



# ATTENDANCE POLICY

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Revised April 2023

## **Attendance Policy**

At Chatmore, we firmly believe that all students benefit from outstanding school attendance. To this end, we will do all we can to ensure that our students achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted upon promptly.

Research shows that missing 10 percent of school, or about 18 days, negatively affects a student's academic performance. That's just about two days a month. When students improve their attendance rates, they improve their academic prospects and chances for graduating.

As part of our school model, we place high value on developing personal skills and dispositions. For many students, arriving to school on time gives them the space to 'gear up' for the day and clear their mind of any distractions. This lays a strong foundation for a successful day full of skill building and learning.

We will never penalise the student for absenteeism or lateness with things like detentions. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure the child is attending school in a timely manner. We will make every effort to ensure the child feels safe and always welcomed at school.

### **Attendance Expectations**

We expect that all students will:

- Attend school regularly
- Attend school punctually, by 8:30am
- Attend school appropriately prepared for the day

We expect that all parents/carers who have day to day responsibility for the children and young people will:

- Encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities (see Appendix);
- Ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at school punctually, prepared for the school day;
- Contact the school before 9:00am on the morning of each day of the student's absence by calling the school office or emailing the Director.

### **Lateness**

Students should be in their class no later than 8:40am. A student who arrives after 8:40am should report to their classroom and will be marked as late.

Chatmore will work with families to identify solutions to late arrivals in certain circumstances (i.e. if coming from a distance or for medical reasons).

### **Medical Appointments**

Students will be excused for medical appointments. Parents should make their child's class teacher aware prior to the appointment so that the absence is recorded accurately.

### **Religious Holidays & Observances**

We will authorise absence for major religious holidays. It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to inform us in advance of their intention to keep their child at home.

### **Holidays & Vacations**

It is expected that parents will schedule trips outside of term time so that students can benefit from the full offering of learning. However, we know that in some instances, families may need to travel for extended periods or during term time.

Parents will be expected to notify the school with as much notice as possible (ideally 1 month minimum) so that arrangements can be made for students to continue learning while overseas. An agreement must be signed between the parents and the school prior to travel that will result in more than 1 week away from school. This may include an agreement to pay for additional tutoring time to 'catch up' on missed learning.

In the event of a long-term absence from school, the school will:

- Primary
  - Provide a small learning pack for students to take
  - Make a few suggestions on how you can continue learning while overseas using real-world activities
- Secondary
  - Continue to post learning on Google Classroom

The school will not be able to provide 1:1 sessions or allow Zoom-ing into lessons for students while they are overseas.

### **Other Absences**

Chatmore aims to be a flexible learning environment, adaptable to the needs of families. We know that students can be away from school for a number of reasons. It is critical that you communicate these absences with us beforehand where possible. You must also be prepared as parents to complete the missed work due to that absence and any long-term absences not included in the above (and more than 2 days) will require a signed agreement to support this.

### **Responding to Non-Attendance or Regular Lateness**

Student attendance is continually monitored by the classroom teacher and the school. When a student does not attend school, we will call or email the parent to determine if the student is absent for the day and the reason for the absence.

Persistent absences will be recorded, and should we see a pattern of absences or a high frequency (i.e., absent on a particular day, when a test is given, increased absences to 2-3 times per month, etc.), we will set aside time to call or meet with you to discuss. If no consistent change is seen after this intervention, we will meet with you again. It is our legal

obligation to take attendance and report any instances of truancy to the Government. Chatmore will make every effort to find a solution for non-attendance before reporting absences to the Government.

The parents and the student will be responsible for catching up on any missed work due to the absence.

### **Appendix**

The Legal Framework - please see below a selection of laws taken from the Education Act. The full document can be found on [www.bermudalaws.bm](http://www.bermudalaws.bm)

The Education Act 1996 states that:

#### **Compulsory school age**

40 (1) Subject to subsections (2), (3) and (4), a child shall be deemed to be of compulsory school age if he has attained the age of five years and has not attained the age of eighteen years, unless the child has met the requirements for graduation from senior school at an earlier age; and accordingly “compulsory school age” in this Act means, subject as aforesaid, any age between the age of five years and the age of eighteen years, unless the child has met the requirements for graduation from senior school at an earlier age.

#### **Parents must secure regular attendance of children at school**

44 (1) If any child of compulsory school age who is enrolled as a pupil at a recognized school fails to attend regularly at the school, the parent of the child commits an offence against this Act.

#### **Persistent truants**

46 (1) Where in any proceedings for an offence under section 44, it appears to a court that the child in respect of whom the proceedings are brought—

- (a) is a persistent truant; and
- (b) is beyond the control of the parent,

then, whether the parent is convicted or not, the court may direct that the child be brought before the Family Court and place the child in the care of the Director of Child and Family Services until he can be brought before the Family Court.