



Attendance and Registration Policy (Prep)

Reviewer: Kit Perona-Wright

Approver: Noll Jenkins

Review Date: January 2026

Next Review: April 2026

Introduction

We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. To do this it is crucial that every child attends The Prep every day and on time. This policy sets out how together we will achieve this and takes into account Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025) and Working Together to Improve Attendance (2024). The Senior Attendance Champion at The Prep is Mr Noll Jenkins (Deputy Head, Pastoral). His contact details are n.jenkins@cheltenhamcollege.org

Why regular attendance is so important

Every pupil should aim to have a minimum of 95% attendance. Anything less than this will impact on their education. Learning is cumulative and sequential. Absence results in missed teaching, discussions, and feedback that are difficult to replace. Pupils with attendance above 95% are significantly more likely to achieve well across subjects while persistent absence, defined as attendance below 90%, is strongly associated with reduced academic progress and widening gaps in knowledge. An attendance rate of 90% equates to missing approximately one day of school every two weeks, or almost four weeks across a school year. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at The Prep is a parent's legal responsibility and permitting absence from The Prep without a good reason is an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

School provides structure, routine and a sense of belonging. Regular attendance supports the development of friendships, resilience, confidence and emotional stability, while enabling pupils to access pastoral support at the right time. Irregular attendance can increase anxiety about returning to school and may lead to disengagement, creating patterns that become increasingly difficult to break.

Attendance is a recognised safeguarding indicator. KCSIE (2025) highlights that children who are regularly or unexpectedly absent may be at increased risk of neglect, exploitation, abuse, mental health crisis or family difficulties. Monitoring attendance closely allows the College to identify early warning signs and ensure that pupils receive appropriate support or protection.

Absence affects not only the individual pupil but also the wider school community. It can disrupt the pace of teaching, group work and class cohesion and requires additional teaching time to support catch-up. Regular attendance benefits pupils, staff, and the learning environment.

Through the academic year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made. Should we have any concerns, pastoral leaders will work closely with parents to address any issues.

Promoting regular attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parent / guardian/carers, pupils, and all members of Prep School staff.

To help us all to focus on this The Prep will:

- ☐ Give details of attendance on request;
- ☐ Report to parents each half term regarding their child's attendance;
- ☐ Analyse attendance data to improve attendance for those who need it;
- ☐ Explore trends and patterns that may indicate safeguarding issues or barriers to learning;
- ☐ Raise awareness of the importance of good attendance amongst the school community through regular reporting to parents, training for staff and communication to pupils
- ☐ Ensure Governors have a strategic oversight of attendance matters through reporting by senior leaders, enabling them to provide challenge and support when necessary

Understanding types of absence

Every half-day absence from The Prep must be classified by The Prep (not by the parent / carers), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. Therefore, information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from The Prep for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments or extra-curricular activities which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies, or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which The Prep does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence is often asked for in educational references and in extreme circumstances – **missing 10 registration contact points without explanation** – may have to be reported to the Local Education Authority (LEA) or the UKVI (UK visas and Immigration).

Examples include:

- ☐ Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- ☐ Absences which are not properly explained
- ☐ Any event in term time which have not been agreed.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. In this situation it is essential that the parents do not give in to pressure and allow students to stay away from The Prep. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse. The Prep works to support parent / carers to ensure that the child returns to school.

If a pupil is ill for 5 days in a row and no Doctor's note is provided, this will likely be classed as unauthorised absence and could trigger a report to the LEA or UKVI.

Persistent Absence (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% of lessons across The Prep School year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and should be treated as a safeguarding issue. We therefore need parents' full support and co-operation to tackle this. PA pupils, and those at risk of becoming PA are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment. The attached appendix gives a summary of the stages and steps The Prep will take with persistent absentees.

Absence Procedures

If a child is absent parents must:

- ☐ Contact the form teacher and/or the school office as soon as possible on the first day of absence. Parents have the individual contact details for their child's form taker, and the general absence contact is prep.absent@cheltenhamcollege.org

If a child is absent The Prep will:

- ☐ Attempt to telephone or text parents on the first day of absence if we have not heard from them
- ☐ Invite parents in to discuss the situation with the form taker, Head of Section, Head of Pupil Welfare or one of the Deputy Heads if absence persists

If a child's attendance drops below 90%, the school will be in touch with parents to understand any specific issue and to agree on how we can work together to improve attendance.

Parent Contact details

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have accurate contact details and numbers at all times. Please ensure The Prep is informed immediately of any changes. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. Pupils who are late disrupt their own progress and the learning of others.

How we manage lateness:

Form time – unless at an authorised activity or appointment pupils in Y3-8 are expected to be registered by their form taker at 8:15am (EYFS-Y2 at 8.30am). The form period finishes at 8.45am. A child arriving late to registration in their form will be marked as 'L'. At 8.45am, the administrative team start to follow up any absence by contacting parents until the school's defined registration closure time of 9.15am. If a pupil arrives after this time, they will be marked as 'U' (recorded as a type of unauthorised absence). If a pupil has a record of persistent lateness, they and the parents will be asked to meet with a senior teacher to resolve the problem, but parents can approach The Prep at any time if they are having problems getting their child to school on time.

School Day

The afternoon registration period for Y5-8 on a Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday is open between 1.45-2.15pm, and on a Wednesday between 12.10-12.40pm. For EYFS-Y2, afternoon registration is between 1.15-1.30pm, and for Y3-4 is between 12.30-12.45pm every day.

The teaching day ends for EYFS-Y2 at 3.30pm, Y3-4 at 4.00pm, and Y5-8 at 4.25pm. pupils can stay for a number of reasons, from 'prep' (homework) through to a range of clubs and activities, and also late-stay. These conclude at 6.00pm. All pupils are expected to sign out at the end of the day whenever they are collected and go home. EYFS-Y2 are collected and signed-out from Pre-Prep, Y3-4 from Lower School, and pupils in Y5-8 sign out at Day End with a member of staff.

Holidays in term time

Taking holidays in term time will affect a pupil's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in term time.

There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in term time to go on holiday. Holiday absences may be authorised in certain circumstances at the head's discretion.

Any application for leave must be made in advance to the Head. In making a decision, the Head will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave in term time and your child's overall attendance record.

Circumstances where such leave will be authorised:

Examples of where leave in term time may be authorised include, but are not limited to:-

- ☐ Weddings of parents and siblings.
- ☐ The funeral of a parent or sibling or any other compassionate incident
- ☐ Where an absence from The Prep is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue. A health professional's letter will need to be seen by the Head.
- ☐ 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 Prep School holidays.
- ☐ Early departure of pupils due to personal reasons
- ☐ Religious holidays
- ☐ Passport and Visa Interviews

This list is not exhaustive.

Coding Absence

The following DfE codes supplied by Gloucestershire County Council are used to record attendance:

/ – Present

School Attendance Codes 2024

Present Codes	
/ \	present during registration
B	educated off site and for taster days and do not fit K, V, P or W codes
K	attending provision arranged by the local authority under Section 19 of the EA 1996
L	arrived after the register has started but before it has closed
P	participation in a sporting activity with prior agreement from school
V	educational visit or trip supervised by a member of the school staff
W	attending work experience under arrangements by the school or local authority
Absent Codes	
Authorised Absences	
C	absence due to exceptional circumstances, agreed by the headteacher
C1	in a regulated performance/undertaking regulated employment abroad
C2	absent due to part-time timetable, agreed by the headteacher and parent(s)/carer(s)
D	dual registered
E	suspended or permanently excluded, and no alternative provision made
I	illness (both physical and mental health related; not medical or dental appointments)
J1	job/school/college interview
M	medical or dental appointment
Q	unable to attend because of a lack of access arrangements
R	religious observance (only 1 day allowed; any more coded as C if agreed)
S	study leave
T	parent travelling for occupational purposes
X	non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
Y1	unable to attend due to transport provided not being available
Y2	unable to attend due to widespread transport disruption
Y3	unable to attend due to part of the school premises being unexpectedly closed
Y4	unable to attend due to unexpected whole school closure
Y5	unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	unable to attend due to other avoidable cause (must affect the pupil NOT the parent)
Unauthorised Absences	
G	holiday or absence for leisure-related purposes (not agreed by the headteacher)
N	reason for absence not yet established (must be corrected within 5 days)
O	absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	late after register has closed
Administrative Codes	
Z	prospective pupil not yet on register
#	planned whole school closure (e.g., holidays, Insets and polling station days)



The people responsible for attendance matters in Cheltenham Prep are:

Head

Mr Tom O'Sullivan

Deputy Head Pastoral (DSL & Senior Attendance Champion)

Mr Noll Jenkins

Houseparents

Cade House, Mr Jonny Bell and Mrs Emma Bell

Head of Wellbeing

Ms Catherine Solomon

Appendix 1

Roles and Responsibilities

Pupils

- ☐ Pupils in Y3-8 will arrive at The Prep by 8.15am each day (8.30am for EYFS-Y2)
- ☐ Pupils will attend all timetabled lessons on time.

Parent / Carers

- ☐ All non-urgent appointments to be arranged after Prep School at the weekend or in school holidays.
- ☐ The Prep should be informed in advance or on the day of reasons for absence.
- ☐ A reason for every absence to be given to the Prep School either in writing, via email or by telephone (usually to the form taker), or via prep.absent@cheltenhamcollege.org

Prep Admin Office

- ☐ Updating the registers when notification is received regarding reason for absence
- ☐ Daily monitoring of am / pm registration – recording where registers not taken
- ☐ Provide DHP/Head of Section with a list of students to receive Warning letters re attendance
- ☐ Contact parent / carers in writing where a student has an unauthorised absence for 10 consecutive days

Head of Wellbeing

- ☐ Facilitate support for pupils experiencing mental health problems which is causing issues with attendance.
- ☐ Engage with parents at an early stage to support their child experiencing anxiety to ensure robust support for the child.
- ☐ Support parents if they feel the child needs to visit a specialist in relation to a mental health concern.
- ☐ Refer to Early Help if consent has been agreed.

Form Takers

- ☐ Take the Morning register on iSams
- ☐ Do not leave anything blank. If whereabouts not known, mark as 'N' and this will be chased by administrative staff
- ☐ To flag persistent absence to the DHP/ Head of Section

Heads of Section

- ☐ Monitor and support the Form takers and DHP regarding attendance matters with Boarders
- ☐ Identify pupils who are or at risk of poor attendance or persistent absence and liaise with the DHP to ensure appropriate action is taken

Senior Leadership Team

- ☐ DHP (senior attendance champion) to track and monitor whole Prep School attendance and the effective implementation of the Prep School attendance policy
- ☐ Follow up where any member of staff fails to fulfil their attendance responsibility

Appendix 2

Procedures for Poor Attendance

Stage	Medical (Self Certified by parents)
Trigger	Pupils missing 5 days in a row but without a Doctor's note
Action	DHP/Head of Section informed who will likely arrange a meeting between parents/carers and appropriate Head of Section or form taker to discuss pupil/ family circumstances. Actions agreed documented.
Support	Monitoring and attendance targets put in place. Additional support applied as necessary.

Stage	Medical (Doctor's Note)
Trigger	Pupils with compromised attendance for the academic year.
Action	Meeting with parents / carers and senior pastoral staff (DHP/Head of Section) to discuss pupil's/family circumstances, including possible consideration of amendments to the pupil's academic and co-curricular programme. School to report/seek advice from the local authority.
Support	The DHP/Head of Section will write a Individual Welfare Plan and will encourage Early Help/Student Support Services.

Appendix 3

Pupils/Students Absent Without Authority

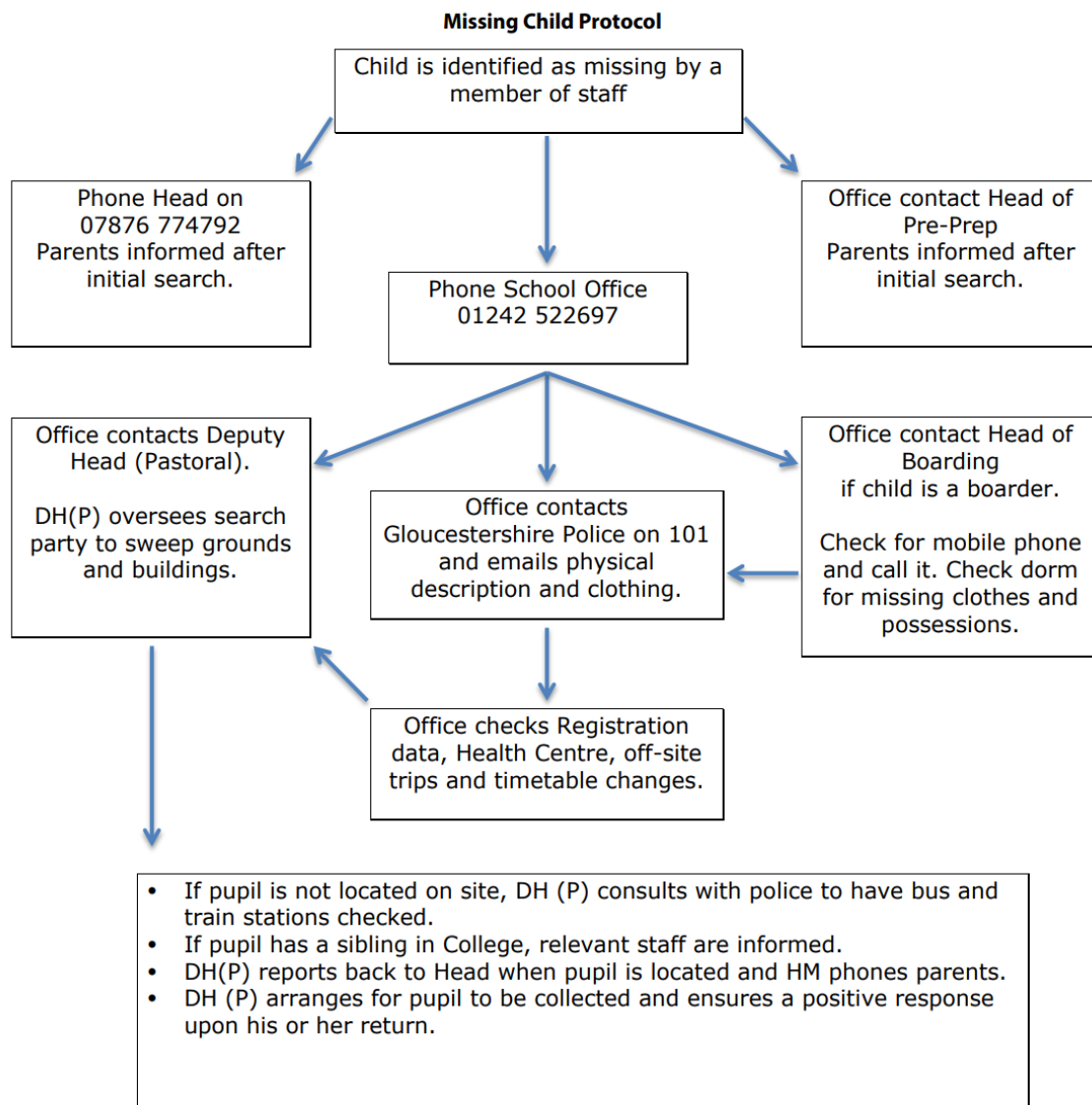
1. Introduction

The school has written procedures identifying action to be taken when a child is absent without authority. These procedures are known to staff, pupils and their parents or guardians (through the Prep website).

- ☐ The procedures cover the following: Searching for any pupil missing or believed to have run away from The Prep or as a result of a possible abduction to include the timing of reporting pupil missing to:
 - ☐ The Police
 - ☐ To the pupil's parents or guardians (if appropriate).
- ☐ Take action to obtain information about the whereabouts of a missing pupil and to try to ensure:
 - ☐ The safety and welfare of that pupil
 - ☐ The collection and return of missing pupil when found
 - ☐ Action to be taken on the pupil's return.

All staff are aware of, and do not exceed, the measures they may properly take to prevent a pupil leaving without permission under current legislation (section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006) and government guidance on the use of force, (see Use of Reasonable Force policy).

Missing Child Protocol



Appendix 4 Procedures where a mental health issue is affecting attendance.

The following guidance is applied to any pupil displaying social, emotional and mental health issues that is affecting their attendance. It is not only for pupils who have a diagnosed mental health disorder, or a disability or a special educational need.

All actions taken to support attendance are referred to as “reasonable adjustments” and this term is used as a way of describing actions in general terms, as opposed to a school’s duty to make reasonable adjustments for pupils with a disability under section 20 of the 2010 Equality Act.

Parents/carers have a duty, under section 7 of the Education Act 1996, to ensure that their child of compulsory school age (5 to 16) receives an efficient full-time education either by attendance at school or otherwise, and so share in the responsibility of ensuring good and regular attendance. As such, we encourage parents/carers to be open and work with the school to create a plan for attendance that fits with the needs of the child. Any reasonable adjustments or support put in place should ensure that the time the child spends in school is prioritised as much as is possible.

Where support offered is not engaged with, or where all other options have been exhausted or deemed inappropriate, the school will consider whether this meets the threshold for referral to external agencies.

While it is the legal responsibility of all parents/carers to ensure their child receives education by full-time attendance at school or otherwise, in very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil’s best interests, a plan to help a child to attend may involve the use of a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition (including a mental health condition) prevents a pupil from attending school full-time and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package. Any part-time timetable will seek to maximise face-to-face school time as much as possible.

While the School will consider providing remote education to help pupils stay on track, this will not be of the same standard as face-to-face class based learning and should therefore only be a temporary measure, used as part of a plan to reintegrate a pupil back into full time education. If the absence has not been authorised, there can be no expectation of remote learning.

The Head of Wellbeing and Deputy Head (Pastoral) oversees issues with attendance, which is linked to a mental health concern. In doing so they will:

- ☐ Where attendance has been identified by the form taker or office staff as falling below 90% for an extended period of time (half termly), a letter will be sent to ensure early communication between the school and parents.
- ☐ If absence persists, the DHP/Head of Wellbeing will gather the facts to start a My Plan in order to potentially initiate an Early help referral. This may include conducting a risk assessment to consider any potential safeguarding/welfare issues.
- ☐ In doing so, the DHP/Head of Wellbeing will work with parents/carers as well as with the pupil to understand the barriers to regular attendance and, where appropriate, make reasonable adjustments to overcome those specific barriers.
- ☐ Arrange for a home visit with prior agreement from the parents/carer and the pupil.
- ☐ If appropriate refer to external agencies such as Early Help.

Appendix 5 – Attendance Support Plan

Name		Risk assessment	<input type="checkbox"/>
Age		IWP	<input type="checkbox"/>
Boarding/Day		My Plan	<input type="checkbox"/>

Pupil Profile

SEND	<input type="checkbox"/>
ECHP	<input type="checkbox"/>
ASD/ADHD/other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Details of absence

Agreements with parents/carers

Support Measures

Home Visit	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pupil Support Services	<input type="checkbox"/>
GP involvement	<input type="checkbox"/>
Early Help	<input type="checkbox"/>

Reasonable adjustments

Part-time timetable	<input type="checkbox"/>
Remote teaching at home	<input type="checkbox"/>
Time-out card	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sitting exams in a smaller room	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ear defenders/pods worn	<input type="checkbox"/>