

**Attendance**

**Policy**

Created May 2016

Reviewed May 2018

Next Review May 2020

 **Christ Church Academy attendance policy** 

**Introduction**

Regular attendance at school is essential to ensure uninterrupted progress and to enable children to achieve their potential. The attendance pattern for all children is monitored weekly with the school seeking to work actively with parents to ensure a regular pattern is maintained. We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so.

One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. We actively promote 100% attendance for all our pupils and we use a variety of weekly, termly and annual awards to promote good attendance and punctuality.

We encourage children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures to support this. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school and learning.

Poor attendance can seriously affect each child’s:-

· attainment in school

· relationships with other children and their ability to form lasting friendships

· confidence to attempt new work and to learn alongside others

The Governors and Headteacher, in partnership with parents have a duty to promote full attendance at school.

**Aims and objectives**

This attendance policy ensures that all staff and governors in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this Policy we aim to:

* Improve pupils’ achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
* Achieve a minimum of 96% attendance for all children, apart from those with chronic health issues.
* Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
* Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child’s education.
* Ensure that our policy applies to Nursery and Reception aged children in order to promote good habits at an early age.
* Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the Education Welfare Service so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
* Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.
* Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
* Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance.

We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

* Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and pupils.
* Ensuring that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
* Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child’s age and development.
* Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, pupils, staff and governors on school attendance matters.
* Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
* Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.
* Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.

**Definitions**

Every half-day absence 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 Absence**

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.

**Unauthorised Absence**

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the Headteacher.

Unauthorised absences are those, which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no ‘authorisation has been given. This includes:

* Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily.
* Truancy during the school day.
* Absences that have never been properly explained.
* Holidays not agreed.

**Authorising Absence**

Only the Headteacher can authorise absence for approved reasons. The absence must be unavoidable. The Headteacher is not obliged to accept a parent’s explanation and if the absence is not authorised, parents will be notified.

Authorised absence codes will only be used after there has been some communication between the parent and school.

**Procedures**

In order to achieve the best attendance possible for every child, every staff member is clear on their role in supporting improved attendance. The following procedures have been put in place to ensure staff have clarity and consistency when dealing with absence.

**Absentees**

Pupil not in school and no phone call received by the office

Office call home before 9.15 and feedback to home visit team

**No Concerns with pupil** **Concerns with pupil**

Monitor Attendance CP/Safeguarding Persistent Absentee

And take action if they

Become a persistent absentee  **Home Visit**

(prioritise CP/Safeguarding)

**Monitor attendance for the next 2 weeks**

**No Improvement** No **Improvement made**

Letter home inviting them to a Continue to monitor regularly

meeting

**Attend Meeting**  **Do Not Attend Meeting**

Action Plan put in place ESW Letter sent home

Monitor Attendance Regularly to

Ensure an improvement is made

Because Christ Church has a range of different needs, there are clear structures in place to deal with children according to their own specific circumstance and all children and parents are dealt with fairly.

Parents must provide ‘First Day Contact’ during a period of absence. They must then either follow this up with daily updates on the child’s absence or create proof of extended period of absence, such as a doctor’s note…

**Procedures with persistent absentee cases**

Stage 1: child drops below 90% and initial letter to inform parents is sent. The letter makes it clear that attendance will be reviewed in 4 weeks. It also informs them that no further absences will be authorised unless medical evidence is produced.

Stage 2: after 4 weeks, the child’s attendance is reviewed. If their attendance improves to above 90%, a text / phonecall is made to speak to the parent and inform them that they have improved. However, if their attendance had not improved the child is then placed on an attendance action plan. They are then invited to a meeting where they are presented with their action plan where this is discussed.

The school maintains evidence of actions taken by the school and family from when they are placed on an action plan. This will include meeting dates, further support given, additional absences / home visits, patterns with siblings.

Stage 3: Children who are on an action plan will then be invited to a further meeting where the case will be referred to the Educational Social Worker if their attendance continues to fall below 90% or if parents do not engage. If children have 5 or more days of unauthorised absence in six weeks, Bradford Council will issue a fine in-line with their guidance.

**Holidays in term time**

All holidays in term time are seen as unauthorised absence and parents are reminded frequently that weekends and holiday times are the only times where holidays should be taken. Holiday request forms are available by requesting them from a member of Senior Leadership Team however the key message is that holidays will never be authorised and are actually unlawful.

The school will enforce the right to fine parents who take children on term time holidays for a period of 5 consecutive days (10 sessions) or more. Parents still need to make a request for holidays in term time but the school will refuse this on all occasions. Parents will be notified verbally and through writing that the request has been declined. If the family still elect to go on holiday, they will receive a notification letter upon their return that they will be required to pay a fine of £60 per parent, per child.

**Responsibilities**

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

**Class teacher / support staff**

Class teachers and support staff are responsible for:

* Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers
* Informing the Headship Team where there are concerns and acting upon them
* Providing background information to support referrals
* Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns
* Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness
* Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation which should be noted inside the register
* Discussing attendance issues at consultation evenings where necessary

**Headteacher / Deputy Headteacher**

The Headteacher is responsible for:

* Overall monitoring of school attendance
* Trends in authorised and unauthorised absence
* Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues
* Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised
* Making referrals to the ESW service
* Providing reports and background information to inform discussion with the school’s ESW
* Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.

**Administration staff**

Staff in the School Office are responsible for:

* Collating and recording registration and attendance information.
* Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence
* Ensuring the Absence/Late Book is completed
* Contacting parents of absent children where no contact has been made.
* Recording details of children who arrive late or go home
* Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers and reporting concerns to the Headteacher
* Sending out standard letters regarding attendance

**Parents**

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

* Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment.
* Contacting the school office on the first morning of absence.
* Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we do require evidence from the doctor or dentist. (Appointment card/letter)
* Making requests for authorised absence in term time, only if absolutely necessary as these are not automatically authorised.
* Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child’s reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

**Absence**

At Christ Church, absence is taken very seriously and measures are in place to ensure that any absence is accounted for. All staff are responsible for reporting absence but then absence is followed up as shown in the flow chart shown previously. Parents are made aware of this process and it is done in a consistent way to ensure positive relationships remain with parents.

**Rewards for good attendance**

**Weekly**

In every celebration assembly, attendance across the whole school is shared and the leading classes in ks1 and ks2 are celebrated. Their class then receive 10 minutes and a £3 voucher which can then be the used for a whole class reward at the end of a half term.

**Half termly**

As part of BASE children are awarded green for attendance of above 96%. To get the chance to go on the badge winners trip, children need to do this for all 6 half terms and also be awarded green for behaviour, looking smart and effort.

In the first week of every term, a prize draw is done for the previous term where all children with above 98% attendance are entered and three children are chosen where they can win a £10 voucher. This is then repeated where children with above 96% are added to the draw and a further three children have the chance to win £5.

**Attendance challenges**

In three of the six half terms across the year, the school run an attendance challenge. This is where all children are challenged to get 100% attendance in this period. Children who achieve this get a reward afternoon where their parents are invited to an event to recognise their achievement.

**Appendices**

Letters to parents – exemplars

Blank version of action plan for parents

Letters taken from Bradford Council Education Social Work Service ‘Holidays in term time – penalty notice procedures and guidance’.