

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY



Christ Church CEVA Primary School

"A Christian community dedicated to educational excellence."

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Legal Guidance

Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 has been amended (as of 1 September 2013) to prohibit the proprietor (headteacher) of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application. The expectation of the Local Authority is that term time holidays should not be planned or booked as a matter of course as they are likely to be **unauthorised** and will lead to the issuing of a penalty notice (fine).

Exceptional circumstances

These are defined as:

- Forces Personnel on leave from a foreign posting
- **Exceptional significant** family events or circumstances – these will be considered on an individual basis.

The Headteacher will consider every request individually but the following **will not meet the criteria:**

- Relatives coming to visit
- Cheaper holidays in England and abroad
- Family day trips
- Visiting family / friends that have different half term holidays and may include refusal to attend family weddings and visits to see family abroad.

Authorised officers have the discretion to issue penalty notices without warning where the parent has chosen to take the child on leave during term time without authorisation, or evidence is subsequently found to suggest a child was away from school with the knowledge of the parent and does not meet the statutory defences mentioned below.

Penalty Notices

Through section 444A and section 444B of the Education Act 1996, it has become possible that certain cases of unauthorised absence can be dealt with by way of a Penalty Notice. Penalty Notices require **each parent** of a child of compulsory school age, whose attendance has been unsatisfactory, to pay a penalty, currently £60.00 **per child** if paid within 21 days or £120.00 if paid within 28 days.

For example:

2 parents with 3 children would have to pay a total fine of £360.00 if paid within 21 days and £720.00 if paid between 21 and 28 days.

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If the Penalty Notices are not paid, parents will be automatically summonsed to appear in Court for an offence under Section 444(1) Education Act 1996 and can result in a criminal conviction recorded against you.

Courts have a wider range of sentencing options, which could include a maximum fine of up to £1000.

The only statutory defences to the offence under Section 444(1) Education Act 1996 are:

- The child was absent for medical reasons
- The LA failed to provide transport when required to do so
- The absences were due to religious observance
- You had permission of the school or there was an unavoidable cause

Our Philosophy

Christ Church Primary School is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience to all pupils. We believe that if children are to benefit from education, good attendance is crucial. As a school, we will organise and do all that we can to ensure maximum attendance for all pupils. Any problems that impede full attendance will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible.

It is our policy to celebrate achievement. Attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career. Our school will actively promote and encourage 100 per cent attendance for all our children.

We will give a high priority to conveying to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance. Parents are informed regularly – in Newsletters – about our attendance policy and the policy is held on the school website.

If there are problems, which affect a child's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents and pupils to resolve these problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We will adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the child to full attendance at all times.

Principles

- Ensure that all staff are aware of the registration process and receive 'In Service' training on Registration Regulations and Education Law (as appropriate).
- Complete accurate registers at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session, within 15 minutes of the start of the morning session and 5 minutes of the start of the afternoon session.
- Encourage parents / carers to contact staff early on the first day of absence.
- Celebrate attendance rates across the school every week in Achievement Service (Roary Award).
- Promote positive staff attitudes to pupils returning after absence.
- Consult with all members of the school community and the Education Welfare Service in developing and maintaining the whole school attendance policy.
- Evaluate regularly attendance procedures by senior managers and the school governors.
- Inform parents and pupils of attendance rates and related issues.

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- Work towards ensuring that all pupils feel supported and valued. Send a clear message that if a pupil is absent he / she will be missed.
- Have procedures that allow absentees to catch up on missed work without disrupting the learning of other class members.

Procedures

If no contact is received from the parents / carers of an absent pupil on the first morning of an absence, school staff will attempt to contact the parent by telephone. If this is not possible, a letter will be sent on the third day of absence. Any unexplained absences of one week or longer will be reported to the Education Welfare Officer, and further action decided upon.

Systems will be set up to reward classes / individuals who have good attendance. Extremely good attendees will receive certificates at the end of the year.

In order for this policy to be successful every member of the school staff, by their behaviour, must make attendance a priority and convey to the pupils the importance of their education. This means ensuring that all teaching staff attend regularly, arrive on time and are well prepared.

Evaluation and Review

Senior leaders and Governors will review attendance data regularly.

Part of the evaluation process will be to look at what interventions have been successful.

This could include:

- Has the attendance of individual pupils and / or attendance as a whole improved?
- Has the school been successful in raising the profile of attendance both within the school and the community?
- How well informed are new pupils and their parents about the importance of attendance and the policy and procedures operating within the school?
- Have attendance issues been included as topics in school assemblies and / or curriculum discussions e.g. PSHE?

First Day Contact

First day contact is an integral part of the Attendance and Punctuality Policy. Parents and pupils must realise that a pupil absence will be noted and acted upon swiftly. First day contact sends a clear message to pupils and parents that attendance is very important.

For our policy of first day contact to work efficiently:

- Parents will be asked to ring the school by 10.00 a.m. on the first morning that the child is away. Reasons for the child's absence should be given.
- A member of staff will write these messages in the attendance file.
- Staff will notify the attendance secretary of any verbal messages received.
- The attendance secretary will complete the absence codes in the registers as appropriate.
- The attendance secretary will telephone any parents who have not notified the school of an absence that morning.
- The attendance secretary will send a letter to parents who have not notified the school on the third day of absence.

It is our view that first day contact works by:

- Raising awareness of the importance of full attendance.

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- Addressing problems before they grow.
- Improving home school links.
- Sending a clear message to parents and pupils that if a child is absent they will be missed.
- Alerting parents who may be unaware that their child is truanting.
- Reducing the number of pupils who have short-term absence, thereby reducing the overall absence rate.
- Assisting parents and pupils to develop habits that reduce casual absence and encouraging early contact from parents.

Lateness

Children who arrive after 9.00 a.m. will be marked late in the register. Children arriving after 9.15 a.m. will be marked as an unauthorised (late) absence.

There are two negative results caused by pupils who constantly arrive late. These are:

- The loss of education suffered by the pupils themselves which over a year can add up to a significant proportion of their time in school.
- The disruption to other children in the class.

The strategies we use to tackle lateness include:

- Informing parents when a pupil is late three times in a fortnight.
- Informing the Education Welfare Officer for children who are persistently late.
- Rewarding children who arrive on time (weekly 'Roary' award).

Sickness Absence

The school realises that children will get ill from time to time and will only learn if they are well enough to attend school. Parents must take a view as to whether their child is fit to come to school. The school asks specifically that:

- On the first morning of absence, parents **RING 01934 620738** before **10.00a.m.**, and leave a message on the answer phone or with a member of staff, with a brief explanation of the absence. (Please leave your name, your child's name and the name of your child's class teacher).
- Parents give an indication of when your child might be back in school if possible. If it is not possible to do so on the first day, then parents should ring school again to give an update on the second or subsequent day.
- Planned medical appointments are supported by written evidence, and that a photocopy of this is given to the school office.
- Pupils who have been sick or have diarrhoea do not attend school for 48 hours after the last bout of illness

Holiday in Term Time

The Local Authority gives guidelines for the authorisation of holidays in term time (as described above) and states the Headteacher may authorise such holiday in exceptional circumstances only. Any request by a parent for an approved absence for this reason will be considered by the Headteacher who will make a decision after considering:

- Whether there are exceptional circumstances (as described above)
- The likely damage to the pupil's education (e.g. SATs, worked missed).
- The attendance rate of the pupil up to the time of the request.
- Whether it is possible for the parent to take the child away during normal school holidays.

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If the school does not authorise an absence but the child is still away, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Requests for approved absence for holidays must be submitted in advance on a holiday form.

Poor Attendance

If a child's attendance falls below 96%, the school will investigate and review reasons or patterns of absence.

The school may request medical evidence if high levels of sickness absence exist. If absence / lateness is due to other reasons, the school will seek advice / help from Education Welfare. In cases of significant absence or unauthorised holiday, this could lead to a Penalty Notice being issued by the Local Authority.

Signed:

Headteacher: _____ Date: _____

Chair of Governors: _____ Date: _____

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Overview of ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY PROCEDURES

ABSENCE

If your child will not be in school for any reason:

- On the first morning of absence, **RING 01934 620738** before **10.00a.m.** and leave a message on the answer phone or with a member of staff.
- Please leave your name, your child's name and the name of your child's class teacher.
- Please say why your child will not be in school (illness, medical appointment, etc.). N.B. Medical appointments should be supported by written evidence.
- Please give an indication of when your child will be back in school if you can.

Staff in the office will listen to all the messages by 10.00 a.m. If a child is not in school and we have not received a message, they will ring you to check that your child is safe.

PUNCTUALITY

The school gates open at **8.35 a.m.** and school starts at **8.45 a.m.**

Children will often then do 'early work' before the start of their main lessons for the morning, especially in the Juniors, and this work starts as soon as they enter the class and by **8.45 a.m.** at the latest.

If your child arrives in school **after 9.00 a.m.** they will be marked as late in the register.

If your child arrives **after 9.15 a.m.** your child will be marked as having an unauthorised (late) absence.

It is important that you bring your child to the office if they arrive after 9.00 a.m. so we know exactly how many children are in school in case there is a fire or other emergency.

**REMEMBER, THE NUMBER TO PHONE IF YOUR CHILD IS ILL IS:
01934 620738**