



CHURCHILL  
SCHOOL

## **Attendance Policy**

Churchill School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance.

The whole school community – pupils, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's part in this.

The policy is based on current government and statutory Regulations. The school will ensure that all members of the community know of the policy and have access to it.

Churchill School encourage all parents/carers to work in partnership with us in order to improve attendance and punctuality and recognises that ***“parents have the primary responsibility to ensure that pupils of compulsory school age attend school regularly”***.

## **Aims & Objectives**

This attendance policy ensures that all staff and governors in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this policy we aim to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a minimum of 96% attendance for all pupils, apart from those with chronic health issues.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Ensure that our policy applies to non-statutory school age children in order to promote good habits at an early age.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the Education Welfare Service so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff in promoting good attendance.

## School's Responsibilities

All the staff at our school will place a high value on regular attendance and good punctuality. They also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

All school staff are responsible for ensuring that pupils have good attendance by:

- Form tutors ensure that attendance registers are kept accurately
- Differentiating appropriately between authorised and unauthorised absence (a letter or message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence – only the Headteacher can decide whether the parent's explanation justifies authorising the absence)
- Responding to absenteeism firmly, consistently and with care
- The attendance lead will contact parents when they are concerned about a pupil's absences, and record the contact
- The attendance lead on behalf of the Headteacher will consult with the Education Welfare Service if a pupil's attendance continues to give cause for concern
- Promoting regular school attendance (for example, by contacting parents on the first day of absence if parents have not contacted the school);
- Acknowledging good or improved attendance of individual pupils and classes.

## Responsibility of Parents/Carers

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations.

## Punctuality

It is the parent/carer's responsibility:

- To ensure that their children arrive at school on time.
  - The morning register will be called promptly at **8.40 am**. Any child arriving after 8.50am but before 9.00am will be marked as late. Any child arriving after the registers have closed at 9.10am will be marked as unauthorised absence.
  - The afternoon register will be called promptly at **1.10 pm**. Any child arriving after 1.20pm but before 1.30pm will be marked as late. Any child arriving after the registers have closed at 1.30pm will be marked as unauthorised absence.
- To ensure children who arrive after the registers have been called report to the school office to sign in.

## Absences

- It is the parent/carer's responsibility:
  - To notify the school on the first day of absence before 9:30am or as soon as possible. Parents can report an absence by telephoning the school office or emailing.
  - To provide medical evidence, if requested, on the child's return to school.

- To ensure that, as far as possible, medical appointments are arranged outside school hours. Where this is not possible, parents are expected to provide evidence of the appointment in advance, and the child should attend school before/after the appointment.
- To liaise with the school as soon as possible regarding any specific issues that might cause absence or lateness, e.g. a sick parent/carer. Parents/carers of children for whom we do not know the reason for absence will be contacted after 9:30am.

### Illness/Medical absences

- In addition to the points above, if a child is repeatedly absent due to illness, the school may request medical evidence for further absences. This can take the form of a GP appointment card, a consultant letter, a copy of a prescription etc.
- The school will automatically request medical evidence for any illness absence taken immediately before or after a school holiday or if the authenticity of an illness is in doubt.

### Absence for Holidays

- Parents/carers are expected to take their children on holiday during the school holidays to minimise the impact of missing education.
- Parents/carers requesting a term time holiday must complete a Leave of Absence request form – Appendix A; in advance of the trip (ideally at least 4 weeks prior). These requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Headteacher.
- It is the parent/carer's responsibility:
  - To obtain a Leave of Absence form from the school office.
  - To complete and submit the form in advance of the period of absence (ideally 4 weeks prior).
- If parents/carers decide to take a holiday without the Headteacher's authorisation, the child's absences will be marked as unauthorised.
- An immediate fixed penalty notice fine will be issued when 6 or more unauthorised absence sessions have occurred (3 whole days in total). We will give a reminder/warning about attendance when 6 unauthorised sessions have been recorded (3 whole days in total) and then expect to see no further unauthorised absences.
- The penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days; please note this is £60 for each child, for each parent/carer (i.e. 2 children, 2 parent/carers = £240 fine) increasing to £120 between 21 and 28 days.

### Absence for Other Reasons

- It is the parent/carer's responsibility:
  - To inform the office, in writing, of the need for leave in circumstances which are known in advance.
  - To inform the school as soon as possible when sudden circumstances occur which prevent a family bringing a child to school, so that the appropriate code can be recorded in the register.

## **Unexplained Absence**

- When a child is repeatedly absent and no satisfactory reason is given, or the pupil's attendance drops below 90%, the parent/carers will be investigated and a letter will be sent out inviting them to an informal meeting with the Headteacher.
- They will then be monitored by the Education Welfare Officer. If this continues and they have repeated unauthorised absences, holidays or otherwise, a second letter will be sent out explaining that they will be contacted by the Education Welfare Officer and may be invited to an attendance meeting to discuss absences and any appropriate support.

## **Role of the Education Welfare Officer**

- To investigate absence which exceeds more than 10%, and to hold meetings with these parents as required.
- Lateness will be investigated at the discretion of the Headteacher
- To investigate any unexplained absence which exceeds more than 5 consecutive days.
- To ensure parents are aware of their legal duty under the Education Act to ensure their children attend school.
- To refer cases to the Local Authority for prosecution where persistent absenteeism has not improved despite thorough intervention and support from the school and Education Welfare Officer.

## **Children Missing in Education**

If a child is absent (unexplained) for at least 5 consecutive days, the Education Welfare Officer will be notified and a home visit may be carried out.

## **Persistent Latecomers**

Children who repeatedly attend school late after 9.00am will be brought to the attention of the Education Welfare Officer.

Parents/carers should note that children who arrive late after the register has closed are given a 'U' code, which is the equivalent of an unauthorised absence and this will affect the child's attendance figures. Fixed penalty notices may be issued to parents/carers whose children persistently arrive after this time.



## Notification of Leave

Pupil Name:..... Tutor Group:.....

School(s) Attended by

Siblings:.....

Proposed Dates of

Absence:.....

Reason for

Absence:.....

.....

It is the policy of the Suffolk Local Authority **not** to authorise any holidays in school term time.

Furthermore if there are 8 unauthorised sessions (4 days in total) throughout the academic year you will receive a Fixed Penalty Fine. (Guidance can be found on the Suffolk County website).

Churchill Special Free School, in line with the Local Authority Policy will only authorize holidays that meet the following criteria and only at the discretion of the Head of School.

Special or mitigating circumstances which indicate that the leave should be granted, e.g.:

- Father or mother in the armed forces
- In some instances, farm workers

Signed:..... Parent/Guardian:..... Date:.....

### To be completed by the school:

Leave for family holiday should NOT be authorised unless the mitigating circumstances warrant authorisation. If the Local Authority has begun legal proceedings the holiday will NOT be authorised.

Leave Authorised :

Leave NOT Authorised:

Signed Headteacher:..... Date:.....