

# ST. CHRISTOPHER'S C.E. HIGH SCHOOL

## WHOLE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

### MISSION STATEMENT

St. Christopher's is a Church of England High School where pupils and staff work together in the knowledge and love of God. We try to act out our faith in our daily lives, with Christ as our example. We seek to promote the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, intellectual and physical development of all our pupils within a caring and supportive community, preparing them as Christians for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of their adult life.

*Please note that where reference is made to pupils, this also refers to students, unless otherwise stated. Students should also note the sub-section Additional Sixth Form Attendance Guidance on the final page. Information relevant only to Main School is marked in Blue and for Sixth Form, in green.*

### AIMS OF OUR ATTENDANCE POLICY

We will:

1. encourage good attendance for all pupils by offering an environment in which pupils feel valued and part of the school community
2. promote a culture across the school which identifies the importance of regular and punctual attendance
3. make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school, including pupils, parents, staff and governors
4. further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school
5. reward good attendance
6. work to improve the attendance of individual pupils and groups of pupils who are a cause for concern, particularly persistent absentees (PA's) and those whose attendance falls at or below 95%.
7. set targets to improve individual pupil and whole school attendance levels.

### RIGHTS, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

We will develop a procedural framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities for:

- parents and carers
- pupils
- school staff
- governors.

The procedural framework will complement this policy and identify how we will deliver our aims in respect of regular and punctual attendance.

The procedural framework will include guidance on:

- registration
- what constitutes unauthorised absence
- consistent use of symbols for authorised absence
- holidays in term time/extended leave
- systems for monitoring attendance and punctuality for individual pupils
- systems for dealing with absence
- criteria and systems for referral to the Well Being Officer
- systems for reintegrating pupils who have been absent
- systems for monitoring whole school attendance and for action planning.

### HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME/EXTENDED LEAVE

From September 2013, the DfE states that Headteachers are not to grant any leave of absence during term time. In exceptional circumstances only, parents may seek permission from the

Headmaster. This must be done well in advance of the proposed date (at least 2 weeks) using the Leave of Absence Request Form found on the school website, or by letter. Supporting evidence will be requested where necessary.

### **USE OF PENALTY NOTICES**

Lancashire County Council considers that regular attendance at school is of such importance that Fixed Penalty Notices may be used in a range of situations where unauthorised absence occurs, such as:

- truancy (including pupils found during truancy sweeps)
- parentally condoned absence without good reason
- holidays in term time which have been taken without prior school permission
- persistent late arrival at school.

In each case a pupil must have had a minimum of 5 days (10 sessions) of unauthorised absence in a term, or 10 days (20 sessions) in two consecutive terms.

Parents/carers commit an offence if a child fails to attend school regularly and those absences are classed as unauthorised. Depending on the circumstances, such cases may result in prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

A penalty notice is an alternative to prosecution, which does not require an appearance in court unless the fine remains unpaid after 28 days. Full payment of the penalty means that parents/carers can avoid being prosecuted and convicted.

**Penalty notices are issued at £120 per parent, per child, however, if paid within 21 days of being issued the cost is £60. Non-payment of the Penalty Notice will result in prosecution.**

### **PARTNERSHIP WORKING**

School will work with support agencies e.g. CSC as appropriate to ensure regular attendance at school.

### **MONITORING, ANALYSIS, ACTION PLANNING**

School will adopt systems for monitoring attendance at both individual pupil and whole school level, and will analyse patterns and trends of non-attendance to inform future action planning and target setting in respect of whole school attendance matters. Monitoring of individual pupils will be triggered by indicators of developing attendance problems such as:

1. Attendance below 95% and falling
2. A succession of broken weeks
3. Absence on a particular day each week
4. Patterns of joint sibling absence
5. A succession of one- or two-day absences that are **repeatedly** explained by the same reason, e.g. 'he felt sick, he had a headache', etc.
6. Poor punctuality
7. No explanation received from home after child's absence from school
8. Difficulty in contacting parents/carers

### **REVIEW OF ATTENDANCE POLICY**

School will review this policy and the associated procedural framework every two years.  
Updated by SPN and CCO May 2020, in liaison with PCU and JBR Review date: May 2022.

# ATTENDANCE POLICY PROCEDURAL FRAMEWORK

This document forms part of St Christopher's Attendance Policy and will be reviewed every two years.

## LINKED POLICIES

This Attendance Policy and Procedural Framework should be considered alongside other related school policies:

Admissions  
Anti-Bullying  
Behaviour  
Child Protection  
Equal Opportunities  
Special Educational Needs  
PSHEE Policy  
and in conjunction with St. Christopher's Home School Agreement.

## CURRENT STATUS

Whole school attendance for 2019-2020 stands at 97.0% and is consistent with previous years.

To help us to achieve these excellent levels of attendance and reach our targets, we have in place a number of strategies which are detailed in a later section of this document. These include:

- regular communication with parents
- promotion of the benefit of good attendance across our school community
- rewards for high attendance
- monitoring and action planning for pupils with problem attendance/punctuality.

## RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### Parents are expected to:

- ensure children attend regularly, and punctually
- make contact on first day of absence, via email, through Synergy or phone
- provide a written note on the pupil's return from prolonged absence
- if leave is permitted, (in exceptional circumstances), ensure sufficient prior notice is given for authorising the request
- make early contact with school when they become aware of problems with attendance
- attend meetings if concerns are identified
- support the school in agreed interventions/action plans.

### Pupils are expected to:

- acknowledge behaviour needed out of school (e.g. early bedtimes) to allow punctual attendance
- attend school whenever possible and arrive at registration punctually
- adhere to appropriate systems for registration and for late registration
- adhere to appropriate systems for signing out at Reception if leaving school during the school day.

### School Staff

The overall responsibility for attendance lies with the Headteacher. However, the Senior Assistant Headteacher, working with the Heads of Year, Head of Sixth Form and the Attendance Officers takes responsibility for leading and managing most attendance issues.

### Headteacher

Reviews any requests from parents for leave of absence.

### **Senior Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral) – Mrs S Parkinson**

- Takes the lead in ensuring attendance has a high profile within the school and in monitoring whole school attendance trends
- Ensures there are designated staff with day-to-day responsibility for attendance matters
- Ensures adequate, protected time is allocated to discharge these responsibilities
- Takes overall responsibility for ensuring the school conforms to all statutory requirements in respect of attendance
- Makes parents aware of expectations regarding attendance matters
- Promotes high attendance at Intake Evening and in written communications (e.g. website, parents' newsletter)
- Communicates information on school systems to staff
- Delivers training for all staff re. attendance matters
- Liaises with Heads of Year and Attendance Officers on a regular basis.

### **Heads of Year**

- Make pupils aware of expectations regarding attendance matters
- Identify trends of absence
- Share information on attendance data with pupils and form teachers/personal tutors
- Promote high attendance verbally in Year assemblies and by rewarding pupils who achieve high attendance (100% certificates, badges, form awards)
- Liaise with form teachers/personal tutors re. concerns
- Contact parents re. concerns.
- Arrange meetings
- Communicate targets to individual pupils, forms and year group, and to form teachers/personal tutors
- Liaise with Attendance Officers and Senior Assistant Head (Pupil Welfare)
- Liaise with outside agencies (e.g. LEMS, CAMHS)
- Re-integrate pupils who have had long term absence
- Promote good punctuality by monitoring lates and imposing sanctions when necessary

### **Attendance Officers – Mrs C Connor & Mrs Braithwaite**

- Staff with responsibility for attendance should be aware of the "Guidance for Schools on Registration and Attendance" issued by Lancashire County Council.
- Read registers each day
- Retrieve voice and email messages. Pass on any important information to relevant Heads of Year
- Check on absentees by visiting classrooms
- Make first day contact (by telephone or Synergy) with parents of all pupils who are absent without explanation
- Fill in absence slips to pass to form teachers
- Amend absence codes
- Record and monitor attendance of pupils who are receiving education elsewhere
- Read absence return sheets each week
- Follow up any unexplained absences
- Collates main school/Sixth Form attendance data and analyses this information
- Produce reports to identify pupils **with less than** 95% attendance or with a significant number of broken weeks.
- Produces registration certificates as required
- Produces registration certificates for pupils' annual report to parents
- Generates letters for Heads of Year to send to the parents of pupils whose attendance drops below 95%
- Registers pupils arriving late for school and updates school system
- Keep Heads of Year informed of persistent late comers

- Liaise with Heads of Year, and with Senior Assistant Head (Pupil welfare), Head of Sixth Form and the Well Being Officer (Mrs C Blackburn) as appropriate on all issues regarding registration, attendance and punctuality.
- Keeps a record of lates to inform Late Detentions and further interventions
- Record persistent latecomers in Synergy who are given detentions
- Submits half-termly data to LCC re attendance and PA data

#### **Form Teachers/Sixth Form Personal Tutors**

- Mark attendance registers on Synergy within the first five minutes of assembly.
- Take in notes from pupils who have had prolonged absence and pass to the Attendance Officers or Reception
- Monitor individuals in their form and pass on concerns to Heads of Year
- Liaise with the Attendance Officers with regard to registration and punctuality issues.

#### **Class Teachers**

- Must take a register within the five minutes allocated to this after lunch and update the list for late arrivals.

#### **Deputy Headteacher (Curriculum) – Mrs N Moran**

- Ensures arrangements for registration are in place when staff are absent
- Provides a safe learning environment
- Ensures an appropriate and responsive curriculum
- Provides a sympathetic response to any pupils' concerns
- Is aware of factors that can contribute to non-attendance
- Is aware of the part all staff can play in ensuring attendance is seen as important for all pupils
- Sees pupils' attendance as the responsibility of all staff, even if the co-ordination and management of attendance are designated responsibilities of specified staff

#### **Governors**

- Establish a whole school attendance policy and regularly review this policy
- Designate a committee (Governors' Well Being Committee) to take responsibility for attendance issues
- Consider attendance issues and pupil data as an agenda item at all meetings of this committee (once each term) and make recommendations to staff where necessary.

### **PROCEDURES**

#### **Registration**

- Pupil attendance/absence is recorded using on-line registers with Synergy/SIMS.
- The attendance register is taken twice daily by form teachers (am) and by class teachers (pm), within the first 5 minutes.
- Form teachers should ensure that a formal registration takes place at each session, i.e. that the class is quiet and seated and that pupils' names are read out. (A quick head count is not sufficient).
- The register should be returned electronically immediately after the register has been taken.
- When the register is taken, EVERY PUPIL must be marked either PRESENT or ABSENT. (Pupils marked absent when they were in fact present can have this error corrected on the absence report).
- Any pupil who arrives after the register has been taken, should be recorded as being late.
- For any pupil arriving after 9.30am, a note must be sent in by the pupil's parent giving an acceptable reason for this absence.
- The school office should be informed of any changes of address or telephone contact numbers.

### **Systems for dealing with lateness**

- Registration is at 8.45am
- Pupils arriving after 8.50am will receive a late mark.
- Pupils arriving late must report to Reception.
- Pupils educated off-site will be registered by the attendance officers. These pupils should be marked as absent by their form teachers.
- If poor punctuality continues to be an issue, further action is taken.
- When a pupil has been late four times in one half term, the pupil completes a 15-minute lunch time detention. For being late eight times, this escalates to a 30-minute detention and discussion with detention staff. Over eight lates can result in an after-school detention and parents will be consulted.
- Penalty notices may be used.
- Heads of Year are encouraged to issue "Goal" cards (a self-monitoring strategy) to persistent late comers to encourage good punctuality.

### **Persistent Absenteeism (PA)**

A pupil becomes a persistent absentee when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. This equates approximately to 3.5 days absence per half term. Absence at this level has a severe impact to any child's educational prospects and therefore school will monitor any such pupils carefully. Parents will be informed should their child fall into this category and would be encouraged to offer support and cooperation in order to bring about an improvement.

PA cases are also automatically made known to the Local Authority.

### **Systems for dealing with absence**

- All absences are covered by a parental phone call or email/Synergy message on the first day of absence and by an absence note from parents for prolonged absence. The note must give the **reason** for the absence.
- Once a satisfactory reason has been received, the correct code on Synergy is logged.
- Any pupil who fails to provide an absence reason from parents should be referred to the Head of Year. Please note that an absence for which no record has been received will be counted as unauthorised (truancy) and will affect the school's attendance figures. Pupils who fail to provide a reason by 10 days after their return to school will have a reminder letter sent to parents. After 15 days the absence will be deemed to be unauthorised.
- Only Heads of Year and the Attendance Officers can classify an absence as unauthorised. Any pupil who requests permission to leave school during the school day must bring in a note, take this note to pupil reception and receive a permit card. The pupil should show this permit card at Reception and sign out. If the pupil returns to school, he/she should sign back in at Reception.
- Should a pupil's attendance become a cause for concern, we may ask for medical evidence in order to validate the absences as authorised.
- Home visits may be carried out where we have had no communication from home, are unable to contact parents, for prolonged absence and where attendance is a concern.

### **Holidays in term time/extended leave**

From September 2013, the DfE states that Headteachers are not to grant any leave of absence during term time. In exceptional circumstances only, parents may seek permission from the Headmaster. This must be done well in advance of the proposed date, using the Leave of Absence Form found on the school website.

### **Removal from Roll**

- Senior staff receive information about pupils who intend to leave the school and pass on this information to other members of staff, so that school property and equipment can be returned.

- If a pupil fails to attend or “goes missing”, the Attendance Officer, Heads of Year and Well Being Officer will make enquiries and outside agencies including the police and the “Children Missing Education” team at LCC will be informed.
- A member of SMT will decide when a pupil can be removed from roll.
- The Headmaster’s PA, Mrs A Walsh, who is responsible for admissions and the school roll will oversee completion of the Common Transfer Form, liaise with other establishments and remove the pupil from roll. Student roll changes are handled by the Sixth Form admin team.
- The Attendance Officers will inform LCC when a pupil has been removed from roll.

### **STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING GOOD ATTENDANCE**

- The Senior Assistant Head (Pastoral) and the Heads of Year promote the need for good attendance in a variety of ways e.g. the prospectus, Parents’ Newsletters, school noticeboards, year assemblies, annual Awards Assemblies, Open Evening, new Year Seven Intake Evening.
- Pupils with 100% attendance are rewarded in the following ways:
  - Gold Certificate
  - Attendance Badge
  - Speech Night Prize for 5 years full attendance
  - Students may receive the Senior Speech Night Prize for 7 years full attendance
- [Main School attendance figures for groups of pupils are displayed and are shared with pupils in Year Assemblies. These figures show comparisons between year groups, form classes and between boys and girls. They are used by Heads of Year to encourage good attendance and to set targets for forms and particular groups \(eg. 9SL Girls\).](#)
- [Year 7 pupils complete work on the importance of good attendance in PSHEE lessons.](#)
- [At Key Stage 4, when a pupil is in need of support or when mainstream curriculum is not entirely appropriate, alternative curricular arrangements are made \(Common Prospectus, College Courses, work placements etc\).](#)
- The SENDCO, Mrs Collier and Pupil Support Department help to ensure that learning is differentiated and that the curriculum offered is flexible so that pupils’ individual needs are met.
- The Attendance Officers makes contact with the parents of any pupil who is absent without notification on the first day of absence.
- When a pupil has had a long term absence and/or is struggling with the return to school, Heads of Year work with the SENDCO and Well Being Officers to give support and to structure the pupil’s time, initiating a phased return and appropriate changes to the curriculum when necessary.
- The Well Being Team offer additional support to vulnerable pupils, working with individuals and small groups, to raise self esteem and promote positive attitudes to school.
- All new staff are supported by their Heads of Year in their form teacher role and are given initial training by the Senior Assistant Head (Pastoral).
- Form teachers work positively with their pupils to encourage good attendance and punctuality. We are aware that pupils’ attendance and punctuality records are included in school references and in their Progress File and that details of Main School’s authorised and unauthorised absence rates are published in Ofsted’s RAISEonline, in the DfE School Census, in LCC documents (LSIP) and in our school’s prospectus each year. All Pastoral staff are keen to promote high levels of achievement in this area.
- Form teachers/personal tutors and Heads of Year, liaise closely on all matters of attendance, punctuality, pupil welfare and progress. This strong pastoral system ensures that we support and encourage the whole child to flourish and be the best they can be.

### **MONITORING, ANALYSIS, EVALUATION AND ACTION PLANNING**

The Senior Assistant Head (Pastoral) works with Heads of Year and the Attendance Officers to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the school’s policy and procedures.

- The school funds the post of Attendance Officers in order for us to give a higher profile to Attendance issues, to provide first day contact for **all** unexplained absentees, to support Heads

of Year in their day-to-day work on attendance, and to improve our analysis of attendance data and monitoring of attendance issues.

- The Attendance Officer produces attendance data each half term and distributes it to the Heads of Year and to the Senior Assistant Head (Pastoral). This includes data on individual pupils, form groups, year groups, ethnic minorities, PP, F.S.M. pupils, S.E.N.D. pupils boys/girls and whole school.
- Heads of Year use this data to monitor and work with those individual pupils whose attendance is causing concern, with attendance of 95% or less, liaising with parents when appropriate and providing pupils with targets for improvement.
- The Pastoral Team (Heads of Year, Attendance Officer and Senior Assistant Head (Pastoral)) hold weekly meetings during which issues of punctuality and attendance are regularly addressed, data is analysed, trends and patterns are identified, the effectiveness of registration and punctuality procedures is evaluated and changes to policy and procedures are instigated.
- The Senior Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral) leads meetings of the Governors' Well Being Committee each term. Attendance issues are considered at each of their meetings when data is shared, attendance is monitored, policy and procedures are discussed and recommendations made.
- The attendance and punctuality record of each pupil is communicated to parents in their progress and annual written reports.
- The Synergy system enables Heads of Year to view individual attendance records for use in e.g. parental interviews and to distribute to Main School form teachers in preparation for each pupil's annual Form Inspection.

### **Monitoring/intervention for individual pupils**

Staff monitor and when necessary, intervene when the attendance or punctuality of any individual pupil causes concern. This intervention is triggered by indicators of developing attendance problems such as:

1. Attendance below 95% and falling
2. A succession of broken weeks
3. Absence on a particular day each week
4. Patterns of joint sibling absence
5. A succession of one- or two-day absences that are **repeatedly** explained by the same reason, e.g. 'he felt sick, he had a headache', etc.
6. Poor punctuality
7. No explanation received from home after child's absence from school
8. Difficulty in contacting parents/carers

The Attendance Officers monitor pupils whose attendance is below average and refers individual cases to the Heads of Year who use a range of intervention strategies depending on the nature and severity of the problem:

- Telephone call to parents
- Written letter to parents
- Referral to a Well Being Officer
- Home visit by a Well Being Officer
- Attendance meeting in school
- Follow-up support to aid improvement (eg. regular meeting with one of the Well Being Team, one-to-one support in school, adjustments to timetable).

### **Use of penalty notices (Main School only)**

Lancashire County Council considers that regular attendance at school is of such importance that Fixed Penalty Notices may be used in a range of situations where unauthorised absence occurs, such as:



- truancy (including pupils found during truancy sweeps)
- parentally condoned absence without good reason
- holidays in term time which have been taken without prior school permission
- persistent late arrival at school.

## **ADDITIONAL SIXTH FORM GUIDANCE**

St Christopher's Sixth Form has high expectations of its students and regular attendance is key to academic success. A-level courses are particularly intensive and it is no surprise that studies have shown that there is a direct correlation between attendance at lessons and success at A-level. Students cannot afford to miss valuable teaching time, as well as the timetabled study periods, enrichment activities and tutorial time. These all form part of the A-level study programme, attendance at which contributes to successful progression beyond the Sixth Form.

### **Attendance protocol for Year 12 students:**

- Year 12 students are expected to attend the Sixth Form every day and be punctual for their Personal Tutor session or their weekly assembly at 8.45am.
- Year 12 students must remain on site until 3.15pm Monday to Thursday, and until 2.15pm on a Friday. All students may leave the Sixth Form building during lunchtimes.

### **Attendance protocol for Year 13 students:**

- When students in Year 13 have completed and sent their applications for university, apprenticeships or the workplace, and they are on track in their studies, they are not required to remain on site during free periods. (see '*U6 Privileges*' for further detail).

All Students are required to sign-in and out at Sixth Form Reception whenever they enter or leave the Sixth Form building, in accord with health and safety. Abuse of this system may result in a student's privileges being revoked. Ultimately, poor attendance and/or punctuality may result in students being withdrawn from public examinations and their place in the Sixth Form into jeopardy.

### **Late procedure**

Punctuality is a life skill and persistent lateness is not acceptable. Morning arrival late to the Sixth Form must be followed with signing-in at Reception and attendance at the Personal Tutor session. Persistent 'lates' will result in a Synergy alert or email home.

### **Absences**

It is students' responsibility to talk to teachers about missed work and how best to catch up.

Acceptable foreseen absences include:

- Medical, hospital and dental appointments that cannot be scheduled for out-of-school hours. Evidence of the appointment is required
- Significant family events such as marriage, bereavement, or graduation ceremonies
- Absence related to religious observance
- Participation in sporting, drama, or music events (usually at a high level)
- University open days and interviews (students are permitted to attend three visits in addition to those organised by the Sixth Form).

A Green Absence Form (available in reception) should be completed for these events and ideally 48 hours' notice should be given.

### **Illness**

If a student is taken ill during the day, ordinarily the Head of Year or Head of Sixth Form must be informed before calling home or leaving the building. This will allow us to ascertain whether medical attention is required and the journey home can be made safely.

### **Holidays in term time/extended leave**

The Sixth Form supports the government guidance adhered to by main school, that:

From September 2013, the DfE states that Headteachers are not to grant any leave of absence during term time. In exceptional circumstances only, parents may seek permission from the Headmaster. This must be done well in advance of the proposed date, using the Leave of Absence Form found on the school website, or by letter.

Students who take unauthorised holidays will lose free periods on their return to enable missed work to be completed.

### **Upper Sixth (Year 13) Privileges**

Where students are granted the privilege of studying at home, they are expected to make effective use of time. This privilege may be withdrawn if a student is not meeting study commitments.

In such cases students will be scheduled to work within Sixth Form until the Head of Sixth Form or Head of Year is satisfied that the student is completing all work and studies are back on track.

### **Truancy**

Truancy from lessons (including Study Periods, Enrichment and Personal Tutor time) may result in attendance at an end of day Supervised Study Period or some other sanction at the discretion of the Head of Sixth Form/Head of Year. Repeated truancy will lead to sanctions specified in the behaviour policy.

Related documents:

Behaviour Policy, Sixth Form Student Handbook, Sixth Form Student Contract, U6 Student Privileges – Attendance & Registration.

**Procedural Framework updated by SPN & CCO, in liaison with PCU and JBR May 2020.**

**Review date : May 2022.**