



## Christ Church CE Primary Attendance and Punctuality Policy

As a Rights Respecting School we believe that all pupils have the right to an education and that pupils should be encouraged to go to school – article 28.

Last year's attendance figure – 93%

Whole School Attendance Target – 96%

### **Rationale**

As a Christian community, Christ Church CE Primary School seeks to ensure that all of its pupils receive a full-time education which contributes not only the pupils' academic development but also to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is exemplified in our whole school motto, "Learning with God and Each Other to Be the Best We Can Be."

All school staff will work with pupils and their families to ensure each pupil attends school regularly and punctually. This work will be led by our home school link worker and school secretary supported by the Head Teacher and other members of staff.

Staff and Governors expect full and punctual attendance from all pupils as long as they are fit and healthy.

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, the governing body is responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

Parents of registered pupils have a legal duty under the Education Act 1996 to make sure that children of compulsory school age attend school on a regular and full-time basis. Permitting unauthorised absence from school is an offence and parents may be reported to the Education Authority if problems cannot be resolved by agreement.

### **Aims of the Policy**

1. To improve the overall attendance and punctuality of pupils at school.
2. To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including pupils, parents, teachers and governors.
3. To develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks.

*"Learning with God and Each Other to be the Best We Can Be"*

4. To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils.
5. To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data.
6. To develop positive and consistent communication between home and school.
7. To implement a system of rewards for sustained good attendance and punctuality.
8. To promote effective partnerships with the Education Welfare Service and with other services and agencies.
9. To recognise the needs of the individual pupil when returning to school following significant periods of absence.
10. To reduce the number of Persistent Absentees (PA) pupils in school.
11. To acquire a necessary life skills that impacts upon pupils' future employability

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

#### Head Teacher

- Ensure that all processes and procedures are being followed.
- With other staff monitor attendance issues.
- Report to governors each term any issues via the HT report.

#### Home School Link Worker (HSLW)

- Meet with the EWO every half term to discuss any attendance and punctuality issues.
- Monitor registers on a weekly basis.
- Make HT aware of any issues.
- Send letters to parents of pupils with attendance or punctuality concerns.

#### School Secretary

- First day contact for pupil absences. After 10am of the first day of absence.
- Ensure that late marks (U) are placed in the register each day after 9.10am.
- Provide HSLW with attendance reports when required.

#### Attendance Governor

- Meet with HSLW and HT twice a year to discuss attendance and punctuality.

#### Governing Body

- To challenge all school staff on attendance and punctuality procedures to ensure that they are rigorous and are helping to improve overall levels of attendance and punctuality.
- To monitor overall attendance.

### **Procedures**

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

#### **Illness and Other Legitimate Reasons**

If a pupil is unfit for school, parents are asked to contact the school on each day of the pupil's absence by 9:30 am. When the pupil returns, he or she must bring a written note, signed by the parent for each period of absence. In exceptional circumstances, further evidence of a child's illness, such as a doctor's note, may be requested. Other reasons for absence must be discussed with the school each time; notes will not necessarily be accepted as providing valid reasons. It is not appropriate for the school to authorise absences for birthdays, shopping, looking after younger children, day trips, hairdresser's appointments, etc. Except in an emergency, doctors' and dentists' appointments should be arranged for times before or after school whenever possible. Leave may however be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments which cannot take place during school time. It is expected that pupils are only absent for the duration of the appointment and are present in school during the rest of the day.

#### **Holidays**

***"The Local Authority strongly discourages parents/carers from applying for leave of absence during term time and encourages schools NOT to authorise such applications save in exceptional circumstances."***

All requests for absence will now be submitted to the governing body who fully support the statement from the Local Authority and only in exceptional circumstances will they be authorised. If the absence isn't granted and parents/carers still decide to take their child out of school then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

(This needs to be read in conjunction with Guidance on Term-Time Leave of Absence document)

#### **Lateness**

Pupils must attend on time to be given a mark for the morning and afternoon session. Parents are expected to ensure that pupils are present at school by 8.50am.

- Doors open at 8.45am
- Doors close at 8.50am
- A late book is in operation for arrivals after 8.50am (through the main entrance not classroom doors or children's entrance)

- Register opens at 8.45am
- Register closes at 8.55am when it is sent to the school office.
- Late marks (L) are awarded for arrivals between 8.55am and 9.15am. These are awarded by the office.
- Late marks (U) are awarded for arrivals after 9.15am. These are awarded by the office. If your child receives 20 late marks, the EWO service will be informed. A U mark means your child is absent for the morning session

If a pupil is absent at morning registration and the school has not received an explanation for the absence by 10.00 am, the school secretary will contact the parent by telephone as a matter of concern.

### **Bereavement**

The school is sensitive to family requests for a child's attendance at funerals or associated events. The Head Teacher will offer the family advice over absence in this instance.

### **Special Occasions**

A request for a child to attend a special occasion during school time, e.g. family wedding, must be made in advance and the Head Teacher will make the decision as to whether to authorise the absence. Parents/Carers will be notified of the Head Teacher's decision.

### **Days of Religious Observance**

Attendance at a religious observance held by a religious body may be granted authorised absence. The Head Teacher should be consulted in advance of the event and will make a decision as to whether this will be authorised.

### **Persistent Absentees (PA)**

If a pupil's attendance falls below 85% they are classed as being PA pupils. We will continue to work together with the family and EWO to improve the pupil's attendance.

### **Further Guidance**

- Contact will be made by:
  - a) the school secretary on the first day of absence
  - b) if the attendance figure falls below 95% a letter will be sent home by the HSLW
  - c) if poor attendance continues another letter will be sent after consultation with the EWO inviting the parents into school to attend an attendance clinic (held by our HSLW, school secretary and EWO)
  - d) if poor attendance still continues then the EWO will become formally involved (a penalty notice warning letter will be sent)

- A record of all concerns, correspondence and meetings will be kept in school
- Termly attendance percentages will be reported to the Governing Body via the Head Teacher's report and to parents via newsletters.
- Parents are informed of attendance targets and kept up to-date of classes' achievement via awards assemblies and regular newsletters.
- The attendance Link Governor will meet with the HSLW and EWO each term to discuss any attendance issues in school.

### **Attendance Rewards for Pupils**

- If a pupil attends school on time every day for a week they will receive a sticker. When children have received 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35 and 39 stickers they will receive the following awards:

5 weeks	Merit Card
10 weeks	Wristband
15 weeks	Book Mark
20 weeks	Pencil
25 weeks	Badge
30 weeks	Note Book
35 weeks	Ruler
Whole Year	Gift Pack

- A trophy is awarded for a week, to the classes (one in EYFS/KS1 and the other in KS2) who have achieved the best weekly attendance.
- The class with the highest attendance will be allowed to look after "Maximus Mouse" for the week.
- Certificates will be awarded for 100% termly attendance at the end of the each term and for 100% annual attendance at the end of the academic year.
- Half termly treats will be organised for all pupils who achieve 100% for that half term. This could be a disco, afternoon tea with the HT, film afternoon, games afternoon etc.

### **Principles**

- Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents) as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required.
- Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason (i.e. illness or other unavoidable cause).
- Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no permission has been given. This includes keeping children off school unnecessarily, truancy, absences which have not been properly explained and children who arrive at school too late (after 9:15am) to receive a mark in the register.
- 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.

- Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving problems together. This is nearly always successful. If problems cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) from the Local Authority (LA) who will also try to resolve the difficulties by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, this officer can use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child.
- Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for advice. They are independent of the school. Their telephone number is available from the school office.

Appendix 1 – Local Authority document entitled Leave of Absence

Appendix 2 – Registration protocol

#### **REVISION/REVIEW HISTORY**

Signed (Chair of Governors) \_\_\_\_\_

Signed (Head Teacher) \_\_\_\_\_

<b><u>Date</u></b>	<b><u>Comments</u></b>	<b><u>Review Date</u></b>
21/11/12	Amended to include change to holiday authorisation, attendance rewards and updated procedures	Autumn 2013
22/11/13	Amended with new reward system, an earlier register close time and a clearer system.	Autumn 2014
07/11/14	Amended with new school start times, change of policy name, updated reward system, change to the use of 'u' marks	Autumn 2015

