



Attendance Policy

Approved by Governors on September 2024

Review Committee: Standards and Effectiveness

Review on: September 2025



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Mission Statement

“Love one another as I have loved you” (John, 15)

We believe that Jesus Christ and his Gospel Call – to love God and all people – are at the heart of what we do.

He inspires us, as children of God, to uphold the dignity of each individual. We strive to develop a community in Christ which fully supports all in achieving their potential – spiritually, academically and personally.

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School

1 Introduction

In line with our Mission Statement, we at Christ the King aim to foster good relationships between staff, students and parents/carers in a partnership of mutual responsibility. As a school we aim for an environment which enables and encourages all students to achieve their potential and to aspire for excellence.

For our students to achieve the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend school regularly and should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless they have an unavoidable reason to be absent. Any absence affects the pattern of a student's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Absence or late arrival also disrupts daily routines and teaching and therefore may affect the learning of others.

Government research shows a direct link between attendance and attainment. Good attenders also tend to make better progress socially, learn to work with others and are better prepared for transition to further education, training and employment.

It is very important therefore that you make sure your child attends regularly and our attendance policy sets out how together we will achieve this. The policy will be applied fairly and consistently and we will always consider the individual needs of our students, and their families, who have specific barriers to attendance. We will also be mindful of our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and give consideration to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Our individual attendance target currently is 97%, however all students should strive to achieve 100% if they can.

2 Roles and responsibilities

2.1 Families

Parents and carers have a legal duty under the Education Act 1996 to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend school regularly, it is also their responsibility to ensure school have up-to-date contact for themselves and emergency contacts.

Parents and students should know the times the school day starts and finishes and when the register closes (see section 4, below), the processes for requesting leave (see section 3.4), and the process for informing school of the reason for unexpected absence (as follows).

If a student is going to be absent, parents must inform school as soon as possible and at the latest by 8:40am on the first day of absence using the Groupcall Xpressions app or by telephoning school and leaving a message (01772 252072).

Students' responsibilities depend upon their age, maturity and capability but they too must do their best to attend school regularly and punctually.

School contact information for attendance-related matters is given below at the end of section 2.2.

2.2 School

Headteacher

- Take overall responsibility for ensuring attendance has a high profile in school.
- Ensure there are designated staff with day-to-day responsibility for attendance matters and protected time is allocated to complete their responsibilities
- Takes overall responsibility for the school complying with statutory guidance relating to attendance

- Consider each request for leave of absence against the school's criteria, make a decision whether some, all or none of the leave will be authorised and notify parents/carers of their decision
- Provide regular reports to the governing body on school attendance, including persistent absence and vulnerable groups.

Senior Attendance Lead

- Take overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance in school, liaising with students, parents/carers and external agencies where needed
- Set a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Establish and maintain effective systems for tackling absence and make sure they are followed by all staff
- Have a comprehensive understanding of attendance data
- Use attendance data to target attendance improvement efforts and support to the students or student cohorts who need it most
- Regularly monitor and evaluate progress, including the efficacy of the school's strategies and processes
- Regularly communicate student attendance and punctuality levels to parents/carers

Other staff with designated responsibilities for attendance

- First day response; contact parents or carers via Groupcall Xpressions if a reason for absence has not been provided. This information will be recorded accordingly. Contact emergency contacts if parents cannot be reached
- Update attendance registers using the appropriate code
- Regularly monitor student attendance, identify potential patterns of absence
- Analyse attendance data, including vulnerable groups such as SEND/Pupil Premium
- Work with students and parents to remove barriers to regular and punctual attendance, using attendance contracts where appropriate
- Involve external agencies to support students and parents/carers to have a better understanding of the importance of good attendance and to address any issues causing attendance concerns.
- Promote regular attendance through school announcements, assemblies, attendance ladders, website and THE CTK WAY and ensure the school's attendance policy is readily accessible
- Implement rewards and sanctions in line with our school attendance procedures.

All school staff

- Provide a warm and welcoming atmosphere for students and ensure a safe learning environment
- Be aware of factors that could contribute to poor attendance and punctuality
- Recognise that absence is a symptom of other issues impacting on a student's welfare and can be a warning sign of safeguarding concerns
- Adhere to the procedures in place within school to promote good attendance
- Promote the link between attendance and educational attainment to students and parents/carers
- Complete attendance registers in accordance with legislation and under the direction of the Headteacher
- Raise any concerns about attendance with the Senior Attendance Lead and/or Headteacher.

Governors

- Ensure compliance with The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024,

- Agree an attendance policy and review it annually or more frequently if required
- Agree targets for attendance for Christ the King Catholic High School
- Where attendance targets are not being met or when the governors believe there is cause for concern, they should instigate a review of the attendance procedures
- Authorise the Headteacher (or other designated person) to make decisions regarding leave of absence requests
- Liaise with the Headteacher in establishing reasonable and consistent criteria against which leave of absence will be considered.

Schools are bound by a range of attendance legislation and guidance; please see appendix for further details.

School attendance contacts

Contact for parents/carers to notify school of a student's absence: Mrs Angus, Attendance & Admissions Manager

Contacts for day to day enquiries about attendance: Mrs Angus, Attendance & Admissions Manager

Support for specific and more serious attendance concerns: Mrs Cartwright, Assistant Headteacher - Pastoral Lead

Senior Attendance Champion, the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in school: Mrs Cartwright, Assistant Headteacher-Pastoral Lead

The staff named above can be contacted on 01772 252072.

2.3 Lancashire County Council

School Attendance Support Team

Each school has a named contact in the School Attendance Support Team who can advise schools on attendance related matters, and with whom Targeting Support Meetings will be held. For mainstream secondary schools this will be a School Attendance Support Worker (SASW).

School Attendance Legal Team (SALT)

Following requests from schools for legal interventions when parents fail to ensure their children attend regularly, the School Attendance Legal Team undertakes enforcement processes, including penalty notices, prosecutions, parenting orders, education supervision orders and school attendance orders.

Children Missing Education (CME)

The Children Missing Education Team ensures the local authority fulfils its statutory duty to identify children in their area who are not registered students at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. For further information see section 7, below, regarding notifications schools must submit.

Types of absence

Every half-day absence from school is classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required from parents/carers. As a school, we will always work with parents/carers, and other agencies if appropriate, to understand the reasons underlying absence.

3.1 Authorised absences

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school times, emergencies or other unavoidable causes or exceptional circumstances.

3.2 Unauthorised absences

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable or justifiable. If a student continues to have unauthorised absences, we will follow the school procedures and may request legal intervention from the School Attendance Legal Team.

Examples of unauthorised absences are:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school to look after younger children
- To translate for a family member
- Absences which are not explained satisfactorily
- Students who arrive at school after the register has closed and without a legitimate reason (see section 4.2)
- Days off for shopping
- Celebrating a birthday
- Taking a full day off for a medical appointment unnecessarily
- Day trips and other leave in term time which have not been agreed by the Headteacher,
- Days that exceed the amount of leave agreed by the Headteacher.

It is the Headteacher's responsibility to determine if an absence is authorised or unauthorised. If there is any ambiguity relating to an absence, school may request further confirmation from parents/carers before an absence is authorised. For absence due to illness

- Sight of an appointment for your GP or for the hospital, clinic, etc
- Sight of prescribed medication or prescription for medication
- Sight of medical notes/records
- A letter from a medical professional such as a specialist or consultant.
- School's medical evidence slip, authorised by a pharmacist, doctor, receptionist, etc which indicates that you have sought medical advice and outlines your child's medical condition
- Parents should not ask their doctor (GP) to provide "sick notes" to excuse absence.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school for other reasons. If your child is reluctant to attend it is better to speak to school as soon as possible to resolve the issue, rather than trying to cover up their absence, or give in to pressure to let them stay at home. As a school, we will always work with parents/carers (and external agencies as appropriate) to understand and address the reasons behind absence.

3.3 Persistent Absence (PA)

Persistent absence is when a child misses 10% or more of their schooling across the school year for whatever reason, authorised or unauthorised (including illness, exclusion, holiday, etc). Absence at this level will damage any student's educational prospects and we expect parents'/carers' fullest support and co-operation to address this. At Christ the King Catholic High School, all absence is monitored thoroughly, therefore any student whose attendance indicates they are likely to reach the PA threshold will be prioritised and parents/carers will be informed of this promptly. Students who are persistent absentees are tracked and monitored carefully and the attendance procedures (Section 5) will be followed

3.4 Leave during term time

By law, maintained schools cannot authorise any leave in term time other than in exceptional circumstances. Taking a student out of school in term time will affect their education and progress as much as any other absence. If leave is being requested that involves

arranging travel or accommodation, approval should be obtained from the Headteacher before any bookings are made.

Leave of absence in term time **will not** be granted unless:

- A request for leave has been made in advance by a parent/carer with whom the student normally resides (using the form available on the school website or from the school office), and
- The Headteacher considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the **exceptional circumstances** relating to the request.

Due to the need to evidence exceptional circumstances, parents/carers may be asked to provide school with any relevant information regarding the request at the point of application if they believe the circumstances are exceptional.

In considering the request school will also consider other factors such as:

- The timing of the requested leave, e.g. when a student is just starting school or during an assessment period.
- A student's attendance record already includes unauthorised absence.
- Attendance is already a concern, or could become a concern, as a result of taking leave.
- Other periods of leave which the student may have had, either during the current or previous academic year.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract legal sanctions such as a penalty notice. In certain circumstances, as outlined in regulation, parents/carers risk losing their child's place on the school roll if leave is taken and the criteria governing removal from roll are met.

3.5 Religious absence

School will authorise one day of absence per religious festival and this will be marked as code R on the register. The day authorised will be that set aside by the religious body of which the parent is a member.

Parents/carers must request additional leave in advance and this can only be authorised if the Headteacher agrees that exceptional circumstances apply; this would be marked in the register as code C.

3.6 Participation in sporting events

Parents/carers can request leave of absence for their child to take part in regional, national and international sporting events. However, as always, granting leave is at the Headteacher's discretion and he will need to discuss with you the length and frequency of the absence(s) requested and how learning will continue if absence occurs, eg the sports club or association providing an approved education tutor.

Leave for a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and is being supervised by someone authorised by the school can be marked on the register as code P.

Permission for a student to leave early or arrive late in order to attend coaching/training sessions is also at the Headteacher's discretion and is unlikely to be approved if it would occur regularly.

3.7 Participation in performances

Parents/carers of a student performer can request leave from school for their child to take part in a performance. A local authority licence must be obtained before a student can take part in a performance. Before a licence is granted, school should be consulted and the

Headteacher must be satisfied that the leave will not have a negative effect on the student's education.

Where the licence specifies the dates that the student is to be away from school, the Headteacher should authorise those days. However, if the licence does not specify the dates, it is at the Headteacher's discretion to authorise the leave request.

Any absence authorised for the student to take part in a performance will be recorded as code C1. Parents/carers wishing to apply for a performance licence should go to **[Lancashire County Council Child performance licences webpage](#)**.

4 Registration

4.1 Attendance registration and late arrival

Morning registration is between 8:40am – 9:00am. Afternoon registration is between 2:00pm – 2:05pm. The school day starts at 8:40am. Students are expected to be on site at that time and that is when the registration period starts (i.e. when the register is taken and remains open). When the attendance register has been taken it remains open until 9:10am and 2:30pm in the afternoon. School finishes at 3:00pm.

4.2 Late arrival

Students who arrive after 9:00am must go straight to the school office to sign in and provide a reason for their lateness. Students who arrive after the register has been taken but before it closed (9:10am or 2:30pm), will be marked as code L. This is classed as late but present for the session (i.e. the morning or afternoon). Students who arrive after the register has closed and without a valid reason for being late (such as attending a dental or medical appointment) will be marked as code U, which is classed as an unauthorised absence but indicates that the student was physically present in school for part of the session.

4.3 Punctuality

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a student misses registration they can miss vital information for the day. Students arriving late can also disrupt lessons and interrupt the learning of others. Being 10 minutes late every day throughout the academic year is the same as missing two weeks of school.

If a student is late to school or lesson twice in a week they will complete a 20 minute lunchtime detention, if they are late more than 3 times in a week they will be given a 30-minute afterschool detention for each of the remaining days of the week. You can approach your child's Head of Year at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

5 School attendance procedures

Flowcharts detailing attendance procedures can be found in the appendix of this policy and can be downloaded from the school website.

5.1 First day of absence

If a student is absent and school have not been contacted, a message will be sent by Groupcall Xpressions on the first day of absence to find out what the reason is and when the student is likely to return. If we are unable to make contact we may telephone emergency contacts and, if necessary, a home visit. Please note that such home visits may be unannounced.

5.2 Attendance concerns

Parents/carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and should work with school to resolve any attendance issues together; this is nearly always successful. However, if

concerns persist or absences are unexplained school will use the procedures in the flowchart (see page 10). At any stage, school may seek advice from the local authority School Attendance Support Team.

5.3 Students with medical needs who have difficulty attending school

Government guidance on supporting students at school with medical conditions (see appendix/SEND Policy and Medical Conditions Policy) emphasises the role of the governing body in ensuring that students with medical conditions are able to fully access education in the same way as other students. A key element of this responsibility is reducing the amount of time missed by these students, whether their condition is short or long term.

School will work with parents/carers and other relevant professionals to minimise absence for reasons of ill health. This may in the form of reasonable adjustments, specific support or resources used within school, or by sourcing appropriate provision at another establishment. When education is to be provided at an alternative location, this should always be done via the use of a direction (see section 6).

When a student has been absent from school for an extended period, the Headteacher, Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral), SENDCO and other support services will work with the family to ensure that a smooth reintegration is achieved.

5.4 Students refusing to attend school

At Christ the King Catholic High School, we believe that every child has a right to a full-time education, and we will not accept “school refusal” as a reason for non-attendance. In such cases, we will work with parents/carers to identify the reasons why a student may be reluctant to attend school. We may request advice from the School Attendance Support Team and, with consent, make referrals to external agencies such as Children and Family Wellbeing Service or Primary Mental Health Workers to try to ensure the correct support is secured for the student and their family.

5.5 Promotion of good attendance

School will promote and incentivise attendance by acknowledging and rewarding good attendance by all students and efforts to improve attendance by individual students who have additional needs or challenging circumstances.

5.6 Use of penalty notices and other attendance legal interventions

Legal interventions may be sought if providing support to improve attendance is not appropriate (e.g. for an unauthorised holiday in term time), or has not been successful or engaged with. In accordance with the Lancashire code of conduct, we may request the local authority issue penalty notices for unauthorised absences. This includes:

- Leave of absence which is taken without prior request being made
- Leave after a request has been declined
- Days taken in excess of an agreed period of leave, without good reason
- Other unauthorised absences that meets the required threshold, including sessions marked as late after the register has closed (code U).

On 19 August 2024 new penalty notice arrangements came into force, with changes to the cost of a penalty notice and to the thresholds at which penalty notices may be requested by school. The DfE now requires that schools **must** consider if a penalty notice is appropriate when the thresholds are met. The changes to be aware of are:

- Penalty notices issued for offences that take place after 19 August 2024 will be charged at £160 per parent/carer per child. This will reduce to £80 if paid within 21 days

- Any second penalty notice issued to the same parent/carer for the same child within a rolling 3-year period will be issued at the rate of £160 to be paid within 28 days with no option for a discounted rate
- The threshold at which a penalty notice must be considered is set at 10 sessions (equivalent to 5 days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-school week period. This may include absences as a result of arriving late after the register closes. The 10 school weeks may span different terms or consecutive school years
- A maximum of two penalty notices may be issued to a parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period, so at the 3rd (or subsequent) offence(s) another course of action will need to be considered (such as prosecution or one of the other attendance legal interventions)
- If a school requests a penalty notice for absences other than unauthorised holidays, including being late after the register has closed, the local authority School Attendance Legal Team may issue a Notice to Improve to parents. A Notice to Improve is a final opportunity for parents to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is issued. If the national threshold has been met and offers of support have not been engaged with by parents/carers or have not worked, a Notice to Improve may be issued to give parents a final chance to engage with support and improve their child's attendance.

The code of conduct for penalty notices, including information and FAQs for parents, can be found on the Lancashire County Council education penalty notice webpage.

6 Alternative provision and use of direction

There is a range of circumstances when students might be required to access educational provision at a venue other than their mainstream setting. The main reasons are:

- Students who have been excluded, either for a fixed period of more than 5 days or permanently
- Students unable to access provision at their mainstream setting for medical reasons
- Students required to attend another venue for the purpose of improving behaviour, either on a temporary basis or with a view to making a permanent move to the alternative provision (via a managed move).

When a student is required to attend the alternative provision for the purposes of improving behaviour, the governors of the mainstream setting must issue a written direction or notice informing all parents/carers of the alternative provision which the student is required to attend. Where a student is required to attend an alternative provision for other reasons, the issuing of a written direction is considered best practice.

7 Notifications school must submit to the Local Authority

7.1 Admissions

School must notify the local authority within five days of adding a student's name to the admission register and must provide the local authority with all the information held within the admission register about the student. This duty does not apply to students who are added to the admission register at the start of Year 7.

7.2 Leavers

School must notify the local authority when a student's name is to be deleted from the admission register under any of the grounds prescribed in Regulation 9 of The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, as soon as the ground for removal is met and no later than the time at which the student's name is removed from the register. This duty does not apply where the student's name is removed after they have completed the school's final year, unless the local authority requests for such information to be provided (Lancashire currently does not).

Where a school notifies a local authority that a student's name is to be deleted from the admission register, the school will provide the local authority with the required information as laid out in regulation.

In addition to submitting a notification about removal from roll, some circumstances also require school to make referral to other local authority teams such as the Elective Home Education team or the Children Missing Education team. Schools may also contact the School Attendance Support Team for advice on removing children from roll. For pupils with an EHCP on roll at a special school, the school must have the agreement of the Lancashire Inclusion Service (SEND) before removing from roll.

7.3 Students who fail to attend

All schools (including academies) must inform the local authority of any student who fails to attend school regularly or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more. In Lancashire schools, this can be done via a variety of means and school can contact the School Attendance Support Team for further advice.

7.4 Students on a part-time table

Schools must also inform the local authority when a pupil is placed on a part-time timetable. In Lancashire, this should be done via the appropriate form available to schools.

7.5 Children Missing Education (CME)

Local authorities have a duty to put in place arrangements for identifying (as far as possible) those children of compulsory school age in their area who are not on roll at a school or receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Local authorities should trace those children and ensure they receive a full-time education.

If a student has stopped attending and their location is unknown, school must make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the student jointly with the local authority, before deleting the student's name from the register. In these cases, school will undertake a home visit prior to a referral being made to the local authority Children Missing Education team.

School attendance and the law

There are many pieces of legislation and government regulations and guidance that are relevant to school attendance and to children and their parents and carers. The list below relates to this policy but is not exhaustive.

Parents and carers

Government expectations

The Department for Education's School attendance guidance states that the government expects:

- *Parents to inform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.*
- *All students to be punctual to their lessons.*

Duty to ensure children receive education

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 covers the duty of parents to secure the education of children in their care who are of compulsory school age and states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable

- (a) to their age, ability and aptitude, and*
- (b) to any special education needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.*

Offence if a child does not attend regularly

Under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, if a child of compulsory school age who is a registered student at a school fails to attend regularly, their parent is guilty of an offence.

The offence is absolute as the only defences available to the parent are those statutory defences listed within that section of the Act, ie:

- *the child was absent with leave granted by the school,*
- *the child was prevented from attending by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause,*
- *absence was on a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which their parent belongs,*
- *that the school is not within statutory walking distance and that the local education authority has made no suitable transport arrangements or enabled the student to become registered at an alternative nearer school.*

Compulsory school age

Section 8 of the Education Act 1996 establishes that a child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June in the academic year in which they reach the age of 16 or if they reach 16 after the last Friday in June but before the start of the next academic year.

Legal definition of "parent" in relation to attendance

The law requires that all "parents" are held responsible for their child's attendance. This definition can include any person who has care for the child. Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 states:

Meaning of "parent"

- (1) *In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires, “parent”, in relation to a child or young person, includes any person*
- a. *Who is not a parent but has parental responsibility*
 - b. *Who has care of the child or young person.*

Thus the definition of “parent” means all natural parents, whether they are married or not, and includes any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility and/or care for a child or young person.

Schools

Attendance and absence registration codes

School attendance: Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities, DfE, regularly updated

This guidance also states that the government expects schools and local authorities to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence,
- Ensure every student has access to full-time education to which they are entitled; and,
- Act early to address patterns of absence.

Data protection

Schools must ensure that personal data is handled with the Data Protection Act 2018. See our Privacy Notice for information on how personal data will be used.

Duty for schools to include attendance information in reports for parents

[The Education \(Pupil Information\) \(England\) Regulations 2005](#)

Duty for schools to notify the local authority when students join or leave school

[Regulation 12 of The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)

Duty for maintained schools to publish attendance data

[What maintained schools must publish online, DfE guidance](#)

Duty for schools to report attendance concerns about individual students to the local authority

[Regulation 12 of The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)

Duty for schools to report attendance data to Government

[Section 537A of the Education Act 1996](#) and

[Complete the school census, DfE guidance for schools and local authorities on what data government requires.](#)

Duty for schools to safeguard and promote welfare of children

[Keeping children safe in education; statutory guidance for schools and colleges, DfE regularly updated.](#)

Leave in term time

[September 2013 amendment to The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)

Legal interventions

Parents/carers commit an offence if a student who is on a school roll fails to attend regularly and those absences are recorded by the school as unauthorised.

Legal interventions are available under the following Acts, Guidance and Regulations

- Section 444 of the Education Act 1996
- Section 36 of the Children Act 1989
- Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendments) Regulations 2013
- School attendance parental responsibility measures 2015

Students with health needs who cannot attend school

Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions: Statutory guidance, DfE 2015

Regulations regarding participation in performances

The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014

Regulations regarding removing from roll

Regulation 8 of The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

Regulations regarding the school day and number of sessions

The Education (School Day and School Year) (England) Regulations 1999