


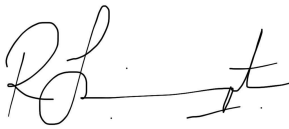
Christ Church New Malden

Church of England Primary School



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Committee responsible	Pupil Impact
Approval required by	Headteacher
Statutory or Recommended	Statutory
Frequency of review	Every two years
Date last reviewed	November 2024
Date of next review	November 2026
Display on website	Yes
Purpose	Outline principles and procedures related to attendance and punctuality
Link with other policies	Admissions Policy Behaviour Policy Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy SEND Policy

	Signed	Date
Headteacher		November 2024
Chair of Governors		November 2024

1. Introduction

Regular school attendance is essential to ensure uninterrupted progress and to enable children to maximise their potential, in line with our vision statement. To this end, at Christ Church New Malden, 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.

We do all that we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To achieve this, we strive to make Christ Church New Malden a happy, caring and rewarding experience for all children. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, due to ill-health, are prevented from coming to school.

This policy has been written based on the following DFE guidance:
[Working Together to Improve School Attendance \(August 2024\)](#)

2. Non- Attendance

Non-attendance is an important issue that is treated seriously. However, we recognise that each case is different and the school acknowledges that no one standard response will be appropriate to all cases. Consideration is given to all factors affecting attendance before deciding what intervention strategies to apply.

In every case, early intervention is essential to prevent the problem from worsening. It is essential that parents keep the school informed of any matters which may affect their child's attendance.

The school will keep parents/carers aware of their children's attendance and any associated concerns on a regular basis. Our headteacher, Neil Meehan, our Senior Attendance Champion, Alex Roe and our Attendance Officer, Julia Tagg meet regularly to look at absence patterns and initiate communications to parents/carers where there are attendance concerns.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

Parents/Carers

- ensure their child attends every day the school is open
- contact school on first day of absence to provide a reason for non-attendance for unexpected absence (eg illness)
- update the school if the absence is expected to continue
- be aware of school policy with regards vomiting and diarrhoea: child to be kept at home until 48 hours after the last episode to prevent the spreading of any infection to others (NHS guidance)
- only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances, and well in advance
- book any medical appointments around the school day where possible
- proactively engage with the school and any other agency to resolve any difficulties which may affect regular school attendance

Class teachers

- taking class registers by 8.45am (infants) and by 8:55am (juniors) in the morning and by 1pm (infants) and by 1:35pm (juniors) in the afternoon
- monitoring individual pupils' patterns of absence
- communicating with parents if concerned about pupil absence and lateness, especially where a pupil's absence percentage falls
- If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, taking immediate action by notifying the school office.

School Attendance Officer

- first day calling to parents/carers for all absences
- liaison with class teachers, Senior Attendance Champion and Headteacher about absence levels
- liaison with parents where necessary with regards to attendance concerns
- recording of absence reports and reasons received each day

Senior Attendance Champion

- overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance
- work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance
- where out of school barriers are identified, support access to any required services
- take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners
- liaison with Kingston Education Welfare Officer on patterns of absence and persistent absentees
- provide regular, accurate and timely reports to senior management and governors about patterns and levels of attendance and absence
- use data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance and develop strategies to support them

Headteacher

- overall accountability for school attendance levels and trends
- responsible for promoting high levels of attendance in line or above national averages across the school and achieving school attendance targets

School Governors

- regular reviews of school attendance data and help school leaders focus support on pupils who need it
- promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos

4. What does good attendance look like?

Each child's attendance can be summarised as:

97 – 100%	Excellent attendance. A level which will help all aspects of a child's progress and life in school.
95 – 96%	Average attendance. A level in-line with national averages.

90 – 94%	Less than average attendance. Absence is likely to affect children's attainment and progress. The school will informally liaise with parents/carers where attendance is declining below average attendance.
Below 90%	Poor attendance, classified as persistent absence. This level of attendance is a cause for concern and will affect children's attainment and progress. The school will contact parents via formal emails. If there is little or no improvement, a meeting will be set up to seek to work with the parents/carers to improve the situation. Where there remains no improvement, the school's Educational Welfare Officer will also then contact or meet the parents/carers.

5. Arrival and Registration

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, the Governing Body are responsible for making sure that the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

School registers are taken twice daily. A day counts as 2 attendances.

- All infant children are able to enter the school from 8.30am and are expected to be in class by 8.45am for the morning session.
- All junior children are able to enter the school from 8.40am and are expected to be in class by 8.55am for the morning session.

Any child who arrives after these times will be marked as late. Our registers close for the morning at 9.15am (infants) and 9.25am (juniors); if your child arrives after this time (later than 30 minutes late), this will be coded as unauthorised lateness.

The afternoon registers are taken with the first five minutes of the afternoon session beginning, so by 1pm in the infants and 1.35pm in the juniors.

It is essential that children arriving and leaving with a parent / carer outside normal hours, but within the school day, are signed in or out from the school office. The signing in / out inventory in the office is used in the case of an emergency and a fire drill.

6. Illness and Medical Appointments

Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours. If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child should return to school directly after the appointment should the school day not have ended.

The school office should be informed before 9.15am on the morning of the first day of a child's absence through illness and then each morning, if appropriate, for the duration of the absence. To report a child's absence, parents should use the Arbor Parent App or Portal.

If a child suffers from either vomiting or diarrhoea then they must be kept off school and can only return 48 hours after their symptoms disappear. Medical certificates may be required if an absence is greater than five days or overall attendance is unacceptable.

7. Recording of Absences

Authorised absence

An absence is classed as authorised when a child has been away for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent / carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the school has received telephone or written explanation of the absence.

Unauthorised absence

An absence is classed as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the Head Teacher and/or if the school has not been informed why a child is absent.

If a child is absent

When a child is absent, the class teacher will record the absence in the register. The school office will endeavour to contact the parent / carer of the child by 9.30 a.m. if no message has been received prior to this regarding the reason for the absence. If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent / carer in order to check the safety of the child.

Should there be concerns regarding persistent absence, then the school will work closely with our Educational Welfare Officer to provide wider support for the family.

8. Leave of Absence

Parents are required under the Education Act (1996) to ensure their child attends school regularly. In line with DFE guidance (August 2024), we do not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are “exceptional circumstances”. The law does not grant parents/carers an automatic right to take their child out of school during term time. Please note that family holidays are not considered an exceptional circumstance and so will not be authorised. Absence requests are also not authorised during times of national school tests and any avoidable absence is strongly discouraged during preparation time for national tests.

Any absence requests must be submitted, on the school’s Leave of Absence Request Form, at least half a term in advance, unless there is an emergency. A hard copy is also available from either school office.

The Head Teacher must be satisfied that the exceptional circumstances justify an authorised absence and it is entirely the responsibility of the parent submitting the request to provide sufficient and correct information and evidence in order to establish this fact, with as much notice as possible should be given. On some occasions, the Head

Teacher may invite the parent into school to discuss the request before a decision is made.

If the circumstances relating to this request are considered exceptional and the absence is authorised by the Head Teacher, the expectation is that the child's attendance will be of a satisfactory level both prior to and after the date covered by the request.

If the request for a leave of absence is refused and/or unauthorised absence is taken in term time (5 days, 10 sessions or more), within a ten-week period, the head teacher/governors may request that the local authority issue a fixed penalty notice (FPN). The amount payable is £80 if paid within 21 days and rising to £160 if paid within 28 days. If the FPN fine is not paid, the Local Authority will prosecute in court. Where there is more than one child, each parent may be issued with a Penalty Notice in respect of each child.

The school may also initiate a FPN if a pupil fails to return on an agreed date following a leave of absence. In these circumstances, it will be made clear to parents and carers on which day the pupil will be expected to return to school, with the warning that if they do not return on that date, a FPN may be issued.

As a parent/carer, you can demonstrate your commitment to your child's education by not allowing your child to miss school for anything other than an exceptional and unavoidable reason. Research suggests that children who are taken out of school may never catch up on the learning they have missed, which may ultimately affect exam and test results. Even an attendance of 90% accounts for four school weeks lost in a year.

Lateness

The importance of punctuality is also stressed as repeated lateness impacts not only on the learning of the individual but can affect the learning of the class as a whole. With this in mind, parents / carers of children who are identified as attaining frequent lateness will also be contacted by the school and targets for improvement set.

9. Assessment, Monitoring and Review Procedures

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance. The Governing Body also has responsibility for this policy, and analyse attendance and punctuality trends in the school through termly reporting presented by the Head Teacher and Senior Attendance Champion.

Our Attendance Officer, Mrs Julia Tagg and our Senior Attendance Champion, Mrs Alex Roe monitor trends of attendance issues and register entries on a weekly basis and meet regularly to review all pupils' attendance and take any appropriate action; this includes the sending of standard emails when attendance is less than satisfactory and to celebrate improvement.

Our procedures are monitored and overseen on a termly basis by our Educational Welfare Officer. This policy is reviewed every two years by governors and will be shared with parents at least annually through our weekly update newsletter and is also published on our website.

