



ATTENDANCE AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE POLICY/ Procedures

Primary Attendance and Leave of Absence Policy

Introduction

At St Christopher school we want to ensure that our pupils are able to take the fullest possible advantages of all that we have to offer.

We want every pupil to attend school every day that they can and hold the view that regular attendance is important to ensure the best possible learning outcomes for all of our pupils.

This attendance policy sets out what is expected so that this may be achieved. Our aims are to raise attendance and improve punctuality by

- Ensuring that all pupils have full and equal access to the best education that we can offer in order to increase learning.
- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued.
- Promoting opportunities to celebrate and reward pupils' successes and achievements.
- Raising awareness of the importance of good attendance.
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.
- Making parents/carers aware of their legal responsibilities.

The Government expectation is that all primary school children will achieve a **95%** level of attendance. This is deemed to be the level of attendance needed to give children the greatest opportunity to achieve the best of their potential, both academically and socially. Anything less than 95% attendance gives St Christopher School a cause for concern.

1 Legal Requirements, Local Authority Policy

- 1.1** Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.
- 1.2** Under the Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 (Amendment) Regulations 2013 the governing body is responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register.

2 Leave Of Absence

2.1 As from September 2013

There is **no automatic right to any leave of absence** and all Coventry schools are encouraged to adopt a policy of not authorising leave of absence in term time. Being mindful of this, only in very exceptional circumstances will leave of absence be authorised during term time.

- 2.2** Applications for leave of absence (Appendix 1) will need to be at least 3 weeks before the expected absence, and include the reason for the request. An appointment may, on request from the parent, be made to discuss the request and the reasons behind it face to face with the Head teacher but it should be noted that requests for leave of absence will be refused, except in an emergency or if exceptional. The school will reply in writing to the parent/carer within 5 working days.
- 2.3** Section 444(A) of the Education Act 1996 empowers the Local Authority to issue Penalty Notices for failure to ensure regular school attendance. **Parents or carers who take their children out of school in term time without school's authorisation, or, are late returning from an exceptional leave of absence, may receive a Penalty Notice fine of £60 per parent per child, which must be paid within 28 days.** After 28 days and up to 42 days this will increase to £120 per parent per child. Where a fine remains unpaid the Children and Families First Service will submit the case for prosecution in the Magistrates Court.
- 2.4** In line with national and local guidance the school would like to outline clearly when exceptional leave will definitely not be granted:-
- During transition time as a pupil is settling into the school.
 - Before or during Year 2 and Year 6 SATs or important revision periods leading up to these. (April to end of May)
 - If the pupil has attendance **below 95 %**.
 - If the pupil already has unauthorised absences within the previous year.
- 2.5** Pupils who fail to return within 10 school days of any agreed return date or after 20 days of unauthorised absence if exceptional leave of absence has not been agreed can be deleted from the School Register.
- 2.6** Please note that Penalty Notices can be issued after 10 unauthorised absences in a 12-week period – this is 10 registration periods, i.e. 5 days. Children who are late without good reason after 9.30am also receive an unauthorised absence mark unless there is an acceptable reason for lateness. This decision will be the Head teacher's decision.

3 Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Authorised absence

- 3.1** An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.
- 3.2** Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours; this will not be classified as an authorised absence.

Unauthorised absence

- 3.3** An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent. Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

4 Procedures

- 4.1** At St Christopher, registration is taken at 8.55 am. Registration closes at 9.00am
- 4.2** If a child is not present when the register is taken or they have not been marked as present by the admin team at 9.00am they are given a late mark. If a child arrives at school later than 9.30am they are given an **unauthorised absence** mark unless there is an acceptable reason. This decision will be made by the Head teacher.
- 4.3** The afternoon session begins at 1.00 pm for Year 1-6 and 1.15pm for Reception and the same procedures apply
- 4.4** The morning session at Nursery begins at 9.00 am and the afternoon session at 12.30 pm. Persistent absence in Nursery may result in your child being removed from the roll.

If a child is absent without notification

- 4.5** Where no notification (by phone, in person, by letter (Appendix 2) or email) has been received by 9.30 am a text message/call will automatically be sent to the parents/carers.
- 4.6** If there is no response to the message and there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the office staff will then contact the parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child.

Missing children

- 4.7** If a child is missing and their whereabouts are unknown, the school will follow the Local Authority procedures in taking immediate steps to locate that child as soon as possible.

5 Long-term absence through Child's Accident or illness

- 5.1** If a child is under the care of a hospital Consultant and a Consultant's letter has been produced, and the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or to be a repetitive absence, the school may contact the parent to request that they access support services so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school. The school has the right to request further information or contact the health department if required.

6. Repeated unauthorised absences

- 6.1** The school will contact the parent or guardian of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or guardians will be contacted to discuss the problem.
- 6.2** If a child's attendance falls below 90% the attendance team will send a letter (Appendix 3) to parents/guardians emphasising the importance of regular attendance and its concern with the current percentage.
- 6.3** If the situation does not improve, the school will then contact the Children and Family Services, who may visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or guardians understand the seriousness of the situation.
- 6.4** The Governors, supported by the Local Authority, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis. There is a fast track to court procedure for parents of pupils whose attendance falls below the expected levels.
- 6.5** A pupil becomes a persistent absentee (PA) when their attendance drops below 85% for any reason. Absence at this level is causing considerable damage to a child's educational prospects.

All pupils who are PA, or are considered to be on track to becoming PA, will be referred to the school's Children and Families Worker (Schools) and may also be referred to Children and Families First Services for targeted support.

If parents fail to engage with support and their child continues to have unsatisfactory attendance, a request may be made to the Local Authority to pursue legal proceedings.

7 Rewards for good attendance

Children will receive the following at the end of each term:

100% attendance in any term will receive a gold certificate for attendance.

98%+ attendance in any term will receive a silver certificate for attendance.

95% + attendance in any term will receive a bronze certificate for attendance.

Children in each year who have most improved attendance will receive a cert-if-icard.

The % attendance for each class will be included in the newsletter on a weekly basis. This will be shared in assembly on Friday and the class with best attendance will be awarded with five minutes extra playtime.

At the end of the year all pupils with 100% attendance overall will be awarded with a voucher. Pupils with 96%+ will be entered into a raffle and have the chance to win one of three prizes.

- * School recognises that some pupils with serious life threatening illnesses will have a low percentage attendance. Where this is the case they will not be penalised by their illness. In some cases they maybe awarded with a special attendance award, particularly if they have been committed to getting to school when they are well enough.

8 Monitoring

- 8.1** It is the responsibility of the governing body to monitor overall attendance and the attendance Head teacher will include report attendance outcomes on a termly basis. The governing body also has the responsibility for seeing that this is carried out. Governors will therefore examine the information provided in the report to satisfy themselves that attendance meets the required levels.
- 8.2** Class teachers are responsible for accurately recording daily attendance in their class. Administrative staff are responsible for taking action on first day contact.
- 8.3** The attendance team includes the administrator who is responsible for attendance within the admin team, the school family support worker, the inclusion leader and the Head teacher. Other leaders in school regularly liaise with the attendance team regarding attendance.
- 8.4** The attendance team monitor attendance on a fortnightly basis. They monitor any absence below 95% by ensuring that this does not rapidly decline and by looking for patterns. The team may act on attendance below 95% depending on past records. They swiftly act on any absence below 90%. This includes sending letters home. If a child is off school for three parts or whole weeks within one half term then parents will be sent a 'Broken weeks letter' (Appendix 4).
- 8.5** The team meet with the local Authority Children and Family First (CFF) team on a half termly basis. The CFF team work with the school in working together to improve attendance. Each concern is discussed within the context. Actions from this meeting may require school to take further actions, such as face to face meetings, requests to parents for further evidence if children are regularly absence through illness. Families may also be placed on a rapid improvement requirement of four weeks. The CFF and attendance team may also act by visiting the home.

- 8.6** The attendance team will send a letter (Appendix 5) to parents/carers when their child has been late three times within a half term period.
- 8.7** Ten lates per half term will result in the parent/carer being invited into to school to discuss a way forward with the family support worker. Any further lates within the half term will then be referred to the Head teacher who will request a meeting and consider making a referral to the CFF team.

10 Review

- 10.1** The policy will be reviewed by the governing body every two years, or earlier if considered necessary.

Ratified by Governors on

Review Date: March 2014

Next Review Date: September 2016

See Attached

- 1. Appendix 1- application for leave of absence**
- 2. Appendix 2 – unauthorised absence**
- 3. Appendix 3 – Under 90% attendance**
- 4. Appendix 4 – Broken week letter**
- 5. Appendix 5 – Late Letter**
- 6. Appendix 6 – Holidays in term time leaflet**

ST CHRISTOPHER PRIMARY SCHOOL



APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE FOR A SCHOOL PUPIL IN TERM TIME IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES ONLY

Important Information for Parents/Carers

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 no longer permit Head Teachers to authorise leave for holidays
- Head Teachers may grant leave of absence in exceptional circumstances
- If the exceptional circumstances are agreed, the Head Teacher will determine the length of the absence authorised
- Requests for Leave of Absence should be made before any arrangements confirmed or money committed
- If Leave of Absence is granted please contact school to discuss measures to minimise the impact of the absence on your child's academic progress
- This form **MUST** be completed by the parent(s)/resident parent/carer(s) before requests will be considered
- Please complete a Leave of Absence form for each child

Please note: Parents do not have any entitlement to take their child on holiday during term time.

I wish to apply for Leave of Absence from school to be granted to:

Name of Child: _____ Reg Group: _____

Dates of Proposed Absence: From: _____ To: _____

Reason for Proposed Absence – please provide reasons to support the application including evidence *(they can only be exceptional circumstances)* (see overleaf before completing)

.....
.....
.....

Total Days Requested On This Occasion

(For siblings) I have also applied to _____ School/Academy for leave of absence for _____ *(Insert child/children's name)*

Signature of Parent/Carer: _____ Date _____

For school use only

Previous leave checked: Y/N Attendance %: _____
Consistent with school policy/regulations: Y/N

Reasons for decision:

1st date of absence..... Expected date of return

Authorised: Y/N Head Teacher: Date:

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 which come into effect on 1st September 2013 state:

1. Head Teachers **shall not grant any** leave of absence during term time **unless** they consider there to be exceptional circumstances relating to the application.
2. The Head Teacher must be satisfied that exceptional circumstances warrant the granting of a leave of absence.
3. The Head Teacher will determine how long the absence should be and any additional absence will not be authorised.
4. Parents whose children have unauthorised absence may be subject to a Fixed Penalty Notice and/or prosecution.

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- Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full time education through regular attendance at a school or otherwise (ie home education) (Section 7 Education Act 1996)
 - If a child who is of compulsory school age, who is registered at school and fails to attend regularly, it is the parent that will be guilty of an offence (Section 444 (1) Education Act 1996)

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- *Children need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education*
 - *Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind*

Parents:

- a. The application must be made in advance by the parent(s) that the child normally resides with.
- b. Parents can be issued with a Fixed [Penalty Notice or prosecuted](#) for unauthorised absence including holidays.

We have a shared responsibility to ensure that the law is upheld and that your child achieves to his/her full potential. We look forward to your co-operation.

St. Christopher Primary School



Headteacher:

Mrs Clair Robinson

Allesley Old Road
Allesley
Coventry CV5 9JG
Telephone/Fax:: (024) 7667 5017
www.st-christopher.coventry.sch.uk

23 April 2023

«address_block»

Dear «salutation»

Re: «chosen_name» «surname», «year» «reg»

According to our records «forename» was absent from school on the date(s) shown below and we have not yet received an absence note from you.

Under government rules, we have to record the reasons why pupils are absent from school. Can you please complete the slip below as soon as possible and write the reason for absence against each date below. When completed please ask «forename» to return the reply slip to the school office.

If you wish to discuss your «son_daughter»'s absence, please come into school to see me.

Yours sincerely

School Admin

✂ -----

Pupil: «chosen_name» «surname» Class Teacher: «tutor»

Dates and sessions of absence:

«periods_of_absence»

Signature of Parent/Guardian:..... Date:

St. Christopher Primary School



Headteacher:

Mrs Clair Robinson

Allesley Old Road
Allesley
Coventry CV5 9JG
Telephone/Fax:: (024) 7667 5017
www.st-christopher.coventry.sch.uk

23 April 2023

«address_block»

Dear «salutation»

Re: «forename» «surname», «year» «reg»

I am writing to you with regard to attendance. As a school we are expected to closely monitor all our children’s attendance and I would like to remind you that it is your legal responsibility to ensure that your child attends school on a regular basis.

You may or may not be aware that attendance so far this school year is , this is in comparison to a national average of 95%. The lessons that are being missed are not repeated.

I cannot stress strongly enough that children need high levels of attendance if they are to make a good progress. In particular, the teaching of Mathematics and English needs children’s attendance to be consistently high.

It must be our shared aim to give our children the best possible opportunity to make good progress. By ensuring good attendance we are providing a good foundation for this to happen.

I do understand that there may well be special personal circumstances that have contributed to this and if you haven’t already made one of us aware of these, then please do so.

If you would like to discuss this matter or have any enquiries about the legalities of non-attendance, then I would be more than happy for you to make an appointment to discuss this with Tracy Penn.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

✂.....

«forename» «surname» «year_reg»

We/I «salutation».....

acknowledge receipt of this letter dated:

St. Christopher Primary School



Headteacher:

Mrs Clair Robinson

Allesley Old Road
Allesley
Coventry CV5 9JG
Telephone/Fax:: (024) 7667 5017
www.st-christopher.coventry.sch.uk

date

salutation
address block

Dear Salutation

Re: Student – Class

I am writing to you about STUDENT's poor level of attendance at school. STUDENT has had 3 broken weeks of attendance this term resulting in an attendance percentage of PERCENTAGE ATTENDANCE%. The Government's target level for a pupil's attendance is 95%. As you can see STUDENT's attendance falls short of where it should be which will be having an impact on STUDENT's standard of attainment.

I have enclosed a print off of STUDENTS's attendance certificate for you to look at.

Whilst the school fully understands that there may be valid reasons for your child being absent from school I felt it was important that you knew of STUDENT's poor attendance figure at present so that we can begin working together to try to improve it.

I would also like to bring to your attention the importance of keeping the school informed of why your child is absent from school by initially telephoning the school office and by sending a written explanation into school when your child returns. Unfortunately, any absences not covered by one of these actions will be marked as 'unauthorised' and this is the marking criteria taken into account for serving a fixed penalty notice on persistent absences.

I would like to thank you for your continued support and look forward to working together to make your child's experience of school a happy and productive one.

Yours sincerely,

MRS C ROBINSON
HEAD TEACHER

St. Christopher Primary School



Headteacher:

Mrs Clair Robinson

Allesley Old Road
Allesley
Coventry CV5 9JG
Telephone/Fax:: (024) 7667 5017
www.st-christopher.coventry.sch.uk

23 April 2023

«address_block»

Dear «salutation»

Re: «forename» «surname», «year» «reg»

According to our records «chosen_name» was late for school on numerous occasions during the last half term.

During the regular register check undertaken in conjunction with the Children and Families Worker for Schools, «forename»'s attendance was highlighted as a cause for concern. If there are any problems that you need to inform us of then please contact me.

Please make every effort to improve this situation before it becomes necessary for the school to make a formal referral to the Children and Families Worker for Schools.

May I remind you that it is very important for the continuity of «forename»'s education that «he_she» attend school regularly and that, as parent/carer, you have a legal responsibility to ensure this.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

✂.....

«forename» «surname» «year_reg»

We/I «salutation»

acknowledge receipt of this letter dated:

APPENDIX 5

