

# Attendance Policy

September 2023

# Attendance Policy

<b>Policy to be reviewed annually</b>			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Completed</b>
Review	Sandrine Paillasse	September 2023	
Reported	Safeguarding and Welfare Committee	October 2023	
Approved	Board of Governors	November 2023	

<b>To be published on</b>	
School network	
School website	
ISI portal	

## **Accessibility notice**

To enable easier reading, this Policy is available in a larger font upon request

## **This policy applies equally to the Early Years setting, KS1 and KS2 as taught at St Christopher's School.**

### **1. Aim**

1.1. The aim of the Attendance Policy is to ensure that all pupils at St Christopher's School are able to benefit fully from its educational provision. We are committed to:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school.

1.2. We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons. Unauthorised absence is strongly discouraged. It leads to educational and pastoral disadvantage and may place pupils at risk.

### **2. Legislation and guidance**

2.1. This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023](#)

2.2. This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

### **3. Absence and communication**

3.1. Information on punctuality, unauthorised absence and illness is set out in the Parents' Handbook. Parents are requested to:

- ensure that their daughter attends school every day
- ensure that their daughter arrives on time each day (between 8.15 and 8.25am)
- collect their daughter promptly in the afternoon
- notify the school if someone else is collecting their daughter from school
- notify the school if for a legal reason someone is not permitted to collect their daughter from school
- inform the class teacher if there are any worries which might cause their daughter to be unwilling to come to school
- take holidays during the holiday period and not during term time
- discuss with the Head, and put a request in writing with advance notice, in the event that permission is being sought to take a holiday during term time (see below)

- put a request in writing to take their daughter out of school for any other reason, such as appointments, school visits etc.

## **4. Roles and responsibilities**

### **4.1. Governors**

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy
- The Safeguarding Committee is responsible for ensuring that attendance figures for the whole school are monitored on at least a termly basis. The Safeguarding Governor also holds the DSL and the Head to account for the implementation of this policy.

### **4.2. The Head**

The Head is responsible for:

- 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

### **4.3. The Heads of Lower and Upper School**

They:

- Lead attendance across the Lower or Upper School and at an individual level
- Offer a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluate and monitor expectations and processes
- Have an oversight of data analysis
- Devise specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arrange calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Deliver targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Report concerns about attendance to the Head
- Work with form teachers and parents to tackle persistent absence

### **4.4. The welfare coordinator**

The welfare coordinator is responsible for:

- 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 Heads of Lower/Upper School for attendance and the Head
- Arrange calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues as required

### **4.5. Form teachers**

Form teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

They should alert the heads of lower/upper school and the welfare coordinator if they are concerned about a pupil's absences, persistent lateness or identify patterns.

#### 4.6. School Office staff

- School office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.
- The Head of Admissions maintains the admissions register and liaises with the local authority.

### 5. Recording attendance

#### 5.1. Attendance register

5.1.1. We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

5.1.2. Pupils must arrive in school by 8.30am on each school day.

5.1.3. The register for the first session will be taken at 8.40am and will be kept open until 9.00am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.40pm and will be kept open until 2.00 pm in the lower school and at 2pm and will be kept open until 2.20pm in the upper school.

5.1.4. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

5.1.5. 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.

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

5.1.6. We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

5.1.7. We keep every entry on the attendance register in accordance with the school's data retention schedule.

#### 5.2. Unplanned absence

- 5.2.1. The pupil's parent/guardian must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8:30am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).
- 5.2.2. They must notify the school office by telephone [0207 435 1521] or email [Secretary@stchristophers.london] before 8.30am if their daughter is to be absent due to illness. If she is away for more than one day, the parent/guardian should ring or email the school by 8.30am every morning to confirm that she will not be in school. On her return, parents are asked to provide a letter of explanation and, in the case of infectious illness, a doctor's note.
- 5.2.3. The school discourages parents from taking girls out of school during term time, not least because it creates considerable problems of continuity for their daughters. Other than when emergency treatment is required, parents are asked to arrange appointments with the dentist, optician, etc. during school holiday times.
- 5.2.4. If absence is unavoidable, parents should make their request in writing to the Head giving at least 24 hours' notice. This applies to full and part days and to late arrival or early departure on any day.
- 5.2.5. We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.
- 5.2.6. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/guardian to provide 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.
- 5.2.7. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/guardians will be notified of this in advance.

### **5.3. Planned absence**

- 5.3.1. Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/guardian notifies the school in advance of the appointment.
- 5.3.2. Parents should notify the school office by telephone or email before 8.30am.
- 5.3.3. However, we encourage parents/guardians 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.
- 5.3.4. The pupil's parent/guardian must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

### **5.4. Lateness and punctuality**

5.4.1. A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

5.4.2. The office has a late arrival book, in which detail are recorded. Any repeat late arrivals are discussed with the form tutor.

### **5.5. Following up absence**

5.5.1. Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school office will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/guardian to ascertain the reason, by telephone/email if no response to telephone
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, including calling any of the pupil's emergency contacts
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- 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 five working days after the session.
- Call the parent/guardian on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer from the local authority.

### **5.6. Reporting to parents/carers**

- The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels

## **6. Authorised and unauthorised absence**

6.1.1. Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 states that, a child absent from education is a child who is on roll at a school, but is very regularly not attending; a child missing education is a child of compulsory school age who isn't on a school roll or being educated elsewhere.

6.1.2. Being absent from education, and missing education, are vital warning signs of safeguarding risks to a child.

### **6.2. Approval for term-time absence**

6.2.1. The Head will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Head's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

6.2.2. Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time.

6.2.3. Applications for leave of absence must be made in writing to the Head and in advance. Failure to do so will result in the absence being recorded as 'unauthorised'.

6.2.4. The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

6.2.5. The Head may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence. Applications which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being recorded as 'unauthorised'.

### **6.3. Valid reasons for authorised absence include:**

6.3.1. Illness and medical/dental appointments

6.3.2. Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

6.3.3. Attendance to close relative funerals or weddings.

#### **6.4. Unauthorised absence from school**

6.4.1. Unauthorised absence is where the school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence, and where the reasons do not amount to exceptional circumstances. Holidays during term time are not authorised absences.

6.4.2. The school must notify the local authority of absence without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more.

#### **6.5. Attendance monitoring**

6.5.1. The welfare coordinator and heads of lower and upper school monitor and analyse pupil absence on a regular basis. They produce reports for the Head half-termly, termly and yearly.

6.5.2. The heads of lower / upper school identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families

6.5.3. If a pupil's continued absence or attendance level (usually below 95%) raises concerns, the heads of lower / upper school will write to the parent/guardian of the pupil to communicate their concerns.

6.5.4. If a pupil's absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/guardian, the heads of lower / upper school will ask to meet with the parents/guardians.

6.5.5. If attendance continues to be a concern and does not improve, the Head will ask to meet with the parents/guardians.

6.5.6. [The School may seek guidance from Camden's Pupil Attendance Service \(PAS\) or Camden Attendance Strategy for children who are persistently absent.](#) Anonymised pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and shared with the Governing Board.

6.5.7. In addition to the above, the pastoral team, alongside the Learning Enrichment coordinator, will triangulate attendance data with academic and other pastoral data, and will consider any neurodiversity or screening needs.

### **7. Children missing education (CME)**

7.1. CME are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school or receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school.



7.2. The school has a duty to notify the local authority when a pupil is about to be removed from the school admission register. This duty does not apply when a pupil's name is removed from the admission register at standard transition points.

7.3. The school must also notify the local authority within five days of adding a pupil's name to the admission register at a non-standard transition point.

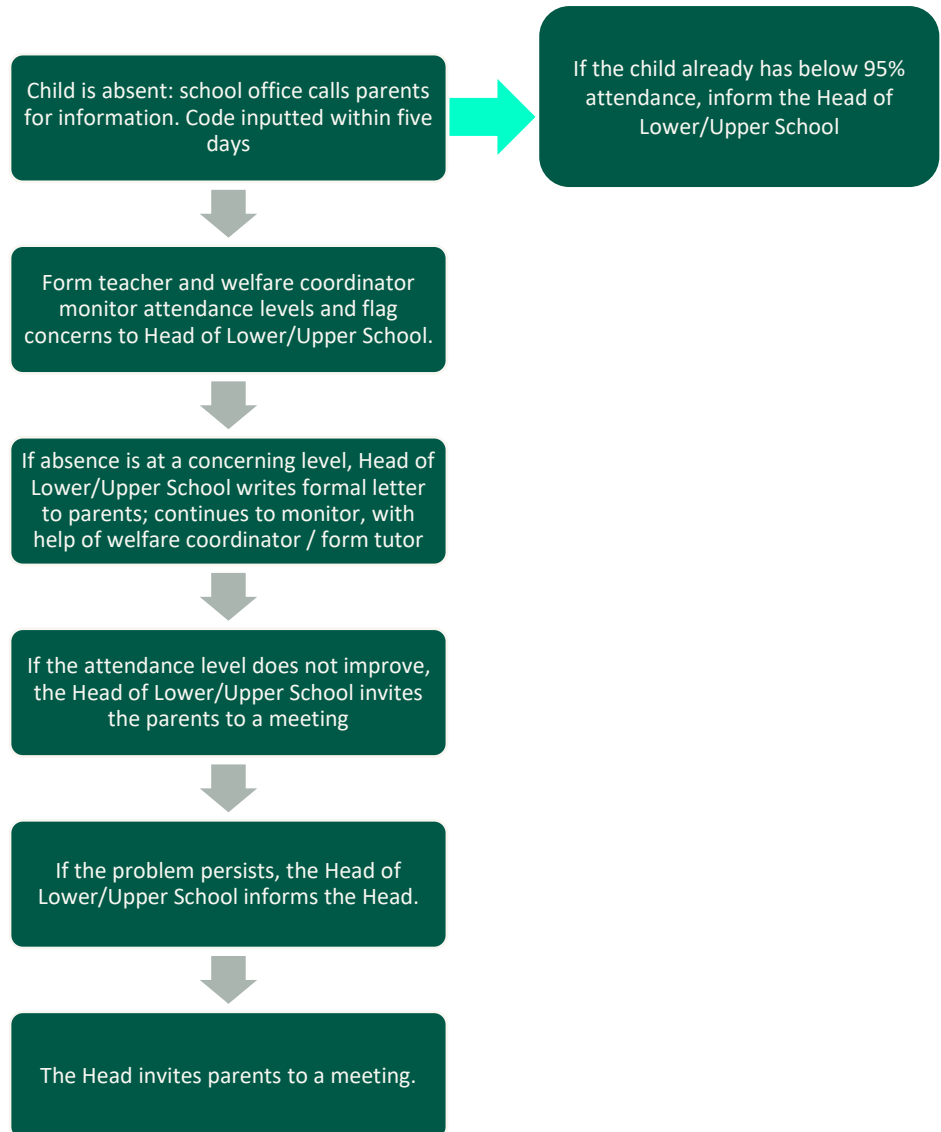
7.4. The school must make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the child jointly with the local authority, before deleting the pupil's name from the register.

## **8. Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy

## Appendix 1 – flowchart monitoring attendance



## Appendix 2: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance:

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	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
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment

<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day