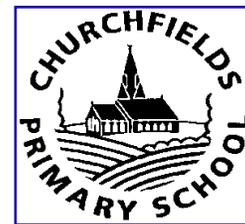


## Churchfields Primary School

### Attendance Policy 2019



#### Policy on Attendance

We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, the governing body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

#### Definitions

##### Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the current attendance is 90% or above and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

##### Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent.
- Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

School starts at 8:40. Children arriving after 8:40 but before 9:10 will receive a late mark (L). Registers will close at 9:10am Any child arriving after this time will receive a unauthorised late mark. (U)

#### If a child is absent

When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the Register. As part of 'First Day Cover' and Safeguarding procedures the school office will check all completed registers for absences, completing data for informed absences and where parents have not informed the school, all possible communicative means will be undertaken to contact the parent or guardian.

If the school has not been contacted then 'attendedc' will be asked to complete a home visit as part of our safeguarding procedure. They may also complete a home visit for children whose attendance is a cause of

concern.

If a child has a medical appointment a copy of the appointment letter should be sent to the school before the day or time of absence. Parents may also inform by telephoning the school, but parents who wish to collect their child early for any reason should contact the school at least an hour in advance, unless there is an emergency. He/she should always be signed out of school at the school office.

Any child who reaches a third day of absence will be visited by 'attendedc' to discuss return to school and to take work to be completed if necessary.

### **Requests for leave of absence**

From September 2013 the Department for Education amended the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, the amendments removed references to family holidays as well as the statutory threshold of ten days. The amendments make clear that Headteacher's may NOT grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances, in which case the Headteacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted. The definition of exceptional circumstances will be considered on an individual basis.

Therefore in line with this new Government legislation, we will issue an application form for a leave of absence but to accompany this form you must put your reasons in writing. Any request made because of exceptional circumstances can only be judged on a case-by- case basis taking into account individual circumstances. Requests should be made in writing at least 28 days before the period of requested absence. Even with the exceptional circumstances we will still consider the following before permission can be granted:

- **Current level of school attendance including punctuality.**
- **The current progress being made towards academic targets.**
- **The time and length of the requested exceptional absence.**
- **The amount of exceptional absence that has been authorised previously.**

To illustrate the impact of taking holidays in term time it was noted that if children are taken on a two week holiday every year and have the average number of days off for sickness and appointments, then during their school career they will have missed the equivalent of a year of school. We need to point out that, in an effort to address poor attendance and unauthorised absences from school, the local authority may decide to issue a Fixed Penalty fine and/or prosecute parents under the Education Act 1996 if a holiday is taken during term time.

***I understand that if the absence request is unauthorised Education welfare will be notified of the holiday taken and a Penalty Notice may be issued. I understand that a Penalty is issued to each parent for each child taken out of school. Payment of a Penalty Notice within 21 days is £60.00 and payment after this time but within 28 days is £120:00. I understand that if I do not pay this it may result in legal action.***

### **Long-term absence**

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will work with 'attendedc', so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

### **Repeated unauthorised absences**

The school will contact the parent or carer of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or guardians will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem by attending an attendance clinic. If the situation does not improve, the school will then work with the external EWO, who will visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or guardians understand the seriousness of the situation.

The governors, supported by the external EWO and the local authority, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

### **Rewards for good attendance**

All the children who have 100 per cent attendance in any one term will receive an excellence certificate for attendance and badge, awarded at the last assembly of the term. A weekly attendance draw takes place and the best class is rewarded each week.

### **Attendance targets**

The school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the senior staff and governors. The targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. The school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools when setting its own targets. The target for this academic year is 96%

### **Penalty Notices**

A penalty notice is a fine of £60 per parent / carer (per child) if paid within 21 days from the date of issue. If this Penalty is not paid, the amount rises to £120. If after 28 days of the date of issue, the £120 is not paid, the Local Authority will prosecute you under section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996. This will lead to a hearing in the Magistrates Court and may result in a fine of up to £1000.

### **Changes to the Code of Conduct for Penalty Notices Commencing 1<sup>st</sup> January 2018**

#### **Penalty Notice for leave of absence (holiday) in term time**

**Any** period of unauthorised leave may result in you as a parent receiving a penalty notice fine. The head teacher will continue to be the only person able to authorise leave in term time, but this will apply only in exceptional circumstances. Any unauthorised absence will be referred by the head teacher to the EWO.

#### **Penalty Notice for persistent lateness**

Previously a pupil had to achieve 20 unauthorised late marks before a penalty notice warning could be issued. **This has now changed to 10 marks**, and late marks do not have to be one after the other in order for the penalty notice to be issued.

#### **Period of time used to measure persistent absence and lateness**

If your child has had 10 days unauthorised absence or is late 10 times over a twelve week period, you may receive a penalty warning notice and also potentially a fine.

### **Monitoring and review**

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report from the Headteacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that the school's attendance figures are as high as they should be.

The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.

The rates of attendance will be reported in the school prospectus, and in the annual governors' report.

Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's absence, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the headteacher, who will contact the parents or guardians.

This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every two years, or earlier if considered necessary.