



Attendance Policy 25–26

Person responsible for policy:	Matthew Wynne		
Approved by:	FGB	On:	September 2025
Next Review:	September 2026		
Version Number:	1		

Key Information for parents/carers

School starts at:	8.45am
School ends at:	3:15pm
School registers are closed after 30 minutes after which time, unless a satisfactory reason can be evidence, the absence will be unauthorised and could lead to legal interventions Registers close at:	9.15am
The Senior Leader responsible for championing attendance (Attendance Champion) is:	Mr Matthew Wynne
The Senior Leader responsible for championing attendance (Attendance Champion) can be contacted by e-mailing:	enquiries@christchurchsandwell.org

The school will always prioritise support over legal interventions. However, the school has a duty of care to inform parents that do not respond to the advice and support offered that legal interventions will be pursued

Introduction

The School Pupil Attendance and Punctuality Policy operates within the context of the school's mission statement. It is the aim of leaders to support every pupil to attend school each day to fulfil their academic and social potential. To realise this aim, the school will work in partnership with parents/carers, the local authority, and outside agencies to offer pupils support in maintaining excellent attendance. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. Improving attendance is everyone's business: effective communication and joined-up working are paramount. Excellent attendance is a pre-requisite of academic success. The school will ensure that parents are kept well-informed about the link between attendance and attainment and that when academic progress is jeopardised, this message is clearly reiterated, and support is offered to remove any existing or emerging barriers to attendance.

School leaders will ensure a calm, safe, supportive and stimulating learning environment where pupils want to be present and are eager and ready to learn.

The school will operate on a support first basis, giving each parent opportunities to address any issues before using legal intervention as a last resort.

Leaders should expect high standards, monitor patterns of attendance, listen to parents to understand barriers and facilitate and formalise support where necessary. Enforcement and the use of legal interventions should only be considered where there is evidence of a lack of parental engagement, and it is likely to encourage an improvement in attendance (except for unauthorised leave in term time). This is in line with the schools attendance support pack 2025 from Sandwell Local Authority.

The policy should be implemented alongside the Department for Education guidance document [‘Working Together to Improve Attendance’](#) and the school’s Behaviour.

Aims

- To provide clear guidelines about how the school promotes and attains high levels of pupil attendance and punctuality
- To ensure that all stakeholders understand the school’s expectations of themselves, and each other, and strive to attain them.
- To support the mission, vision and values of Christ Church C of E Primary.

Who is responsible for this policy?

- The Governors have overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with the relevant statutory framework.
- The senior leadership team has a specific responsibility to ensure the fair application of this policy and all members of staff are responsible for supporting colleagues and ensuring its success.

Definitions

‘Session’ is a term related to the recording of absence data – a school day usually has two ‘sessions’ (morning and afternoon), divided by a break, for which attendance must be recorded.

‘Authorised absence’ means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

‘Unauthorised absence’ is where the school is not satisfied with the reasons given for an absence. ‘Attendance Champion’ is the senior leader responsible for attendance.

Legal Duty

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 places a duty on parents/carers to ensure children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude and to any special needs the child may have. Parents/carers have a legal duty to ensure their child's regular attendance at the school where they are registered.

In exceptional circumstances the headteacher, with the consent of the parent, may consider a temporary reduced timetable. Sandwell Local Authority guidance must be followed including the referral being approved by the Senior Leadership Team.

A parent/carer who fails to ensure that their child attends school regularly, without good reason, is guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

School Commitment

- Everyone in school is committed to promoting good attendance and punctuality.
- All members of staff are made aware of how their role impacts attendance and punctuality as well as the expectations of them in ensuring consistent application of the policy and the use of absence codes. Mandatory training will support this commitment. The extent and regularity of the training will be proportionate to the role undertaken but the message will be clear that every member of staff can make a difference.
- The school will listen to and support pupils and parents/carers to achieve good attendance and punctuality, working closely with parents/ carers where absence is a cause for concern.
- The school strives for 100% attendance for all pupils. The whole school attendance target is 95% (25-26) and 96% (26-27).

Responsibilities

The Governors will:

- Devise and review the school's Attendance and Punctuality Policy.
- Set and review the school targets for attendance and punctuality.
- Advise schools on matters related to school attendance and support as required.
- Provide training for all colleagues to make an active contribution to improving attendance aligned to their role and responsibilities.
- Ensure that strategies are in place to promote and implement the Attendance and Punctuality Policy throughout the school and are understood by parents/carers.
- Review the effectiveness of the implementation of the policy in light of the school's termly reports.

The Headteacher will:

- Ensure the school ethos promotes and celebrates good attendance and punctuality.
- Ensure strategies are in place to promote and implement the Attendance and

Punctuality Policy throughout the school.

- Monitor the school's offer to ensure the delivery of a curriculum which is engaging and personalised to the needs of the pupils.
- Monitor data on attendance and punctuality via reports from the senior leader responsible for attendance.
- Determine, in collaboration with staff that have responsibilities for attendance, whether to authorise any proposed absences requested on the school's official request form.
- Provide the Governors with termly reviews on attendance and punctuality, including data about pupils who are persistently absent (90% or below) or severely absent (50% or below) as well as how many families are being monitored.
- Ensure that the Local Authority's Attendance Strategy is implemented within Christ Church CofE.
- Lead initiatives to promote the profile of attendance throughout the school including rewards that is valued by pupils. Interrogate and analyse data on attendance and punctuality on a daily, weekly, half-termly, and termly basis and prepare reports and delegate actions, as required.
- Oversee the arrangements for pastoral / attendance review meetings and quality assure any action plans.
- Comply with the Department for Education Statutory Guidance on Children Missing Education (CME).
- Co-ordinate the support plan for pupils returning to school after a prolonged absence.
- Co-ordinate the collation of all the documentary evidence required by the local authority for pursuing a legal intervention.

The Attendance Officer will:

- Monitor attendance on daily, weekly, half-termly, termly and annual basis, contacting parents/carers of pupils who have been identified as at-risk, to challenge absences and encourage an early return to school.
- Ensure data on attendance and punctuality is displayed in prominent places visible to pupils.
- Where appropriate, arrange home visits to home addresses and/or make a referral to the local authority's attendance service or contracted equivalent.
- Work with the senior leader responsible for attendance to maintain an up-to-date attendance risk register and punctuality risk register of high-risk pupils in designated year groups.
- Lead/delegate pastoral / attendance review meetings and develop an action plan involving the child, parent/carers and, where appropriate, other agencies for pupils whose attendance and/or punctuality falls below the expected level.

Teachers responsible for registering morning and afternoon sessions will:

- Provide regular advice, encouragement, challenge and support to the class as a whole and individually to pupils about the importance of regular attendance and punctuality using the data provided by the administrative team.

- Ensure that the statutory attendance register using the school's MIS system is taken at the start of the first session of the school day and once during the second session.
- Ensure any communications related to attendance and punctuality are provided to the administration team/attendance officer.
- Be alert and deal with any signs of disaffection which could result in poor attendance and punctuality and impact on learning and ensure this is recorded and communicated to the pastoral team via CPOMMs.
- Identify absence trends or concerns and raise with the relevant member of administration team/pastoral team staff

Administrative staff will:

- Monitor registration daily and ensure any missing marks are quickly resolved to ensure pupils are safe.
- Be the first point of contact for parents/carers and relevant school staff regarding pupil absence and appointments.
- Collate and issue all attendance and punctuality data on a daily, weekly, half-termly, termly and annual basis to the attendance officer/head of year and senior leader responsible for attendance.
- Maintain a record of all applications for leave of absence during term time and requests for issuing a penalty notice.
- Collate data to refer to the Local Authority for Leave of absences already taken and leave of absences.

Parents/Carers will:

- Be aware that it is an offence for their child to be absent from school without a valid reason.
- Be aware that only the school can determine if an absence from school is 'authorised'.
- Ensure their child arrives at school on time, dressed in full uniform, ready and equipped to learn.
- Inform the school if their child is unable to attend, including the reason for absence and the expected date of return.
- Ensure that all appointments, where possible, are arranged after school.
- Avoid arranging holidays during term time.
- Ensure that all requests for leave of absence during term time for exceptional circumstances are made by completing the 'Leave of Absence During Term Time Request Form'(see [Appendix 1](#)), where possible at least one month in advance ([See term time leave and holidays](#)).

Registration

The school will ensure that an attendance register is taken at the start of the first session of the school day and once during the second session. On each occasion, they must record whether every pupil is:

- present
- attending an approved educational activity
- absent; or

- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Appointments

- All appointments, where possible, must be arranged after school.
- Parents/carers should provide advance notice by way of a medical card and/or letter for any time off school required for medical appointments for the session to be authorised.
- Time away from school because of an appointment must be kept to a minimum. Pupils should attend appointments before and after school where possible.
- Children leaving school due to parents/guardians' medical appointments will be marked as unauthorised.

Pupils leaving school during the school day

Pupils are not permitted to leave school unescorted during school hours for any reason.

This is not limited to, when pupils are suspended or are unwell. Pupils should only be collected from school by an appropriate known adult, ideally a parent or carer. Over the telephone parental consent allowing for a child to walk home alone during school hours is not permitted.

If a pupil cannot be collected from school by an appropriate known adult or parent/carers, the school must make arrangements for the pupil to remain in school until the end of the school day. The care of the child must be handed over to an appropriate known adult, ideally a parent/carers.

Absences

- On each day of absence, parents/carers must contact school before the morning registration period begins, before 8:30am.
- Where no information has been received, the school will contact the parent/carers of the absent pupil to enquire about the absence.
- Parents/carers should contact school every day until the pupil returns to school or alternatively indicate the length of the absence and the reasons why it is known the pupil will be unable to attend e.g. recovering from an operation. In these circumstances a 'check in' date must be agreed when the absence will be reviewed.
- Failure to provide a reasonable explanation within 3 days of the start of the absence will result in the absence being marked as unauthorised and a safe and well check may be carried out.
- It is the responsibility of the headteacher, not the parent/carers, to decide whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. Such decisions will be made in accordance with DfE regulations and guidance.

Attendance absence data

The tables below equate percentage attendance to time missed from school.

Table 1: Attendance over one whole school year for each pupil

Attendance	Missed Days
100%	0
98%	Less than 4 days / 8 sessions
97%	Less than 6 days / 11 sessions (school target)
95%	9½ days / 19 sessions
90%	19 days / 38 sessions
85%	28 ½ days / 59 sessions
80%	38 days / 76 sessions

Table 2: Attendance over 5 years for each pupil

Attendance	Missed Weeks
85-90%	19 weeks = ½ year absence from school
80%	38 weeks = 1 full year absence from school

Persistent absence

- According to the Department for Education guidelines, a pupil will be considered as a persistent absentee if their attendance is 90% or lower (i.e. 10% or more sessions are missed).
- Any pupil who is at the persistent absence threshold or at risk of moving towards that threshold is placed on the Attendance Risk Register and given priority for intervention.
- Any pupil with attendance of 80% or lower, will be invited to be referred to the school nurse if the absences are medically related.

Severe Absence

- According to the Department for Education guidelines, a pupil will be considered as a severe absentee if their attendance is 50% or lower (i.e., 50% or more sessions are missed).
- Any pupil who is at the severe absence threshold is at serious risk of harm. There should be an intensive level of support, and where appropriate challenge, including the use of legal interventions to secure improvement.

Term-time leave and holidays

- The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2013 prohibits the headteacher of a school from granting leave of absence to a pupil, except where an advance application has been made by the parent/carer and the headteacher considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.
- The request for leave of absence, where possible, must be made at least one month in advance by completing the 'Leave of Absence During Term Time Request Form'
- The school will not consider the following to be exceptional circumstances:
 - o the availability of cheap holidays
 - o the availability of the desired accommodation
 - o an overlap at the beginning or end of the school term
 - o the working pattern or availability of parental holiday entitlement
- Where a leave of absence is granted, the headteacher will decide the number of school days a child can be away from school, and the agreed date of return to school.
- Where a leave of absence is not granted or where the child fails to return to school by the agreed date following approval of leave of absence, then the headteacher will start the 'Leave in term Time' process.

This means if there are 10 sessions of unauthorised absences (5 days) then a referral will be made to the Local Authority, which may result in a fine.

Support first - where attendance is a concern, but not related to leave of absence

If a child's attendance becomes a concern through routine monitoring, the attendance champion will look into it more closely. A 'concern' is classed as:

- 3 -½ days absence in a half term or 5 days in a term
- Attendance below 93% (after Autumn 1)
- 10+ rolling absences in 10 rolling weeks

Stage 1: The Informal meeting If any of the above are reached, the attendance team will invite parents/carers to an informal meeting to discuss concerns.

They will:

- Discuss barriers to attendance
- Look at attendance data
- Offer Early Help
- Signpost to agencies.
- Created an agreement to say there will not be any more authorised absences in a set period.

Stage 2: The Formal Attendance Meeting (FAM)

If one more authorised absence occurs after the informal meeting, then it will proceed to Stage 2.

There will then be a form to complete and an attendance contract to work through and sign. The contract must be agreed and signed by both parents/carers where applicable to last a period of one term.

Stage 3: Enforce

If 10 further sessions of absence (5 days), after the FAM, there will then be a referral to the Local Authority to start legal proceedings.

Legal Interventions

Details of the full range of legal interventions available to school can be found in the DfE's ['working together to improve attendance'](#) statutory guidance. Christ Church CofE primary follows the Sandwell LA guidance.

Vulnerable Pupils

The school recognises that some groups of pupils are more vulnerable to poor attendance than others. These groups should be carefully monitored, and intervention should be targeted where additional support is required.

Pupils with medical needs, special educational needs and/or disabilities, young carers, pupils with a social worker or in a receipt of the pupil premium are likely to require more targeted support than pupils outside of these groups. However, schools must never assume that because individual pupils do not belong to these groups that additional support will not be required, and colleagues must remain vigilant.

When a pupil with a social worker is absent without good reason, the social worker should be informed of unauthorised absences and support improved attendance. Where schools are considering the use of legal interventions, the view the relevant social worker should be considered although the final decision will be taken by the school in liaison with the local authority school attendance service.

Removal from school roll

Schools must only remove compulsory school-aged children from the roll of the school under certain circumstances defined in Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. If children removed from roll are not statutory school age their name, date of birth and address will be shared with the Local Authority, no official paperwork will be completed

For removal from roll for elective home education (EHE), schools must follow the LA's EHE

guidance and return the completed checklist and await approval from the LA's admissions and exclusions team before removing a child from the roll of a school.

