



# **ATTENDANCE AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

## **Policy And Procedures**

# Primary Attendance and Leave of Absence

## Introduction

At St Christopher school we want to ensure that our pupils are able to take the fullest possible advantages of all that we have to offer.

We want every pupil to attend school every day that they can and hold the view that regular attendance is important to ensure the best possible learning outcomes for all of our pupils.

This attendance policy sets out what is expected so that this may be achieved. Our aims are to raise attendance and improve punctuality by:

- Ensuring that all pupils have full and equal access to the best education that we can offer in order to increase learning.
- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued.
- Promoting opportunities to celebrate and reward pupils' successes and achievements.
- Raising awareness of the importance of good attendance.
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.
- Making parents/carers aware of their legal responsibilities.

The Government expectation is that all primary school children will achieve a **95%** level of attendance. This is deemed to be the level of attendance needed to give children the greatest opportunity to achieve the best of their potential, both academically and socially. Anything **less than 95%** attendance gives St Christopher School a cause for concern.

## **1 Legal Requirements, Local Authority Policy**

- 1.1** Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.
- 1.2** Under the Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 (Amendment) Regulations 2013 the governing body is responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register.

## **2 Authorised and Unauthorised Absence**

- 2.1** An absence is classified as authorised when a child is away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child is unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence.
- 2.2** **Only the school** can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences reported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours; this will not be classified as an authorised absence. Similarly, if a child's attendance is low and causing concern the school **may choose to only authorise** this if there is medical evidence. Unauthorised absences can incur a penalty notice. See Section 8.4.
- 2.3** An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent. An absence is also unauthorised if a child arrives after 9.30am, unless there is a very good reason and the Headteacher accepts this.

## **3 Procedures**

- 3.1** At St Christopher entrance doors open at 8:50am, registration is taken at 8:55am. Registration closes at 9:00am
- 3.2** If a child is not present when the register is taken or they have not been marked as present by the admin team at 9:00am they are given a late mark. If a child arrives at school later than 9:30am they are given an **unauthorised absence** mark unless there is an acceptable reason. This decision will be made by the Headteacher.
- 3.3** The afternoon session begins at 1:00 pm for Year 1-6 and 1:15pm for Reception and the same procedures apply
- 3.4** The morning session at Nursery begins at 9:00 am and the afternoon session at 12:30 pm. Persistent absence in Nursery may result in a child being removed from the roll.

## **If a child is absent without notification**

- 3.5** Where no notification (by phone, in person, by letter or email) has been received by 9.30 am a text message/call will automatically be sent to the parents/carers.
- 3.6** If there is no response to the message and there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the office staff will then contact the parent or carer, in order to check on the safety of the child.

## **Missing children**

- 3.7** If a child is missing and their whereabouts are unknown by parent and school the school will follow the Local Authority procedures in taking immediate steps to locate that child as soon as possible.

## **Long-term absence through Child's Accident or illness**

- 4.1** If a child is under the care of a hospital Consultant parents and carers are encouraged to contact school as soon as possible. If illness or accident is likely to continue for an extended period, or to be a repetitive absence, the school will liaise with the parent to offer advice or direct them to various support services. This may include home tuition if, of course, the consultant feels that they are well enough. School will work hard to support children and their families during prolonged illnesses.
- 4.2** The school has the right to request further information or contact the health department direct if required.

## **Repeated unauthorised absences**

- 5.1** The school will contact the parent or guardian of any child who has an unauthorised absence as described in Section 2.3 (**Appendix 6**). If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences that **have not been requested in advance or reported by the parent/carer**, the parents/carers will be contacted to discuss the problem and warn parents that these can warrant a penalty notice to be served.
- 5.2** If the situation does not improve, the school will send another letter and then contact the Children and Family Services, who may visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or guardians understand the seriousness of the situation.
- 5.3** The Governors, supported by the Local Authority, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who fail to contact school regarding absences.

## 6 Leave Of Absence

- 6.1** As from September 2013, there was **no automatic right to any leave of absence** and all Coventry schools are encouraged to adopt a policy of not authorising leave of absence in term time. Any leave taken that is not exceptional will be marked on the registers as **unauthorised**. Being mindful of this, only in very exceptional circumstances will leave of absence be **authorised** during term time.
- 6.2** Applications for leave of absence (**Appendix 1**) will need to be at least 3 weeks before the expected absence, and include the reason for the request. An appointment may, on request from the parent, be made to discuss the request and the reasons behind it face to face with the Headteacher but it should be noted that the Headteacher is not permitted to authorise requests for leave of absence, except in an emergency or if exceptional. Governors do not want the Headteacher to spend time discussing absences that are not exceptional as Headteacher time is best spent on improving the school. The school will reply in writing to the request the of parent/carer within 5 working days. (**Appendix 2/3/4**)
- 6.3** Section 444(A) of the Education Act 1996 empowers the Local Authority to issue Penalty Notices for failure to ensure regular school attendance. Parents or carers who take leave of absence **at St Christopher that is**
- a:** not authorised by the school **and**
  - b:** the previous calendar year attendance is below 95% eg: October to October **and**
  - c:** there are ten sessions (five days) or more unauthorised absence within the past five week period
- will be issued a Penalty Notice fine** of £60 per parent per child, which must be paid within 28 days. After 28 days and up to 42 days this will increase to £120 per parent per child. Where a fine remains unpaid the Children and Families First Service will submit the case for prosecution in the Magistrates Court.
- 6.4** Parents of pupils whom take leave of absence that has not been authorised by the Headteacher **but** have a good past year attendance record of at least 95%, **and** the leave is no longer than 5 days will have the absence recorded as unauthorised but **will not be issued with a penalty notice**.
- 6.5** Pupils who fail to return within 10 school days of any agreed return date (authorised or unauthorised) can be fined and deleted from the School Register (**Appendix 5**).

## **7 Rewards for good attendance**

Children will receive the following at the end of each term:

100% attendance in any term will receive a gold certificate for attendance.

98%+ attendance in any term will receive a silver certificate for attendance.

95% + attendance in any term will receive a bronze certificate for attendance.

Children in each year who have most improved attendance will receive a cert-if-icard.

The % attendance for each class will be included in the newsletter on a weekly basis. This will be shared in assembly on Friday and the class with best attendance will be awarded with five minutes extra playtime.

At the end of the year all pupils with 100% attendance overall will be awarded with a voucher. Pupils with 96%+ will be entered into a raffle and have the chance to win one of three prizes.

- \* School recognises that some pupils with serious life threatening illnesses will have a low percentage attendance. Where this is the case they will not be penalised by their illness. In some cases, they may be awarded with a special attendance award, particularly if they have been committed to getting to school when they have been well enough.

## **8 Monitoring**

- 8.1** It is the responsibility of the governing body to monitor overall attendance and the attendance team. Headteacher will include report attendance outcomes on a termly basis. The governing body also has the responsibility for seeing that this is carried out. Governors will therefore examine the information provided in the report to satisfy themselves that attendance meets the required levels.
- 8.2** Class teachers are responsible for accurately recording daily attendance in their class. Administrative staff are responsible for taking action on first day contact.
- 8.3** The attendance team includes the administrator who is responsible for attendance within the admin team, the school family support worker, the inclusion leader and the Headteacher. Other leaders in school regularly liaise with the attendance team regarding attendance.
- 8.4** The attendance team monitor attendance on a fortnightly basis. They monitor any absence below 95% by ensuring that this does not rapidly decline and by looking for patterns. The team may act on attendance below 95% depending on past records. They swiftly act on any absence below 90%. This includes sending letters home. **(Appendix 7/8)**

If attendance is between 85% and 95% and hasn't improved after a letter has been sent out, then the Headteacher will consider not authorising further absence without medical evidence. This will result in any further absences being recorded as 'unauthorised'. After 10 unauthorised absences the Headteacher will refer this to Children and Family First team and parents/carer may be at risk of being issued with a Penalty Notice fine.

**8.5** The team meet with the local Authority Children and Family First (CFF) team on a half termly basis. The CFF team work together with the school to improve attendance. Each concern is discussed within context. Actions from this meeting may require school to take further actions, such as face to face meetings, requests to parents for further evidence if children are regularly absent through illness. Families may also be placed on a rapid improvement requirement of four weeks. The CFF and attendance team may also act by visiting the home.

There is a fast track to court procedure for parents of pupils whose attendance falls below the expected levels.

**8.6** A pupil becomes a persistent absentee (PA) when their attendance drops below 85% for any reason. Absence at this level is **causing considerable damage** to a child's educational prospects.

All pupils who are PA, or are considered to be on track to becoming PA, will be referred to the school's Children and Families Worker (Schools) and may also be referred to Children and Families First Services for targeted support.

If parents fail to engage with support and their child continues to have unsatisfactory attendance, a request may be made to the Local Authority to pursue legal proceedings.

### **Late arrival to school**

**8.7** The attendance team will send a letter (**Appendix 9**) to parents/carers when their child has been late three times within a half term period.

**8.8** Ten lates per half term will result in the parent/carer being invited into to school to discuss a way forward with the family support worker and will be referred to the Headteacher. The Headteacher may consider making a referral to the CFF team and the parent/carer may be at risk of a penalty notice fine.

### **Review**

The policy will be reviewed by the governing body every two years, or earlier if considered necessary.

Ratified by Governors on

**See Attached**

**Appendix 1 - Application for leave of absence**

**Appendix 2 - Letter authorising leave**

**Appendix 3 - Letter stating unauthorised leave with risk of penalty notice**

**Appendix 4 - Letter stating unauthorised leave without risk of penalty notice**

**Appendix 5 – Letter stating did not return by due date penalty notice**

**Appendix 6 – Unauthorised absence**

**Appendix 7 – Under 95% attendance**

**Appendix 8 – No improvement letter/medical evidence request**

**Appendix 9 – Late Letter**

**Appendix 10 – Leave of absence in term time leaflet**



**APPENDIX 1**

**ST CHRISTOPHER PRIMARY SCHOOL**



**APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE FOR A SCHOOL PUPIL IN TERM TIME**

**Important Information for Parents/Carers**

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 no longer permit Headteachers to authorise leave.
- Governors only permit the Headteacher to grant leave of absence in exceptional circumstances
- If the exceptional circumstances are authorised the Headteacher will determine the length of the absence authorised
- Requests for Leave of Absence should made before any arrangements confirmed or money committed. This form **MUST** be completed by the parent(s)/resident parent/carer(s) before requests will be considered
- Please complete a Leave of Absence form for each child

*Please note: **Parents do not have any entitlement to take their child on leave during term time.***

I wish to apply for Leave of Absence from school to be granted to:

Name of Child 1: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Child 2: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates of Proposed Absence: From: \_\_\_\_\_ To: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for Proposed Absence – please provide reasons to support the application including any evidence *(they can only be exceptional circumstances)*

.....  
.....  
.....

Total Sessions Requested On This Occasion. One day=Two sessions: am and pm

*(For siblings)* I have also applied to \_\_\_\_\_ School/Academy for leave

Of absence for \_\_\_\_\_ *(Insert child/children's name)*

Signature of Parent/Carer: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**For school use only**

Child 1 - Current Attendance %: \_\_\_\_\_ Attendance % in last academic year: \_\_\_\_\_

Child 2 - Current Attendance %: \_\_\_\_\_ Attendance % in last academic year: \_\_\_\_\_

Reasons for decision: .....

1<sup>st</sup> date of absence..... Date returned .....

Authorised: Y/N Penalty Notice: Y/N Headteacher: ..... Date: .....

Letter:..... SIMS  Teacher Advised

## APPENDIX 2

# St. Christopher Primary School



*Headteacher:*

Mrs Clair Robinson

Allesley Old Road  
Allesley  
Coventry CV5 9JG  
Telephone/Fax:: (024) 7667 5017  
[www.st-christopher.coventry.sch.uk](http://www.st-christopher.coventry.sch.uk)

**Date**

Parent  
Address

Dear (parent)

**Re: Term time leave request for (child's/children's name)**

Following your recent request for exceptional leave for (child's/children's name) to be allowed during term time, I am writing to confirm that, in this instance only, for the reasons put forward, I have authorised this planned absence from .... to ....

Should there be any delays in your return to school, please ensure you inform the school office as soon as possible. Failure to return on the agreed date will result in absences being recorded as unauthorised as regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If a pupil fails to return within ten school days of any agreed return date parents will be fined and pupils deleted from the School Register.

For your information, the fine is for £60 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days and £120 per parent, per child if paid after this date but within 28 days.

I hope that the information above is helpful.

Yours sincerely

**The Governing Body and Mrs Robinson**

## APPENDIX 3

# St. Christopher Primary School

Headteacher:

Mrs Clair Robinson



Allesley Old Road  
Allesley

Coventry CV5 9JG

Telephone/Fax: (024) 7667 5017

www.st-christopher.coventry.sch.uk

**Date**

Parent  
Address

Dear (parent)

### **Re: Term time leave request for (child's/children's name)**

Following your recent request for leave to be permitted during term time, I regret that I am unable to authorise this absence as it is not in exceptional circumstances. This means that the absences will be recorded as unauthorised.

Should you, however, choose to take this planned leave, the schools attendance policy makes it clear that if leave is taken in term time that:

- a.** has not been authorised by the school **and**
- b:** the previous calendar year attendance is below 95% eg: October to October **and**
- c:** there are ten sessions (five days) or more unauthorised absence in a five week period.

then a Penalty Notice will be issued. As your child meets the criteria a and b above, and the planned leave will result in ten unauthorised sessions, taking this leave will result in a Penalty Notice.

For your information a Penalty Notice is for £60 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days and £120 per parent, per child if paid after this date but within 28 days.

Failure to pay the Penalty Notice could result in Coventry City Council starting legal proceedings against you for the offence of failing to ensure your child's regular attendance at school.

Yours sincerely

**The Governing Body and Mrs Robinson**

## APPENDIX 4

# St. Christopher Primary School

*Headteacher:*

Mrs Clair Robinson



Allesley Old Road  
Allesley

Coventry CV5 9JG

Telephone/Fax:: (024) 7667 5017

[www.st-christopher.coventry.sch.uk](http://www.st-christopher.coventry.sch.uk)

**Date**

Parent  
Address

Dear (parent)

### **Re: Term time leave request for (child's/children's name)**

Following your recent request for (child's/children's name) to be permitted to leave of absence during term time, I regret that I am unable to authorise this absence as it is not exceptional reasons.

The school's attendance policy makes it clear that leave should not be taken in term time and it is, therefore, discouraged.

Should you decide to take this planned leave, the absences will be recorded as **unauthorised**. Following statutory guidance a number of unauthorised absences can incur a penalty notice. In accordance with our school policy, as your child/ren's attendance is above 95% for the past year, providing your child/ren return on the planned date, a penalty notice will not be issued.

Please note that two weeks absence from school for illness and leave in an academic year will result in an attendance level of 94.7% and will, therefore, have implications should leave be taken next year.

Yours sincerely

**The Governing Body and Mrs Robinson**

## APPENDIX 5

# St. Christopher Primary School

*Headteacher:*

Mrs Clair Robinson



Allesley Old Road  
Allesley  
Coventry CV5 9JG  
*Telephone/Fax:: (024) 7667 5017*  
[www.st-christopher.coventry.sch.uk](http://www.st-christopher.coventry.sch.uk)

**Date**

Parent  
Address

Dear (parent)

### **Re: Student – Class**

It has come to my attention that (child's name) did not return from the planned leave by the agreed date. This means that (no of days) of this absence have been treated as unauthorised.

As you did not return on the agreed date, I will now request a Penalty Notice to be issued against you. You will receive notification in due course.

The Penalty Notice is for £60 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days and £120 per parent, per child if paid after this date but within 28 days.

Failure to pay the Penalty Notice could result in Coventry City Council starting legal proceedings against you for the offence of failing to ensure your child's regular attendance at school.

Yours sincerely

**The Governing Body and Mrs Robinson**

**APPENDIX 6**

**St. Christopher Primary School**

*Headteacher:*

Mrs Clair Robinson



Allesley Old Road

Allesley

Coventry CV5 9JG

Telephone/Fax: (024) 7667 5017

www.st-christopher.coventry.sch.uk

**Date**

Parent  
Address

Dear (parent)

**Re: Student – Class**

According to our records «forename» was absent from school on the date(s) shown below and we have not yet received any reason for their absence from you.

Under government rules, we have to record the reasons why pupils are absent from school. Can you please complete the slip below as soon as possible and write the reason for absence against each date. When completed please ask «forename» to return the reply slip to the school office.

If we do not receive notification then this absence will be registered as unauthorised. Our school’s Attendance Policy explains that this can result in a penalty notice being issued.

If you wish to discuss your «son\_daughter»’s absence, please come into school to see me.

Yours sincerely

**The Governing Body and Mrs Robinson**

✂ -----

Pupil: «chosen\_name» «surname»

Class Teacher: «tutor»

Dates and sessions of absence: «periods\_of\_absence»

Reason: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent/Guardian:..... Date: .....

## APPENDIX 7

# St. Christopher Primary School

*Headteacher:*

Mrs Clair Robinson



Allesley Old Road  
Allesley  
Coventry CV5 9JG  
*Telephone/Fax:: (024) 7667 5017*  
[www.st-christopher.coventry.sch.uk](http://www.st-christopher.coventry.sch.uk)

**Date**

Parent  
Address

Dear (parent)

### **Re: Student – Class**

We am writing to you with regard to (child's name) attendance.

As a school we closely monitor our pupil's attendance and do all we can to ensure they are in school as much as possible.

You may or may not be aware that (child's name) attendance so far this school year is (attendance %), this is in comparison to a national average of 95%. When (pupil) is absent from school they are missing valuable learning opportunities.

Regular attendance at school helps to give a good foundation for good progress to take place. It is very important that we work together to support (child's name) make this progress.

We do understand and appreciate that there may well be special personal circumstances that have contributed to this and if you have not already made one of us aware of these, then please do contact Miss Tracy Penn.

Please can you aim to improve (child's name)'s attendance. If there is no improvement or a further dip in attendance then we may have to consider taking further action. This may include not authorising absences without medical evidence.

Yours sincerely

**Admin Team**

## APPENDIX 8

# St. Christopher Primary School

*Headteacher:*

Mrs Clair Robinson



Allesley Old Road  
Allesley  
Coventry CV5 9JG  
*Telephone/Fax:: (024) 7667 5017*  
[www.st-christopher.coventry.sch.uk](http://www.st-christopher.coventry.sch.uk)

**date**

Parent  
Address

Dear (parent)

### **Re: Student – Class**

I am writing to you about (child's name)'s poor level of attendance at school.

Following my last letter to you dated.....There has been little or no improvement/further decline in your child's attendance in school. I am extremely concerned about this. I enclose a copy of the attendance record of your child for you to look at.

Due to the above, I will no longer be authorising any absences reported by you unless there is medical evidence to prove this. This will mean that as of this date a reported absence by you will registered as 'unauthorised'. In line with our policy, only the school have the right to authorise absences.

Please be aware that unauthorised absences can warrant the school requesting the LA to serve a fixed penalty notice on a number of unauthorised absences.

I would urge you to take my concern seriously.

Yours sincerely,

**The Governing Body and Mrs Robinson**



## APPENDIX 9

# St. Christopher Primary School

*Headteacher:*

Mrs Clair Robinson



Allesley Old Road  
Allesley  
Coventry CV5 9JG  
*Telephone/Fax:: (024) 7667 5017*  
[www.st-christopher.coventry.sch.uk](http://www.st-christopher.coventry.sch.uk)

**Date**

Parent  
Address

Dear (parent)

### **Re: Student - Class**

According to our records (child's name) was late for school on ..... occasions during the last half term.

Please make every effort to improve this situation before it becomes necessary for the school to make a formal referral to the Children and Families Worker for Schools.

Ten lates in a five week period will incur a penalty notice as per our Attendance Policy.

May I remind you that it is very important for the continuity of (child's name)'s education that «he\_she» attend school regularly and is on time, as parent/carer you have a legal responsibility to ensure this.

If your family need support due to circumstances, please contact us at the school. Miss Penn, our family support worker, will be happy to help.

Yours sincerely

**The Governing Body and Mrs Robinson**

**Exceptional Circumstances**

In normal circumstances Leave of Absence will **NOT** normally be authorised for:

- Holidays taken in term time through parent/carer choice
- Holidays taken in term time for economic reasons
- Weddings during term time
- Family days out during term time

In normal circumstances requests **WILL** normally be authorised for:

- Holiday requests by Active Service Personnel where tours of duty prohibit one family holiday per year in the school holidays and this is verified by the employer.



- Holiday requested by Emergency Services Personnel where working arrangement prohibit one family holiday in the school holidays a year and this is verified by the employer.

If you would like to join the campaign to reverse the changes to school term time family holidays rules, a link can be found at:

<http://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/reverse-the-changes-to-school-term-timefamily-holiday-rules>



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**INFORMATION & GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS AND CARERS**



**SUMMARY OF ATTENDANCE/ LEAVE OF ABSENCE POLICY**

**AS FROM SEPTEMBER 2014**



Children need to attend school for all sessions, to enable them to make the best possible progress.

School attendance is a legal requirement for all compulsory school aged children - a child becomes "compulsory school age" in the term following their 5th birthday. Short absences from school can have a detrimental impact on a child's learning and progression.

There are only 190 days in an academic year, which leaves 175 non-school days remaining for holidays and other activities. We therefore encourage children to come into school everyday to maximise their learning potential.

If a child is out of school for a two week holiday they can only achieve a maximum of 94.7% attendance for that year. The Government expectation for school attendance is 95%+

**Why attendance matters:-**

- Less than 5 days absence = 98%+
- 14 days absence (approx.) = 93.5%
- 20 days absences (approx.) = 90%
- More than 30 days absence = 88%

From September 2013 amendments to the Government regulations state clearly that head teachers are no longer permitted to authorise holidays or grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

All requests for exceptional Leave of Absence must be made in writing to the Head Teacher. If the leave is authorised, a date of return to school will be agreed. Any absence after this date will be recorded as unauthorised and you may be issued with a penalty notice.

If a request for exceptional leave is not authorised by the Head Teacher and parents still take their child/ren out of school, you may be issued with a Penalty Notice if:-

- a not authorised by the school **and**
- b the previous calendar year attendance is below 95%, e.g. October to October **and**
- c there are ten sessions (five days) or more unauthorised absence in a five week period

Parents of pupils whom take leave of absence that has not been authorised by the Headteacher **but** have a good past year attendance record of at least 95%, **and** the leave is no longer than 5 days will have the

absence recorded as unauthorised but **will not be issued with a penalty notice.**

Any unauthorised leave of absence over 5 days will be issued with a penalty notice

**PENALTY NOTICES**

**A penalty notice is £60 per parent, per child and would be issued to each parent and should be paid within 21 days.**

**Non payment would lead to each parent receiving a second fixed penalty notice for a further £60, thus increasing the original fine to £120 per parent and per child.**

**If the fixed penalty notices remain unpaid after 7 days of the second penalty notice, this could result in Coventry City Council legal proceedings against you for the offence of failing to ensure your child's regular attendance at school.**

**Attendance Awards**

There will be termly and annual awards for attendance that is 95% or above