

THE CHARTER SCHOOLS

EDUCATIONAL TRUST

The Charter School Bermondsey

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

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Reviewed by:			
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1. Introduction

Our mission at The Charter Schools Educational Trust (hereafter referred to as the 'Trust') is to inspire and nurture young people in South London to excel, through education that transforms lives. A key factor in delivering this is a child's attendance at school.

It is only by attending school regularly (97% or more of the time) and punctually, will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High achievement depends on good attendance. Children who miss out on lessons are at risk of falling behind and statistics show that children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

Attendance	Description	Approx. days lost per year	Approx. weeks lost per year
97-100%	Excellent	0-4	Less than 1
95-96.9%	Good	5-9	1-2
93-94.9%	Satisfactory	10-13	2-3
90-92.9%	Unsatisfactory	14-18	3-4
Below 90%	Persistent Absence	More than 19 Equivalent to 38 sessions	More than 4

The whole school community, including pupils, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and Trustees and local Governors, have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's part in this. The policy is based on current government and Local Authority guidance and statutory regulations. The school will ensure that all members of the school community are made aware of the policy and have access to it.

2. Legal framework

The Education Act 1996 states that:

- The parent/carer of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable
 - a) to their age, ability and aptitude, and
 - b) to any special educational needs, they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- A person begins to be of compulsory school age
 - a) when they attain the age of five, if they attain that age on a prescribed day, and
 - b) otherwise at the beginning of the prescribed day next following their attaining that age.
- A person ceases to be of compulsory school age at the end of the day which is the school leaving date for any calendar year.
 - a) if they attain the age of 16 after that day but before the beginning of the school year next following,
 - b) if they attain that age on that day, or

- c) (unless paragraph (a) applies) if that day is the school leaving date next following their attaining that age.

The Charter Schools Educational Trust and its schools are dedicated to complying with attendance laws set out by the legal framework and has set out this attendance and punctuality policy accordingly.

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)
- DfE (2022) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2023) 'Keeping children safe in education 2023'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following Trust/school policies:

- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Children Missing Education Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Pupils with Additional Health Needs Attendance Policy

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1. The **Trust Board** is responsible for:

- Recognising the importance of school attendance and promoting it across the Trust's ethos and policies
- Ensuring that effective practice on attendance management and improvement across its schools.
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.

3.2. The **local governing board (LGB)** has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies.
- Working with the school leaders to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the Trust's Complaints Policy.
- Having regard to 'Keeping children safe in education' when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

3.3 The headteacher is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Arranging attendance training for all relevant staff that is appropriate to their role.
- Appointing a member of the SLT to take the strategic lead on attendance.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

3.4 All staff at The Charter School Bermondsey are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.
- Providing an environment in which all our pupils are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day.

3.5 A designated member of the school's Senior Leadership Team will be identified as the school's strategic lead on attendance and will be responsible for:

- The overall strategic approach to attendance in school.
- They will ensure that the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school.
- Developing a clear vision for improving attendance.
- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions.
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.
- Reporting on attendance to the Senior Leadership Team and local governing body.
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance.
- Liaise with the EWO to target persistently absent and severely absent students.

3.6 The attendance officer will:

- Be responsible for attendance on a day-to-day basis and will provide support to any pupils whose attendance drops below 97%.
- Be responsible for liaising with the (Head of Year and Education Welfare Officer [EWO]) in relation to pupil absence.
- Contact parents/carers to discuss the pupil's attendance where concerns arise.

- Inform the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers.
- Collate attendance data and provide this along with information to the Senior Leader with strategic responsibility for attendance.
- Maintain the electronic registers.
- Sign in pupils who arrive late.
- Carry out first day calling and, ensure letters are sent to parents and carers, as directed by the Senior Leader with strategic responsibility for attendance.
- Share all absence and lateness information with all staff daily by 11:30 a.m.
- Ensure paper registers are available for all lessons (should they be needed in case of an emergency or failing of our information management system).
- Support families in enabling them to get their child(ren) to school.

3.7 The Head of Year will:

- Be responsible for ensuring follow-up on a weekly basis where there is a drop in attendance
- Promote and model positive attendance.
- Conduct phone calls and attendance meetings.
- Regularly review attendance with the Attendance Officer and EWO.

3.8 Parents are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- Promoting good attendance with their children.
- Ensuring their children attend the school regularly (at least 96% or more) and on time.
- Supporting their children's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum.
- Parents are also be expected to:
 - notify school on the first day of absence and on each subsequent day of absence, unless medical evidence is provided which defines the necessary length of absence.
 - Provide medical evidence when asked in order to authorise an absence due to illness.

3.9 Pupils are responsible for:

- Being aware of the importance of regular school attendance and punctuality.
- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school on time.
- Ensuring they attend the school regularly (97% or more) and on time.
- Speaking to their Head of Year, a member of the pastoral team or the attendance officer if they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school regularly or are causing them to arrive at school late.

4 Attendance expectations

The school has high expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality and ensures that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents/carers and pupils.

4.1 Class Registers

Class registers are recorded using Class Charts. The system ensures that no children are missed, and that pupil information can be shared quickly and securely. Registers are the only way of recording pupil attendance and must be completed accurately. This is the responsibility of whichever member

of staff has been directed to take the register for that session. Registers are legal documents and can be used in a court of law, so they **MUST** be accurate.

4.2 Morning registration

In order to promote good punctuality, the school is open from 8:15 a.m. daily, with gates shutting at 8:35 a.m. There is free breakfast available in the school canteen, as well as paid for options. A daily 'late gate' is positioned at the main entrance to the school. Poor punctuality affects the chances of individual learners making progress. It also interrupts the flow of the lesson being taught and as such has a negative impact on all learners' present. This is unacceptable.

All lateness to school and lessons is recorded electronically. Where punctuality is a serious concern, parents/carers are informed via telephone, Class Charts app, email or post.

The formal start to the school day **is 8:35 a.m.** and pupils must be on site by 8:35 a.m. Any pupil arriving after this time is considered to be late.

If a student arrives after **8:35 a.m.**, they will be considered as late. The morning register closes at 9:05 a.m. and students arriving after this point are marked absent. Students who arrive after 9 a.m. should sign in at the School Reception before continuing to lessons. All lateness to school will be recorded on the electronic registration system and will be recorded in the student's planner.

We run a late gate daily staffed by our attendance officer.

- If a pupil is late to school between 08:35 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. they will serve a 30-minute detention that day.
- If a pupil is late to school between 9:05 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. they are marked absent for the morning session and will serve a 60-minute detention that day.
- If a pupil is late to school past 10:00 a.m., they are marked absent for the morning session and will serve a 90-minute detention that day and possibly time in the Behaviour Support Unit.
- If a pupil is late to school persistently, a warning letter will be sent.
- If following a warning letter being sent there are no improvements, a meeting will be arranged with their HoY and supported by a member of the SLT.

4.3 Afternoon registration

- Registers must be submitted by 12:05 p.m. at the start of period 4.
- Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classrooms by this time.
- The afternoon register will close at 12:10 p.m., and any pupil is not present at this time will be marked as absent. At this point On Call will be notified to investigate and, if necessary, escalate the situation to ensure the safety of the student.

5 Categorising absence

5.1 Any pupil who is not present during registration will be marked as absent, unless authorised leave has been granted by the school in advance or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate. The decision about whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised rests with the Headteacher or other designated staff.

Parents/carers cannot authorise absences and should be aware that while calling the school or providing a note for an absence complies with safeguarding procedures, it does not automatically mean an absence will be authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school.

If no explanation about an absence is received by the school, the absence will remain unauthorised.

5.2 Authorised Absence

Absences may be authorised by the Headteacher or other designated staff in the following circumstances:

- Leave has been granted by the headteacher in advance in exceptional circumstances and for a very limited period, (code C)

*NB an application must be made in writing on the prescribed form (**Appendix 2**), with appropriate evidence, in advance of the intended circumstance wherever possible.*

Amendments have been made to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. From 1st September 2013 Term-time absence will NOT be authorised unless there are exceptional circumstances.

- The school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend. In cases of recurring absences, medical evidence will be required. For long term issues a letter from a hospital consultant will be required and this must be updated at least every 6 months. The EWO may also ask parents of students whose attendance is less than 90% for permission to contact the GP to ascertain reasons for poor absence to school. (Code I)
- The pupil has a medical or dental appointment (code M) (although parents should endeavour to make these out of school hours wherever possible, and to return their child to school immediately afterwards – or send them to school beforehand)
- There is an unavoidable cause for the absence, which is beyond the family's control, e.g., extreme weather conditions (code C)
- The absence occurs on a school day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent belongs. Code R is usually set aside for well-recognised and published religious observance from one of the six major religions e.g., Eid, Orthodox Christmas. Other types of cultural observance will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the school. If the request is for more than one day, this will also be considered on a case-by-case basis. Parent/carers will be aware of these dates and should give the school written notification in advance.
- The pupil is of no fixed abode, their parent is engaged in a trade which requires them to travel, the pupil has attended school as often as the nature of the trade permits and, having reached the age of six, they have attended 200 sessions in the preceding 12 months (code T).
- Where a pupil is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the school will check their attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register. (Code B).

5.3 Absence related to COVID 19

If a pupil has a **confirmed** case of COVID (through the use of a test (LFT or PCR)), then they should stay at home for at least 3 days. This starts the day after they did the test. After the three days has finished, if they are well and do not have a temperature then they can return to school even if tests are still showing positive.

There is no requirement for any person to self-isolate because they have COVID or have been in close contact with someone who has COVID.

5.4 Unauthorised absence

Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised. Some examples of unauthorised absence would be:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- The pupil is staying at home to mind the house
- Staying at home to care for a sick or disabled parent / carer / family member.
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Truancy before or during the school day
- The parent / carer has medical appointment
- Siblings are unwell so the child is not coming in
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

Unauthorised absence codes are:

Code U – late after the registers close (as detailed above)

Code O – the absence is not authorised by the school, even though a reason may have been given for the absence. Only the school can authorise.

Code G – a holiday during term time or leave of absence that has not been authorised.

5.5 Persistent absence/severe absence

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more school sessions across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level has been proven to do considerable damage to any child's education and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence and the reasons given thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the persistent absence mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and we will inform the parents/carers immediately.

6. Collection and analysis of data

The school uses Class Charts to keep an electronic record of attendance.

The Senior Leader with strategic attendance responsibility will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to the senior leadership team, to parents and the Local governing body as appropriate. The data will inform the school's future practice to improve attendance and prevent disaffection.

Attendance is monitored by individual child, year group, class/Tutor group and by reasons of absence. It is also analysed by gender, ethnicity, pupils with special educational needs and those who are vulnerable to poor attendance. This data is used to identify where intervention and support is required to improve attendance.

Accurate attendance returns are made to the Department of Education (DfE) within the stipulated time frame.

7. Systems and strategies for managing and improving attendance / punctuality

Monitoring and rewarding

- Individual student attendance is shared with students and families through Class Charts.
- Those who attend every day in a week receive a Friday treat
- There is a weekly competition for LFTs, each half term the group with the best attendance win the attendance cup and a small prize.
- Weekly attendance prize of skip the lunch queue.
- End of half term 100% attendance certificates.
- All absences are followed up weekly with Learning Family Tutors and Heads of Year responsible for following up where absence has been unauthorised.
- Whole school attendance trends (including group comparisons) are shared through line management meetings with those responsible for whole school attendance.

7.1 Profile & Rewards

- Half-termly assemblies on attendance/punctuality and its importance to education and further life
- Weekly attendance league in celebration PowerPoint
- Half-termly attendance league competition trophy
- Breakfast rewards termly for students whose attendance is 100%
- Friday Freddos
- 100% reward certificates

7.2 School Strategies to tackle absence

The Pastoral Team are responsible for the school management of attendance, policy and systems to ensure that Charter School Bermondsey intervene in non-attendance at an early stage. The Attendance Officer meets with the Senior Leader with strategic attendance responsibility on a weekly basis to review any pupils where attendance concerns exist and to monitor the impacts of any actions taken.

Where there is an emerging pattern for a pupil's absence or if staff are particularly concerned, the school will contact the parents/carers to discuss reasons for the absences with them. Plans should be put in place with the family and pupil to resolve any difficulties and improve the attendance within a specified time limit. It will be explained to parents that any future absences may be unauthorised unless there is clear evidence of a good reason for them. If the pattern persists a Penalty Notice referral may be issued where no improvement is seen.

Our approach to tackling unacceptable levels of absence is bespoke and takes into account the individual circumstances of the family. We recognise that absence may be a symptom of other challenges, and we aim to help address those challenges.

7.3 First-day calling

If a child is absent from school and the school has not received a phone call or other message from the parent/carer, a first day absence call will be made to establish the whereabouts of the child and that they are safe. School staff will make every effort to establish contact with the parent and speak to them to confirm where the child is.

If we are unable to establish contact with the parents, we will contact the emergency numbers provided.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will routinely share a list of vulnerable children with the school administration team, and the admin team will notify the DSL immediately if a child on that list is not in school, on the first day of absence, and each subsequent day.

7.4 Lateness and punctuality

Pupils are expected to arrive at school by 08:35 a.m. every day. For health and safety reasons it is important that the school knows who is in the building.

Pupils arriving late should therefore report to the (School reception) on arrival to sign in and provide an explanation for the late arrival. It is important that all pupils arriving late follow this procedure.

Pupils who arrive after the register closes will be marked as absent for the whole session (a session being a morning or an afternoon). This absence will be unauthorised unless the school is satisfied that there is a legitimate reason for the pupil to be late.

For the same reason it is important that pupils who need to leave the premises legitimately (e.g., for a medical appointment), or return to school later in the day after a legitimate reason, sign in and out and provide a reason for leaving early. On his/her subsequent return to school, they must sign in again to say that they have returned.

7.5 Post-registration truancy

Post-registration truancy occurs when a pupil goes missing from school having previously registered for the session. This behaviour not only means the pupil will not be receiving a full-time education, it also potentially renders them vulnerable to harm. Charter School Bermondsey takes this very seriously and will endeavour to ensure it does not happen. If, however, a pupil appears to have left the premises without authorisation, the school will try to contact their parents immediately; failing this the police will be contacted and informed. Any child who leaves the school without authorisation will be dealt with according to the school's behaviour policy and the Child Protection Policy.

8. Tackling excessive sickness absence (Code I and code M)

In aiming to maintain an average attendance of at least 97% across an academic year, a child cannot miss more than 8 days in total. We use this benchmark to consider carefully how we define excessive sickness absence.

We recognise that some of our pupils have medical conditions or disabilities that necessitate them having more days than this. Where a pupil has no known diagnosis and misses many days due to sickness absence over a period of time, the parents/carers will be warned that in order to authorise any further absence due to illness, medical evidence will be required, even if it is for half a day.

We would always give plenty of warning, opportunities for discussion and implement support from other agencies where we can for families, before that decision is taken. This requirement will never be a surprise or brought in too quickly.

We view medical evidence as something that does not place additional pressures on health professionals, something that is easily obtainable:

- Appointment slip
- Prescription issued
- Email /text message confirming appointment
- Mobile phone record to show the number you called and the duration of the call.

9. Term-time absence due to exceptional circumstances (code C)

9.1 The Headteacher will consider each application individually. An application must be made in writing on the prescribed form, with appropriate evidence, in advance of the intended circumstance wherever possible. Charter School Bermondsey will only consider authorising leave of absence for the following: -

- Serious and sudden illness of a close relative and you must leave in an emergency (see 9.2)
- A one-off never to be repeated occasion that can only happen at that time e.g., wedding or funeral
- Any religious observance (one day only under code R)
- A significant educational opportunity afforded **to the child** by a national organisation e.g., ballet, exams, filming for a TV commercial, taking part in a West End production
- If a parent is service personnel and is returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any **leave** in the near future that coincides with **school** holidays.

9.2 What do we mean by serious and sudden?

- Serious means an accident, injury, illness, disease, or physical or mental condition that: poses imminent danger of death; requires inpatient care in a hospital, hospice, or residential medical facility.
- Examples of this are: road traffic accident, diagnosis of a life limiting illness, deterioration of a life limiting illness.
- Sudden means it has happened and it wasn't expected.
- For time away from education it has to be the type of situation for where you receive communication that requires you to leave immediately to travel.

- We will require evidence of the seriousness of the situation, which you can bring back with you.

10. Issuing fixed penalty notices and initiating court proceedings

As a school within The Charter Schools Educational Trust, we will make full use of the law and issue fixed penalty notices and court proceedings where the conditions for this have been fulfilled. Fixed penalty notices are issued where there are many unauthorised absences on a child's attendance certificate, in accordance with the local authority's code of conduct (detailed below).

Important changes to school attendance rules came into force on August 19th, 2024.

Absence Thresholds and Penalty Notices:

1. If a student accumulates **10 sessions (equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absences within a 10-week period**, the school or local authority will issue a Notice to Improve. This notice outlines the support available to help improve attendance. A penalty notice may follow if no improvement is made or support is declined.
2. **Penalty Notice Structure:** Each parent may receive a fine per child under the following updated structure:
 - **£80** per parent, per child if paid within **21 days**.
 - Increasing to **£160** if paid between **21 and 28 days**.
 - Legal action may be taken directly instead of additional penalty notices for further repeated absences within three years.
2. **Term-Time Leave and Holidays:** Penalty notices may be issued for **term-time holidays exceeding five days**, even if absences are non-consecutive. Parents are strongly encouraged to avoid holiday absences to support continuous learning.
4. **Support for Attendance Improvement:** We recognise that various challenges can impact regular attendance, and we are here to support you. If your child is facing any issues with school attendance, don't hesitate to get in touch with your child's head of year or our pastoral team, who can provide tailored support options.

11. Referral to the Child Missing Education (CME) Service

If, after repeated attempts, we are unable to contact any family to establish for sure where the children are, we are obliged to make a referral to the local authority to say this is a child 'missing education' This is an important safeguarding duty and it ensure that circumstances where children are missing from education are swiftly and appropriately responded to. This will be in accordance with our Children Missing from Education Policy and the local authority procedures.

12. Deletions from the register/ removal from the school roll

Parents must ensure they inform the school of any change of address, contact details or family circumstances. Should a parent advise they are moving and will be removing their child(ren) from the school roll, the school must attempt to obtain the parent's new address and if possible, the name of

new school the child will be attending. If this information has not been supplied the school must inform their EWO if the child leaves without obtaining any forwarding information.

In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, children will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- Permanent exclusion has occurred, and procedures have been completed
- Transfer between schools
- Children withdrawn to be educated outside the school system (Educated otherwise)
- Failure to return from an extended holiday after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the child
- 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and both the local authority and school have tried to locate the child
- Left the school but not known where he or she has gone after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the child

The school will report a child as Missing in Education to the local authority, following 10 consecutive days of absence, when all checks have been exhausted. This will include telephone calls to all known numbers on the school system, including relatives, discussion with class teacher and known friends of pupil, home visit by School/Education Welfare Officer. The school will contact the local authority completing a 'Child Missing in Education' form with the relevant information and await confirmation to remove.

13. Medical/Hospital Appointments and Medical Absence

Parents and carers must try to ensure where possible that any medical appointments are made after school or during the school holiday period. Should a child have a medical appointment during an a.m. or p.m. session, the expectation is they will be returned to school following the appointment and not be taken out of school for the entire day. They will be marked as unauthorised for the session if they do not return to school and no explanation is given. An appointment card/letter/email or text will need to be shown to the Attendance Officer in order for the absence to be authorised in the first instance.

Where pupils are likely to have a period of long absence, for example from a period of illness, the Head of Year should liaise with parents and make arrangements for work to be sent home.

The Attendance Officer, along with Heads of Year, has the major responsibility for identifying persistent poor attendance and punctuality. The Attendance Officer will also analyse attendance data and look for patterns of absence and poor punctuality.

Where there is a significant pattern of medical absence or absence through illness, the school will:

- Contact the parent/carers to discuss reasons why and may invite them to the school for a meeting. This will always be the case after three consecutive days of absence.
- If no contact is made a letter will be sent to the parents advising them that any future absences will require them to produce medical evidence and failure to do so will result in the absences being unauthorised (appendix 3)

- If attendance has previously been a concern, or continues to be a concern, a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Officer who will offer support and guidance, but may also refer to the local authority to issue a Penalty Notice or consideration of legal proceedings

14. Expectations and Timeline of Action

Attendance at school is a vital part of a student's education and the expectation at The Charter School Bermondsey is that students attend school every day, unless in the case of exceptional circumstances and with the Principal's permission.

The Charter School Bermondsey overall attendance target is 96%+. This reflects the value that we place on attendance and punctuality at school.

Daily Absence

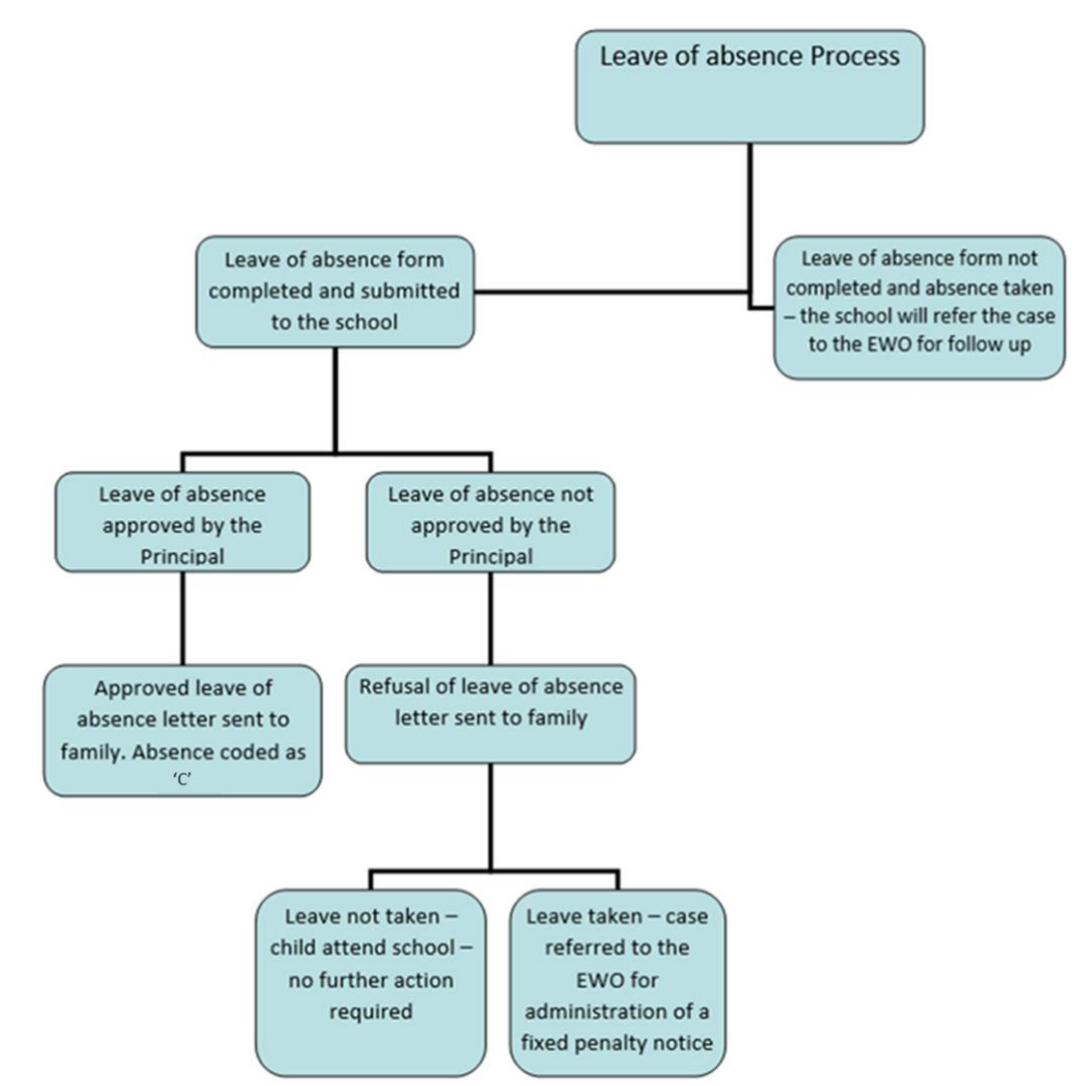
Day of Absence	Responsibility of Parent/Carer	Responsibility of School
Day 1 - 4	Contact the school before 8:15 a.m. and explain absence on each day of absence	Attendance Officer to log reason for absence/chase reason for absence. The Head of Year or LFT to have completed on the first day of absence a welfare call.
Day 5 - 9	Contact the school to explain the prolonged absence. Any absences of five days or more, must be accompanied by medical evidence (doctor's certificate, GP/medical appointment card, copy of prescription, hospital letter or note from the GP is required) *	Attendance officer to log reason and strategies offered to enable a return to school.
Day 10	We have a legal duty to report the absence of any student who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. The Local Authority will be notified that the child is 'at risk of missing' his/her education.	
2+ Days no communication	If a student does not attend school for more than 2 days without communication made by the parent, a safeguarding log is reported, and the necessary steps are taken. This may include a home visit, police informed or/and social services informed.	

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* If a note is not received, this absence will be marked as unauthorised until confirmation of the absence is received.

Appendix 1

Leave of absence process



Appendix 2

Application for exceptional leave of absence

School Name: _____

Student/Pupil Details					
Name:		Date of birth:		Class/Form:	
Address:					
Contact Numbers:					
Sibling Details of Compulsory School Age (or other children living in the household)					
Name:		Date of birth:		School:	
Name:		Date of birth:		School:	
I request permission for my child to be absent from school between: -					
Date of First Day School Absence:		Date of Return to School:		Total of Absent School Days:	
<p>Please detail below the reason for your request for absence from school in term time and include any supporting information. The Principal <u>will not</u> be able to consider your request without your <u>supporting documents</u>. <i>Please read carefully the Absence from School for Exceptional Circumstances Information for Parents attached.</i></p>					
Parent's Declaration: <i>I have read the Absence from School for Exceptional Circumstances Information for Parents and understand I/we may receive a penalty notice if my/our child receives unauthorised school absence as a result of this request. Please note the school day is divided into 2 registration periods, for example if your child is absent for one day this equals 2 sessions and a five-day absence equals 10 sessions.</i>					
Signed:			Date:		
(Parent/Carer)					
Full Name:					

Absence from School for Exceptional Circumstances Request Information for Parents:

Please note:

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- We advise that you do not plan for your child to be absent from school without gaining prior agreement from their school first. Principals cannot retrospectively authorise absence from school under any circumstance.
- Any disagreement between estranged parents should be resolved prior to submitting this request to your child's school.

You are required under the Education Act (1996) to ensure your child attends school regularly. There is, however, a discretionary power held by Principals to authorise absence in exceptional circumstances **only**. This is **not an entitlement**. There is no longer a provision in law for Principals to authorise an absence for the purpose of a term-time holiday.

The Principal will only authorise absence in line with the Whole School Attendance Policy. The Principal will not authorise absences if they believe it is to the detriment of a child's education.

Please note that supporting documents to aid decision making must be submitted at the time of your request for absence.

If your request is authorised, you are required to ensure your child catches up on any missed schoolwork. This is your responsibility and school is not obliged to provide work for your child to complete. Any unauthorised absence will be recorded on your child's attendance records. This may result in legal proceedings against you, either through a Penalty Notice or the Magistrates' Court. Where parents do not follow school procedures of submitting a request and simply remove their child without seeking prior approval, a warning may not be given. Parents must complete a request for exceptional leave form and submit this to the school, allowing for sufficient time to enable the school to consider the request and inform the parent of the decision.

If your request is declined and you still take your child out of school, each parent within your household may be issued with a £60 penalty notice for each child you have taken out of school. If a penalty notice remains unpaid after 21 days, it will increase to £120. If after 28 days, it remains unpaid you may be summoned to appear before Magistrates to explain why your child has unauthorised school absences and you may be liable for a fine of up to £1000.

Support and guidance on attendance is always available and if you have any questions about this, or if you need help to achieve an improvement, please contact the school to discuss this.

For School Use Only

The school has considered your request for leave of absence and your child's absences will be recorded as follows: -					
Number of Authorised Sessions:		Number of Unauthorised Sessions:		Number of Unauthorised sessions to date:	

Signed: Position:	Date:
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Original signed and completed forms to be retained with pupil's records.

Copy should be returned to the parent/carer of the pupil to confirm authorised or unauthorised absence prior to the intended absence period.

Contact details for attendance at The Charter School Bermondsey

Please see below the contact details for key colleagues with regards attendance and reporting absence at The Charter School Bermondsey.

You should report your child's absence via Attendance@charterbermondsey.org.uk or through the Class Charts app.

Appendix 3.1

Supporting my child(ren) with attendance

1. My child is trying to avoid coming to school. What should I do?

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

Contact your child's Learning Family Tutor or HOY immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons, such as difficulties with schoolwork, friendship problems and family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem. In some cases, you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with another professional.

At The Charter School Bermondsey, the relevant staff are:

1. Learning Family Tutor
2. Attendance Officer
3. Heads of Years
4. SENDCO
6. Pastoral member of SLT
7. Educational Welfare Officer

2. What can I do to encourage my child to attend school?

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that they leave home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value their education.

Your child will bring home a student diary. Please ensure you look at it with your child and sign it weekly. Be interested in what your child is doing in school, talk to them about the things they have learnt, what friends they have made and even what they had for lunch.

Share your child's attendance with them and refer to the graph (appendix 3.2) that clearly shows the impact of attendance on academic achievement. Discuss aspirations for the future and encourage your child to understand the impact that poor attendance has on future prospects.

Celebrate with them when they have perfect attendance for a given period of time or they work hard to improve their attendance.

Appendix 3.2

Days off school adds up to lost learning					
175 NON SCHOOL DAYS A YEAR 175 days to spend on family visits, holidays, shopping, household jobs and other appointments					
190 SCHOOL DAYS IN EACH YEAR	10 days absence	19 days absence	29 days absence	38 days absence	47 days absence
190 days for your child's education	180 days of Education	171 days of Education	161 days of Education	152 days of Education	143 days of Education
100%	95%	90%	85%	80%	75%
Excellent Best chance of success. Gets your child off to a flying start	Good Great chance of success. Gets your child off to a good start	Worrying Less chance of success. Makes it harder to make progress		Serious Concern Not fair on your child Court action!	



Appendix 4

Exemplar Letter – Medical Absence

<date>

Dear Parent/Carer of <name>,

According to our records, <name>, missed school on <date>, due to illness. Their attendance rate is currently <%>. In line with the school's policy, we do not authorise recurring absences without medical evidence being provided.

As such and due to <name> falling into this category this academic year the school is going to require all future absences reported as illness to be supported by medical evidence.

Examples of evidence that could be provided:

- Appointment letter
- Medication slip
- Hospital letter
- Doctors note
- Photo of medicine you gave your child
- Photo of your child

All future absences reported as illness will be categorised as “unauthorised” absence unless you provide medical evidence to support it. If the required medical evidence is not provided, the school may consider referring you to the Education Welfare Officer and you may be liable to a fine and/or prosecution.

Yours sincerely,

Miss Bissmire
Attendance and Pastoral Officer |

The Charter School Bermondsey

Appendix 4.1

Exemplar Letter – Unexplained absence from school (Level 1)

<date>

Level 1 Warning: Unexplained Absence

Dear Parent/Carer of <name>,

According to our records, <name>, has been absent from school on <date>. You will be aware that it is the parent's responsibility to notify the school on the first day of a pupil's absence to explain the reasons why they are unable to attend school and an expected date when they should return. Unfortunately, we have not received any contact from you.

Dates of unexplained absence: <date>

Students Name: <name>

I am therefore writing to you to give you the opportunity of 5 working days to explain the "Unauthorised" absence/absences. Please make sure you contact me via class charts or email: Attendance@charterbermondsey.org.uk within this time frame.

If the school does not receive an explanation for the unauthorised absences, and this continues we will be escalating this to a **Level 2 warning** which will come from the Assistant Principal, Mr Haverty.

Yours sincerely,

Miss Bissmire

Attendance and Pastoral officer |

The Charter School Bermondsey

Appendix 4.2

Exemplar Letter – Unexplained absence from school (Level 2)

<date>

Level 2 Warning: Unexplained Absence

Dear Parent/Carer of <name>,

<name> was absent from school on <date> and no explanation was provided. You will be aware that it is the parent's responsibility to notify the school on the first day of a pupil's absence to explain the reasons why they are unable to attend school and an expected date when they should return. On <date> you were sent a letter by our attendance officer and asked to provide an explanation for your child unauthorised absence and you have failed to do this.

I am therefore writing to you to give you a final opportunity to explain the reason for your child's absences. Please do this by contacting our attendance officer and providing an explanation via class charts or email: Attendance@charterbermondsey.org.uk within **5 working days**.

If the school does not receive an adequate explanation for the unauthorised absences, it is highly likely this will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer and you may be liable for a fine and/or prosecution.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Haverty

Assistant Principal for Pastoral | Designated Safeguarding Lead

The Charter School Bermondsey

Appendix 4.3

Exemplar Letter – Leave of absence granted

{Parent name}

{Address}

TCSET Attendance and Punctuality Sept 2025

{Date}

Dear {Parent Name}

RE: Child's Name and DOB - Request for Exceptional Leave - Current attendance percentage (%)

Thank you for your application requesting permission to take (child's name) out of school for the purposes of (insert reason) from (insert date) to (insert date) – a total of (insert number) days absent from school.

Encouraging regular school attendance is one of the most powerful ways you can prepare your child for success—both in school and in life. When you make school attendance a priority, you are helping your child socially and academically. However, given the exceptional circumstances you have provided for the absence, I have considered your application for leave for (insert number of days) and I have agreed that this absence will be authorised for the following reasons:

- Your child's/children's attendance is above 97% this academic year.
- The circumstances are exceptional
- The absence will not result in (child's name) missing any exams

Whilst I have authorised this leave for a period of (insert number of days) please note that any absence beyond the (insert number of days) will be considered unauthorised and I may decide to request that the Local Authority issues a Penalty Notice which may result in a fine of £60.00 per parent.

We look forward to seeing (insert child's name) back in school on (insert return date).

Yours sincerely,

Mr M Huntley
Principal
The Charter School Bermondsey

Appendix 4.4

Exemplar Letter – Leave of absence not granted

{Parent name}

TCSET Attendance and Punctuality Sept 2025

{Address}
{Date}

Dear {Parent Name}

RE: Child's name and DOB - Request for Exceptional Leave - Current attendance percentage (%)

Thank you for your application requesting permission to take (child's name) out of school for the purposes of (insert reason) from (insert date) to (insert date) – a total of (insert number) days absent from school.

I have made my decision in line with our policy and regret to inform you that your application for leave has not been granted for one or more of the following reasons:

Your child's/children's attendance is below 95% this academic year.

The circumstances are not deemed exceptional

(Childs Name) will miss planned exams/tests

(Childs Name) has already taken 10 days leave this academic year.

Encouraging regular school attendance is one of the most powerful ways you can prepare your child for success—both in school and in life. Regular attendance at school is vital to help children achieve and get the best possible start in life.

We trust that your child's full attendance will be encouraged given this information and our decision and you will make alternative arrangements for your trip during the school holiday period. If you wish to discuss this letter's content or provide further information, contact Pamela Elcock, Education Welfare Officer, via the school office.

Yours sincerely,

Mr M Huntley
Principal

Encl: Registration Certificate

Appendix 4.5 Exemplar Communications – Persistent Absence

Dear [Parent's Name],

TCSET Attendance and Punctuality Sept 2025

We are writing to express serious concern regarding your child, [Child's Name]'s recent attendance. Your child's current attendance rate is well below the 100% target and has resulted in them being classified as persistently absent.

Persistent absence is defined as missing 10% or more of school sessions, or 19 or more sessions per term.

Regular and punctual attendance is crucial for your child's academic success. As outlined in the Education Act 1996, parents have a legal duty to ensure their child receives a full-time education.

Every day counts. Regular and punctual attendance is crucial for your child's academic success and overall well-being. It allows them to fully engage in lessons, build strong relationships with their peers and teachers, and develop essential skills. As outlined in the Education Act 1996, parents have a legal duty to ensure their child receives a full-time education.

Please note that registers close at 9 am. Any student arriving after this time will be marked as absent for the morning session.

To support your child's attendance and academic progress, we implement the following:

- Attendance Panels: Regular meetings with you and your child to discuss attendance and strategies for improvement.
- Home Visits: Visits to your home to discuss any barriers to attendance and to offer support and guidance.
- Referral to the Education Welfare Service: We will be referring your child to the Education Welfare Service for additional support and intervention.

We encourage you to work with us to improve your child's attendance. Let's aim for 100% attendance! Please ensure your child returns to school after half-term on Monday, November 4th.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the school.

Sincerely,

Mr. Huntley Principal

Appendix 4.6 Exemplar Communications – Lateness

4.6.i Late to school ClassCharts Message

Dear Parent/Carer of <name>,

We are writing to inform you that your child, [Child's Name], arrived late to school today, [Date].

TCSET Attendance and Punctuality Sept 2025

Please be aware that regular and punctual attendance is crucial for your child's academic success. As outlined in the Education Act 1996, parents have a legal duty to ensure their child receives a full-time education.

We kindly request that you take steps to ensure your child arrives at school on time. If you anticipate any difficulties, please inform the school in advance.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

The Charter School Bermondsey

<date>

4.6.ii Persistent Lateness Letter

Dear Parent/Carer of <name>,

I am writing to inform you that your child <name>, is persistently late for school. From the start of the school year, your child has been frequently late to school.

When pupils arrive late, they miss essential instructions given at the beginning of day/lesson. This can significantly reduce achievement, regardless of academic ability. Your child may also feel awkward arriving to the classroom when everyone else is settled. Furthermore, when one pupil arrives late, it disrupts the entire class and the teacher – everyone's education is compromised.

As parents, you have a legal duty to ensure your child receives a full-time education suitable to their age, ability, and aptitude. This is outlined in the Education Act 1996. This includes ensuring regular school attendance and punctuality. Persistent unauthorised absence can lead to legal action, such as penalty notices or even prosecution.

If lateness continues, this will escalate to higher warning and you could be called to attend a meeting with the Principal or Assistant Principal, or other member of SLT.

If you require any advice or if anything can be done to support <name>, getting to school on time, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Miss Bissmire
Attendance and Pastoral Officer

The Charter School Bermondsey

Appendix 5

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable:

[a] To his/her age, ability and aptitude and

[b] To any special needs he/she may have

either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. For educational purposes, the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day-to-day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

Register and Admission Roll keeping

The legal requirements are found in: The Education [Pupil Registration] (England) Regulations 2006

Guidance documents on attendance

The following DfE documents are used to guide attendance recording:

- Absence and Attendance codes (Guidance for Schools and Local Authorities)
- Keeping Pupil Registers (Guidance on applying the Education Pupil Registration Regulations).
- These and other guidance documents are available on the DfE website.

