

# Christ Church Primary School

## Our School Vision:

### ***‘Starting the journey well’***

As a Church of England community school, we  
**believe** we can impact God’s world for good,  
**grow** in learning, love, wonder and faith and  
**seek** together to flourish in the fullest way possible.

## Attendance Policy

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## Contents

Intent .....	2
Legislation and guidance .....	2
Roles and responsibilities .....	3
Recording attendance .....	4
Authorised and unauthorised absence .....	6
Strategies for promoting attendance .....	7
Attendance monitoring .....	7
Links with other policies .....	8

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### **Intent**

We are committed to ensuring every child has the best start to their education. Establishing good routines and expectations early on their journey will enable them to maintain their attendance as they progress through their education. Research shows children who attend regularly and on time are happier at school and achieve higher grades. We will do all we can to encourage good attendance, working with and supporting families to achieve this goal. By building strong relationships with our families we aim to address any emerging patterns of absence quickly.

### **Legislation and guidance**

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

## **Roles and responsibilities**

### **The governing board**

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

### **The headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school and promoting a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Conducting parent meetings to discuss attendance issues, and involving Tower Hamlets attendance officer as required
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

### **The Tower Hamlets Attendance Welfare Officer**

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Provides an annual attendance report to highlight concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with staff and parents to tackle persistent absence
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- The attendance officer is Lina Rahman and can be contacted via [office@christchurch.towerhamlets.sch.uk](mailto:office@christchurch.towerhamlets.sch.uk)

### **Class teachers**

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office by 9.15

## **School admin staff**

School admin staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Report concerns and address queries to the headteacher for more detailed support on attendance

## **Parents/carers**

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

## **Recording attendance**

### **Attendance register**

- We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register using Integris
- We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and at the start of the afternoon sessions.
- The correct codes, as listed in Appendix 1, will be used and kept up to date.
- Any amendments to the register will clearly state the reason for the amendment, date and the name of the person

We will also record:

- For pupils of compulsory school age whether the absence is authorised or not
- We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.
- Pupils must arrive in school by 8.55am on each school day.
- The register for the first session will be taken at 9.05am and will be kept open until 9.15am. The register for the second session will be taken 1.30pm and will be kept open until 1.45pm.

### **Unplanned absence**

- The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am, or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office.

- We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.
- If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.
- If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

## **Planned absence**

- Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. Parents should provide evidence of the medical appointment, and this will be noted in the register
- However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.
- The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

## **Lateness and punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code
- Punctuality is important as this provides a settled start to the school day. Regular late marks will lead to a parent meeting with the headteacher

## **Following up unexplained absence**

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may call at the residential address to identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer and MASH

## Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels;

- Children achieving 100% attendance each month will receive a certificate to take home. All children maintaining 100% attendance for the term will attend a celebration with the headteacher. And parents will be informed
- Where attendance falls below 95%, parents will be informed and asked to address and improve the attendance. If a child continues to show poor attendance the AWO will work with the family to identify steps to improve attendance
- Attendance figures and reminders will be reported to parents via the weekly newsletter.
- All families will be informed of attendance on annual reports, and at the end of the year.

### Authorised and unauthorised absence

## Approval for term-time absence

- The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.
- We define 'exceptional circumstances' as urgent family circumstances requiring immediate action
- The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.
- Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and before the absence begins. A Leave of absence form must be completed and submitted to the school office for consideration. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.
- Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:
  - Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections above)
  - Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
  - Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

## **Legal sanctions**

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority. Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

### **Strategies for promoting attendance**

- Children achieving 100% attendance each month will receive a certificate to take home. All children maintaining 100% attendance for the term will attend a celebration with the headteacher.
- Attendance celebrated in the Monday morning assembly with award of the attendance cup.
- Weekly newsletter records and celebrates figures.

### **Attendance monitoring**

## **Monitoring attendance**

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data monthly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

## **Analysing attendance data**

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns
- Evaluate the impact of interventions put in place

## **Reducing persistent and severe absence**

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

### **Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy



## Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance

<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day