

Christ Church CE Primary School & Nursery



Through God's love, we learn, aspire and achieve;
we flourish.

Attendance Policy

Approved: May 2026

Review date: Sept 2027

1. Introduction and Context

This Attendance Policy sets out how Christ Church CE Primary School promotes and secures excellent attendance for all pupils. It reflects the statutory guidance 'Working together to improve school attendance' (DfE, August 2024) and is informed by Ofsted's inspection expectations.

Regular attendance is essential for children's learning, wellbeing, safeguarding, and personal development. At Christ Church, we believe that every child is known, valued and supported to flourish, and that attendance is a shared responsibility between school, families, pupils and external agencies.

2. School Vision and Ethos

As a Church of England school, our vision is rooted in love, respect and community. We aim to support children to live life in all its fullness. Good attendance enables children to build relationships, develop confidence, and engage fully in learning.

Our approach to attendance is underpinned by high expectations, compassion and partnership. We seek to understand and remove barriers to attendance wherever possible, while also being clear about our statutory responsibilities.

3. Aims of the Attendance Policy

This policy aims to:

- Promote a whole-school culture where good attendance and punctuality are valued.
- Ensure all pupils attend regularly and on time.
- Identify and address barriers to attendance at the earliest opportunity.
- Safeguard children who may be at risk due to poor attendance.
- Ensure compliance with statutory requirements and best practice.
- Work in partnership with families and external agencies, building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school

- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

4. Legal Framework and Guidance

This policy is based on the DfE's statutory guidance on [Working together to improve school attendance](#) and [School attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the [Education Act 1996](#)
- Maintained schools: Part 3 of the [Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- The [Equality Act 2010](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)
- [Ofsted's 2025 framework toolkit](#)

5. Roles and Responsibilities

The Senior Attendance Champion (Assistant Headteacher) has strategic responsibility for attendance. This includes:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis

- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

Senior Leadership Team

The Executive Headteacher, Head of School and the Senior Leadership Team promote a culture of high attendance, ensure systems are robust, and deploy support and resources effectively to address attendance concerns. Attendance data will be reported at each full Governing Body meeting.

Head of School

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing penalty notices, where necessary, and/or authorising the [Assistant Headteacher] to be able to do so
- Working with the parents/carers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where (if applicable) school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents/carers through all available channels

- Sharing information from the school register with the local authority, including:
 - Notifying the local authority when a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the school admission register outside of standard transition times
 - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who fail to attend school regularly, or who have been marked with an unauthorised absence for a continuous period of 10 school days
 - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who the school believes will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness

Class Teachers

Teachers promote positive attendance through strong relationships, daily monitoring of attendance, and early communication with families where concerns arise. Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1), and submitting this information to the school office immediately after the morning and afternoon registrations.

SENDCo and Support Staff

The SENDCo and pastoral team support pupils who face additional barriers to attendance, including SEND, medical needs, mental health challenges or safeguarding concerns.

Administrative Staff/Attendance Officer

Administrative staff manage attendance records, first-day calling, and liaison with families and the local authority. They are responsible for:

- Taking calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Put parents/carers in touch with the to the teacher or senior attendance champion where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement

- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher/assistant headteacher (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

Governing Body

Governors hold leaders to account for attendance outcomes, ensuring statutory duties are met and that attendance strategies are effective. They are responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents/carers
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations, statutory duties and comply with the law on school attendance, including:
 - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
 - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils' needs

- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
 - The importance of good attendance
 - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
 - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
 - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Holding the Head of School to account for the implementation of this policy

Parents and Carers

Parents and carers (all those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person and those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child i.e. lives with and looks after them) have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually. We ask families to work openly and honestly with the school where difficulties arise. Parents 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
- Keep to any attendance plans/stipulations that they make with the school and/or local authority
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the Head of School who can be contacted via the office email or number.

6. Expectations for Attendance and Punctuality

All pupils are expected to attend school every day that the school is open, unless they are genuinely unwell or there are exceptional circumstances. School starts at 8:55am and lateness is recorded and monitored.

Persistent absence is defined as attendance below 90% and will trigger additional support and monitoring.

6.1 Attendance register

The school keeps an electronic attendance register, and places all pupils on this register. We take our attendance register at the start of each morning session of each school day and once during each afternoon session. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 (See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes), whether a pupil is:

- Present;
- Attending a place other than school;
- Absent;
- Absent – unable to attend due to unavoidable causes

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry;
- The amended entry;
- The reason for the amendment;
- The date on which the amendment was made;
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not (for compulsory school aged pupils)
- The nature of the activity, where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity

- The nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The school day starts at 8:55 and ends at 15:30. Pupils must arrive in school by 8:55 on each school day. The register for the first session will be taken at 8:55 and will be kept open until 9:05. Afternoon registration will take place after the lunchtime break and will be kept open for 10 minutes.

6.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9:05, or as soon as practically possible, by calling the school office on telephone number: **020 8440 2198**

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for 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.

6.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment, will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment and no later than 9:05 on the day of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents 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 must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

6.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late (after 9:05) before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code. After the register has closed (9:25) will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code. The school will monitor late arrivals and will follow the graduated response described in this policy.

6.5 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 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 contact Social Care
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not and 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(s) for which the pupil was absent
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's social worker and/or youth offending team officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance, including from external agencies, as quickly as possible.
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with the school will consider whether further intervention is appropriate.

6.6 Reporting to parents

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels, at least once every term.

7. Authorised absence

7.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Head of School will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 school attendance regulations](#). These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

When requesting leave of absence, the following will also apply:

- A leave of absence is granted at the Head of School's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.
- We define 'exceptional circumstances' as rare and unexpected circumstances which are unlikely to reoccur and may include medical or family emergencies.
- Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.
- As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.
- The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.
- Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 3 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school's website.
- The Head of School may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

7.2 Other reasons for authorised absence

Other valid reasons for authorised absence include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart for religious observance
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – a pupil is a mobile child if their parent is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. In these circumstances a pupil will be considered as a mobile child, provided they are of compulsory school age and have no fixed abode and whose parent is in a trade or business that requires them to travel from place to place
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made

7.3 Absences from the school site (which are not classified as absences)

The Head of School will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings. These are not classified as absences. Reasons include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

8. Attendance and Safeguarding

Attendance is a key safeguarding priority. Children who are frequently absent may be at increased risk of harm. The school will:

- Make first day contact with parents/carers on the first day of any unexplained absence, typically via telephone to establish the reason for absence and ensure the child is safe.
- Follow up patterns of absence or lateness.
- Work with safeguarding partners where concerns arise.
- Escalate concerns in line with safeguarding procedures.

9. Graduated Response to Attendance Concerns

Christ Church follows a graduated response to attendance concerns in line with the principles set out in Working Together to Improve School Attendance. The aim is to identify concerns early, work in partnership with families to remove barriers to attendance, and only consider enforcement where support has not been engaged with or has not led to improvement. Attendance is monitored regularly and pupils may move between stages depending on their level of attendance and the nature of any barriers identified.

Attendance Thresholds

Attendance	Category	School Response
96–100%	Good attendance	Expected level. Attendance monitored routinely.

Persistent lateness, more than 5 times in a term.	Persistent Lateness	Class teachers may speak with parents to explore any emerging barriers.
93–95%	Early concern-at risk of persistent absence	Staff may speak with parents to explore any emerging barriers. Targeted support offered and attendance monitored closely
Below 90%	Persistent absence	Formal support and possible involvement of the Local Authority attendance team.

The Graduated Response

Expect – Promoting Good Attendance

At this stage, the focus is on creating a culture where good attendance is expected and supported. The school will:

- Communicate the importance of good attendance to pupils and families.
- Maintain clear routines for punctuality and attendance.
- Celebrate good and improved attendance.
- Analyse attendance data half-termly throughout the year.

The school recognises that pupils with attendance below 95% are at risk of becoming persistently absent (Below 90%) and will be identified early and monitored closely.

Monitor – Early Identification of Concerns

Where attendance falls below 95% or patterns of absence emerge, the school pupils will be identified as at risk of persistent absence.

- Speak informally with parents or carers at the earliest opportunity
- Explore any early barriers to attendance.
- Offer reassurance or practical guidance.

The aim is to intervene early and prevent attendance from declining further.

Support – Working with Families

If attendance continues to decline (typically below 92%) or concerns persist, the school will work more closely with families to remove barriers to attendance. Support may include:

- A meeting with parents or carers to identify barriers to attendance.
- Agreeing practical strategies or reasonable adjustments.
- Pastoral support or SENDCO involvement where appropriate.
- Signposting or referral to external services.

Formalise – Attendance Plans

Where attendance falls below 90% the school will move to a more formal stage, recognising the child as persistently absent. This may involve:

- The pupil's attendance will be formally recorded as a cause for concern
- A formal letter will be sent to parents to outline concerns

A review period will be set to monitor improvement. Parents will be informed that any further absence due to illness will require medical evidence in order to be authorised. If there is insufficient improvement at the review point:

- A formal attendance meeting will be held with the Attendance Champion and the parents or carers
- Barriers to attendance will be discussed and an action plan agreed.
- A further review period will be set.

If attendance does not improve following this, a further meeting will be arranged with the Head of School.

All stages of this process will be clearly recorded and monitored

Enforce – Legal Intervention

Where the continued lack of improvement or where unauthorised absence, meets the threshold for legal intervention, the school will proceed to enforcement in line with local authority guidance.

This may include:

- Requests for Penalty Notices, where a pupil has 10 sessions (equivalent to 5 days) of unauthorised absence within a 10-week period.
- Further legal action, including prosecution under section under Section 444 of the Education Act, where appropriate.

The school will always seek to work collaboratively with families and will only pursue enforcement where necessary to secure a child's right to education. Pupils with attendance below 50%, will be considered severely absent and prioritised in terms of support and multi-agency involvement.

10. Supporting Pupils with Additional Needs

We recognise that some pupils face additional barriers to attendance, including SEND, medical needs or mental health difficulties. Support will be personalised and may include reasonable adjustments, phased returns, or temporary arrangements agreed with families and professionals. Part-time timetables will only be used where absolutely necessary and will be regularly reviewed.

11. Monitoring, Data and Evaluation

Attendance data is monitored daily by staff and reviewed half-termly by leaders. Patterns are analysed by cohort, including vulnerable groups, to inform targeted support. Attendance information is reported to governors.

12. Working with External Agencies

Where attendance concerns persist, the school will work with the local authority and other external professionals to support the child and family.

13. Review of the Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually by the governing body to ensure it remains compliant, effective, and aligned with statutory guidance and the school's ethos.

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's [guidance on school attendance](#).

Code	Definition	Scenario
I	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
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered

Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at

		school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: In police detention Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence

U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

Appendix 2: Application for Leave of Absence

Application For Leave of Absence

Please complete this form (one for every child it applies to), if you want to take your child out of school during term time.

The form should be returned to the School Office no less than three weeks before the date when you want the period of absence to start, stating your reasons for needing to take your child out of school.

Parents/carers should not expect leave of absence to be granted as of right. Leave would not normally be granted if it coincides with school tests or SATs.

The conditions under which leave of absence for term-time holidays may be granted are contained in the school's policy and the statutory guidance underpinning it.

I, _____ (Name of the parent(s)/carer(s) making this request),
would hereby like to request leave of absence for my child, _____ (Name of
child) from (Date of first day of absence) _____ to _____
(Date of the last day of absence).

Please fully explain the reason(s) for this request:

Christ Church school will / will not be able to authorise this absence.

Signed _____

Date _____

Appendix 3: Persistent Absence Letter to Parents



Through God's love, we learn, aspire and achieve; we flourish.

Christ Church CE Primary School

Byng Road, Barnet, Hertfordshire EN5 4NS Telephone 020 8440

2198

Email office@christchurch.barnetmail.net

www.christchurch.barnet.sch.uk

..... (Date)

Dear (parent name)

I am writing to you with regard to your child's school attendance.

Since the start of this term our records show that 's (child's name) attendance is%

Government expectations are that pupil school attendance should be a minimum of 96% - this applies to all children of statutory school age. Statutory school age commences the beginning of the term after a child's fifth birthday.

Student attainment and achievement depend on regular attendance at school. Any absence leads to missed learning and other experiences and may cause difficulties with social relationships.

It is very important that (child's name) attends school regularly in order for them to make the most of their learning and also establish positive patterns for the future.

The school will review (child's name) attendance next term and I will contact you again if there is no improvement. In the meantime, we ask that you quickly address whatever issues have resulted in this situation.

Please provide medical evidence for any further absences. Evidence that can be submitted is medication labels clearly showing your child's name, a text message/appointment card from the GP's surgery or an appointment letter.

If, however, there are any particular circumstances leading to (child's name) absences from school, please do not hesitate to come and discuss them with either me or the class teacher.

Yours sincerely

James Smith
Assistant Headteacher
(Attendance Lead)