



## 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 will ensure, through 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.

## Registration

- Registers are taken at the beginning of morning and afternoon sessions via SIMS on the class computer. The
- The registers are checked by the Care Guidance and Support Manager, amended and absence calls made
- 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. Parents must sign their Child/Children into school using the Inventory system noting the reason. Where the child is more than half an hour late a U code will be entered for a late mark after the register has been closed.

### 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 daily absence sheet.
- 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 also Text parents daily if a Child is not at school. The school will follow up absences either through personal contact with a parent or carer where possible by the Care, Guidance and Support Manager.
- 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 sign their Child out of school using the inventory system. 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 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
- **THERE IS A ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY.**
- Children who are absent for more than six weeks will be removed from the register unless there is a medical reason. Evidence of this would be required

### Fixed Penalty Notices

Will 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 may 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 Attendance Officer
- 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 Attendance Officer 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 90% 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 Attendance Officer this is done when any child has been away from school continuously without explanation, or where the Head Teacher has concerns that they are unable to resolve.

## 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 most improved children for attendance and punctuality in any one term.
- Certificates notifying of improvements for attendance and punctuality % in any one term.
- Children given 100% certificates for attendance and punctuality at the end of each term
- Reward Trips for 100% attendance each term

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

- Award for the most improved children in attendance and punctuality in any one year.
- End of year reward trip for 100% attendance over year and the most improved attendance and punctuality.

**Summary**

- Poor attendance and punctuality can have a detrimental 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 not be authorised. Absence will be unauthorised.
- Requests will be discussed with the schools Attendance Officer and a fine may be issued to parents.
- 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.

Statement agreed.....

Review Date.....

Signed..... Head Teacher

Signed .....Governor

**POLICY AMENDED JUNE 2017**

