



Christ Church C.E. Primary School

Policy for Attendance

Rationale:

Under Section 36 of the Education Act 1944, parents of children of compulsory school age (between 5-16) must ensure their child receives a proper full-time education, either by attending school or by making other arrangements with the Local Education Authority. Most parents choose to send their child to school. **Parents are therefore responsible for ensuring their child attends regularly and punctually.**

The Government Position

The Government believes that children should attend school regularly because:

- A good education will give the best possible start in life;
- Where a child does not attend regularly he or she will have difficulty in keeping up with their work and will therefore underachieve;
- Employers will want to be sure that their employees are reliable, so children who have poor attendance may have less chance of getting a good job;
- Young people who are off school for no good reason are at risk of becoming victims of crime or abuse and may also be drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour;

The Legal Requirement

In Law, the school is responsible for deciding whether or not a child's absence from school may be authorised. The only circumstances where parents may request that the school authorises their child's absences are:

- Where the child is too sick to attend;
- Where the child needs to attend a medical appointment *relating to him or herself*;
- Where the child will be involved in Religious Observances;
- Where the child has been excluded by the school;
- Where there are exceptional circumstances that require the child to be absent from school for a period of time, for example a family bereavement or very special occasion, which have been discussed and agreed with the Head Teacher in advance.

Where the school cannot agree to the request authorisation, the absence will be unauthorised.

Aims of Good Attendance

Christ Church primary School is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience to all pupils. On the basis of equal opportunities, we will take measures to encourage regular and punctual attendance at school, and in all lessons. We believe our pupils have a right to education and to do this they require continuity and progression in their learning. Consistent attendance is an essential foundation in their learning. Consistent attendance is an essential foundation in order to achieve potential. We need:-

- To promote the need for good attendance and encourage children to become reliable and responsible;
- To ensure that parents are fully aware of their responsibilities relating to their child's attendance at school and why regular, punctual attendance is important;
- To have effective procedures in place for recording and monitoring pupils absences and the reasons for these;
- To offer appropriate support to parents and pupils in order to improve poor attendance;
- To deal with parents' requests for their child's absence fairly, on an individual basis, taking into consideration any extenuating circumstances.

To Promote Good Attendance

- The school will endeavour to make all parents aware that it considers a child's attendance record to be important, because poor attendance is directly related to underachievement.
- The school's attendance figures are published in the Prospectus.
- The school will ensure, through the School's Prospectus and reminders in the school newsletter, that all parents are aware of the procedures they must use when their child is absent, that they must give reasons for their child's absence and that these reasons must be in line with those permitted by law, as interpreted in the school's attendance policy;
- The school has procedures in place to follow up and support poor attendance and frequent lateness and will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of these on an annual basis.
- The school has a reward system of certificates and other rewards to promote good attendance.
- The school is aware that children need to feel safe, emotionally secure and motivated to learn if they are to enjoy coming to school, and have policies and procedures in place to promote this climate and environment.
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Registration

- Registers are taken at the beginning of morning and afternoon sessions. An optical Mark Reader form is used which requires staff to mark them. The registers are then returned to the school office.
- The times of the school day are:-

	Morning	Afternoon
Nursery	8.45 - 11.45	12.30 - 3.30
Foundation	8.55 - 12.00	1.15 - 3.15
KS1	8.55 - 12.00	1.15 - 3.15
KS2	8.55 - 12.15	1.15 - 3.15

(It is to be noted that the school is open from 8.45am onwards for children and parents)

Children arriving after this time must come into school via the main entrance and report to the school office. The office staff will enter them into the Late Book, noting the reason. Where the child is more than half an hour late this will be countered as an unauthorised absence unless there is an acceptable reason for this.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

- When a child is unable to attend school, parents are asked to notify the school of the reasons on the first day of absence, preferably by phone, or failing that, by letter or by word of mouth via another adult. Reasons are recorded on a notification sheet seen by class teachers.
- If reasons are not provided a first day phone call is made requesting the reasons for absence and the expected return date. The school will follow this up either through the class teacher's or Learning Mentors personal contact with a parent or carer where possible, or via a standard letter from the school office which has a tear-off return slip for parents to complete.
- Where this form has not been returned within a week the absence will be coded accordingly.
- The Head Teacher will not authorise a child's absence for shopping or day trips, visiting relatives or where other members of the family are ill or have medical appointments. However, the school recognises that there may be exceptional circumstances and so each request is considered carefully, taking into consideration the family situation and the child's previous attendance record. Children are allowed days for Religious Observances.
- When the school receives an explanation for absence that the Head Teacher cannot authorise, the school will notify the parent of this.
- If a child needs to leave school during a session the adult collecting the child must first obtain an authorisation form from the school office. This records

the child's name, class, reason for the absence and the time the child left the school.

- Medical letters / appointment cards for the Child must be shown to the Head Teacher and a photocopy taken and kept for our records in before the Child can leave school. If this is not possible i.e. appointments made over the telephone an appointment card must be brought into school on their return.
- If the parent wishes to take their child out of school for any reason other than the child's medical appointment, or because the child is ill, they must first discuss the circumstances with the Head Teacher, who will decide whether or not the school is able to authorise the absence.
- All authorised absences are documented and the information stored in the Class Attendance File, Documentation includes:
 - Attendance and Punctuality Monitoring
 - Attendance and punctuality figures for school and class
 - Any relevant information regarding pupils
- By law a child's rates of authorised and unauthorised absence must be reported on the annual school report which forms part of the child's official school record and must be passed on to any future school the child attends.

Authorisation of holidays during term time:

- The school will not authorise any holidays during Term time unless in **VERY EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES, THERE IS A ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY.**
- A request for any holiday of 10 days or less where there are extenuating circumstances must be put in writing to the Head Teacher where the circumstances and the Child's attendance record will be discussed and a decision made.
- If a request of over 10 days in any school year is made it will **only** be considered where there are **VERY EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES**, which have been discussed with the Head Teacher. The following factors may be relevant:
 1. The duration of the trip and its impact on the child's education, particularly in terms of continuity and learning
 2. The circumstances of the family
 3. The distance being travelled, the expense of such and whether the trip is seen by the family as a rare event in the child's school career;
 4. The child's previous attendance history

- Parents are encouraged to plan extended holidays to link into the school's holiday periods where this is possible.
- Children who will be absent for more than six weeks will be removed from the register until their return, though their place will be reserved until their expected return date (or beyond providing the school is kept informed of any changes to this).
- Where parents exceed the agreed holiday period, the extra time will be unauthorised unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Fixed Penalty Notices

May be given for the following reasons:

Unauthorised holidays during term time

Our advice to parents/carers is that any break in pupils' education is detrimental to performance and achievement. The law states that parents do not have the right to take their children out of school for holidays during term time.

If the school denies a request for term time leave, yet the child is taken out of school regardless, this will be regarded as an 'unauthorised absence'. This will be referred to the Education Welfare Service who will issue a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Improving Poor Attendance

- The school will monitor the attendance figures for individuals, cohorts, ethnic and gender groups as well as the school as a whole, weekly, each term and annually, to identify groups and individuals who have unsatisfactory attendance rates.
- Governors will consider action plans to improve the attendance of these groups and individuals, in consultation with other support agencies such as the Education Welfare Officer (EWO).
- Class teachers will highlight the importance of a child's regular, punctual attendance and the impact on his/her achievement at informal meetings and at Parent Consultations.
- Where a child's attendance rate has been very poor (below 90%) or there are any 10 days consecutive absence without explanation the EWO will be notified and will take action accordingly.
- The Head Teacher will notify parents whose child achieved below 95% attendance in a term to inform them of the situation and the school's concerns.
- The Head Teacher and Governors will invite parents of children who achieve below 95% for a second subsequent term, or below 85% in a single term to school to discuss ways in which their attendance can be supported and improved. This might involve:
 - Establishing that there are no concerns about bullying or other reasons why a child dislikes coming to school;

- Establishing whether the parent needs support in maintaining regular family routines, or other forms of advice or support which may be available either from school staff or outside agencies;
- Target setting with a child, using stickers or other appropriate rewards;
- Referring a child to the school doctor for a medical examination to confirm or deny the existence of a health problem, and for advice on how the school might better support any condition that would improve a child's ability to attend;
- Referring a child to the EWO; this is done when any child has been away from school continuously without explanation, or where the Head Teacher has concerns she is unable to resolve, or about which she requires advice.

Encouraging good attendance

We will encourage good attendance in the following ways:-

- Set appropriate targets for individuals, year groups and the school.
- Accurate completion of registers at the start of each session.
- Accurate and immediate notification of all absences to the office and to staff.
- Recording all attendance on reports.
- Rewarding improvement in attendance and punctuality by:-

A. Identifying the most improved year group in attendance and punctuality each week and rewarding with the attendance gorilla or an extra playtime.

- Awards for the three most improved children for attendance and punctuality in any one term.
- Certificates notifying of improvements and attendance and punctuality % in any one term.
- An award for the most improved class in attendance and punctuality in any one term.
- Children given 100% certificates for attendance and punctuality at the end of each half and full term
- Reward Trips for 100% attendance each term

B. Award annual medals for 100% attendance and punctuality.

- Award a prize for a randomly selected 100% attendance and punctuality in any one year.
- Award for the three most improved children in attendance and punctuality in any one year.

Summary

- Poor attendance and punctuality can have a very poor effect on a child's ability to achieve in school and often their life chances.
- Parents are responsible for ensuring their child is in school unless the child is unwell, attending medical treatment or there are extenuating circumstances.
- The school is responsible for deciding whether or not an absence can be authorised.
- Where there are extenuating circumstances these must be discussed with the school beforehand wherever possible.
- Requests for holidays in term time will only be considered if there are extenuating circumstances normally for a maximum of 10 days in any school year. A child's previous attendance rate will be taken into consideration when deciding whether or not to authorise the request.
- Schools are required by law to record and report the attendance history of a child on his/her annual school report and on the records that are passed to a child's next school.
- The school will work with pupils, parents and other agencies as appropriate to promote good attendance and punctuality and to address any issues that may be preventing this.

Linked Policy Statements/Documents: Discipline and anti-bullying Policy, Racial Equality Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy.

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Statement agreed.....

Review Date.....

Signed..... Head Teacher

SignedGovernor

POLICY AMENDED JANUARY 2013

Appendices

1. Procedures/Staff Responsibilities.
2. EWO Service leaflet 'Absence From School'
3. School Attendance and the Law
4. Holidays in Term time
5. Copy of the fixed penalty fine system/parliament act

PROCEDURES/STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

THE OFFICE STAFF/ LEARNING MENTOR WILL:

- Record any telephone and text messages relating to absent children on the appropriate simms print out. Manually enter the authorisation code into the computer for these children. Record daily absence and pass on to class teacher
- Enter late children into the Late Book and add them to class register and inform kitchen/lunchtime supervisors of any absences and late children
- Issue Pass Out slips to parents collecting children from school for medical appointments **where an appointment card is produced by the adult**, or for other reasons approved by the Head Teacher.
- The Learning Mentor will phone or text the parents of any children absent without notification daily.
- Issue the standard letter to parents requesting reasons for the non-attendance of pupils where this has not been received by the end of the week.
- Notify parents of pupils who have attendance of below 95% in a term/half term
- Notify parents of pupils who have been late more than five times in a term/half term.
- Generate computer reports and assist the Head Teacher with monitoring the lateness and attendance figures for individuals, groups, cohorts and the whole school each half term and the end of each term.
- Provide the computer-generated reports for individual children to be included in their annual school report or when requested by the EWO or Head Teacher.
- Provide each class teacher with a folder for their class Attendance File each school year. Collect and store these at the end of the school year. They must be kept for three years.
- Print out the completed official registers from simms at the end of each week, collate and store these for three years.
- Bring the simms absence list, Late Book and Pass Out Book to the Assembly Points outside in the event of an emergency evacuation.

THE CLASS TEACHER/ LEARNING MENTOR WILL:

- Access their class register via simms on their class computer noting any children who are absent at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions
- Check class registers via simms on computer each morning and afternoon and amend the codes appropriately .Print out absence sheet daily.
- Alert the Head Teacher to any emerging patterns of absence or reasons. These include: when a child has prolonged spasmodic attendance e.g. odd days or half days each week over half a term; when a child has a regular short term absence e.g. every Wednesday morning; when a child has had frequent illness which amounts to more than three weeks in a half term, or is substantial over the year.
- Ensure that children take home any letters relating to attendance.

- Maintain the *Class Attendance File* in the folder issued by the office. This should contain all documentation from the parents and school office relating to authorised and unauthorised attendance for the current school year.
- Highlight concerns to parents about poor attendance and lateness and the effects on a child's achievement, both at informal meetings and at *Parents Consultations*.
- Discuss with the Head Teacher the provision of an appropriate holiday homework pack for any child on an extended holiday abroad.

THE HEAD TEACHER / LEARNING MENTOR WILL:

- Monitor the attendance of individuals, groups, cohorts and the whole school on a termly basis and devise an action plan, in consultation with staff, governors and appropriate outside agencies, to address any emerging concerns.
- Report on the results of the termly monitoring and the progress of any action plan to *Governors* via the termly *Head Teachers* report.
- Issue good attendance certificates each term / half term to all children achieving 100% attendance and improvement certificates to others.
- Issue letters to the parents of children whose attendance falls below 95% advising them of this fact.
- Issue letters to parents of children whose attendance falls below 95% for a second term, or whose attendance falls below 90% in a term, requesting a meeting with *Governors* to discuss how better attendance might be supported, and to agree a plan with parents and the child to achieve this.
- Monitor the success of these children's plans.
- Request the support and advice of the *EWO*, school medical authorities and other appropriate outside agencies where appropriate in particular cases.
- Ensure that children's attendance is included in their annual school report and include a comment on this where appropriate.

SOME USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS:

Christ Church School	01922 710080
Christ Church School Kitchen	01922 710638
Education Welfare Office	01922 686223

