Chetham's

# Registration and Attendance Policy, Absence from School Procedure

**(Website)**

23/10/26

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Editor: JAR-C
Line Manager: NS
Created: NS, 09.19
Version: 23.10.26
Review: 31.7.27

Chetham's

# Registration and Attendance Policy

# Absence From School Procedure

**(Website)**

## Statement

Chetham's School of Music is robust in its safeguarding measures and students, staff and parents all play a vital role in making it so. School should be a happy and enjoyable experience for our students. It is a place where learning takes place, where friendships are formed and where social and educational skills are developed within a safe and secure environment. Students who fail to attend regularly experience educational disadvantage at school and their future life prospects are impaired.

This policy follows the statutory guidance of *Working Together to Improve School Attendance* (WISA) (July 2026). It follows *School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations (2024)* which requires the school to keep admissions and attendance registers as laid out in *Children Missing in Education* (2016 Updated 8 September 2025) and *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (2026). It has reference to *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (2026). The School's own CME policy is contained within the *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures*.

A reduced version of this policy, without Appendix 3, which is for staff use only, is made available to students and parents on the School website.

## Purpose

- To ensure that students are safe and accounted for throughout the school day.
- To ensure that the proper checks are made for students who do not attend school either on the first day of the academic year, or at any interval over the year.
- To have a robust procedure to follow for any students missing for an unexplained reason.
- To ensure that students fulfil their academic and music curriculum safely and purposefully.
- To create a welcoming, positive, and safe environment in which students feel comfortable, supported and ready to learn and where barriers to attendance might arise, to work with the student to break these down.

## Ethos: Whole School Culture of High Attendance

We recognise that the key to securing good attendance is to ensure school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils are keen and ready to learn.

Every student has a right to full-time education, and high attendance is expected. Certain students and their families have specific needs, and these will be considered in our approach. Thus the policy will be applied in an equitable fashion in the spirit of fairness and consistency, with appropriate high attendance ambitions for all. We, Chetham's School of Music:

- Recognise the importance of good attendance, being ready to learn in a safe and respectful environment. It is a central part of our vision, values, ethos, and day-to-day life.
- Recognise the interplay between attendance and attainment, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, supporting pupils with medical conditions or disabilities, safeguarding, wellbeing, mental and physical health and support for disadvantaged students.
- Work with families to remove barriers to attendance
- Recognise that improving and achieving optimum attendance is everyone's responsibility and all staff receive attendance training through induction and ongoing safeguarding and attendance updates.
- The Joint Principal (NS) has overall responsibility, and delegates responsibilities to the Vice Principal who leads a team that includes Heads of Section, Heads of House and Tutors who, together, are our **Attendance Champions**. Together they offer a clear vision and leadership for proactive attendance improvement, evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes, oversight of data analysis, offering in-School support and facilitating external support, and communications with students and parents. Their contact details are in the A-Z of Chetham's.
- Julia Harrison, our **Senior Attendance Champion**'s contact details are: juliaharrison@chethams.com, 0161 838 7280.
- Families requiring more specific support on attendance should make contact with the student's Head of House, Head of Section, or the **Senior Attendance Champion**
- Set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all students and communicate these to students and parents through tutorials, assemblies, House Meetings, Chets Chat and the A-Z of Chetham's
- Recognise children missing education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, sexual abuse and child sexual and criminal exploitation. See the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Incentivise attendance through the recognition system and contact points with parents and guardians, as well as informing parents and guardians where attendance falls below expected levels. Heads of Section will review attendance half termly and apply recognition points for good attendance. (See Appendix Two)
- The Compliance Officer Jon Runswick-Cole, is responsible for the monitoring of coding accuracy though general checks are also effected in pastoral discussions
- Our attendance governor is also our Chair of the Safeguarding Committee, Nigel Shepherd.

## The Admissions Register

All students are entered onto the school's admissions register via SIMs on their first day at Chetham's. If a student fails to attend the school without prior notification Chetham's School of Music will take all reasonable measures to establish the whereabouts of the child. Procedures include but are not limited to:

- Telephone contact: all named contacts
- Email: all contacts
- Letter
- If all methods of contact have been exhausted and there is still no contact with the parents of the child, this may constitute a safeguarding issue.

The School will contact:

- the home Local Authority (LA) of the child (UK resident)
- the student's former school (especially if an overseas student)
- a destination school, if known.

The School will tell the LA (or relevant overseas authority) when a child fails to attend school regularly or is absent without contact, for more than 10 consecutive school days. If there are safeguarding issues that arise due to absence or other issues, and this is sooner than ten days, we would refer using the local safeguarding referral pathways.

Where a child has not attended 10 days after an authorised absence or is absent from school for 20 consecutive school days without authorisation, (in the absence of illness or other exceptional reason) then the child can be removed from the Admissions Register, but only after the School and LA have jointly made reasonable enquiries and subject to the School's terms and conditions.

The School will also notify the LA (or relevant overseas authority) of any non-standard admissions and departures according to local procedures.

## Attendance Registers

Prompt registration ensures that teaching time and learning are optimised and underpins our efforts to break down barriers to attendance and to create a welcoming, positive, and safe environment in which students feel comfortable, supported and ready to learn.

Statutory attendance registers are taken for all students at the School before morning and afternoon school. These are then transferred to the electronic record on SIMS within 15 minutes of the session closing. Boarding registration and accountability checks are undertaken at designated points throughout the day and evening to ensure the School can account for the whereabouts and welfare of all boarders at all times.

An entry must be made in the attendance register for all day-students of compulsory school age who are on the School's admission register. Whilst the statutory duty applies to students of compulsory age, Chetham's records attendance for all students, day and boarding, regardless of age, so that we know their whereabouts, and to support safeguarding and student welfare.

Students are registered in academic and instrumental lessons via StREAM and anyone missing is subject to additional check from House staff or HoS.

The School contacts parents and guardians about absence.

We use the attendance codes as set out in *Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2026*: Attendance Register Codes These are replicated on the central attendance register.

### Morning Registration

Boarders and Day students: All students are registered in the morning between 08:10—08:25.

If a boarder does not arrive for registration the missing student policy is followed to establish their whereabouts, usually starting with a mobile call and room search. Swipe cards are also used to 'track' the whereabouts of un-registered students.

If a day student fails to arrive for registration this is followed up by the House Team with a phone call to the child's own mobile, and then to the contacts given by parents. Parents are told via the A-Z and reminded through the year of the need to ensure that

they contact the appropriate House regarding any absence on the morning of the absence before 08:30.

Being in the heart of the city centre has a number of issues, one of which is transportation delays and cancellations so taking account of the individual circumstances of the student is essential. Students and parents are required to contact the appropriate house in case of delay. If, however, there has been no contact by 10:00am a decision will be made by the Head of House (HoH), Deputy Head of House (DHoH), or Vice Principal to phone the police to ask for a welfare check for the student as they are 'missing'.

If a student accumulates more than three late marks the Head of Section should be informed and will follow up with parents and students.

**Afternoon Registration**

All students are registered in their Houses between 14:10 and 14:25 electronically. It is possible that a student will miss this 15 minute window if they are in an instrumental commitment; in these instances our contingency is to extend the registration window to 30 minutes.

Ordinarily, if a student is missing with no clear reason, and has been registered in the a.m. session, staff will follow the **'missing student procedure'** (see below).

Boarders are additionally registered in the evenings at various times according to age and maturity. The times for registration are held in the A-Z and displayed throughout the Houses.

**Lesson Registration**

All classes have registration points using Stream. If a student is absent an there is no adequate reason such as an appointment or instrumental lesson, staff must follow the **'missing student procedure'.**

**Variations, Risk Assessment, Control Measures**

At times there are challenges around using the same two consistent points for registration. Our school body comprises both boarders, and day students who sometimes might need to arrive and leave at varying times of morning, afternoon and evening.

For example, our termly Music Courses each child will have a bespoke schedule of musical activities during a week of rehearsals and performances. In these cases we risk assess the necessary variations to best safeguard the students.

Control measures will always include close attention to clear and timely communication both from us to parents and students, and any requests from families.

We also use the Net2 swipe card system to monitor and delimit student exits from site.

**Study Leave**

Study Leave for public examinations is agreed in advance with parents. Study leave is not usually granted for internal examinations including mocks. However, they may represent an exceptional circumstance which would justify a leave of absence to be granted. Otherwise the School will make provision for students to revise at School.

- **Code S** can only be used for public examinations.
- **Code C** would be used if the leave was considered an exceptional circumstance.

**Study Leave for External Examinations**

During study leave students may base themselves at School or at home. However, if they stay at School they are required to maintain normal daytime working hours. They should inform their House of their intentions during these weeks via a form which they will receive before the exams start.

Instrumental lessons and ensembles continue as far as possible except during the first week of June. If there is a clash with an exam, or a lesson on the morning of an afternoon exam, students should let the timetablers in the music office know immediately.

If students have an exam before study leave begins, they may take **one half-day** immediately beforehand for study leave, e.g. for a morning exam, they may take the previous afternoon; for an afternoon exam, they may take the morning beforehand.

All students are required to be back at school at 08:30 on the Monday of the last week of June.

**Mock Exams**

If students do not have an exam they may practise, and day pupils may work at home (by prior arrangement between parents and their Boarding House) or in the School Library. Boarders may work in House or the Library; sitting on the yard is not permitted. Evening practice, instrumental lessons and ensembles will continue as far as possible - if students have a clash they should let the music timetablers know immediately.

**Internal Exams**

Parents of Day students in Years 9, 10, and 12 who do not have an exam in the first or last part of the day and who want to arrive late or go home early, must request permission from their child's Head of Section and also their House before the first week in June.

**Daily Or Short Term Absence**

Parents have a duty to contact the school regarding any absence due to illness or unforeseen events. (see Appendix for Procedure) This is to one of the following numbers **BEFORE 0830**.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Victoria House: vh@chethams.com | Duty Mob: | 07918904362 | email |
| New College House: nch@chethams.com | Duty Mob: | 07918904360 | email |
| Millgate House: mh@chethams.com | Duty Mob: | 07963628877 | email |

**Leave Of Absence Request**

All leave of absence requests are sent via an online link that passes them onto the relevant Head of School and Head of Instrumental Department; both need to give permission for absence. In some cases, these might consult further with other colleagues. The Head of Section will have an overview of the student's well-being and attendance data, which will feed into the decision. (see Appendix 1 for procedure).

The school's specific context affects our decision making. If a student has a strong musical case for absence then we are more likely to agree it as an exceptional circumstance because it relates directly to their chosen future career. An example of this would be to attend NYO Inspire or consultation lessons with teachers at their chosen conservatoires. In these cases the Head of Section will always flag the student's status in

terms of academic attainment either as an additional comment on the form or in a separate email to parents and will make sure the student is aware. Well-being will also be considered; the absence may not always be in the interests of the student. There will also be input from the Head of Instrumental department outlining any benefits of the instrumental activity requested.

If the request brings no advantage to the student's overall development then we will not agree to the request. All requests are based on consideration of the benefits to the student but against the context of their current attainment or whether they would be unsettled or disrupted by the absence. We record decisions through the absence reporting system and through additional information against the codes uploaded on SIMS

**Unauthorised Absence**

Only under exceptional circumstances agreed by the Joint Principal (NS) would holidays be taken during term time. Any circumstances where unauthorised absence is recorded, parents and guardians will be notified by letter with clear reminders regarding their obligations.

## Monitoring Attendance

The Senior attendance champion will check data weekly to identify patterns of poor attendance and will work with the pastoral team in the first instance to understand why. Before it drops below 90%, unless this is unavoidable, such as for a series of auditions for example, there will be work with the student and parental contact so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

We do our best to understand barriers to attendance and take a team approach to resolve them, particularly where the absence might be wholly or in part due to mental or physical ill health or special educational needs and/or disabilities. Wherever possible we will provide them with additional support or reasonable adjustments.

Likewise we are mindful in cases where a student's family circumstances might create specific barriers to attendance. In case of persistent absence (90% and below) and severe absence (50% and below), wider support services will be provided potentially and where appropriate alongside support from the local authority. In exceptional circumstances a time-limited phased return to school might be arranged.

## Promoting And Incentivising Good Attendance

Students are rewarded as per the Good Behaviour Manual for high attendance, good punctuality and commitment; see Appendix 2 below. Likewise we **a**ddress minor lateness with students and if it is more persistent with emails or phone calls home.

The attendance champion runs an attendance report every week to identify emerging concerns early. This is then followed up by the Head of Section or House.

It is likely that where an absence is due to mental or physical health concerns or family issues, the student will already have been raised in a pastoral meeting. Cases of significant absence will discussed in a pastoral meeting so that the whole circle of care of a student can contribute to the picture of the child's situation and to any support plan going forward . Where extra pastoral support is needed, details will be agreed in the Pastoral Management Team meeting. If this support doesn't facilitate escalate where needed.

**95%-90% Attendance**

Weekly checks mean we notice patterns or slight drops in attendance. In response to this, as with all things, we will check in with the student to explore any barriers they may feel to attending school and concerns addressed. If they continue to need support with attendance, we will contact parents and ask them to work with us to achieve better outcomes. If the reasons for absence seem to lack validity, we might send standard advisory letters or invite parents for an informal discussion to find out why the child is missing school.

**Persistent and Severe absence 89%-50%**

We will always aim to work with the family and child. In rare cases, we might need to draw up a formal attendance plan. Targeted plans might put forward tailored interventions like reduced timetables, Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) (see appendix 4) support, or counselling. There is likely to be external referral to local authority services. If there is a safeguarding issue then it might require multi-agency support.

**Incentives and Exclusions**

(See *Promoting Good Behaviour Manual*: *Expulsions Policy*).

Our strategy to use data to target attendance improvement is in Appendix 2 below.

Our strategy for reducing persistent / severe absence and accessing wider support is to treat each case as an individual safeguarding issue and to utilise a 'team around child' approach to support the student.

As an independent school we do not use national penalty notices.

## Approach To Attendance In All Cases

We recognise that students with SEND and medical needs may need a more tailored approach to attendance particularly those with SEND mental or physical health needs, those who have additional issues in the family such as social worker involvement or who are young carers.

Only in the most exceptional circumstances where it is clearly in a child's best interests would we resort to a part-time timetable and this would be temporary and regularly reviewed.

Where interventions are failing, all parties should work together to identify the reasons why and either adjust or change the approach. In very few cases will all options have been exhausted therefore partners are expected to work together to continue offering new approaches if a particular form of support is refused or does not work initially.

## If A Child Fails To Be Collected At The End Of The School Day

Day students are required to leave the site at 4:30pm unless there is a valid school commitment or they have asked House staff if they may stay. If a day student is not collected (VH) or has left (NCH / MH) at the end of the school day, as planned, all contacts on the system will be used to ascertain why. The student will return to the House team and will stay in their care until they are picked up. There is adequate provision on site to accommodate the student.

## Retention Of Records

The attendance and admission registers will be kept in accordance with statutory requirements which is currently 6 years from the date of data entry.

## Review Procedure

These procedures shall be reviewed every year by the Vice Principal who will take into account any incidents of missing students that indicate the School's procedures may require revision and will take action accordingly.

## Related Policies

- *Admissions Policy*
- *Promoting Good Behaviour Manual*
- *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures*

## Resources

**KCSIE 2026:**

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6a9081309a177a1decf97b00/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2026.pdf

**Working Together to Improve School Attendance July 2026:**

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6a4f9ec6a6586e258d371bd0/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_2026.pdf

**Children Missing Education 2016:**

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550416/Children_Missing_Education_-_statutory_guidance.pdf

**Student Information:**

https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2024/209/made/data.pdf

**The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024:**

https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2024/208/contents/made

**Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026:**

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/69b995106736ec37c8a4669f/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_2026_.pdf

# Appendix 1

# Procedures For Unforeseen Absence

### Day one of absence

1. Parent phones or emails or texts House with absence
2. House enters absence on register / SIMs and informs Reception to put on STREAM
3. All staff alerted via StREAM

### Further absence

If an absence is set to be longer than one day, parents / guardians must follow up the initial notification with further information regarding the amount of time needed for the absence.

### Leave of absence requests / planned absence

If parents need to request leave of absence for their child for a reason other than illness:

- Parent uses online form
- HoS and First Study HoID receive form
- HoS and HoID approve or reject the request
- If both agree, a permission notification is sent to parents, and Houses.
- Houses upload absence to StREAM so that students and staff are aware.
- If the absence is not granted, the HoS informs parents.

## Appendix 2:

## Incentives for Attendance

Data is analysed by the Head of Section at the end of every Half Term and recognitions are added to the system on the first week after each half term by Tutors according to the following table:

| | |
|---|---|
| **100%** attendance (NS) | X 2 'Ready' Recognition points, Letter home from the Joint Principal |
| **96%+** | X 1 'Ready' Recognition point |
| **90-95%** | Standard email home with data & improvements expected by tutor, monitored over the next Half Term |
| **90% or below** | Standard letter home and / or meeting with parents or guardians with Heads of Section (or tutor as appropriate) setting realistic targets regarding attendance improvement, monitored over the next Half Term.<br><br>Where there is no improvement or poor attendance persists, bespoke interventions may be needed. The Vice Principal and Joint Principal (NS) will be consulted regarding next steps. |

## Appendix 4

# Emotionally Based School Avoidance

Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) is a term used to describe children and young people who experience severe emotional distress, anxiety, or fear that makes attending school very difficult or impossible.

### Key Signs of EBSA

- **Physical complaints:** Frequent stomach aches, headaches, or feeling sick, which are often worse on Sunday evenings or school mornings.
- **Behavioural changes:** Reluctance or refusal to get ready, extreme clinginess, or behavioural outbursts.
- **Emotional distress:** Increased anxiety, tearfulness, low mood, or withdrawal from friends and activities.

### Common Causes

- Academic pressure or a fear of failure
- Social difficulties, isolation, or bullying
- Sensory overload in the school environment
- Underlying needs such as anxiety, autism, or ADHD.

Unlike truancy, EBSA is rooted in an emotional inability to cope rather than a defiant choice. Early intervention and a compassionate, collaborative approach between parents, the child, and the School are vital to identifying the root cause and providing support.