

CHRIST CHURCH



PRIMARY SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

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ATTENDANCE POLICY - 2023

Challenges

The school's context and character creates a significant challenge making strategies to promote and reward good attendance crucial in the drive to raise standards of achievement. It is therefore particularly important to have clearly understood policies and practices to promote both understanding and an appreciation of both the legal and academic needs of good attendance. We follow government guidelines for attendance and do not condone unauthorised absences.

The school has continually developed and refined its procedures to track and report on attendance and rigorously follows up on all absences. However, parents have a duty and a responsibility for their child's education and there is now increasing national expectation that parents should ensure their pupils should attend school for 190 days a year unless there is a justifiable reason for absence.

Key Objectives

1. Our aim is for pupil's attendance to be at least 95% in each academic year (September – July).
2. The school target for the academic year 2023-2024 is >95%.
3. All absences should be notified and authorised for justifiable reasons.
4. To provide advice and support to parents to promote the school's policy.
5. To encourage pupils to have a positive attitude to school and recognise the importance of attending school in good time, with the equipment they need for school, so that they are prepared and ready to learn
6. We will continually improve pupil attendance by:
 - (a) promoting and rewarding regular attendance and good time keeping
 - (b) raising parental awareness about:-
 - the legal requirement for all pupils to attend school regularly
 - the crucial link between regular attendance and raising pupil achievement
 - the need to give informed reasons which justify and authorise pupil absences
 - giving appropriate help and advice
 - (c) enabling the school governors to fulfil legal requirements regarding admission, registration and required data
 - (d) Consistently monitoring and reporting to governors on pupil attendance and where appropriate take agreed actions.

Rewarding Good Attendance / Good Time Keeping

Pupils are encouraged to be at the school gate prior to

- **8.45 am for KS2/ KS1 and EYFS**

. Pupils arriving at school after this time are considered to be late and will be reminded of the importance of being in good time and ready to learn.

Parents should be at the Nursery as follows:

- Morning session - **8.45 am** and again at **11.45** to collect their child.
- Afternoon session – **12.15 pm** and again at **3.15 pm** to collect their child.

- All day sessions:30 hours) are **8.45 am to 3.15 pm**

There are regular opportunities to praise and reward pupils who are punctual and have regular good attendance as well as incentives to encourage those pupils and families who may need support, advice and encouragement. Pupils and families will have opportunities to receive:

- Certificate presented in Assembly
- Class awards
- Colour coded letters showing attendance levels

Requests for Absence from School

- **Authorised Absences**

Leave to attend medical appointments or absences due pupils illness are authorised.

- **Religious Observance**

Pupils are granted special authorised leave on religious grounds to celebrate religious festivals which fall during a school day such as Eid. The number and timing of such absences are usually agreed locally by the community Mosques. The local authority recognises the need for these celebrations and will authorise one day of absence only for each religious observance.

- **Circumstances**

Very occasionally there may be very special family events – circumstances which the Headteacher/Governors may authorise.

- **Unauthorised**

Any other absence from school without request and authorised permission will be recorded as unauthorised.

Medical Appointments

If a child needs to be collected from school for a medical appointment this will be recorded using the school INVENTORY system. This system records the time of leaving and returning to school. Parents are expected to bring appointment cards to school when appropriate.

Penalty Notice

When an individual pupil's attendance level falls below 90% in any term without good reason, a referral to the Educational Welfare Worker will be made. Following investigation any unresolved issues could result in the parent receiving a Penalty Notice or ultimately a prosecution under the Education Act 1996. (See Penalty Notice Protocol Appendix A1).

Parental Responsibility

Only parents with parental responsibility should request permission to collect a child from school during the school day. Only the following adults have legal parental responsibility.

- If parents are **MARRIED, SEPARATED** or **DIVORCED, BOTH** parents have parental responsibility on an equal basis.
- If parents are **UNMARRIED**
 - If the mother's name only appears on the birth certificate **ONLY THE MOTHER** has parental responsibility unless the father has obtained it by formal written agreement or through a court order.
 - If the father has registered the birth with mother and **his name appears on the birth certificate, BOTH** parents have parental responsibility on an equal basis.
- Other people (step-parents, grandparents etc.) **DO NOT** have parental responsibility unless they have a court order (e.g. adoption/residence order) or have taken over parental responsibility as a legal guardian.

Annual Holiday / Extended Leave

The DfE has stated that parents no longer have an entitlement to take pupils out of school for a family holiday during term time. The Headteacher no longer can grant any leave unless the circumstances are exceptional.

Parents wishing to take a pupil on an extended trip abroad should be directed to make an appointment to see the Headteacher as soon as possible, where the school's policy will be explained and the impact of a pupil's education being disrupted. If parents proceed with this extended leave it will be unauthorised (G code) and after 20 days their children will be removed off roll.

- **Circumstances** (family illness or death, emergencies) - in exceptional circumstances a pupil may be granted leave of absence .
- Due to the government class size policy this may lead to a child losing their place at Christ Church Primary School as the number of pupils in Key Stage 1 classes may not exceed 30. Parents will have been advised of this implication and will be supported to find a suitable alternative school.
- Statistics on the numbers of pupils whose education has been affected will be reported to Governors each term in the Headteacher Report.
- Any parent taking unauthorised leave of more than 10 sessions(**5 days**) may be liable to a fixed penalty notice and fined.(See appendix 1.)

Completion of Class Registers

Class Teachers or support staff will complete the registers daily at the beginning of morning and afternoon sessions.

1. Late Pupils

- Everyone is late sometimes. We would rather children arrived late than not at all. Pupils arriving late will be reminded of the need to be in **Good Time**
- Children will be recorded late on the register
- Morning registration **closes** at **9.15 am**.
- Children who arrive late before registration closes are marked with **Code L**, those arriving after registration closes are marked with **Code U** (no mark for session). The number of minutes late can also be added if desired.
- **Monitoring Lateness** - Regular lateness is monitored by the School Attendance Officer (SAO)/EWO.

2. Late Parents

- Children who are collected late from school will be recorded in the School Late Book.
- Parents of children who are regularly late being collected will be contacted by School Attendance Officer (SAO)/EWO.

3. Absence

- When a child is absent the Class Teachers should mark the child with **an appropriate code if the reason for absence is known (i.e. I for illness)**. Please see Appendix A4 for absence codes.
- Ms Douglas will contact parents of absent children and will apply appropriate codes for absence
- Repeated absences, particularly sporadic absences, will be monitored carefully to ensure absences are justifiable.

4. Monitoring Absence

- Children / families identified as having a history of poor attendance, Looked After Children or families involved with multiple agencies will be phoned on the first day of absence during registration by the School Attendance Officer. Target families will be

invited to a formal meeting to discuss improving attendance.

- Class Teachers will notify the Headteacher of any child whose attendance is causing concern.
- Pupil Attendance will be regularly monitored at least fortnightly by Ms Douglas
- Ms Douglas will pay particular attention to absences due to ill health which may require intervention e.g. asthma advice and support.
- SAO/EWO will check if any siblings/cousins are absent at the same time.
- HT/ SAO will track and monitor those pupils on extended leave and their impact on class attendance percentages.
- SAO/Administrative Assistant (Pupils) will complete returns for the Education Service/ DfE.
- Headteacher will monitor the impact of absences on pupil progress and achievement through class tracking profiles.
- Termly meetings with Class Teachers will monitor progress and impact of revised policy for attendance.
- Pupils with attendance concerns will receive attendance letters.

5. **Appropriate action**

Issues of concern or actions taken and the child/families attendance will continue to be monitored closely. Actions could include:

- A direct approach to parents by Class Teacher
- A letter or phone call by Headteacher/School Attendance Officer
- A home visit by EWO/ School Attendance Officer
- A formal meeting between Headteacher/family
- The ultimate sanction for non-attendance would be referral to social services / child protection / court action.

Reporting Attendance

Data on percentage attendance and absences will be recorded:

- In regular updates to parents via newsletters
- Each term in the Headteacher's Report to Governors
- In the pupil progress reports and National Curriculum reports
- On the school website
- Annually to DfE and Education Service.

Maintaining School Registers / School Roll

The Administrative Assistant (Pupils) will complete these procedures.

1. **Admissions**

- All new pupils will usually be enrolled by the Headteacher or Ms Douglas and data entered on SIMS.
- If the pupil is transferring during the school year then the School Attendance Officer should ensure that an **In Year Transfer Form** has been completed and signed by the Headteacher of the previous school.

2. **Admission Registers**

A complete print of the admissions / attendance register must be made and kept annually / termly for reference.

3. **Change of Details**

It is essential that Class Teachers update the office of any changes of address or phone numbers of contact points so that the SIMS data files and update class lists.

4. **Pupils transferring to a new school during a school year**
 - The School Attendance Officer should ensure that an **In Year Transfer Form** is completed by the parent and submitted to the Headteacher for signature.
 - When the transfer is approved a CTF file is sent to the new school via the S2S website. The **Pupil Records** will be completed ready for despatch to the new school.
 - **SIMS** - Pupils names are removed immediately. The revised number on roll is applicable as soon as the has removed the pupil's name from the official class list
 - **Class Registers** – the pupil's name will be removed from the register when SIMS is updated.

5. **Pupils transferring to a new school at the end of a school year i.e. July**
 - **SIMS** - Pupils names to be removed as from the end of term with destination logged. A CTF file is sent to the new school via the S2S website.
 - **Class Register** - The child's name would be removed from the class register with a note of destination to ensure pupil records can be despatched.

6. **Other circumstances**
 - What if a child does not return to school. Normally this will follow inquiries by the HT/EWO/ School Attendance Officer and a decision will be taken to remove the child's name from the school roll.
 - Once that decision has been taken Pupils Records must be completed and labelled **destination unknown** with last date of attendance recorded. Pupil records will be stored and filed: Pupil Records Unknown Destination in line with Retention of Records guidelines.

Appendices

- A1 Penalty Notice Protocol
Absence Codes

**STAFFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
Families First Targeted Services**

**STAFFORDSHIRE LOCAL AUTHORITY
Code of Conduct for issuing Penalty Notices**

Rationale:

Regular and punctual attendance at school is both a legal requirement and essential for pupils to maximise their educational opportunities. In recognition of this, the law makes it an offence for a parent or carer to fail to secure the regular attendance of their child at a school at which the child is a registered pupil, without good reason or the agreement of the school.

Penalty Notices are one of the sanctions available for this offence and offer a means of swift intervention, which can be used to combat attendance problems before they become entrenched.

Parents and children will be supported by their school/alternative provision, the Local Support Teams for Targeted Services and, as appropriate, other Partner Agencies, to overcome barriers to regular attendance, through a range of intervention strategies.

Therefore, Penalty Notices and other sanctions will only be used where parental co-operation with this process is either absent or deemed to be insufficient to resolve the problem. They will be used as a means to support and challenge parents to meet their legal responsibilities and where there is a reasonable expectation that their use will secure improved school attendance.

Legal Framework:

Section 444A of the Education Act 1996 (as inserted by section 23 of the Anti-Behaviour Act 2003) empowers designated Local Authority (LA) officers, head teachers (as well as deputy and assistant head teachers authorised by them) and the Police to issue Penalty Notices in cases of unauthorised absence from school.

The Education Penalty Notices (England) Regulations 2007

The Education and Inspections Act 2006.

The issuing of Penalty Notices must conform to all requirements of the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 makes it an offence if a parent fails to secure their child's regular attendance at school at which they are registered, if that absence is not authorised by the school. Penalty Notices supplement the existing sanctions currently available under s444 Education Act 1996 or s36 Children Act 1989 to enforce attendance at school where appropriate.

As a result, the Local Authority has responsibility for developing a local code of conduct that will govern how all of the partners named in the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003, will issue Penalty Notices.

Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be issued:

- A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence.
- Use of a Penalty Notice or formal warning of a Penalty Notice for unauthorised absence will be restricted to one notice/ warning per parent of a pupil per academic year¹.
- There will be no limit on the times a Penalty Notice for unauthorised leave of absence can be used in an academic year.
- In cases where there is more than one pupil in a family with unauthorised absences, Penalty Notices may be issued for more than one child.
- The presence of an excluded child in a public place at any time during school hours in the first five days of exclusion.

Penalty Notices may be considered appropriate if one of following criteria is met:

- From 1 January 2018 **any** period of unauthorised leave may result in you as a parent receiving a penalty notice fine. The Headteacher continue to be the only person who can authorise leave in term time, but this will apply only in exceptional circumstances. Any unauthorised absence will be referred by the Headteacher to the local authority.
- Persistent late arrival at school-previously a pupil had to achieve 20 unauthorised late marks before a penalty notice warning could be issued. This has now changed to 10 marks, and late marks do not have to be one after the other in order for the penalty notice to be issued. You are therefore encouraged where possible to ensure your child attends school on time. However, if your child is late you must inform the school of the reason(s) why, as they may be able to offer you some sort of advice or support.
- Period of time used to measure persistent absence or lateness
If your child has had 10 days of unauthorised absence or is late 10 times over a twelve week period, you may receive a penalty warning notice and also potentially a fine.
- The presence of an excluded child in a public place at any time during school hours in that child's first five days of exclusion. An "excluded child" is one who has been excluded from school for a given period under the Education and Inspections Act 2006.
- A Penalty Notice will not be issued in respect of children in the care of the LA with whom other interventions will be used.

Leave not authorised by the head teacher or in excess of the period determined by the head teacher.

¹ Continued poor attendance in the same academic year can be addressed by other statutory actions available to the Local Authority under the Education Act 1996.

² Once an unauthorised absence has been used as evidence in Court/Penalty Notice it cannot then be used again in another prosecution.

The Local Authority will only issue Penalty Notices requested by a school in response to an unapproved leave of absence (including holiday related) resulting in unauthorised absence where the school has provided the necessary paperwork.

This paperwork should comprise:

- A copy of the newsletter or letter sent to all parents during the current academic year which clearly states that parents may receive a Penalty Notice for an unauthorised holiday in term time. (The LA does not need a hard copy of this newsletter/letter each time a school applies for an unauthorised holiday Penalty Notice, just on the first occasion each academic year.)
- A copy of the leave of absence (Holiday) Request Form submitted by parent, and a copy of the response sent to the parent by school. In the event the leave of absence (holiday) request is being denied the school's response should state the reason why the request is unauthorised and should again advise parent that they may receive a Penalty Notice if they take their child out of school and that the school has referred the matter to the Local Support Team (representing the Local Authority).
- In cases where the unauthorised leave of absence occurs without prior request from the parents, or is due to unauthorised absence beyond what was agreed, the school should include all correspondence sent to the parents to explore the unauthorised absence.
- Relevant pupil Attendance of Registration Certificate signed by the Head teacher / Principal – or their nominated deputy – confirming that non-attendance during the period was unauthorised.
- Completed school unauthorised absence checklist and signed penalty notice request form. (Appendix A).

Excluded Pupils

In the case of an excluded child, a copy of the letter required to be sent to parent(s) pursuant to s.104 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 warning them to ensure that the child is not permitted to be present in a public place in the first five days of exclusion.

Robust and reliable evidence that the child was in a public place, which includes the date and time and a statement will be required from the witness will be necessary.

Who May Issue a Penalty Notice?

A Penalty Notice may only be issued by:

- Authorised LA staff. In Staffordshire this will be members of the Local Support Teams.
- Head teacher / Principal and school staff authorised by them may request Local Support Teams to issue a Penalty Notice.
- A Police Officer during a truancy sweep under the provision of Crime and Disorder Act 1998 may request a Local Support Team (LST) to write a notice.

Procedure for issuing Penalty Notices:

The designated officers within Targeted Services will be the only individuals permitted to issue Penalty Notices in the Staffordshire area. This will ensure consistent and equitable delivery, avoid duplication of issue and to allow schools to maintain good relationships with parents and ensure that they reinforce other enforcement sanctions.

Penalty Notices will only be issued by post and never as an instant action, e.g. during a Truancy Sweep. This will enable officers to ensure that all evidential requirements are in place, duplication of issue is avoided and limit the health and safety risks associated with delivering such notices by hand.

Where Schools, Police or neighbouring local authorities ask Staffordshire County Council to issue a Penalty Notice, their request will be investigated and actioned by the LST provided that:

- The circumstances of the case meet the criteria specified in this Code of Conduct.
- The pupil is registered at a Staffordshire School;
- All necessary evidence is provided to the LST to establish an offence under Section 444(1) or 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996 has been committed.
- Issuing a Penalty Notice would not conflict with another intervention strategy already in place or another enforcement sanction already being processed; and
- There is an assessment and plan which demonstrates that the use of a Penalty Notice is now the appropriate action to improve the child's school attendance. (Not required in the case of unauthorised leave of absence).

Targeted Services will respond to all requests within 10 school days of receipt or if part of on-going casework, and where satisfied that all of the relevant criteria are met, will:

- Issue an initial warning to the parent (s) of the possibility of Penalty Notice being issued;
- Set a period of 20 school days within which the pupil must have no unauthorised absence and give the parent (s) an opportunity to respond; this information will be included in the formal written warning letter. (Appendix B).
- After due consideration of the facts of the case, only issue a Penalty Notice through the post at the end of the 20 day period, if the required level of improved school attendance has not been achieved.

Where the Penalty Notice is requested from a school in response to a leave of absence (holiday) related unauthorised absence, or is in relation to an offence under section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, the formal warning letter and 20 day improvement period will not apply.

All Penalty Notices will be entered onto a database maintained by Targeted Services to assure that no duplicate Penalty Notices are issued.

Excluded Pupils

The parent of the excluded pupil must ensure that the pupil is not present in a public place at any time during school hours on a day that he / she is excluded, up to and including the first 5 days or, where that exclusion is for a fixed period of 5 days or less, any of the days to which the exclusion relates.

If the excluded pupil is present in a public place at any time during school hours on a school day specified above the parent commits an offence under section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and is liable, on summary conviction, to a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale.

Truancy Sweep

A Penalty Notice will only be issued after due consideration when all facts are known and the threshold for serving the notice has been met.

Information is given to anyone stopped on a truancy sweep, pupil and/or parent about the possible support and sanctions used to address non-attendance.

Procedure for withdrawing Penalty Notices:

Once issued a Penalty Notice may be withdrawn if the Targeted Services is satisfied that:

- The Penalty Notice was issued to the wrong person;
- The use of the Penalty Notice did not conform to this Code of Conduct.
- The Penalty Notice was delivered to the wrong address;
- The evidence demonstrates that the Penalty Notice should not have been issued, e.g. medical evidence;
- The exceptional circumstances of the case warrant its withdrawal.

Payment of Penalty Notices:

- Arrangements for payment will be detailed on the Penalty Notice; (Appendix C).
- Payment of a Penalty Notice discharges the parent's or carer's liability for the period in question and they cannot subsequently be prosecuted under other enforcement powers for the period covered by the Penalty Notice;
- Payment of a Penalty Notice within 21 days is £60 and payment after this time but within 28 days is £120; and
- The County Council retains any revenue from Penalty Notices to cover enforcement costs (collection or prosecuting in the event of non-payment).
- Payments will not be accepted in part or by instalments.

Non-payment of Penalty Notices:

Non-payment of a Penalty Notice will result in the withdrawal of the Penalty Notice and will trigger the fast-track prosecution process under the provisions of section 444(1), of the Education Act 1996.

Policy and Publicity

- Identifying information about Penalty Notices issued to particular parents or specific children should not be made public;
- Issuing of Penalty Notices as a sanction is included in the Authority's Attendance Policy;
- All school Attendance Policies should include information on the issuing of Penalty Notices and this will be brought to the attention of all parents;
- The LA will include information on the use of Penalty Notices and other attendance enforcement sanctions in promotional or public information material.

Reporting & Review:

Targeted Services will:

- report at regular intervals to the head teacher Forum groups (Primary, Secondary, Middle and Special). and Staffordshire Police on the deployment and outcomes of Penalty Notices;
- make regular reports to Staffordshire County Council on attendance matters which will include Penalty Notice use; and
- review Penalty Notice use at regular intervals and amend the Protocol as appropriate.

Representation

There is no statutory right of appeal against the issuing of a Penalty Notice.

The parent will be advised when they receive the warning that they may make representation to the Strategic Lead of Targeted Services setting out reasons why they should not have been issued.

ABSENCE CODES

Code	Description	Statistical meaning
/	Present am	Present
\	Present pm	Present
B	Educated off site	Approved activity
C	Other authorised circumstances	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending another establishment)	Approved activity
E	Excluded	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (not agreed or days in excess)	Unauthorised absence
H	Annual Family Holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved activity
L	Late (before registration closed)	Present
M	Medical / Dental	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved activity
R	Religious Observance	Authorised absence
S	Study Leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved activity
W	Work experience	Approved activity
X	DCSF # school closed to pupils	Attendance not required
Y	Enforced closure	Attendance not required
!	DCSF! Non compulsory school age absence	Attendance not required
#	School closed to pupils and staff	Attendance not required
*	DCSF Z pupil not on roll	Attendance not required
-	All should attend – no mark recorded	No mark