



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.

Our vision is brought to life 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.

Regular and punctual attendance is essential for effective learning and children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Christ Church School intends to maintain its high levels of attendance each year. Our current target is for at least 96.5% attendance for all pupils.

The head teacher leads the school's work on promoting and monitoring good attendance and punctuality, with support from other senior staff. The school has a culture of high attendance which is the responsibility of all staff

members, parents and pupils themselves and which is underpinned by the procedures, expectations and roles set out in this policy document.

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 DfE Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2022).

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, between 1.20 – 1.25pm in Years 5 and 6 and between 1.30 – 1.35pm in Years 3 and 4. 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 or email 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 and/or email the parents/carer on the first day of absence to ask for an explanation. If, after repeated attempts, 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 Pupil Attendance 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.

School governors and staff have agreed that school staff will monitor attendance at least termly, and usually half termly, with closer scrutiny of the attendance record of any pupils with attendance below 93% at any monitoring point in the year. A pupil with attendance below 90% at any point will be monitored even more closely and may warrant involvement from the LA Pupil Attendance Service – these pupils are 'persistent absentees'.

The Governors Behaviour and Safety Committee monitors whole school attendance and the attendance of different groups in the school through termly reports from the head teacher. These reports include anonymised information about individual pupil attendance and any actions taken and the impact of these actions.

Work with other agencies regarding punctuality and attendance

Where necessary, the school will work with the Local Authority's Pupil Attendance Service and/or Safeguarding and Social Care Service to support parents with ensuring good attendance for their children. (See Appendix 3 for information about referrals to the LA Pupil Attendance Service.)

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.

Term dates

The school's term dates are agreed and published in advance. Term dates are available from the school office, on the school website and are shared with parents whose children are joining the school. Any changes to term dates or INSET (staff training days) will be advised to parents in advance in the school newsletter. Whilst Governors consider

the term dates of other local schools when setting the term dates for Christ Church School, there may be differences if you have children attending more than one school. Parents should check term dates carefully.

Exceptional leave

We adhere to both the Camden Policy on Exceptional Leave and the national DfE Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2022) 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 the 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 Local Authority Pupil Attendance Service. Under Sections 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996 the Pupil Attendance Service (previously Educational Welfare Service) may issue a Penalty Notice. The fine for a Penalty Notice is £60 for each parent 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 Pupil Attendance 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.

Children Missing Education (CME)

The school has a duty to report any children believed to be Children Missing Education in line with the 2016 Children Missing Education DfE statutory guidance. There is more detail about our policy and practice in this area in our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

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 96.5% attendance
- 100% attendance certificates given out at the end of each term and each full year, (with acknowledgement and sensitivity that there are many authorised and acceptable reasons why pupils could not be able to attain this)
- Regular information in communications to parents about the importance of good attendance (see Appendix 1 for examples)
- Regular reminders for children about the importance of good attendance and punctuality e.g. in assemblies, as part of whole school goals and resolutions, and including discussion about the range of reasons why good attendance and punctuality is important
- Attendance figures reported to all parents in end of year reports (see appendix 4) with information about 'what is good attendance' shared
- 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:

- Training for all staff on the importance of promoting good attendance and punctuality for all: promotion of the culture that attendance is 'everybody's business'.
- Individual discussion regarding attendance/punctuality in parents' evenings or informally at other times with class teachers
- Head teacher/senior staff letter/email to parents whose children have attendance below 93% or 90% - periodically through year or regular late arrivals (see Appendix 5 for example letter/email)
- Head teacher/senior staff meeting with parents whose children have concerning levels of attendance or punctuality. These meetings/phone calls include
 - discussion of reasons for absence and any patterns of absence,

- discussion of the impact that absence/lateness can have/is having on the pupil,
- offers of support to the family to enable higher attendance or better punctuality
- reminder that school will closely monitor absence/punctuality for this pupil going forward
- where relevant, discussion of referral to LA Pupil Attendance Service
- Close tracking of attendance/punctuality of these pupils, including office staff briefed to let senior staff know of any further absences of these pupils
- Development, implementation and monitoring of an action plan with parents (and LA Pupil Attendance Service where relevant) for persistent absentees
- 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 – referral can be made for school nurse support
- Request for medical documentation for any periods of illness
- Senior staff on gates at the beginning of the day to provide reminders and support for parents who arrive late, informally on a daily basis and more formally over punctuality focus weeks (Appendix 2: late arrival information leaflet handed out to parents over the focus weeks).
- Referral to the LA Pupil Attendance Service for advice and support with potential legal sanctions (Appendix 3)

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.

February 2023

Appendix 1 – Example general communication with parents regarding attendance

New year, new start! Attendance and punctuality

Please be on time for school every day – the bells ring at 8.50am and children should be in the playground ready at this point, not rushing in the gate or up the hill!!

Well done to the 47 children who received a 100% attendance certificate for the summer term! Our attendance level was back to a good standard in the summer term and our target for next year is at least 96.5% Please make any appointments outside school time. Your child should be in school every day they are well to support learning and friendships.

September 2022 newsletter

On time every day, please

School starts at 8.50am every day and learning starts straight away, when, in our 'morning work', classes are often recapping and consolidating previous learning. If your child arrives just five minutes late every day, this soon adds up to well over an hour of learning time lost over three weeks. Children arriving late also miss the social start to the day with their friends in the playground and often miss out on the information about the routine and plan for the day ahead. There are always some genuine reasons for the odd late arrival, but being just five minutes late every day disrupts your child's learning, their class, staff members and can be avoided by setting off earlier or walking faster! Please make every effort for your child to be at school before 8.50am every day in 2023!

January 2023 newsletter

September 2019 letter to all parents:



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. 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 external 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: _____

2018/19 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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LATE ARRIVAL AT SCHOOL

School starts at 8.50am

When your child arrives late at school, they miss the teacher's instructions and **the start of their learning**.

Your child may **feel embarrassed** at having to enter the classroom late and find it **harder to settle** into the school day.

This **will** disrupt their learning.

Punctual arrival at school shows commitment to your child's learning and education and helps your child develop the important life skill of being on time.

Children have 190 school days a year, with an average of 5 hours learning per day. This means that if a child is late for only 5 minutes per day, they will miss over 3 days a year as follows:

Minutes late to school per day	Equivalent of missing:
5 minutes	3.2 school days a year
10 minutes	6.4 school days a year
15 minutes	9.6 school days a year
20 minutes	12.8 school days a year

To help your child to get into school on time each day:

- Prepare your child's school bag and uniform the night before
- Set your alarm to give plenty of time for a good breakfast and travel to school
- Allow extra time for delays in traffic or on public transport
- Ask school staff for support if we can help in any way, including by using our daily breakfast club.

Appendix 3 – referrals to the LA Pupil Attendance Service

Extract from Camden Attendance Policy: Legal sanctions and actions

The school will make every attempt to contact the parent or carer by telephone and in writing. In the first instance the school would invite them to discuss the problem. If this is unsuccessful the school may give warning of referral to the LA. A referral may be made to the LA under the following circumstances:

- 10 days of continuous unauthorised absence
- More than 10 days of authorised leave
- A term time holiday taken without permission
- A pupil who has been more than 10 minutes late (after the close of registers) on a minimum of eight occasions in a rolling eight-week period.
- 95% or less attendance and with 10% or more unauthorised absences

Penalty notices are issued to each parent or carer for each of their children, for example two parents with three children would receive a total of six penalty notices; one parent with two children will receive a total of two penalty notices. Each penalty notice is £60 if paid in the first 21 days, from days 22 to 28 the fine doubles to £120 for each penalty notice. The Pupil Attendance Service asks parents to note that it is not possible to pay these fines by instalments or lower the cost when they have increased, or to just fine one parent. Payment can be made online and instructions on how to pay are included on the penalty notice. Any problems with paying online should be discussed as early as possible with the Pupil Attendance Service by ringing 020 7974 7161.

If a penalty notice is not paid or the Pupil Attendance Service feels that that the level of absence warrants court action, the local authority will arrange for a court hearing. There are a range of sentencing options available to the magistrate including the maximum penalty of a fine of up to £2500 per parent for each offence as well as the possibility of up to three months in prison.

Appendix 4 – information about and ‘grading’ of attendance level in annual reports to parents

Attendance:

Numbers of days absent up to June 10 th 8	% of the year present 94.9%	98% or above = Excellent 96.5% - 98% = Good 94% - 96.5% = Satisfactory 90% - 94% = Low Under 90% = Very low	Unauthorised absence % 0%	Numbers of days late 0
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Christ Church Primary School, Hampstead

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Head teacher: Katy Forsdyke



5th January 2023

Dear X,

X - current attendance – 89.92%

At the end of the first term of this academic year, we have undertaken a full review of our registers and children's attendance levels until the end of December 2022. I am writing to all parents whose children have attendance figures below 93% to make parents aware of this and to ask for your support in increasing your child's attendance over the remaining terms.

I am well aware that there are many different and legitimate reasons for absence, including illness, and that you have been keeping school informed about any absences. However, our attendance target for all pupils is over 96% so a figure that is currently under 93% is a concern and attendance of under 90% means that your child has missed more than a week of the first term of the year. I am attaching your child's attendance record for your information.

Please do all you can to ensure that X's attendance is as high as possible over the coming terms. We know that high attendance supports both academic progress and social interactions with peers.

The school and Camden's Pupil Attendance Service will continue to monitor all pupils' attendance closely. Thank you very much for your ongoing support with this and do please get in touch if there is anything the school can do to support X's attendance.

Kind regards,

Katy Forsdyke
Head teacher

Attendance of under 90% means your child has missed the equivalent of half a day every week so far this year.