

## **Attendance and Punctuality Policy (v12)**



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. Children cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

Last year's attendance figure – 94.7% (in line with the national figure of 94.5%)

Whole School Attendance Target – 96%

Persistent Absence – 15.9% (the percentage of children whose attendance was below 90%) – in line with the national figure of 15.2%

### **Statement of Intent**

Christ Church CE Primary Academy believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents.

We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance, and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, bullying, SEND support, pastoral support, and the effective use of resources such as pupil premium – can have on improving pupil attendance.

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Ensuring this attendance policy is clear and easily understood by staff, pupils and parents.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies.
- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.

## **Legal framework**

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2024) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE (2024) 'Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2024'
- DfE (2024) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2024) 'Providing remote education'
- DfE (2024) 'Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Children Missing Education Policy

## **Roles and responsibilities**

The Local Academy Committee is responsible for:

- Monitoring the implementation of the policy

The principal is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Appointing a member of the SLT to the attendance champion role.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.
- The overall strategic approach to attendance in school.
- Developing a clear vision for improving attendance.
- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions.
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.

The attendance champion (HSLW) is responsible for:

- Communicating with pupils and parents with regard to attendance.

- Leading a compassionate approach when listening to parents and pupils regarding barriers to attendance.
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance.
- Enforcing attendance through statutory interventions in cases of persistent poor attendance where other supports have not succeeded.
- Informing the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers.

Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school.
- Arriving punctually to lessons when at school.
- Following any support provided by the school to improve attendance.

Parents/carers are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- The attendance of their children at school.
- Promoting good attendance with their children.
- Proactively engaging with any attendance support offered by the school and the LA.
- Notifying the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent.
- Requesting leave of absence only in exceptional circumstances, and in advance.
- Booking any medical appointments around school where possible.
- Following any family-based support implemented by the school to improve attendance.

## **Definitions**

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

**Absence:**

- Arrival at school after the register has closed (9.20am)
- Not attending the registered school for any reason

**Authorised absence:**

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency

**Unauthorised absence:**

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

**Persistent absence (PA):**

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason

**Missing education**

- Not registered at a school and not receiving suitable education in a setting other than a school

**Attendance expectations**

The school has high expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality, and ensures that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents and pupils.

Pupils will be expected to attend school punctually every day they are required to be at school, for the full day.

- The school day starts at 8.45am with the school gates being open from 8.40am
- The gates close at 8.45am
- For arrivals after 9.00am (through the main entrance not classroom doors or children's entrance) parents/pupils will sign in using the signing in system.
- 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 9.00am and 9.20am. These are awarded by the office.

- Late marks (U) are awarded for arrivals after 9.20am. These are awarded by the office.

### **Absence procedures**

- If your child is unable to attend school, they must notify school before 9.00am by ringing 01782 234834 on the first day of absence.
- A pupil's absence will be considered unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is received. Children can attend school with minor ailments – colds, sore throats, headaches etc. We will administer Calpol with parental consent.
- A phone call will be made to the parent/carer of any child who has not reported their absence on the first day that they do not attend.
- The school will not request medical evidence in most circumstances where a pupil is absent due to illness; however, the school reserves the right to request supporting medical or other evidence if there are concerns about a child's attendance

The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.

### **Authorising parental absence requests**

Parents will be required to request certain types of absence in advance. All requests for absence will be handled by the principal – the decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the sole discretion of the principal, taking the best interests of the pupil and the impact on the pupil's education into account. The principal's decision is not subject to appeal; however, the school will be sympathetic to requests for absence by parents, and will not deny any request without good reason.

### **Leave of absence**

The school will only grant a pupil a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. In order to have requests for a leave of absence considered, the school will expect parents to contact the principal in writing at least two weeks prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur.

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account. Where the absence is granted, the principal will determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from school. The school is not likely to grant leaves of absence for the purposes of family holidays.

If term-time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions, such as a penalty notice. The school

cannot grant leaves of absence retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by the school in advance will be marked as unauthorised.

### **Illness and healthcare appointments**

Parents will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents will be expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as is practicable. Parents will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment.

### **Religious observance**

Parents will be expected to request absence for religious observance.

The school will only accept requests from parents for absence on grounds of religious observance for days that are exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body. The school will define this as a day where the pupil's parents would be expected by an established religious body to stay away from their employment to mark the occasion.

The school may seek advice from the religious body in question where there is doubt over the request.

### **SEND and health-related absences**

The school recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult.

To support the attendance of pupils with SEND and/or health issues, the school will consider:

- Holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.
- Incorporating a pastoral support plan.
- Carrying out strengths and difficulties questionnaire.
- Identifying pupils' unmet needs through the Common Assessment Framework.
- Using an internal or external specialist.
- Enabling a pupil to have a reduced timetable.
- Ensuring a pupil can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and breaktimes.
- Implementing a system whereby pupils can request to leave a classroom if they feel they need time out.
- Temporary late starts or early finishes.
- Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence.
- Small group work or on-to-one lessons.
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.

## **Attendance Rewards/Intervention**

The following rewards are in place to encourage good attendance across the school:

- Two Dojos each day. One for arriving on time and one for wearing full school uniform
- Trophy awarded each week for the classes with the highest attendance: EYs/KS1 and KS2
- The class with the highest attendance will look after Maximus Mouse for the week, get 15 minutes extra play and will receive a certificate
- If a class achieves 100% attendance for the week they will get a prize.
- 100% attendance certificates awarded at the end of each term;
- Certificates for 100% attendance for the whole year;
- Every month, if you have achieved 96% attendance or above, you will be entered into a prize draw;
- Every half term, a £10 gift voucher (for a local supermarket) will be presented to the child's family drawn out of all of those who have attended 96% or above
- All children who have achieved 100% attendance up to the Friday before May Half Term will receive a special in school treat
- Spot prizes to children with 100% - 3 per half term
- Prize draw for a tablet every term – children with 100% attendance

In order to ensure the school has effective procedures for managing absence, we will:

- Establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
  - Sending letters to parents.
  - Engaging with LA attendance teams.
  - Using fixed penalty notices.
  - Creating attendance clinics.

The school will use attendance data, in line with the 'Monitoring and analysing absence' section of this policy, to develop specific strategies to improve attendance where patterns of absence are emerging. These strategies will be developed on a case-by-case basis, and will consider the particular needs of the pupils whom the intervention is designed to target.

## **Working with parents to improve attendance**

The school will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services.

The school will ensure that there are two sets of emergency contact details for each pupil wherever possible to ensure the school has additional options for getting in touch with adults responsible for a pupil where the pupil is absent without notification or authorisation.

The school will ensure that parents are aware of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and to facilitate their child's legal right to a full-time education – parents will be made aware that this means their child must attend school every day that it is open, save for in certain circumstances, e.g. sickness or absences that have been authorised by the principal in advance. The school will regularly inform parents about their child's levels of attendance, absence and punctuality, and will ensure that parents are aware of the benefits that regular attendance at school can have for their child educationally, socially and developmentally.

If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, the attendance champion will work collaboratively with the pupil and their parents to improve attendance by addressing the specific barriers that prevent the pupil from being able to attend school regularly. The school will always take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for pupil absence and will approach families to offer support rather than immediately reach for punitive approaches.

Where these barriers are related to the pupil's experience in school, e.g. bullying, the attendance champion will work with the principal and any relevant school staff, e.g. the DSL and SENCO, to address this. Where the barriers are outside of the school's control, e.g. they are related to issues within the pupil's family, the attendance champion will liaise with any relevant external agencies or authorities, e.g. children's social care or the LA, and will encourage parents to access support that they may need.

### **Persistent absence (PA)**

Christ Church CE Primary Academy will use a number of methods to help support pupils at risk of PA to attend school. These include:

- Meeting with pupils to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Leading weekly check-ins with PA pupils to review progress and the impact of support.
- Making regular contact with families to discuss progress.

The school will bear in mind that the continuation of severe PA following intervention may, in itself, constitute neglect, and will escalate any concerns in this regard in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

### **Penalty notices and legal intervention (new as part of the Working Together to Improve School Attendance)**

The school will allow sufficient time for attendance interventions and engagement strategies to improve pupils' attendance; however, where engagement strategies to improve attendance have not had the desired effect after one term, the attendance champion will consider:

- Holding a formal meeting with parents and the school's point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team (LA).
- Working with the LA to put a parenting contract or an education supervision order in place.
- Engaging children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns.

Where the above measures are not effective, a notice to improve will be issued as a final opportunity for parents to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is considered.

Where a pupil reaches the national threshold of 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks, the school will consider whether a penalty notice is appropriate. Each case will be considered individually to determine whether a penalty notice or another tool or legal intervention should be used to improve attendance.

Fixed penalty notices will be issued in line with the LA's code of conduct and the DfE's ['Working together to improve school attendance'](#) guidance. See information below.

<p><b>Per Parent, Per Child</b></p> <p>Penalty Notice are issued to each parent, for <u>each</u> absent child.</p> <p><b>For Example:</b> 2 siblings absent for leave during term time would result in <u>each</u> parent receiving 2 separate Penalty Notices.</p>	<p><b>Third Offence</b></p> <p>(Within 3 years)</p> <p>The third time a Penalty Notice is issued for leave in Term Time or irregular attendance, the case will be presented to the Magistrates Court, where fines of up to £2500 per parent, per child can be imposed.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> Cases found guilty in Magistrates Court can show on Parents future DBS certificates as a 'Failure to safeguard a child's education'.</p>
<p><b>First Offence</b></p> <p>The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for Irregular Attendance or leave in Term Time the amount will be £160 per parent, per child when paid within 28 days.</p> <p><b>This is reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.</b></p>	<p><b>10 sessions of Unauthorised absence in a 10-week period</b></p> <p>Penalty Notices will be considered when there have been 10 sessions of Unauthorised absence in a 10-school week period.</p> <p>These Absences can be late after register closes, Unauthorised Absences and Unauthorised Term Time leave absences. They can also be a combination of any of the above.</p>
<p><b>Second Offence</b></p> <p>(Within 3 Years)</p> <p>The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for Irregular Attendance or leave in Term Time the amount will be <b>£160 per parent, per child when paid within 28 days.</b></p>	<p>Penalty Notices are issued by the Local Authority on the instruction from the School/Academy, in line with the Department for Education legislation. Once issued <u>these cannot be withdrawn.</u></p>

Parents will only get up to two fines for the same child in a three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action such as a parenting order or prosecution will be considered. Where attendance still does not improve following a fixed penalty notice, the school will work with the LA to take forward attendance prosecution as a last resort.

Parents who are prosecuted and attend court because their child has not been attending school may be fined up to £2,500.

### **Education Supervision Orders (ESOs)**

Where interventions have not been successful, an ESO can be an alternative to provide formal legal intervention without criminal prosecution. ESOs are made through the Family or High Court and give the LA a formal role in supporting the pupil and parents to improve their attendance. LAs will issue parents with a notice of the intention to consider an ESO, set up a meeting to discuss with the parent and pupil, and decide whether the case will be taken forward.

Once an SEO is secured, a supervisor from the local authority will decide any actions or requirements. These may include:

- Requiring the parents to attend support meetings.
- Requiring the parents to attend a parenting programme.
- Requiring the parents to access support services.
- Requiring an assessment by an educational psychologist.
- Review meetings involving all parties to be held every 3 months.

Failing to comply with an SEO will result in a fine and decisions will be made about whether further action is required.

### **Monitoring and analysing absence**

The Principal and Attendance Champion will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address habitual absence at the first signs.

The school will collect data regarding punctuality, and authorised and unauthorised absence, for:

- The school cohort as a whole.
- Individual year groups.
- Individual pupils.
- Demographic groups, e.g. pupils from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds.
- Other groups of pupils, e.g. pupils with SEND, LAC and pupils eligible for FSM.
- Pupils at risk of PA.

The principal and attendance champion will conduct a thorough analysis of the above data on a half-termly, termly and full-year basis to identify patterns and trends. This will include identifying, for each group:

- Patterns in uses of certain codes.
- Particular days of poor attendance.
- Historic trends of attendance and absence.
- Barriers to attendance.

The attendance champion and principal will provide regular reports to staff across the school to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures. The attendance champion will also be responsible for monitoring how attendance data changes in response to any interventions implemented to increase attendance in future.

The LAC and MAT will regularly review attendance data, including examinations of recent and historic trends, and will support the SLT in setting goals and prioritising areas of focus for attendance support based on this data.

The school will also benchmark its attendance data against local-, regional- and national-level data to identify areas of success and areas for improvement, and will share practice which has been shown to be effective with other schools.

### **Monitoring Procedures**

- 1) Whole school and class attendance is shared weekly in our Praise worship and then discussed in classes with attendance ambassadors leading the discussion.
- 2) Contact is made with parents on the first day of absence for any pupil absence not reported.
- 3) If a pupil's attendance becomes a concern, the class teacher will speak to the pupil in school to discuss any issues or problems to ascertain how the school can help to improve their attendance.
- 4) If your child's attendance figure falls below 90% a letter will be sent home. These will be sent out when a child's attendance falls below 90%. Attendance clinics will be booked and if needed Penalty Notice Warning Letters (PNWL) will be issued.
- 5) If attendance doesn't improve a further letter will be sent explaining the need for medical evidence to cover all illness absences.
- 6) If there is still no improvement parents will be invited to an attendance clinic.
- 7) If poor attendance continues after the above interventions penalty notice warning letters will be issued by the LA and fines could be issued if attendance still continues to be an issue.
- 8) Improvement letters are sent for families whose attendance improves as a result of the monitoring.
- 9) A record of all concerns, correspondence and meetings will be kept in school
- 10) Termly attendance percentages will be reported to the LAC via the Principal's report and to parents via newsletters.
- 11) Parents are informed of attendance targets and kept up to-date of classes' achievement via Praise Worship, dojo and regular newsletters. This includes a weekly how many children are attending today.
- 12) Individual and class average attendance is reported to parents each term via the termly report.
- 13) Weekly attendance (and the rolling from September) is monitored each week and shared with children at the Praise Worship. This is also shared with parents via dojo in the form of a RAG rated graph.

- 14) Personalised attendance targets and attendance trackers will be given to pupils whose attendance is causing concern, below 90%. The HSLW will share these with the pupils.
- 15) All children's attendance is rated red (below 90%), yellow (between 90% and 96%) and green (96% or above) and shared with parents as part of the termly parent's meetings.
- 16) Door knocks will be made to families of absent children.
- 17) Each class, year 3 – year 6, has two Attendance Ambassadors. It is their job to:
  - a) make sure that the class attendance display is always up to date
  - b) meet with the HSLW at least half termly to discuss current whole school percentages
  - c) feedback this information to their class
  - d) be involved in the prize draws each half term

### **Monitoring and review**

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. The school's attendance target is 96 percent – full details of the school's absence levels can be found on the school website.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the principal. The next scheduled review date for this policy is September 2026.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

There is a clear link between poor attendance at school and low academic achievement. Children have little chance of catching up their peers if attendance is poor. We want our children to develop life-long skills and attitudes which will enable them to succeed in life after school.

Appendix 1 – Child Friendly Version of the Policy

Appendix 2 – Summary Table of responsibilities for school attendance

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66bf301e253aee7aafdbdfea/Summary\\_table\\_of\\_responsibilities\\_for\\_school\\_attendance\\_-\\_August\\_2024.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66bf301e253aee7aafdbdfea/Summary_table_of_responsibilities_for_school_attendance_-_August_2024.pdf)

Appendix 3 – Working together to improve school attendance

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

*Christ Church CE Primary Academy are doing everything that they can to make sure pupils attendance is at least 96%.*

### **REVISION/REVIEW HISTORY**

Signed (Chair of LAC) \_\_\_\_\_

Signed (Principal) \_\_\_\_\_

<u>Date</u>	<u>Comments</u>	<u>Review Date</u>
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
Summer 15	Virtually new policy as a result of the Attendance A3.	Summer 2016
30/09/16	Updated with Attendance Ambassadors and new whole school target	Summer 2017
06/10/17	Updated with amendments to rewards following discussions with Attendance Ambassadors	Summer 2018
16/11/18	Updated with a section on Deputy Head Teacher Roles and updated rewards following consultation with Attendance Ambassadors	Summer 2019
11/10/19	Name changed to academy. Last year's percentage attendance updated Removed appendix 2 as part of the policy	Summer 2020
30/09/21	Updated with attendance awards following attendance ambassadors meeting	Summer 2022
07/10/22	Updates to monitoring, awards, attendance figures	Summer 2023
14/09/23	Updates to monitoring, awards, attendance figures	Summer 2024
08/12/23	Section added re: children missing education and children absent from education	Summer 2024
02/09/24	Considerable changes made due to new legislation around attendance	September 2025
03/09/25	No changes	September 2026

