CHRIST CHURCH
Church of England Secondary Academy

Attendance Policy

Our mission statement

Through valuing every individual, as made in God's image, we will **learn**, **flourish**, and **celebrate truth**.

Purpose of this policy

This policy aims to clarify the expectations we have of our students and procedures involved in the reporting of absences and lateness. This policy also outlines our systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance-related data to promote timely and effective intervention at all levels within the academy.

This policy has been updated in line with the Working together to improve school attendance (2022) guidance.

Date of last review:	March 2023	**Author:**	Deputy Headteacher
Date of next review:	March 2024	**Owner:**	Headteacher
Type of policy:	☐ Trust-wide ☒ Contextual to school	**Approval:**	LAB
School:	Christ Church, Church of England Secondary Academy	**Key Contact Name:**	Marie O'Toole
Key Contact Email:	m.otoole@christchurchsecondary.org.uk	**Key Contact Phone:**	01213933789

Contents

1. Introduction

Christ Church, Church of England Secondary Academy seeks to ensure that all students receive a full-time education that maximises opportunities for them to achieve their full potential in the context of that Every Child Matters agenda: being healthy; feeling safe; enjoying and achieving; being able to make a positive contribution and, ultimately, to achieve economic well-being.

Students play a vital part in ensuring the success of the academy. We aim for an environment that enables and encourages all members of the community to aspire to excellence. Irregular attendance leads to educational disadvantage, therefore for students to gain the greatest academic and social benefit from their education, it is vital that they attend regularly and on time, every day the academy is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Academy staff will work with students and their families to ensure that each student attends regularly and punctually.

Improving attendance is in everyone's interests and it's everyone's business. As a result, this policy seeks to ensure that all parties involved in the practicalities of academy attendance are well informed, with a particular emphasis on the need to work effectively together. We always consider the wider context of absence in relation to our safeguarding policy, and where necessary we work with other agencies to promote the safety and wellbeing of our students.

The aims of our Attendance Policy are:

a) To promote the importance of good attendance in line with the *Working together to improve school attendance* (2022) government guidance

b) Ensure that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently

c) To improve punctuality to the academy

d) Promote opportunities to celebrate and reward children for attendance and punctuality achievements

2. Attendance and punctuality expectations including daily routines

Students are welcomed by senior leaders at the academy gates from 08:10. Breakfast is available in the restaurant from this time. Students attend Line-up by 08:30. During Line-up, students are welcomed by their Form Tutor and Head of Year. Key messages to the Year group are shared.

Our main academy gates close at 08:35. Students arriving after this time but before the end of form time 9:00 will be marked as Late (L). Students who arrive after 08:35 time must enter the academy through the main entrance, where their attendance is recorded by the attendance team.

The register opens at 08:35 and closes at 09:00. Students arriving late, after registers close, will receive a U code. A U code is an unauthorised absence and significantly impacts overall attendance. Our process for consistent lateness is the same as for attendance, as outlined in this policy.

There are occasions when absence is unavoidable. These include illness, medical appointments, or education appointments. If a parent knows in advance of absence due to an appointment, the academy office should be informed, and the appointment letter, email or card shown.

If a child is ill, the parent or carer should ring the academy to inform us on 01213933678.

If parents or carers require additional support regarding attendance they can contact the child's Form Tutor in the first instance. Parents or carers should continue to update the attendance officer by phone or through Arbor for every further day of absence.

If we do not receive communication about absence, the parent or carer will be called, and a message will be sent home. If no suitable explanation is provided, the absence will be classed as an unauthorised absence.

Authorised absences

Acceptable reasons include sickness, hospital appointments, dentist appointments, recognised religious observance (1 day per observance only), a graduation ceremony of a parent/carer or sibling and funerals. Medical appointments (including orthodontist, dentist, opticians, GP, hospital appointments) should be arranged outside of the academy day, where possible. Where this is not possible, we expect students to miss only part of the day.

Unauthorised absences

Unacceptable reasons include: shopping, going to a non-medical appointment, visiting relatives, buying shoes, going for a haircut, parent or carer being unwell and taking holiday, for example by acquiring cheaper flights outside of academy holidays. This list is not an exhaustive list.

If parents or carers need to remove their child from the academy for any reason, they must complete a Term Time Absence Request form during a meeting with the School Attendance Officer. No absences for holidays will be authorised, unless in extreme or exceptional circumstances. If the absence is not authorised, the parent or carer may be liable to a Fixed Penalty Notice. Only the Head Teacher can authorise absence.

3. Data and monitoring

We use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance at an individual and cohort level as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve issues before they impact on leaning and progress.

Data	Monitored by	Frequency
Whole academy daily absence report	Attendance Officer, Heads of Year, SLT	Daily
Students at risk of becoming or are SA (severely absent – missing nearly 50% or more of all school days)	Attendance Officer, Safeguarding Team CSAW-Attendance Welfare Officer	Daily Weekly
Individual student attendance	Form tutor, Student	Weekly
Tutor group attendance	Form tutor, Head of Year	Weekly
Year Group Attendance	Head of Year	Daily/ Weekly
Students at risk of becoming or are PA (persistently absent – missing nearly 10% of all school days)	Attendance Officer, Heads of Year	Weekly
Students with EHCPs and SEND	Heads of Year, SENDCO, Assistant SENDCO.	Daily/ Weekly
Cohort analysis (year groups, student premium, SEND) compared with SA Network and National trends.	Attendance Officer, Deputy Head Teacher	Half termly

We also regularly communicate with parents and carers about their child's attendance, through Arbor. Year- to-date attendance is shared as part of students progress reports and weekly data is shared with Form Tutors and Heads of Year to address any concerns with home. Where attendance is a concern parents will be invited to an Early Help meeting to discuss patterns in attendance, the needs of the child and family, and what support can be offered.

The table below outlines the number of days, weeks and number of lessons missed for the 95%, 90% and 85% attendance across the school year. All families, children and staff should know that poor attendance translates into many missed lessons and days in school, resulting in fewer opportunities to learn and develop their character. The data in *Table 2* is shared with parents at the beginning of every academic year and regularly through the CCSA Bulletin and is regularly revisited with students:

Attendance during one school year	Equals this number of days absent	Which is approximately this many weeks absent	Which means this number of lessons missed (approx.)
95%	9 days	2 weeks	60
90%	19 days	4 weeks	120

| 85% | 29 days | 6 weeks | 180 |

4. Escalation of procedures

If attendance falls to an unacceptable level (below 95%) including a combination of authorised and/or unauthorised absence, the Attendance Officer initiates Birmingham City Council's Fast Track to Attendance process:

- The parents or carer of the child invited to an Early Help meeting with a pastoral leader, where any barriers preventing good attendance are discussed and actions are agreed. The pastoral leaders leading the Early Help process will listen and offer support to families. The outcome of this meeting could be the creation of a school action plan including targets set, advice to parents on applying for travel assistance if the child lives more than 3 miles away, a referral to the school nurse or initiation of a multiagency Early Help Assessment (EHA).
- If there is no evidence of a medical condition, but there is a significant illness absence, the school will ask for medical evidence to authorise further illness absence following a referral to the school nurse. If parents do not attend an Early Help meeting or do not respond to phone calls/letters, the academy will conduct a home visit.
- If attendance doesn't improve following the early help intervention, or if parents refuse to engage, Step Two of the Fast-track process will be initiated. At this point, parents will be invited by the Attendance Welfare Officer (AWO) for arrange a formal 'School Attendance Review Meeting' (SARM) with at least 7 days' notice. This will include meeting with students and parents at risk of persistent or severe absence to help further understand the barriers to being in school and agreeing actions or interventions to address them, including another offer of Early Help. The School Attendance Review Meeting may include referrals to services and organisations that can provide support such as Birmingham Children's Partnership. Where information raised in the SARM indicates wider safeguarding concerns a referral will be made to the Children's Advice and Support Service (CASS).
- If there is a further unauthorised absence after the SARM, within a 10-week period, the academy will move to Step 3 – The Formal Warning Notice. This notice will be sent to parents in the post and will warn that the Local Authority may consider issue a penalty notice.
- If there are a further 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence since the formal warning notice was issues, the academy will refer the case to Birmingham City Council's Education Legal Intervention Team, who may serve a fixed penalty notice and/or prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

If parents or carers are engaging with the school, but the child appears reluctant to attend, we will continue to offer the family support through an Early Help Assessment and referrals to other services where needed. Resources from the #you'vebeenmissed campaign will be shared with the parents or carers.

For young people aged 11 to 25 there are also forums, guides and counselling available free of charge at Kooth. https://www.kooth.com/

Parents can also find help and support with their child's mental health and other issues affecting the family though 'From Birmingham with Love':

https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/50224/birmingham_children_s_partnership/2218/from_birmingham_with_love

5. Promoting and rewarding attendance

The important of excellent attendance is promoted at parent evenings and through weekly parent updates, such as the CCSA Bulletin.

At the start of each term students are reminded of the link between attendance and attainment. Students will qualify for attendance rewards at the end of each term, even if they had a period of absence in previous months or years. In this way, the academy seeks to positively reinforce where students have improved attendance.

In every Form Room, one of the whiteboards is dedicated to a form group display. Here there is information on the importance of good attendance including the data for the Form and Year group. Students with excellent attendance and improved attendance are celebrated through our rewards and recognition structure.