Attendance Policy

September 2024

ST CHRISTOPHER'S

HAMPSTEAD

Attendance Policy

Policy to be reviewed annually			
Action	**Owner**	**Date**	**Completed**
Reviewed	Head (Sandrine Paillasse)	April 2024	✓
Approved	Safeguarding & Welfare Committee	May 2023	✓
Approved	Board of Governors	June 2023	✓

Minor update

Date of next review: September 2025

To be published on	
School network	✓
School website	✓

Accessibility notice
To enable easier reading, this Policy is available in a larger font upon request.

STC

This policy applies equally to the Early Years setting, KS1 and KS2 as taught at St Christopher's School.

1. Aim

We believe that school attendance is fundamental to our pupils' academic success, wellbeing, and future development.

The aim of the Attendance Policy is to ensure that all pupils at St Christopher's School are able to benefit fully from its educational provision. We are committed to:

- Developing a whole-school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance
- Maintaining a clear and well-communicated attendance policy
- Accurately compiling attendance registers, regularly analysing attendance data to identify patterns, acting early to support pupils or cohorts needing assistance reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school and to enable us to understand any barriers to attendance

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons. Unauthorised absence is strongly discouraged. It leads to educational and pastoral disadvantage and may place pupils at risk.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures.

2.1 This policy has regard to the following guidance and advice
- 1.1.1 Working together to improve school attendance (DfE, applies from 19 August 2024)
- 2.1.1 Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance (DfE, applies from 19 August 2024)
- 3.1.1 Toolkit for schools: communicating with families to support attendance (DfE, September 2023)
- 4.1.1 Guidance for parents on school attendance (Office of the Children's Commissioner, September 2023)
- 5.1.1 'Is my child too ill for school?' guidance (NHS, April 2024)
- 6.1.1 Keeping children safe in education (DfE, September 2024)
- 7.1.1 School behaviour and attendance: parental responsibility measures (DfE, May 2020)
- 8.1.1 Children missing education (DfE, September 2016)
- 9.1.1 Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school (DfE, August 2017)
- 10.1.1 Behaviour in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff (DfE, February 2024)
- 11.1.1 Mental health and behaviour in schools (DfE, November 2018)
- 12.1.1 Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools (DfE, February 2023)
- 13.1.1 Support for pupils where a mental health issue is affecting attendance (DfE, February 2023)
- 14.1.1 Remote education guidance (DfE, updated February 2023); and
- 15.1.1 [• SEND Code of practice: 0 to 25 years (DfE and Department of Health, May 2015)]

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

This policy is overseen and reviewed at board level by the Risk and Compliance Committee (formerly Safeguarding and Welfare Committee).

3. Absence and communication

Information on punctuality, unauthorised absence and illness is set out in the Parents' Handbook. Parents are requested to:

- ensure that their daughter attends school every day
- ensure that their daughter arrives on time each day between 8.00/15 for Reception and 8.30am
- collect their daughter promptly at the end of their school day
- notify the school if someone else is collecting their daughter from school
- provide a list of people authorised to collect their daughters to the school
- notify the school if for a legal reason someone is not permitted to collect their daughter from school
- inform the class teacher if there are any worries which might cause their daughter to be unwilling to come to school
- take holidays during the holiday period and not during term time
- discuss with the Head, and put a request in writing with advance notice, in the event that permission is being sought to take a holiday during term time (see below)
- put a request in writing to take their daughter out of school for any other reason, such as appointments, school visits etc

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1. Governors

The governing board is responsible for:
- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy
- The Risk and Compliance Committee is responsible for ensuring that attendance figures for the whole school are monitored on at least a termly basis. The Safeguarding Governor also holds the DSL and the Head to account for the implementation of this policy.

4.2. The Head/Deputy Head Pastoral (also Designated Safeguarding Lead)

The Head and Deputy Head Pastoral are responsible for:
- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils

Additionally, the Deputy Head Pastoral/Designated Safeguarding Lead is the School's Senior Attendance Champion, working alongside the Welfare Coordinator in:

- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence and making sure they are followed by staff
- Ensuring all staff understand the importance of good attendance and are appropriately trained
- Evaluating and monitoring processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Liaising with pupils and external agencies as needed

4.3. The Heads of EYFS, Lower and Upper School

They:
- Lead attendance across the EYFS, Lower or Upper School and at an individual level
- Offer a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluate and monitor expectations and processes
- Have an oversight of data analysis
- Devise specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arrange calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Deliver targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Report concerns about attendance to the Head
- Work with form teachers and parents to tackle persistent absence

4.4. The welfare coordinator

The welfare coordinator is responsible for:
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the Heads of Lower/Upper School for attendance and the Head and DSL
- Arrange calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues as required

4.5. Form teachers

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

They should alert the heads of lower/upper school and the welfare coordinator if they are concerned about a pupil's absences, persistent lateness or identify patterns.

STC

4.6.School Office staff

- School office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.
- The Head of Admissions maintains the admissions register and liaises with the local authority.

5. Recording attendance

5.1.Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.
Pupils must arrive in school by 8.30am on each school day.
The register for the first session will be taken at 8.40am and will be kept open until 9.00am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.40pm and will be kept open until 2.00 pm in the lower school and at 2pm and will be kept open until 2.20pm in the upper school.

It will mark whether every pupil is:

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

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 2 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:
- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We keep every entry on the attendance register in accordance with the school's data retention schedule.

5.2.Unplanned absence

- The pupil's parent/guardian must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8:30am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7)
- They must notify the school office by telephone [0207 435 1521] or email [secretary@stchristophers.london] before 8.30am if their daughter is to be absent due to illness. If she is away for more than one day, the parent/guardian should ring or email the

school by 8.30am every morning to confirm that she will not be in school If a child is away from school for an extended period of time due to illness, parents will provide a more detailed explanation and/or description to the Welfare Coordinator.

- If absence is unavoidable, parents should make their request in writing to the Head giving at least 24 hours' notice. This applies to full and part days and to late arrival or early departure on any day.
- We will mark absence due to illness as 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 the pupil's parent/guardian 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 and parents/guardians will be notified of this in advance
- The School will make a sickness return to the local authority if a pupil is recorded in the attendance register as absent using the national absence code 'I' (unable to attend because of sickness) and there are reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will have to miss 15 consecutive school days or more due to illness or if the pupil's condition requires ongoing medical treatment

5.3. Planned absence

- The school discourages parents from taking girls out of school during term time, not least because it creates considerable problems of continuity for their daughters. Other than when emergency treatment is required, parents are asked to arrange appointments with the dentist, optician, etc. during school holiday times.
- Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/guardian notifies the school in advance of the appointment
- Parents should notify the school office by telephone or email before 8.30am
- However, we encourage parents/guardians 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.
- The pupil's parent/guardian must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence

5.4. Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Any pupil marked as absent *after* the register has closed has to sign in at the office using our Inventry system.

The Welfare Coordinator keeps a record of lates collated from InVentry which is shared with DSL. Any repeat late arrivals are discussed with the form tutor.

ST C

5.5. Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school office will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/guardian to ascertain the reason, by telephone/email if no response to telephone
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, including calling any of the pupil's emergency contacts
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained. This will be no later than five working days after the session.
- Call the parent/guardian on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. The School's Welfare Coordinator will keep the Head and DSL informed. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an Education Welfare Officer from the local authority.

5.6. Reporting to parents/carers

- The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels including on school reports (the full reports which are published in Spring and Summer Term respectively)

6. Authorised and unauthorised absence

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 - Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) - states that a child absent from education is a child who is on roll at a school but is regularly not attending; a child missing education is a child of compulsory school age who isn't on a school roll or being educated elsewhere.

Being absent from education, and missing education, are vital warning signs of safeguarding risks to a child.

6.1. Approval for term-time absence

- The Head will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Head's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.
- Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time
- Applications for leave of absence must be made in writing to the Head and in advance. Failure to do so will result in the absence being recorded as 'unauthorised'.
- The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request
- The Head may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence
- Absences which are taken when applications in advance have been refused will be recorded as 'unauthorised'.

6.2. Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- 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 school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- Attendance to <u>close</u> relative funerals or weddings

6.3. Unauthorised absence from school

Unauthorised absence is where the school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence, and where the reasons do not amount to exceptional circumstances. Holidays and family trips during term time are not authorised absences.

The school must notify the local authority of absence without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more.

6.4. Attendance monitoring

- The welfare coordinator and Heads of Lower and Upper School monitor and analyse pupil absence on a regular basis. They produce reports for the Head half-termly, termly and yearly.
- The heads of lower / upper school identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- If a pupil's continued absence or attendance level (usually below 95%) raises concerns, the heads of lower / upper school will write to the parent/guardian of the pupil to communicate their concerns
- If a pupil's absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/guardian, the heads of lower / upper school will ask to meet with the parents/guardians
- If attendance continues to be a concern and does not improve, the Head will ask to meet with the parents/guardians
- Anonymised pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and shared with the Governing Board

In addition to the above, the pastoral team, alongside the Learning Enrichment coordinator, will triangulate attendance data with academic and other pastoral data, and will consider any neurodiversity or screening needs.

7. Children missing education (CME)

- CME are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school or receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school
- The school has a duty to notify the local authority when a pupil is about to be removed from the school admission register. This duty does not apply when a pupil's name is removed from the admission register at standard transition points.
- The school must also notify the local authority within five days of adding a pupil's name to the admission register at a non-standard transition point
- The school must make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the child jointly with the local authority, before deleting the pupil's name from the register
- Parents of pupils at independent schools cannot be issued with penalty notices but can be prosecuted under section 444(1) or (1A). Education Act 1996

8. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy

Appendix 1 – Flowchart monitoring attendance

Child is absent: school office calls parents for information. Code inputted within five days

→ If the child already has below 95% attendance, inform the Head of Lower/Upper School

Form teacher and welfare coordinator monitor attendance levels and flag concerns to Head of Lower/Upper School.

If absence is at a concerning level, Head of Lower/Upper School writes formal letter to parents; continues to monitor, with help of welfare coordinator / form tutor

If the attendance level does not improve, the Head of Lower/Upper School invites the parents to a meeting

If the problem persists, the Head of Lower/Upper School informs the Head.

The Head invites parents to a meeting.

STC

Appendix 2: Attendance codes

Introduction of new codes including multi-character codes
As per the DfE's reform, the following codes will become available for session attendance in the 2024/2025 Academic Year.

Code	DfE Description / Explanation
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
Q	Unable to attend the school because of lack of access
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being provided
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed.
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with Public health guidance or law
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause

Introduction of 'Statutory Explanation'

As part of the DfE's reform, where the following codes are used there is a requirement to provide a supporting explanation in the new Academic Year.

Code	DfE Description / Explanation
B	Attending any other approved educational facility.
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances

STC

E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	**Definition**	**Scenario**
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school

#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 3- Procedures for staff.

Attendance Checks - procedures

<u>Roles and responsibilities:</u>
Form tutors
Welfare coordinator (WC)
Heads of Section (HoS)
Deputy Head Pastoral (DHP)
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

ST C

Attendance: Late	(From 10-minute point)	Form tutors and WC monitor: feedback at meeting for WC and DHP, held approximately every three weeks
Morning Registration	Form tutors register on ISAMS and reviewed by WC	*recalculated at the beginning of each term No of lates: 7 – WC contact 10 – Form tutor contact Persists – escalate to HoS The school may also escalate below the lates threshold level if there are additional reasons for concern.
Attendance: Absences	95% and above is good 90% or below defined as persistent absence	Form tutors and WC monitor: feedback at meeting for WC and DHP, held approximately every three weeks

Absences: **95% -** monitoring begins (WC checks for reasons behind absences) WC call or email (standardised) WC enters information on CPOMS The school may also escalate if above the absence threshold level if there are additional reasons for concern.
90% now persistent absence Form tutor contact Form tutor adds detail of meeting to the CPOMS entry
Below 90% and persisting Head of Section contact DSL made aware.
Absences from illness WC provides wellbeing call instead (discussion with DSL as to appropriate steps)

Late Collection (see Missing Child and Late Collection Policy for full procedure)	Deputy Strategy & Operations: clubs oversight	

Afternoon Dismissal	Sticker printed from Inventry Machine and left on WC desk who logs	3 – WC Contact 5 – Form tutor contact Persists – escalate to HoS/DSO
Afternoon Clubs	Sticker printed from Inventry Machine and left on WC desk who logs	

STC