



Introduction and aims

This is the agreed vision statement of Christ Church School:

Jesus, The Good Shepherd, promises 'life in all its fullness'. (JOHN 10:10)

At Christ Church we believe every child and adult in our school should be able both to experience life in all its fullness now and to aspire to life in all its fullness in the future.

We all seek to inspire life in all its fullness for all in the school through:

- ensuring a **safe, welcoming and inclusive environment** for children and adults, where everyone is valued and has the opportunity to contribute and flourish;
- the pursuit of **academic excellence** in all areas, with a determined desire for each child to make the best possible progress as a result of high aspirations, hard work and the development of a personal love for learning alongside the highest-quality teaching and support;
- offering the widest possible **breadth of curriculum** both within school and through extra-curricular activities, enriched by the vast range of opportunities locally and across London;
- **creativity and positivity** in all we do, mixing innovation with tradition;
- planned and spontaneous opportunities for **spiritual development** through reflection, discussion and harnessing curiosity, as well as the provision, at the heart of our school life, of daily opportunities for prayer and worship;
- the development and modelling of **strong, positive and loving relationships**, with peers, amongst the school community and in the wider community;
- the promotion of **respect and compassion for ourselves and for all others**, by cultivating positive emotional and physical well-being, by celebrating the diversity within and outside our school and by encouraging all of us to be empowered global citizens, guided at all times by the example of Christ's compassion alongside the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- engendering a **sense of community and responsibility** for others and for our local and global environment and enjoying working together towards our common goals and expecting and valuing contributions from all.

All our work in school is also guided by our Christian values of **compassion, courage, creativity, community** and **simplicity**.

In line with our vision and values at Christ Church, the aims of our attendance and punctuality policy and practice are:

- to ensure the highest possible attendance and best possible punctuality for all pupils so that they can be in school to experience all we have to offer at school and to make as much progress as possible in both their academic and personal development;
- to develop in all children the positive habits of committed attendance and good punctuality;
- to work constructively and supportively with parents and families in matters relating to attendance and punctuality, having regard both to the statutory guidance and legal framework regarding school attendance and to the individual circumstances of each family, including the diverse nature of our school population;
- to enable children to build and maintain positive relationships with peers – if children are repeatedly absent or late they find it more difficult to make and maintain friendships in school.

Legal framework

This policy and our practice regarding attendance and punctuality at Christ Church School operates in line with: The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations (2016 and earlier versions), Education Act 1996, Education Act 2002, The Children Act 2004, Children Missing Education statutory guidance (2016) and School Attendance: guidance for schools (2018)

Attendance and punctuality procedures and monitoring

Registers

Registers are taken in each class at the beginning of each morning and each afternoon. The school day begins at 8.50 and registers are taken by 8.55am each morning. Children arriving after 8.55am will be marked late, but present, for the morning session. If a child arrives after 9.05 this may be recorded as an unauthorised absence. Afternoon registers are taken between 1pm – 1.05pm in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 classes and between 1.30 – 1.35 in Years 3-6. Children who arrive during any session must be signed in by an adult in the school office and a reason provided for their lateness.

Children who leave school for any reason during the school day must be signed out by an adult in the school office and a reason provided for them leaving school.

Absences

Parents/carers should telephone the school the school office to report their child's absence before 8.50am in the morning, with an explanation as to why the child is absent. A message can be left on the school answer phone. If the school does not receive any explanation of a child's absence the school office will telephone the parents/carer on the first day of absence to ask for an explanation. If no contact can be made with any of the emergency contacts that have been provided, in exceptional circumstances a member of staff may go to the house to attempt to make contact and find out the circumstances of the absence.

Monitoring

Registers will be monitored on a regular basis by senior staff in the school and by the Local Authority's Educational Welfare Service. Contact will be made by the school with parents whose children's attendance is causing concern and parents will be asked to attend meetings in school to discuss their child's attendance and how the school and parents can work together to support higher attendance.

The Governors Behaviour and Safety Committee also monitors whole school attendance and the attendance of different groups in the school through termly reports from the head teacher.

Work with other agencies regarding punctuality and attendance

Where necessary, the school will work with the Local Authority's Educational Welfare Service and/or Safeguarding and Social Care Service to support parents with ensuring good attendance for their children.

Appointments in school time – including medical and dental appointments and drama and music examinations

We do not allow or authorise absences for appointments in school time – parents should arrange appointments out of school time. In exceptional circumstances, some specialist appointments, such as hospital appointments, may not be able to be rearranged and may be authorised. The school office should be notified of any appointments in advance.

Exceptional leave

We adhere to both the Camden Policy on Exceptional Leave and the national School Attendance: Guidance for Schools (2018) document which clearly state that term time absences can only be authorised in **exceptional circumstances**. Parents should write at least two weeks in advance to the Head teacher to request any period of exceptional leave. The head teacher will then consider the request taking into account whether there are exceptional one-off circumstances, whether requests have been made in the past and the child's attendance record in making a decision about whether to authorise any absence. The head teacher will then write back to the parents to inform them of their decision. If a child leaves earlier or returns later than the agreed dates then the head teacher reserves the right to mark the whole period as unauthorised.

Parents should be aware that from Reception if a child is taken out of school without authorisation the matter will be referred to the Educational Welfare Service. Under Sections 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996 the Education Welfare Service may issue a Penalty Notice. The fine for a Penalty Notice is £60 for each parents and for each child if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid between 21-28 days after which the matter may be taken to Court. The Education Welfare Service has the option of taking the matter directly to Court without first issuing a Penalty Notice.

More than two weeks of unauthorised absence may result in the Head teacher removing the child's name from the school roll.

Promoting good attendance and punctuality

The school has the following strategies in place to promote good attendance and punctuality:

- Promotion of a school target of at least 96% attendance
- 100% attendance certificates given out at the end of each term and each full year
- Regular information in communications to parents about the importance of good attendance (see Appendix 1 for example)
- Regular reminders for children about the importance of good attendance and punctuality e.g. in assemblies
- Attendance figures reported to all parents in end of year reports
- Information about the importance of good attendance and punctuality in meetings for parents who are new to the school
- Phone calls/letters to parents whose children have improved attendance over a period of time

Improving attendance and punctuality of individual pupils

The school has the following strategies in place to improve the attendance and punctuality of individual pupils:

- Individual discussion regarding attendance/punctuality in parents evenings
- Head teacher/senior staff letter/phone call to parents whose children have attendance below 90% - periodically through year
- Head teacher/senior staff meeting with parents whose children have concerning levels of attendance
- Close tracking of attendance of these pupils
- Phone calls/emails to specific families if they have not informed us of reason for absence
- Involvement of school nurse in discussion re whether children are well enough for school
- Request for medical documentation for any periods of illness

Monitoring and review of this policy

The implementation of this policy will be monitored by the Senior Leadership Team and the Governors Behaviour and Safety Committee. It will be reviewed at least every three years to ensure it is an accurate reflection of current best practice.

March 2019



Christ Church School

Attendance – why every single day at school matters

Dear parents and carers,

Attendance at Christ Church is generally good but it could be even better and I would like to continue to work with parents to improve attendance as much as we can over this year. Please take a few minutes to read this letter and to see if there are any ways you can improve your own child's attendance.

Every day is important in helping to move your child's learning on, helping them to make progress and to make, build and maintain their friendships. We know that children who miss time at school find it harder to get back into the learning when they return, they can make less progress than their peers and they find it more difficult to fit back into games and friendships in the playground.

Every day your child spends at school is valuable – even the days at the end of the year when they get to have fun with their friends and teachers and get ready to move on to a new year group!

It is also your legal duty as parents to ensure your child is in school if they are fit to be here.

Attendance at Christ Church is good....

A big well done to the 52 children who took home certificates for 100% attendance in the summer term - this is well above the figure who had 100% attendance last summer. Well done in particular to the eight children who managed an impressive **100% attendance for the whole year last year.**

The whole school managed attendance of 96.12% over the whole year.

But attendance at Christ Church could be better still

96.12% attendance for the whole school last year was very similar to the previous year's figure despite our focus on attendance last year and this is why we are continuing our efforts this year. This was the lowest whole school attendance figure for five years. Many local schools manage over 97%. Attendance really fell again at the end of last academic year and it also suffered unavoidably with the chicken pox outbreak in the Spring term. It would be great to see attendance increase over this coming year.

Ten children across the school had attendance figures of under 90% (for varying reasons), which Ofsted categorises as persistent absenteeism, but there were also many, many children with attendance figures of 91-95%. If your child was present for only 91% of the time last year this means they missed the equivalent of nearly half a day of teaching and learning every week or nearly three and a half weeks of school in total. If your child was present for only 95% of the year they missed the equivalent of half a day of teaching and learning each fortnight or two weeks of school in total over the year.

Why are children absent and how can school and parents work together to reduce this?

Illness – 69% of all our absences are when children are ill

Children get ill and if children are ill they should be at home being looked after and getting better! Please continue to make sensible judgements about whether your child is well enough to be in school, but please don't keep them at home for every cough or sniff and, when they are sufficiently recovered, please send them back in to school, even if it is a Friday!

Medical and dental appointments – 5% of all our absences are for medical/dental appointments

Please try to arrange all appointments you can outside school time. We understand that specialist appointments or hospital appointments may be inflexible but a standard dentist or optician's check-up can and should be booked for outside school hours. Teachers and school staff members have to manage this too!

Authorised and unauthorised holiday absences – 16% of our absences are for family holidays

We have a wonderfully diverse and international population at Christ Church School with children’s families spread all over the world. I have always been sympathetic to requests for authorised absence for important one-off occasions, such as weddings or other family events, and I do understand that some of these events take place overseas and involve travel time.

But...

- please do all you can to limit the time your child will miss school for these one-off occasions
- please do not ask for authorisation for annual, repeated holidays overseas
- please make use of the 13 weeks of school holidays - a need to fit in with a parent’s work schedule is not sufficient reason for a holiday absence to be authorised
- please be aware that I will take into account whether there are exceptional one-off circumstances, whether requests have been made in the past and the child’s attendance record in making a decision about whether to authorise an absence

Thank you to the parents who really try to plan their holidays around school terms and who agonise about asking permission for a one-day absence to attend a family wedding or to visit a sick relative. Your support in trying to make sure your child is in school for as much time as possible will really help them to make the best possible progress.

The remaining 10% of absences were for a range of other authorised reasons including religious observances, visits to schools, bereavements or other exceptional family circumstances and participation in sporting/arts competitions and events.

Please think carefully about whether there is anything you can do to improve your own child’s attendance at school this year. If your child was at the school last year, their full year attendance figure is included below for your information. Some parents told us that they thought we stopped counting attendance when the reports came home – this is certainly not the case! If you have any queries about this figure please do ask Mrs Connock in the school office.

Every day in school now is valuable in supporting your child’s learning and friendships. We also want children to develop the attitude that good attendance is important for their future, whether later on in secondary school or in the world of work.

I have asked Ms Miller to arrange to meet with parents of all children who had a low level of attendance last year and she will be in touch with these families to arrange this. I would also be very happy to meet with any parents who would like to discuss their own child’s attendance or these issues in general – please arrange an appointment with the school office.

With many thanks for your support in working towards the highest possible attendance for every child,

Katy Forsdyke
Head teacher

Name of child: _____

2017/18 full year attendance:

Numbers of days absent	% of the year present	98% or above = Excellent 96.5% - 98% = Good 94% - 96.5% = Satisfactory 90% - 94% = Low Under 90% = Very low	Unauthorised absence %	Numbers of days late
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