

Christ Church CE School
Attendance Policy
Spring 2015



Christ Church
CE Primary School
Regents Park
NW1 4BD

Christ Church C of E Primary School

Attendance Policy

CONTENTS

Mission Statement

Our School Aims

Introduction

Authorised absence

Categories of absence

Unauthorised absence

Sanctions

Christ Church C of E Primary School

Attendance Policy

Mission Statement

The Christian Faith is at the heart of our school community. At Christ Church we care for each other and learn together.

Christ Church is a small, caring school which is committed to a broad, balanced curriculum and to a continual raising of standards. We aim to contribute to the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical needs of every individual.

We are a Church of England school, with a strong commitment to the teaching of Christianity whilst supporting a multi-faith approach to the curriculum. We recognise, value and celebrate the rich cultural diversity that exists in our school.

The Christian ethos of the school is reflected in our positive, disciplined and calm atmosphere. We believe that effective learning takes place when children work in a purposeful and stimulating environment that supports a wide range of learning styles. Mutual respect between adults and children promotes excellent behaviour and well developed social skills. With this approach we seek to achieve high academic standards.

We aim to cater for each individual, taking particular account of any specific needs or abilities. We endeavour to ensure that all our children fulfill their potential and, within this context, we emphasise health and safety, enjoyment and achievement and the beginnings of responsibility for themselves and others. These skills will be carried forward to the next phase of education and throughout life.

The whole school community is committed to a collective responsibility for the implementation of the values inherent in this statement.

Our School Aims - Every Child Matters

The Ethos of the School

The school aims to provide a positive, disciplined, purposeful environment, within a Christian context. We aim to teach children to be caring, to exhibit good behaviour and appropriate social skills and to begin to take responsibility for themselves and others.

The Values of the School

The School aims to value every child and to contribute to the Spiritual, Moral, Cultural, Mental and Physical well-being of our whole school community. We value the diversity of our community and we aim to promote the health and safety of everyone.

The Standards of the School

The School aims to teach a balanced Curriculum and to ensure that each child fulfills his or her potential. We aim to provide teaching and learning of a high standard. We believe that this is achieved when pupils are highly motivated, enjoy coming to school, and are appropriately challenged.

Christ Church C of E Primary School

Attendance Policy

Date of policy: Spring 2015

Review date: Spring 2017

Attendance Policy

Introduction

At Christ Church School, all children on roll must attend school every day when the school is in session. We encourage and motivate all children to attend, helping them to understand the importance of being at school and their education, and work to develop positive attitudes. To this end we do all we can to put appropriate procedures in place to make sure parents, guardians, pupils and staff alike all participate in the important job of a happy and consistent educational experience, which includes knowing why they should be in school along with its benefits.

Children whose attendance is very good will be acknowledged and even rewarded through assembly presentations, stickers and even small prizes. Where there is a problem with attendance, this will be taken up in detail with the parents or guardians concerned

Where children are unable to be in school, for example due to illness, exclusion or emergency, we will make the best possible provision for them. This may include sending work home, operating a 'flexi school' model, and liaising with parents.

Under the *Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995*, the governing body is responsible for the school keeping an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and afternoon sessions of each school day. This register also indicates pupil absence and where there is cause for concern or further investigation.

This policy takes into account the school's legal responsibilities for attendance and absence reporting, as well as its obligations and further guidance as outlined in the Education Act 2002 and the Children Act 2004 (Every Child Matters).

This policy also deals with the legal duty of parents to ensure their compulsory school age child registered at a school attends regularly. Failure to do this is an offence under section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and can lead to a penalty notice and even prosecution by the local authority. If found guilty, the parent can be fined, persecuted or even imprisoned.

Where a child has been excluded from school, this is considered separately. In this instance, the educational experience continues through another form of delivery and remains the responsibility of the school. Work and guidance will be provided for the child until either the exclusion ends or the exclusion absence is concluded through a managed move or a permanent exclusion.

The school reserves its right, where appropriate, to share information and records with relevant authorities as required, such as the local authority, police, benefits agency and justice system. A failure by a parent to maintain their child's attendance at school could have further impact on interaction with other agencies and social welfare provision.

Authorised absence

A pupil's absence from school may be authorised by the school either *before* the date in question or in response to an advance request being made, or *after* the event (usually an emergency) with supporting paperwork or evidence.

Absence is only authorised in **exceptional circumstances** and must have minimal impact on the child's education.

Any request for pupil absence must be made in writing, and as realistically as possible in advance. This includes requests for an assumed 'acceptable' absence such as a religious festival.

The process for an absence authorisation request is detailed below.

Advance request

- To be made in writing up to one week before the actual date of the proposed absence
- Supporting paperwork to be provided at the same time to allow school the opportunity to consider the request fairly
- Decision will be returned within one week in writing

Emergency request

- Where an unforeseen event occurs for which absence from school may be required, a more flexible approach is taken
- Within seven days of the event, an appointment should be made with a member of the SLT and the request made in person
- A decision will be returned within three hours (after consultation with the Chair or Vice chair of Governors who will make the final decision)
- The meeting and decision will be noted on file
- (Where a child does not attend school due to an emergency, the post-event process should be followed)

Post-event request

- Parent or guardian to inform school by 10am on first day of absence
- Reason for absence and expected return date also to be outlined
- Written explanation to be provided within three days of child's return to school
- FAILURE to provide written explanation and supporting paperwork will result in a referral to the EWO (Education Welfare Officer) and other appropriate agencies.

- Sickness policy

The school may request (with the parents' permission) information from the child's GP of any absence due to sickness, including requesting paperwork or other evidence in support of the absence.

- Travel arrangements

Where there may be a question over travel arrangements, the matter may be referred by the school to a professional travel agency for an objective view. Any cost for rebooking or revising will be the responsibility of the parent or guardian concerned.

- Appeal process

Where a parent or guardian is dissatisfied with a decision returned by the school, an appeal may be made to the governing body.

- Appeal can only be made up to seven days before the requested absence date

- To be made in writing to the governing body, with copies of supporting paperwork
- Case will be considered and a decision returned within ten days

Categories of absence

Two categories of absence are defined by the governing body. When an absence request is made, the decision whether or not to grant it will involve categorising the absence along with whatever effect it may have on the child's education in both the short and the long term.

Category A:

(unlikely to exceed three days)

- short-term sickness or emergency
- recognised religious holiday or festival
- examination, audition or interview
- one-off medical appointment
- short-term 'social'
- funeral

Category B:

(greater impact, higher degree of planning or sanction)

- foreign travel or holiday (during term, around school holiday)
- long-term 'social'
- long-term sickness
- repeat medical appointments, procedures or interventions

Unauthorised absence

Where a child is not in school and no prior authorisation has been granted by the school, or notification made to the school by 11am of the first morning in question, an unauthorised absence will be recorded.

Failure then to ensure the child is back in school by the earliest possible date, and supply relevant evidence or paperwork in support of the post-event request, will result in sanctions as outlined below.

Sanctions

Absence can result in a referral being made to the EWO. This in turn could result in a penalty notice, a fine and a criminal record for the parent.

Truancy

Truancy is where a child wilfully and knowingly absents themselves from school. At Christ Church we encourage all our pupils to be with us when they are supposed to be.

Should truancy be detected, the following process is followed:

- Parents/guardians and LA Educational Welfare Officer informed
- Class teacher and Head meet with child and parent to discuss matter
- Appropriate course of action is set, with input from EWO
- Situation monitored and reported back after three months
- SLT decision on whether to extend monitoring or close matter

Definitions

Authorised absence

Unauthorised absence

Sanction

Categories of absence

Appeal

Truancy