



## Attendance Policy

**This Policy applies to all sections of the school including the Early Years Foundation Stage.**

**Covid-19 Amendment** Please be aware that 'Principles' and 'Lateness' described below are currently subject to alteration due to the staggered start and end of day required to comply with Government guidelines. These are subject to review following careful monitoring of the national pandemic.

**Quarantine and Isolation** St Christopher's is obliged to follow government guidelines concerning quarantine and track and trace procedures with regards to families experiencing Covid-19 contact or symptoms, in addition to families returning from countries identified as posing a risk. Please contact the school for up to date directions.

### Procedures

- If a child is unfit for school, parents should contact the school on the first day of absence and on each subsequent day, in person, by email or by telephone, preferably before 8.50am, leaving a message on the answerphone if necessary. If no message is received by 9.30am, the School Secretary, at the request of the child's teacher, will contact parents by telephone to establish the safety of the child. Details are recorded by the School Secretary on the School's MIS system. If no contact has been established, the Headteacher will be informed.
- On the child's return to school, parents should explain the reason for absence in writing in the Home/School Book. This will be initialled when seen by the class teacher.
- Reasons for absence must be discussed with the school each time. Leave may be granted in an emergency, e.g. bereavement, or for medical appointments which are unavoidable in school time, providing a written explanation is received.
- If there is concern about the welfare of a child, the Headteacher will follow the procedures set out in the school's Child Protection (Safeguarding) Policy.
- **After-School Care**  
If a child is expected in After-School Care and does not attend, the Headteacher will be informed immediately (see procedure in Lost or Missing Child Policy) and an investigation will take place. If a parent fails to notify After-School care of a change of arrangements a 'strike' will be issued.

### Introduction

Good attendance is essential if pupils are to take full advantage of school and gain the appropriate skills which will equip them for life. St Christopher's aims to achieve good attendance by operating an attendance policy within which children, staff and parents can work in partnership.

To this end, the school will monitor attendance and ensure quick and early intervention if a problem is identified. When an unacceptable level of absences has been identified with no satisfactory explanation, a courtesy letter will be sent (see Appendix A)

All staff will encourage punctuality and good attendance and will liaise with home and others as required about a child's attendance when this is appropriate.

## **Principles**

- A child should come to school every day.
- All pupils are required to be in school on time. The School day starts at 8.30am for Nursery, Pre-Reception, Reception, Year 1 and Year 2.
- Pupils will not leave the site during the school day unless accompanied by a member of staff for a visit, trip, sporting fixture (the details of which will have been notified to parents in advance) or in an emergency.
- A child should only be absent if the reason is "unavoidable". Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by parents) as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required.
- Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as illness or other unavoidable causes.
- Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no permission has been given. Examples include:
  - going on holiday
  - absences which have never been properly explained
- Providing a note may not be sufficient if the reason given is not "unavoidable".

Some children need encouragement to attend regularly. Any problems are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. It is recognised that it is never better to cover up for absence or to give in to pressure to excuse children from school. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse. Parents are expected to contact the school at an early stage and to work with staff in resolving problems together.

## **Children Missing in Education (CME)**

We recognise that every practitioner working with a child has a responsibility to inform their named CME contact if they know or suspect that a child is not receiving education. Further details may be found in our Safeguarding Policy.

## **Holidays and other circumstances in which a child could be absent**

All holiday leave and other exceptional circumstances for absence in term time are at the discretion of the Headteacher. The School discourages absences for holidays during term time; term dates are published well in advance in order that holidays can be arranged without disrupting a child's education. Requests for exceptional absence, ie other than religious observance, medical/dental appointments or for illness, must be made to the Headteacher in writing at least two weeks in advance.

## **Lateness**

All pupils are registered twice a day, at the start of morning school at 8.30am and at 1.30pm in the afternoon. Children must attend on time to be marked present for the morning session. Parents are expected to ensure that children are present at morning registration. Arriving more than thirty minutes after the start of the session without good reason is counted as unauthorised absence.

## **Early Years Free Entitlement**

Under regulations governing Early Years Free Entitlement, regular absences or an absence of more than two consecutive weeks may result in the loss of this entitlement.

## **Special Circumstances**

It is recognised that there may be circumstances when a child arrives late for a period of time because of transport difficulties or because of prolonged illness. The school would adopt a flexible approach in these instances and work with the child and parents to help in any way possible.

Signed *HM Crossley*  
Chair of Governors

Signed *A C Thackray*  
Headteacher

Reviewed September 2020  
Next review June 2022  
Previous review October 2018

## Appendix A

Dear

### **Courtesy Letter regarding School Attendance**

I am writing this letter to you about our expectations for attendance in order to provide you with a clear outline about the absence procedures at St Christopher's School. Our School and the Local Authority have a legal obligation to monitor pupil attendance. We are keen to promote high levels of attendance as your child's learning will be affected when they are absent from School. However, we completely understand that there will be times when absence is unavoidable and acceptable, and on these occasions we are, of course, sympathetic.

At St Christopher's School, we are aiming for at least 95% attendance over the course of the year, with outstanding attendance recorded above 96%. An attendance record of under 90% is always something we look in to, and if attendance dips below 85% we may have serious concerns. An 85% attendance level is regarded as persistent absence by the Department for Education, and we have a legal obligation to let the Local Authority know.

Therefore, we monitor and look at termly attendance for each pupil. At the end of each half term, we identify all those pupils whose attendance has fallen below 90% and issue a courtesy letter. This is exactly that – a courtesy letter. We simply want to make parents aware that their child's attendance has been brought to our attention via our electronic registration system.

We have identified that **child's name** has attendance below 95%, at **90.4%** during the academic year.

We will be monitoring your **daughter's/son's** attendance on a weekly basis, and with your help, we hope your **daughter/son** is able to attend School with an attendance level above 95%.

We fully understand that there are occasions when your **daughter's/son's** absence is unavoidable, through sickness, or may have been authorised by Mrs Thackray. These reasons are recorded; however, the incidents must still be monitored and tracked.

We hope that these notes will help you to have a clear understanding about the School's expectations in this matter and we hope we can work with you to improve your **daughter's/son's** attendance. I am happy to answer any questions you may have about our approach to attendance, or should you wish to come in and talk about the absences this year.

Kind regards,

Mrs Lisa Meredith-Bennett

**Deputy Head**