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1. Introduction

This policy is written with the mission statement and vision of our school in mind and this policy underpins our school ethos to:

- I. promote children's welfare and safeguarding;
- II. ensure every pupil has access to the full time education to which they are entitled;
- III. ensure that pupils succeed whilst at school; and
- IV. ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities when they leave school.

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence or later arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

2. Rationale

Regular attendance is important. Without it, the best efforts of teachers and school will come to nothing. Children need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Irregular attendance undermines the educational process and can lead to educational disadvantages.

Under Section 35 of the education Act 1944, a parent, an adult who has parental responsibility or an adult who has care of children of compulsory school age is required to ensure that they receive efficient full-time education. Parents are responsible for supporting attendance and taking seriously any problems that may lead to non-attendance.

3. Aims

- I. To demonstrate to pupils, parents and staff that the school values good attendance.
- II. To raise the educational achievement of all pupils in the school.
- III. To value the individual and be socially and educationally inclusive.
- IV. To promote regular school attendance at whole school level, class level and individual child level.
- V. To be consistent in the implementation of rewards and sanctions to promote good attendance



a. Promoting Regular Attendance and Punctuality:

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- I. Give parents/carers details on attendance in our newsletters
- II. Report to parents/carers annually on how their child's attendance with the annual school report.
- III. Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance be of concern.
- IV. Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements;
- V. Reward good or improving attendance and punctuality through the newsletter and class trophies.

Positive encouragement also helps to raise attendance and punctuality rates. Schools should recognise good and improving attendance levels of individual pupils and of class groups. A system of rewards can prove very successful in improving attendance and punctuality levels. Such rewards might include:

- VI. letters of congratulation and certificates for good attendance which may be taken home;
- VII. mentions in assembly;
- VIII. the giving of a cup for the class with the highest attendance.

4. Absence Procedures:

It is the parent's/carer's responsibility to inform the school of the reason for a child's absence as soon as possible. Parental contact on the first day of absence is the normal expectation.

If your child is absent the parent/carer must follow the following procedures:

- I. Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence before 9.20.
- II. Or call into school in person and report to reception.

On return to school following absence, the child should bring a letter on paper detailing the date of absence and reason for absence which is filed by the class teacher. If an absence is unexplained the school will write to parents for an explanation. **Appendix 1** This must be completed by the parent and immediately returned to school.

If your child is absent we will:

- I. Text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you as part of our first response procedure;
- II. Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Learning mentor if absences persist;



- III. Refer the matter to the Education Welfare Officer if attendance moves below 85%.

5. Understanding types of absence:

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

a. Authorised:

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, bereavement, interview at another school, medical/dental appointments (although we encourage you to make these outside of school times) emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

b. Unauthorised:

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not receive a reason or an explanation considered reasonable. This includes:

- I. parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- II. truancy before or during the school day
- III. children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- IV. shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- V. day trips and holidays in term time
- VI. working, oversleeping
- VII. Looking after brothers and sisters at home
- VIII. Non-urgent medical or dental appointments

When explanations for absence are not satisfactory, or when absence persists, parents should be invited into school to discuss any difficulties that may prevent their child(ren) from attending.

Please note that the decision to authorise absences rests with schools and not parents.

c. School refusers:

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with irregular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school then we will work with that family to understand the root problem. The learning mentor can use outside agencies to help with this, such as the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO).



d. Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling (85%) across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's education and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

The learning mentor will monitor all absences and the reasons given thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and we will inform the parents/carers immediately. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully we also combine this with academic tracking where absence affects attainment. We may also use circle time, individual incentive programmes, individual targets and participation in group activities around raising attendance.

6. End of the School Day

Children should always be clear about who is collecting them from school. All children should be collected from the playground at the end of the school day at 3.30 pm by parents/carers. Parents are asked to telephone the school if they are going to be late collecting their child so that the child doesn't get anxious. Nursery, reception and KS1 pupils are collected from their classrooms. All other children are escorted to the playground by their class teachers.

Children not collected on time are brought back into school. On collection a valid reason must be given for the late collection and the child/ren must be signed out. If your child is not collected at the end of the day, and you have not contacted the school to advise us, the office will endeavour to contact you at home and at work.

7. Independent Travellers

If children are independent travellers parents should complete an independent travellers form (APPENDIX 2) and keep the school updated of any changes. Pupils, who are independent travellers, are prioritised in the first response procedure. Any changes to normal pick up arrangements should be made in advance. Please only call the school office with changes of pick up arrangements in an emergency.

Parents of Independent Travellers (travelling without an adult), whose children are not attending school (due to illness for example) must contact the school by 9.00am with the reason. Failure to do so will result in the school contacting parents/carers at home or work to ask where the child is. If it is not possible to contact parents/carers the matter will be referred to the local Police. This is to ensure the safety of the child.

8. Exceptional Leave of Absence

Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence.



Headteachers should not grant leave of absence unless in exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in advance and the head teacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances which warrant the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school.

A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion. (School Attendance, Statutory guidance and departmental advice, August 2013)

Christ Church School does not approve general holidays to be taken during term time in accordance with the law. Parents wishing to take children out of school during term time must complete an exceptional leave of absence form (Appendix 3) and may need to speak to the Learning Mentor in the first instance.

When making a decision on whether a pupil may have leave during term time the Headteacher will consider the child's attendance record, attainment and ability to catch up on missed schooling.

9. Lateness

At Christ Church we feel that children arriving late in the classroom disrupt both their own and the learning of others. If a child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence. Good time keeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

The school day at Christ Church' is split into two sessions, morning and afternoon with a registration period at the beginning of each.

School starts at 08.55 am. Lateness is classed as any child coming into school after 08.55 am. All children arriving after must report to the main school office so they can sign the late book with a reason for the lateness. Children arriving after morning registration will receive a late absence mark unless they have a very good reason for being late.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Learning Mentor to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

We will encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our children and celebrate good class punctuality.

10. Monitoring of Attendance and Punctuality

All children are expected to have attendance of 95% or above.



Where a child's attendance is below 95% for any reason, including sickness, parents may be contacted by the Learning Mentor.

Where a child's attendance falls below 85%, or where there are concerns about a child's attendance patterns or lateness, parents will be asked to attend a meeting with the Learning Mentor which may include the Head Teacher (Letter 1).

The EWO has the authority to issue Fixed Penalty Notices to parents whose children have levels of unauthorised lateness which bring them below the Borough Target for attendance. This process will be initiated by a referral to the EWO from the Learning Mentor where there is a concern.

Any absence considered not to be a justified reason will remain unauthorised. A series of unauthorised absences will trigger a meeting with the Learning Mentor and a possible referral to the Educational Welfare Service.

The Head and Learning Mentor should be informed if any member of staff is concerned about a child's absences – both authorised and unauthorised, or regular late arrivals/collections.

A meeting may be arranged with the parent/carer, Head, Learning Mentor to discuss any issues that may be causing poor attendance or punctuality, and to discuss support where appropriate. Attendance registers are reviewed regularly.

Notes, records of telephone calls, and medical certificates should be kept by the member of staff who receives them. These notes should be kept in the class absence file and are regularly transferred to the child's individual school file at regular intervals. Please note that such documents may be required in legal proceedings.

11. When pupils return after a period of non-attendance:

How a child is received back in school after a period of poor attendance or unauthorised absence may crucially influence whether he or she is to achieve and maintain an improvement in attendance. The following recommendations are made:

- I. Gentle encouragement and support in organising missed work helps to avoid the pupil feeling overwhelmed. This should be carefully coordinated beforehand if possible by the class teacher
- II. Parents should be actively involved in their child's reintegration. Inviting the parents into school and deciding on joint strategies may achieve this.
- III. Older pupils might be encouraged to act as helpers, befrienders or mentors to help to promote re-integration.
- IV. Class teachers and tutors should promote within the tutor group a positive atmosphere which is welcoming to the returning pupil.



- V. Any internal support structure (for example, special needs provision, learning mentor) should be used flexibly.

12. The Education Welfare Officer

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the Learning Mentor in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties with attendance persist, the school may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer from the Local Authority.

He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorized absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court.

Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Local Authority.



APPENDIX 1 - ABSENCE LETTER

Date:

Dear Parent/Carer,

Re:.....

Under the regulations governing attendance registers, I have to account for any absence of every child. Our records show that on the date(s) listed below, your child was absent from school. We do not appear to have an explanation for the absence and need to complete our records. Would you therefore complete the reply slip and return it to school as soon as possible.

Parents are asked to telephone the school by 9.00am on the first day if your child is going to be absent from school.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Print
Headteacher

Reply Slip

Child's name:.....

Class:.....

Date(s) absent (to be completed by staff member)

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

Reason for absence (to be completed by parent/carer)

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

Signed:..... Date:.....



Appendix 2 – Independent Traveller Form

Independent Traveller Form

Christ Church C of E Primary School will be continuing the Independent Traveller Alert Scheme. The aim is to ensure that the school has a record of all children coming to school without an adult.

If your child travels to school without an adult, you must complete the attached form and return it to the school office as soon as possible. If an older sibling or other child is responsible for ensuring your child attends school, you must still complete the form. **Completing this form prioritises your child in the first response process.**

Please ensure your child does not arrive before 8.40am as the school cannot accept responsibility for children at this time. If your child is not attending school (due to illness for example), please contact the school before 8.30am to inform us. Failure to do so will result in the school calling your contact numbers. Please ensure that these numbers are kept up to date.

If we are unable to contact you, we will refer the matter to the local police.

-----Please tear/cut here-----

My child _____, in class _____

is an independent traveller. I will ensure that they do not arrive at school before 8.30am. I agree to contact the school by 8.30am if my child is not attending school.

Signed: _____ Print: _____

Mobile: _____ Home: _____

Work: _____

Emergency contact name and number: _____



Appendix 3 – Exceptional Leave of Absence Request Form

Christ Church Exceptional Leave of Absence Request Form

Child's Name:.....
Class.....

Name of Parent/Carer making request :.....

Dates requested:
.....
.....
.....

How many school days?.....

Return to school date:.....

Reason for requested absence:
.....
.....
.....

Parent/Carer
Signature:.....Date.....
.....

Please return completed form to the school office as soon as possible, prior to the requested absence.

OFFICE USE ONLY

Child's name:
.....
.....

Frequency of request: 1st 2nd 3rd

How many school days requested:.....



Current attendance:.....

Child's attainment:.....

Leave of absence authorised: Yes No

Headteacher Signature:.....



Appendix 4 - ATTENDANCE LETTER 1:

Date:

Dear Parent/Carer

«forename» «surname» «reg»

Further to our last letter concerning «forename»'s attendance. I am concerned that it remains below the 95% government requirement. I have calculated «his_her» percentage attendance as «percentage_attendance» % a figure that, I am sure you will agree, is a cause for concern. At Christ Church we expect «his_her» attendance to be above 95%.

Attendance is very important and research shows a clear correlation between achievement and attendance at school. Children need to attend regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

I would be grateful if you could meet with me and our learning mentor as soon as possible, to discuss how we could work together to support «forename» in an attempt to improve «his_her» attendance. This in turn will have a major impact on «his_her» progress in «his_her» studies in the coming months.

Consistent poor attendance will be reported to the Barnet's Education Welfare officer. This will be monitored closely and you could be asked to attend a meeting with the Education Welfare Officer.

I look forward to hearing from you within the next week. If you fill in the reply slip below, I will get back to you as soon as possible. Should you fail to attend this appointment I will have no option but to forward your details to the Education Welfare Officer from the London Borough of Barnet.

Yours Faithfully

Learning Mentor

Name of Child: _____ Class: _____

- I would like to arrange a time to speak to you about my child's attendance.
- Before School † Date: _____
- After School † Date: _____
- I have already spoken to you about my child's attendance †



APPENDIX 5 - Registration in Integris

What time is registration?

1. Registers need to be marked and saved:
 - a. every morning BEFORE 9.10am
 - b. every afternoon BEFORE 1.40pm
2. Pupils arriving BEFORE 9.10am (but after the rest of the class) still need to be marked in the register as present.
3. Pupils arriving AFTER 9.10am must be sent to the school office to sign the late arrivals book.

What code can I use for registration? **ONLY** USE THE CODES BELOW

Code	Meaning	Notes
/	Present	-
O	Absent	No reason yet provided for absence
C	Other authorised circumstances (normally exceptional)	Pre-authorised absence with letter from parents
M	Medical or dental appointments	
I	Illness	NOT medical or dental – remark/update absence code when a letter is provided after illness (e.g. O changes to I)

DO NOT leave the * symbol (i.e. blank) against ANY child's name.

Can I enter notes in Integris at registration? The notes symbol is next to the

pupils name -

1. The office will enter notes against a pupils name if they have been informed verbally of the reason of absence (e.g. phone call from parents).
2. TAs and teachers – enter notes against a pupils name if you have been informed verbally of the reason of absence (e.g. phone call from parent or face to face conversation with parent).

What do I do on PPA Days for registration?

Teachers **MUST** make sure they have spare class lists available to distribute to the person taking registration if they are unable to input the register directly into Integris.

ONLY change the registration code once you have received a letter then file the letter in class.
Remember to SAVE your registers

