

Christ Church CE Academy



Attendance Policy

This Church of England Aided Academy aims to serve its community by providing an excellent education for pupils of all abilities and backgrounds in the context of Christian belief and practice.

It encourages an understanding of the meaning and significance of faith and requires the valuing of other faiths. It promotes Christian values and spiritual development through the experience it offers to all its pupils.

These values are implicit in this policy.

Status

Oct 17	Draft for staff
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Attendance Policy

This policy sets out the principles and guidelines by which we seek to raise attendance, improve punctuality, to raise levels of achievement and to maximise opportunities both in school and in later life.

Introduction and Statement of Intent

School regards regular attendance at school as essential to ensure the best possible learning outcomes for all children and that regular attendance at school is necessary to promote better life chances. The school's ethos encourages children to feel that their presence in school is important and that they are missed when they are absent or late.

There is a clear link between good attendance and high standards. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and every child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

There is now more Government pressure on schools than ever before to ensure the regular attendance of children in their school. There is a legal requirement for schools to set targets for improving school attendance.

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring every child's regular attendance at school is the parent's/carer's responsibility and permitting absence from school without good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Roles and Responsibilities

Promoting regular attendance and helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents, pupils and all members of school staff. To help us all focus on this we will:

- Give parents details on attendance in our regular newsletters, text updates and Facebook statuses.
- Report to parent/carer's half termly on their child's attendance and weekly with regard to their punctuality.
- Monitor whole school attendance continuously using reports from the school database, the Attendance Officer and the APSO.
- Celebrate good attendance and reward children who have exemplary attendance.

Understanding Types of Absence

Every half day absence from school is classified by the **school (not by the parents)** as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of absence is always required, preferably in writing. It is a parent / carer's responsibility to inform school **before registration** that their child will be absent and a sound reason for their absence must be given.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause. Absences for religious observance will also be authorised.

Absences will only be authorised where a good reason is provided such as genuine illness or family emergencies. Absence for religious observance, as advised by the Department for Education, **will be authorised for 3 days over the school year**.

Routine appointments should ideally be made outside of school hours. **If an appointment during the school day is unavoidable children should only be out of school for the duration of that appointment.**

School make the decision whether or not to authorise any reported absence due to illness. **If there is doubt that it is genuine illness the absence will not be authorised.** Where sporadic illness has become excessive school may request medical evidence for each and every subsequent period of absence. **If absence extends beyond 5 days school will require medical evidence explaining why the child is unfit to attend school.**

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carer's keeping children off school unnecessarily.
- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Absences which have never been properly explained.
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the year **for whatever reason**. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents/carer's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents/carer's will be informed of this immediately. Where a child's attendance is nearing 90% the school will work closely with parents/carers to determine reasons for this and agree strategies for improvement.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system. All our PA pupils and their parents are subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include: allocation of additional support through a Mentor, individual incentive programmes and participation in group activities around raising attendance. PA pupils are tracked and monitored in school and are discussed routinely with the Local Authority Attendance and Pupil Support Officer.

ABSENCE PROCEDURES

Each school follows a rigorous First Day Calling procedures to monitor absences from school.

If a child is absent parents/carer's must:

- Inform school before registration that their child will be absent and the reason for their absence.
- Keep any absence to a minimum.
- **If a child is absent school will:**
- Telephone, text or email parents/carer's on the first day of absence if we have not heard from them.
- Liaise closely with Attendance and Pupil Support Service and take appropriate action to address poor attendance; this may include letters being sent home, home visits by the Attendance and Pupil Support Officer or meetings in school.
- Refer the matter to the Local Authority Attendance and Pupil Support Service if attendance falls below 90%.

Telephone numbers

It is vital that school can contact parents/carers at all times. Please ensure that you inform school of any changes to your contact details and provide additional emergency contacts in the event that parents/carers are unavailable.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher, getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons; it can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

- Children will receive a late mark if they are not in class by the end of registration.
- All children arriving after registration period will need to sign in on the computer system and provide a valid reason as to why they are late.

If a child has a persistent late record parents/carer's will be asked to meet with the Attendance Worker/Learning Mentor or the Head Teacher to resolve the problem, but parents/carer's can approach us at any time if they are having problems getting children to school on time.

Leave of Absence in Term Time

Taking holidays in term time will affect a child'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 school time to go on holiday.**

Parents/carers wishing to take their child out of school for a holiday during term time must complete the **Critical and Emergency Leave Request Form** (available from the school office) and return to the Head Teacher **before** booking the holiday. **Failure to comply with this could result in the child(ren) being removed from the school register** and the Children Missing Education team (CME) being informed. Proof of travel must be provided with a **defined return date**. The law states that 10 days in a school year may be granted under certain circumstances. **This is always at the discretion of the Head Teacher and they may only authorise Leave of Absence in an exceptional circumstance.**

Parents/carers must understand that by taking children out of school they are making a choice to miss out on part of their child's education.

It is the policy of Christ Church CE Academy to request a Fixed Penalty Notice for every pupil taking a leave of absence of 5 consecutive days or more.

If parents/carers take their child out of school on a holiday which has not been authorised by the Head Teacher they may be fined £60.00 if paid within 21 days. The

fine will rise to **£120.00** if the £60 is not paid within 21 days, this then must be paid in full within 28 days. If it is not paid within 28 days then the matter will be referred to the Magistrate's Court where the maximum penalty for an offence is **£1000**.

All penalties are issued **to both parents for each child** taking an unauthorised 'Leave of Absence'.

Parents/carers who also choose to repeatedly take their children on unauthorised Leave of Absence (3 or more occasions in their time as a student at School) may be directly prosecuted under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. If found guilty, you will have a criminal record and may face a fine of up to £1000.

Attendance and Pupil Support Service

Christ Church CE Academy has an Attendance and Pupil Support Officer (APSO) who visits school on a weekly basis to look at attendance data and discuss concerns with staff.

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problem together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Attendance and Pupil Support Officer from the Local Authority. He / She will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Local Authority.

Alternatively, parents/carer's or children may wish to contact the Attendance and Pupil Support Service (APSS) themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the Local Education Authority.

Telephone Numbers

There are times when we need to contact parents/carer's about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have contact numbers at all times. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend regularly. All staff are committed to working in partnership with parents, children and families to ensure as a high a level of attendance as possible.

However parents have a responsibility to minimise absence this includes sickness, medical appointments and leave of absence during term time - continued absence could result in further action being taken. Parents/carers should report absence as soon as possible providing a valid reason.

Arriving at school on time every day will help you and your child establish good routines: lateness results in learning opportunities being missed. Good attendance and punctuality is crucial to ensure positive educational outcomes.