

Christ the King Primary School and Nursery



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Ratified: 19th January 2017

Review: January 2020

ATTENDANCE POLICY

At Christ the King Primary School and Nursery, we believe there is a high correlation between attendance and pupils reaching their full potential. We recognise that underachievement can be a consequence of poor attendance. Therefore, it is our intention, in partnership with parents, to actively encourage good attendance and punctuality at school so that our pupils may:

- Develop a sense of responsibility within the school community.
- Realise the importance of regular and punctual attendance.
- Take full advantage of their educational and developmental opportunities.
- Establish good patterns of attendance and punctuality which may be carried into adult life.
- Be discouraged from truancy which could adversely affect their development.

It is also our aim to be proactive in identifying and resolving any problems related to absence or punctuality. Therefore it will be considered normal good practice to:

- Keep detailed records of pupil attendance in school each day.
- Give appropriate encouragement to pupils for good attendance.
- Communicate with parents if attendance or punctuality causes concern, including writing to parents if attendance drops below 85%.
- Identify patterns of non-attendance at an early stage and work to resolve any difficulties impacting on attendance.
- Inform the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) when punctuality or attendance is deemed unsatisfactory.
- Record late arrival to school and make parents aware of our concern if a child is regularly late.
- Provide information to all parents on their children's attendance.
- Publish the school's overall attendance rate in the school's Prospectus.
- Review attendance matters at Senior Management level.
- Inform the Board of Governors about attendance matters.

The successful implementation of this policy depends upon pupils, parents and staff working in partnership

PARENTS/GUARDIANS SHOULD:

- Ensure that their child attends school regularly and that he/she arrives and is collected on time
- Avoid, if at all possible, taking their child on holiday during term time.
- Notify the school on the first morning of a pupil's absence by ringing the school office.
- Provide a note explaining every absence on the day that the pupil returns to school or as soon as possible thereafter.
- For a planned absence, including appointments provide a note in advance to the class teacher.
- Co-operate with the school in seeking to overcome problems of non-attendance or lateness.

PUPILS SHOULD:

- Make every effort to attend school regularly and to arrive at school on time.
- Following an absence, bring a note of explanation to the class teacher on the first day back after an absence.
- Bring a note from their parent/guardian in advance of any planned absence, including appointments.
- If late, apologise to the class teacher and provide an explanation.
- Never leave school at any time during the school day without permission.

STAFF SHOULD:

- Record pupils' attendance daily for both the morning and afternoon session in accordance with the school's guidance.
- Enter the appropriate code on the register for all absences.
- If a pupil arrives after registration, record him/her as late on the Register.
- Request Absence Notes and ensure that all documentation is noted and stored appropriately.
- Report concerns related to attendance and punctuality to the Principal or Vice-Principal.

If there is a concern the matter will be reported to the Principal who regularly collects attendance data and shares it with the school's Educational Welfare Officer (EWO).

The EWO regularly visits the school to check pupil attendance. During these meetings with the Principal, acceptable attendance thresholds, individual targets for attendance and follow up action for both the school and the EWO are identified.

If a child's attendance is cause for concern, the EWO may recommend that contact is made with the parents/guardians to ascertain the reason. The Principal, Vice-Principal or class teacher may speak to the pupil and parent or guardian and offer support, if necessary. Sometimes, it is necessary to send information in writing detailing unexplained absences and the child's level of attendance. The EWO may contact the family or visit, if deemed appropriate. If the level of attendance does not improve over a period of time, a formal referral may have to be made to the EWO.

GUIDANCE ON ATTENDANCE

The Department of Education issued revised guidelines to schools in August 2006 on School Attendance/Absence Recording by Schools. These guidelines advise schools on the Absence Codes which are to be used when recording pupils' absences. It clearly specifies examples of authorised and unauthorised absences (when a pupil must be recorded as absent) and lists of examples of approved educational activities (when a pupil can be recorded as present).

Parents/Guardians cannot authorise their child's absence – only the school can do this on the basis of the explanation provided. Should parents/guardians fail to provide a satisfactory reason for their child's absence; the school will record such an absence as unauthorised.

For the purposes of attendance, the school day has been divided into 2 sessions, a morning session and an afternoon session. Two registrations are now taken at school, the first opens at 9.00am and the second at 1.00pm. Both registrations close after 10 minutes. For the purpose of recording absences on school reports or other documentation, two sessions will be taken as the equivalent of one day. A pupil who arrives in the morning after registration should be marked as 'late' which is defined by the guidelines as an unauthorised absence. A note may then be required from parents to explain the child's late arrival particularly if this is a persistent problem.

All pupils are expected to be in school by 9.00am unless in exceptional circumstances they are prevented from doing so. If, for example, there is bad weather, a major incident on the road to school or public transport difficulties, the register will be kept open for a longer period.

Before registration, if a pupil is unwell when he/she arrives at school and needs to be sent home, he/she is recorded as absent for that day and a note of explanation will be required on the first day that the child returns to explain that he/she was sick.

After registration, if a pupil takes unwell during the morning session and has to be sent home, he/she is recorded as present in the morning session but absent for the afternoon session.

PARENTAL HOLIDAYS

While some absences like sickness are unavoidable, there are other occasions when this is not the case. We accept that there are many reasons why parents may wish to take their children on holiday during term time but we would ask that parents try, if at all possible, to avoid this.

It is important that children attend school regularly if they are to benefit from the learning opportunities provided in school. Unfortunately, many educational experiences missed in school as a result of family holidays cannot be recaptured later and the child may struggle on his/her return to school to keep up with the work. Teachers cannot be expected to re-do work already covered in order to accommodate family holidays and trying to catch up at home can be very stressful and tiring for both parent and child. If a family holiday is absolutely unavoidable during term time, parents/guardians should speak to the Principal well in advance of the period for which the leave is requested. Such a request will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

THE SCHOOL DAY

School starts officially at 9.00am. The pupils must arrive between 8.30am and 9.00am. Parents/guardians are informed that their children must not be left at school before 8.30am as supervision is not available. The school cannot take responsibility for children left outside the school building before this time. At 9.00am the bell rings for morning assembly.

It is vitally important that all of the pupils arrive on time. If a child is late, he/she may become anxious or embarrassed. He/she may miss an important part of the class routine or work.

Parents/guardians are advised to ensure that their children are collected on time at the end of the school day. The collection arrangements are detailed below:

- Years 1 & 2 pupils must be collected from the playground at 2.00pm sharp.
- Years 4 – 7 must be collected via the children's access gate at 3.00pm sharp.

Punctuality is just as important in the afternoon as well as the mornings. Pupils who are not collected on time may become anxious. Moreover, staff are not available to supervise pupils after home times. Any changes to collection arrangements require a note or a phonecall from the parent.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR DEALING WITH PUPILS WHO ARE ILL

Parents are asked to refrain from sending ill children to school as we are not able to provide proper medical care to a child who is too ill to be in class. If a child takes ill during the school day, the parent/guardian or someone nominated by them, will be contacted and asked to take the child home.

In the case of an asthma attack or any situation where it appears that a child requires emergency medical treatment, the school reserves the right to telephone the Emergency Services or Health Centre. The school will make every effort to contact the parents or guardian at the same time but will not delay seeking medical attention if it is required in the best interests of the child.

It is vitally important that parents/guardians ensure that the school always has up to date medical information and contact numbers for this purpose.

ADVICE TO PARENTS

Parents/Guardians are advised that if there is a problem which may impact on their child's attendance, it is important to inform the school. Parents/Guardians, in this situation, are asked to:

- Listen to their child's anxieties or worries.
- Be sympathetic but firm about attendance at school.
- Inform the teacher, Designated Child Protection Officer or Principal.
- Allow time for help to be provided in school, if appropriate.

If parents/guardians have problems with a child's attendance and they wish to seek support and advice on this matter outside school, they will be directed to the Education Welfare Officer in the Education Authority – Western Region on 028 8241 1411.

Parents are advised to take note of these arrangements carefully and to co-operate fully with the school in looking after the medical and social welfare of their children while at Christ the King Primary School and Nursery.

Thank you in anticipation of everyone's support.