

Attendance Policy

Christ Church Primary School believes in the fundamental right of all children to have access to a good education. Pupils need to attend school for the maximum time that they are able in order to progress not just academically but also in social, emotional, spiritual, moral and cultural terms.

Parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. The school is committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure a high level of attendance.

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Parents will receive information in their child's report detailing their attendance record. Good attendance is rewarded by verbal praise, rewards during weekly assemblies for the class with the best attendance and certificates for individuals, which are presented in front of the whole school.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason; illness or other unavoidable causes.

Unauthorised absence

This includes keeping children off school for trivial reasons; absence, which have never been properly explained, and children who arrive at school too late to get a mark. Providing a note may not be sufficient if the reason given is not 'unavoidable.' Children should never be kept off school for reasons such as shopping or as a treat.

If your child does not attend regularly the school may refer the child to the Attendance and Prosecution Officer from the Local Education Authority. He or she will try to resolve difficulties by agreement but if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance failed, these officers can use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an education supervision order on the child.

Parents may wish to contact the Attendance and Prosecution Officer themselves for advice. They are independent of the school. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the LEA.

Monitoring

It is important that the class teacher, secretarial staff and Head Teacher monitor attendance and, where necessary, involve the school's Attendance and Prosecution Officer. At present the school's Attendance and Prosecution Officer contacts the school every 2 weeks. The following monitoring arrangements will be used to ensure attendance is 96% or more.

- Any member of staff concerned about a pupil's attendance should report their concerns to the Head Teacher who will take appropriate action.
- Parents of children whose attendance falls below 85% will be sent a letter pointing out their child's attendance.
- Parents of children whose attendance falls below 85%, or whose attendance has not improved since previous monitoring, will either be contacted by phone or invited by letter to discuss any problems and look at strategies for improvement.
- Every two weeks, when registers have been read and absence forms completed by teachers, print outs of pupils who have failed to reach the required level of attendance are passed to the Head Teacher who may refer the matter to the Attendance and Prosecution Officer.

Illness and legitimate reasons

If a child is unfit for school, parents should contact the school as soon as possible by:-

- Telephone - this is recorded and given to the class teacher
- Letter or note
- Alternative mutual arrangements, e.g. neighbour, older brother or sister - which will be recorded by the teacher and sent to the office.
- The teacher making contact on return to school - in person or by sending absence form

Frequent or long, unexplained absences from school will result in the school referring the matter to the Attendance and Prosecution Officer who will visit the home.

Lateness

We actively encourage punctuality and the school's first step is to speak to the parent or guardian of the child bringing them to school. Children must attend on time to be given a mark for a session. Parents are expected to ensure that children are present at registration. Late arrivals must be signed on the late sheet at the office. Arriving more than 30 minutes after the start of the session without good reason may be counted as unauthorized absence. If lateness persists then the school will involve the Attendance and Prosecution Officer or a letter may be sent to parents pointing out their responsibility and they will be invited to discuss this with the Head Teacher and Attendance and Prosecution Officer.

We also monitor those who are regularly collected late at the end of the school day. The school's legal duty of care and supervision ends at 3.30 and any child who is regularly left behind may be referred to the social services.

Records are kept of children who are taken out of school during the day with a note as to the reasons why. This may also be used for monitoring of absence purposes. Evidence of medical appointments needs to be brought to the office on collection of the child.

Holidays

All holiday leave in term time is at the discretion of the Head Teacher however it would be in EXCEPTIONAL circumstances that this discretion is used and therefore all other requests will be refused. Requests for leave must be made in writing using leave of absence form.

Parents must be aware that children who miss out on education are at an immediate disadvantage relative to their peers and at great cost to themselves. Therefore they must consider very carefully before removing their child from school for long periods. If children are absent longer than requested they may be removed from the school register and need to reapply for a place. Where extended holiday is taken a 'contract' may need to be signed to determine a date when the child is expected back in school. All holidays of 5 days or more will be referred to the Attendance and Prosecution Officer.

Parents

Parents should feel supported and not threatened by the school's attendance policy. Parents should be aware that the attendance monitoring procedures are there to keep them informed so that appropriate action can be taken. School can provide work packs/ activities for children who are absent for more than a few days. Parents are welcome to discuss attendance concerns with the class teacher, Head Teacher or Attendance and Prosecution Officer. The school's policy should be conveyed to the parents through the school prospectus, information, newsletters and by talking to them as and when appropriate.

Sep 2014