



Christ Church Academy

Part of the Key Educational Trust

Attendance Policy

2026-2028

Reviewed: September 2026

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To be a learning community that provides excellence in education for the whole person – a place where all can flourish. We believe that: “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

[Philippians 4:13](#)

Contents

1. Aims	3
2. Principles:	3
3. What does good attendance look like?	3
4. How does attendance work in schools?	4
5. Absences in more detail:	4
Illness:.....	4
Medical / Dental Appointments:	5
Punctuality:	5
Holidays:	5
Reluctant Attenders:	6
Children who are absent from education:	6
6. Legal Sanctions:	6
7. Following up Absence	8
8. Reporting to Parents	8
9. Strategies for Promoting Attendance	9
10. Attendance Monitoring	9
11. Persistent Absenteeism.....	9
12. Roles and Responsibilities.....	10
The Governing Board	10
The Principal	10
The Pastoral Team.....	10
The Assistant Principal:.....	10
The Attendance Officer	10
Form Tutors	10
Office staff	10
13. Monitoring Arrangements	11
14. Links with Other Policies	11
15. Request for Leave During Term Time	14

1. Aims

At Christ Church Academy, we believe that school attendance is vital in order for pupils to both maximise their potential and increase their enjoyment. Our role is to work closely with pupils, parents and carers in order to ensure that pupils' attendance is as high as it can be in order to ensure success during this phase of their education.

Our attendance policy aims to:

- Support pupils to attend as often as they can to maximise their potential at school
- Outline the legal responsibilities to parents / carers regarding school attendance
- Guide all parties in strategies to help us meet attendance targets

2. Principles:

At CCA we aim to promote attendance at school through the best use made of the curriculum the curriculum and pastoral time available to us. As a school we will celebrate those who attend well, and those who are able to improve their attendance (whatever the starting point) on a termly and annual basis.

Poor attendance can result in pupils underachieving and being vulnerable to failing behind, to this end, we will always encourage all pupils to be in school, on time every day which the school is open unless there are unavoidable circumstances.

Ensuring good attendance at this age will not only enhance the pupils' experience of school life but will also help to embed good working practices for the future and the careers which they have ahead of them.

Within this policy we hope that you clearly understand the processes which we will follow and what to expect from us in terms of both supporting you and challenging you with regard to your child's attendance.

3. What does good attendance look like?

Of the 365 days in every calendar year, only 190 of them are spent in school. This means that each year there is 175 days available for many of the opportunities needed – holidays, medical appointments, shopping, meeting family etc.

Percentage attendance	Days in School	Days absent	
100%	190	0	Excellent attendance – well done!
95%	180	10	
90%	171	19	This is classed as poor attendance by the government and is recognised to reduce life chances.
85%	161	29	The government classes this as persistent absence.
80%	152	38	
75%	143	47	

A two-week holiday in term time would result in maximum attendance over the school year of 94.7%

If a pupil is 5 minutes late every day – this equates to 3 days of absence over the course of the year. If the same pupil were 15 minutes late every day – this equates to taking a fortnights holiday in the year.

4. How does attendance work in schools?

By law, all schools are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register. The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. The register will mark whether every pupil is:

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

At CCA, the register for the first session will be taken at 08.55am and will be kept open until 09.05am (Morning registration).

The register for the second session will be taken at 1.10pm and will be kept open until 1.30pm (Basetime).

Any pupils arriving after those times will be marked late.

If a pupil is absent; school has to use one of two classifications – authorised or unauthorised.

AUTHORISED ABSENCE from school means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES are those which the school does not consider reasonable and is not satisfied with the reasons given for absence. This includes:

- parent/carers keeping students off school unnecessarily;
- truancy for all or part of the school day;
- absences where the school has not yet received an acceptable explanation;
- any other circumstance where the Headteacher has not given authorisation.

5. Absences in more detail:

Illness:

Parents must notify the school on EVERY day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 08.50am or as soon as practically possible - *Parents can notify the school of an absence through the 'My Child at School' app, phone the school number or, if it is more convenient, email the school office. Parents should inform the school of the reason for the absence and how long they expect the period of absence to last.*

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents 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.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised until evidence is provided.

Medical / Dental Appointments:

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences. 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, it would be rare for school to authorise a whole day of absence for a medical appointment.

Evidence of appointments should be emailed to office@cca.staffs.sch.uk in advance of the appointment.

Punctuality:

A pupil who arrives late, but before the register has closed will be marked as late (before 09.05am), using the appropriate code (L).

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed (after 09:05am) will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code (U).

The Academy will monitor punctuality. If patterns of poor punctuality begin to emerge, we will contact parents and request a meeting in school. If patterns of poor punctuality continue the Academy may introduce the support of our in-school attendance officer and/or the educational welfare officer, who may visit parents at home. If poor punctuality continues and parents are not engaging with the program of support the Academy may decide to introduce a fixed penalty notice if the child had 10 unauthorised late marks within 10 school weeks (this is advised by Staffordshire Count Council).

Holidays:

The Government has made clear that leave of absence during term time should only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

In line with The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and current DfE statutory guidance, headteachers may not grant leave of absence during term time unless they consider there to be exceptional circumstances.

There is no automatic entitlement to term-time leave. Requests must be considered on an individual basis, and the need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation will not normally be considered an exceptional circumstance.

The Principal and Governors have determined that:

- Only exceptional circumstance warrants a leave of absence, which is granted by the Principal who will determine the length of time a pupil can be away from school. It is unlikely that a leave of absence will be granted for the purpose of a family holiday.
- Where leave of absence in term time is due to exceptional circumstances, an application form must be requested from the school office and submitted for consideration by the Principal, no less than 4 weeks prior to the requested date. Consideration will then be given to the pupil's previous school attendance and that the time requested does not exceed five school days in any one academic year.
- If leave is taken without prior authorisation by the school, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and Education Welfare Officer will be notified.

If we suspect a holiday has been taken during term time without a request for leave being submitted, a home visit will be completed and a suspected holiday letter will be sent to parents/ carers. This could result in a fine being issued.

We define exceptional circumstances as “Leave of absence due to urgent and unavoidable circumstances”.

Some examples which may be authorised are:

1. 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 Academy will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
2. Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the Academy but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.
3. Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
4. The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.
5. To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family.

If parents/carers believe that the circumstances of the absence are exceptional, they are requested to read the guidance in Appendix 2 and to complete the enclosed form.

Reluctant Attenders:

Pupils are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems that arise with attendance are best resolved between the school, the parent/carer and the pupil. If a pupil is reluctant to attend, parents/carers should never cover up their absence or to give into pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent/ carer.

The school is always willing to support parents/ carers whose children are experiencing difficulties that may result in non-attendance. Parents/ carers should contact the school at an early stage so that we can work together to resolve any problems. Working in partnership nearly always brings success. We can also use this government guidance to support us:

Children who are absent from education:

This includes pupils who are absent from school, particularly repeatedly and/or for prolonged periods and can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities.

In this situation, we will contact/visit daily to work in partnership to secure any necessary support for the pupil and the family with a view to getting the child back into school. We will request relevant evidence for the absences.

6. Legal Sanctions:

Penalty Notices

A national framework for penalty notices came into force on 19 August 2024.

Where a pupil has 10 or more sessions (equivalent to 5 days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks, the school must consider on a case-by-case basis whether a penalty notice is appropriate. These sessions do not need to be consecutive and may span different terms or school years.

Penalty notices are issued by the Local Authority and are intended as an alternative to prosecution. They should only be used where support has been provided and has not been effective or engaged with, or where support would not have been appropriate (for example, in cases of unauthorised term-time holiday).

In appropriate cases, a Notice to Improve may be issued to give parents a final opportunity to engage with support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is issued. A Notice to Improve is not required in all cases and will not usually be used for unauthorised term-time holidays.

The penalty amounts are:

- £80 if paid within 21 days
- £160 if paid within 28 days

A second penalty notice issued within 3 years for the same pupil will be charged at £160 with no reduction. A maximum of two penalty notices may be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a three-year period. A third offence will usually result in alternative legal action, such as prosecution.

Penalty notices may also be issued where a child is found in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first five days of a suspension or permanent exclusion.

The Local Authority retains discretion to issue penalty notices in line with its published code of conduct.

Other Conditions

- Only 2 penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3-year rolling period and any second notice within that period is charged at a higher rate as detailed below.
- The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
- A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. In this case where the criteria to issue a penalty notice is met for a third time within 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.
- In cases where there is more than one pupil in a family with unauthorised absences, Penalty Notices may be issued for more than one child.
- The Local Authority maintains records of penalty notices to ensure consistency and prevent duplication.

A 10-session period of unauthorised absences/lateness

All decisions to issue a penalty notice must be made on a case-by-case basis.

Penalty notices are intended to prevent the need for court action and should only be used where it is deemed likely to change parental behaviour, and support to secure regular attendance has been provided and has not worked or been engaged with or would not have been appropriate in the circumstances of the offence.

The Local Authority is responsible for determining whether a penalty notice is issued, in line with its published code of conduct.

The period of 10 school weeks can span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 unauthorised late arrival within the Autumn Term).

Notice to Improve

In appropriate cases, the school may request the Local Authority to issue a Notice to Improve, particularly where support has been provided but is not yet effective.

A Notice to Improve is a final opportunity for a parent to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is issued. A Notice to Improve does not need to be issued in cases where support is not appropriate and a school can choose not to use one in any case, including cases where support is appropriate, but they do not expect a Notice to Improve would have any behavioural impact.

The LA EWO will then issue a Notice to Improve to the parent (s) by post or email. If the required improvement in attendance is achieved the LA will not issue a penalty notice but will ask the school to continue to support the family. If there is not sufficient improvement within the timeframe of the notice the LA will issue a penalty notice to the parent (s). Where improvement is not being made, it may be appropriate to issue a penalty notice before the improvement period has ended.

Documents used to support the writing of this policy:

<https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Education/Education-welfare/Documents/Penalty-Notice-Code-of-Conduct-July-24-FINAL.pdf>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions--3>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-issues-affecting-a-pupils-attendance-guidance-for-schools>

7. Following up Absence

The Academy will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

By 9.05am the school form tutor will send the complete register on SIMS to the main office. If a pupil has been marked absent but the Academy have not yet received a reason then the attendance officer will:

- a. check their attendance at lesson one,
- b. send a text to parents asking them to contact the school to provide a reason for absence,
- c. if no reason has been provided by 10.30 the attendance officer will phone the contacts list provided,
- d. if no reason has been provided by midday then the school will ask the EWO to perform a home visit.

8. Reporting to Parents

A parent will be informed of their child's attendance on the termly report.

If a child's attendance falls below 90% a phone call is made to the parent to inform them.

If a pupil was PA (persistently absent) below 90% in the previous academic year, we will write to you to advise we are monitoring attendance and will require medical evidence for any future absences.

9. Strategies for Promoting Attendance

Forms of the Week are recognised on a weekly basis during KS2 and KS3 Achievement Assemblies to recognise the form in each year with the highest collective attendance levels for the previous week.

Certificates are awarded to pupils with 100% attendance and improved attendance within the term at the end of each term and at the end of the school year. A random prize draw takes place at the end of each term for all pupils with 100% attendance and improved attendance within the term.

Throughout the year pupils will have the opportunity to track their own levels of attendance and will be able to cross reference this with their target and the colour coded system.

10. Attendance Monitoring

The Attendance Officer alongside the Assistant Principal and Head of Year monitor pupil absence on a fortnightly basis. Parents are expected to call the Academy in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 5).

If a pupil's absence goes below 90% or begins to develop a regular pattern the Academy will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.

If after contacting parents a pupil's attendance continues to decline, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

11. Persistent Absenteeism

The persistent absence threshold is once they reach 90% or below. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

- At the fortnightly attendance check pupils with 90% or less attendance are passed to the appropriate Senior Leader for action (unless there is a known medical condition or other extenuating circumstances, which the school are aware of, which necessitates absence).
- The Attendance Officer will meet regularly with our Independent Attendance Consultant and the EWW to discuss pupils whose attendance is giving serious cause for concern. They will also carefully consider the absence of any vulnerable pupils.
- Unless there is a known medical condition or other extenuating circumstances, in addition to a phone call a first notification letter of concern with a copy of the registration certificate, will be sent home to the parents/carers of identified pupils with less than 90% attendance.
- If there is no improvement within three weeks in the attendance of the identified pupils, a second letter of notification will be sent home requesting their parents/carers to attend a meeting with the relevant Senior Leader (the pupil may be brought into the meeting at an appropriate stage). During the meeting parents will be offered an EHA.
- If there is no improvement after a further 3 weeks medical evidence for future absences will be requested. At this point absences will be deemed unauthorised if medical evidence is not produced, eg sight of doctor's appointment card, a medical letter or sight of a child's prescribed medication.
- If attendance still fails to improve a formal referral may be made to our Independent Attendance Consultant or to the EWW. These officers may visit you at home to investigate the reasons for your child's poor attendance.
- Parents/carers will be informed if there will be potential prosecution procedures in relation to school attendance concerns. The criteria for such statutory action is if the pupil reaches 20 unauthorised sessions (10 days). The EWO will visit the home to discuss further action and deliver the final warning letter.
- When 10 unauthorised sessions (including unauthorised leave of absence) has been reached the EWW may issue a penalty notice for persistent absence or proceed with prosecution procedures.

- Prosecution will be made under the Education Act 1996 s.444. The court could issue an Educational Supervision Order for the child. The maximum penalty for parents/carers convicted is a fine of £2,500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

Pupil attendance data is stored on the school SIMS data base. This system has multiple layers of security.

12. Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole Academy on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Principal to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Principal

The Principal is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the Academy, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The Pastoral Team

The Assistant Principal, with the Head of Year, also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

The Assistant Principal:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the head teacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the Principal when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The Attendance Officer

The attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Assistant Principal
- Ensures the school registers are accurate and up to date
- Works alongside the Assistant Principal to support the administration of the school attendance policy.

Form Tutors

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

Office staff

Office/and reception staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

13. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed bi-annually by the Assistant Principal. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

14. Links with Other Policies

This policy is linked to our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance 2024.

Code	Description	Meaning
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
C	Authorised absence as pupil is absent due to other authorised circumstances	Authorised Absence
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Authorised Absence
C2	Leave of absence due to a part-time timetable	Authorised Absence
E	Pupil is excluded with no alternative provision made	Authorised Absence
I	Illness (NOT a medical appointment)	Authorised Absence
M	Medical/dental appointments	Authorised Absence
R	Religious observance	Authorised Absence
S	Study leave	Authorised Absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised Absence
J1	Attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution	Authorised Absence
B	Approved education activity as pupil being educated off site (NOT dual registration)	Approved Educational Activity
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Educational Activity
V	Approved educational visit or trip	Approved Educational Activity
W	Approved work experience	Approved Educational Activity
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Approved Educational Activity
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised Absence
N	No reason yet provided	Unauthorised Absence
O	Unauthorised absence not covered by any other code/description	Unauthorised Absence
U	Pupil arrived after registers closed	Unauthorised Absence
D	Dual registered (at another establishment)	Not counted in possible attendance
X	Non-compulsory school age children, not required to be in school	Not counted in possible attendance
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendance
#	Planned whole or partial school closure	Not counted in possible attendance
Q	Lack of access arrangements provided by local authority	Not counted in possible attendance
Y1	Transport normally provided not being available	Not counted in possible attendance
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Not counted in possible attendance
Y3	School premises partially closed	Not counted in possible attendance
Y4	Whole school site being unexpectedly closed	Not counted in possible attendance

Y5	Pupil is in criminal justice detention	Not counted in possible attendance
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law	Not counted in possible attendance
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	Not counted in possible attendance

NOTES:

- These new codes come into effect on 19 August 2024.
- For codes K and Y7 you'll need to enter a note detailing the reason alongside the code, as the DfE has asked that this information be available on request.

15. Request for Leave During Term Time*Parents/Carers are kindly requested to read the attached guidance notes before completing this form*

I would like to request that leave of absence from school during term time be considered:

My Child's Full Name: **Year:****For the Period:** From: To:The **exceptional** circumstances and reason for this request are:-
(please attach any supporting evidence)

I have a child/children in other schools as follows:

Name..... School.....

Name..... School.....

Name..... School.....

Signature of 1 st parent/carers	2nd Signature (this is required by the second parent/carers/step-parent who will be accompanying the child on this leave)
Relationship to child:	Relationship to child:
Print Name	Print Name
Date:	Date:

Please complete and return this form to the school office. The Principal will then write to you and confirm whether the request has been authorised or not.**For Office Use Only**

Current Attendance% Last Year's Attendance.....%

Number of school sessions taken as leave during term time (this academic year)

☐
AGREED**Request for leave is agreed / not agreed for the above pupil to take during term time between the above dates.**
☐
NOT AGREED

Rationale to decline request:

Signed:Principal Date:

Notification of decision: Date letter sent to parent/carers:



Guidance Notes for Parents/Carers

Requesting Leave during Term Time

These notes have been produced using guidance issued by Staffordshire County Council

1. Parents/Carers who would like the Academy to consider granting leave of absence in term time should read these notes carefully, complete the request form and send it to the Principal. The form should also be signed by the parent/carer/step-parent who is accompanying the child on leave. The form should be sent to the Principal in time for a request to be considered well before the desired period of absence. Parents/Carers are strongly advised not to finalise any booking arrangements before receiving the Academy's decision regarding their request. The Principal cannot authorise any leave of absence unless the request is received before the period of absence begins.
2. The Department for Education makes it clear that the Principal may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers/Principals now also determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.
3. There is no automatic right to any leave in term time.
4. The Academy, along with Staffordshire County Council understands the challenges that some parents/carers face when booking holidays particularly during school holidays. However, we believe that, in order to ensure children receive the best education and prospects, that they should be in school during term time.
5. Each case will be considered individually and on its own merits. In considering a request, the Academy will take account of: -
 - the **exceptional** circumstances stated that have given rise to the request
 - the stage of the child's education and progress and the effects of the requested absence on both elements
 - the overall attendance pattern of the child
 - frequency of similar requests
 - whether the parent/carer made the request in advance
 - students/pupils on examination courses or due to take SATS will **not** normally be granted leave of absence.
6. Where parents/carers have children in more than one school a separate request must be made to each school. The Headteacher/Principal of each school will make their own decision based on the factors relating to the child at their school. However, Headteachers/Principals may choose to liaise with each other as part of their decision-making process.
7. Should the Academy decide to grant leave of absence, but the child **does not return to school at the time s/he was expected to** (i.e. following the expiry of the granted leave of absence period) and no information is available to the Academy to explain/justify the continuing absence this absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
8. **Should the Academy decide not to grant leave of absence and parents/carers still take their child out of school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, which may be subject to a Penalty Notice.**

From August 2024, the fine for school absences across the country was set at **£80 if paid within 21 days**, or **£160 if paid within 28 days**. This rate is in line with inflation and is the first increase since 2012.

In the case of repeated fines, if a parent receives a second fine for the same child within any three-year period, this will be charged at the higher rate of £160.

9. The Local Authority will continue to monitor all school absences during term time and support Headteachers/Principals in challenging parents/carers who ignore the law.

* Generally, the DfE states that parents include all those with day-to-day responsibility for a child.