



Christleton Primary School

Be the best you can be

Attendance Policy

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Attendance Policy		Full Governing Body	
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Signed Headteacher		<i>Mr Mitchell</i>	
Signed Chair of Governors			

Christleton Primary School

ATTENDANCE POLICY

1. Purpose and principles

Christleton Primary School is committed to securing high attendance and punctuality so that every pupil can benefit from full-time education, feel that they belong and achieve well. Attendance is everyone's responsibility. The school will work with pupils, parents, the local authority and partner agencies to remove barriers before they become entrenched.

The school will apply a support-first approach. Legal intervention will be considered only where support is not appropriate, has not been engaged with or has not resulted in sufficient improvement, and always in line with national and Cheshire West and Chester requirements.

2. Legal and statutory framework

This policy has regard to the Education Act 1996, the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, Working together to improve school attendance (July 2026), Keeping children safe in education 2026, Children missing education statutory guidance, the Equality Act 2010, the SEND Code of Practice and relevant data-protection law.

The school will use the attendance and absence codes prescribed by the current Regulations and DfE guidance. Local codes will not be invented and a code will not be selected merely because it is convenient.

3. Roles and accountability

3.1 Governing board

- Recognise attendance as a school-improvement and safeguarding priority and promote a whole-school culture of good attendance.
- Set high expectations, review attendance information at least termly and provide support and challenge to leaders, including scrutiny by pupil group.
- Ensure the policy is lawful, published, implemented consistently and resourced appropriately.

3.2 Headteacher and senior attendance champion

- The headteacher retains overall accountability. The senior attendance champion is the School Administrative Assistant and is expected have the authority to improve attendance.

- The champion will set a clear vision, establish robust daily processes, analyse data, coordinate support and report to the governing board.
- The champion will work closely with the DSL, SENDCO, pastoral staff and CW&C Education Welfare Service.

3.3 School staff

- Teachers take accurate registers at the required times and raise concerns promptly.
- Office and attendance staff follow up absence, record reasons and codes accurately, maintain the audit trail and escalate concerns.
- All staff build positive relationships, notice emerging barriers and avoid language or practices that shame pupils or families.

3.4 Parents and pupils

- Parents must ensure their child of compulsory school age receives efficient full-time education and attends regularly where registered at school.
- Parents should make routine appointments outside school time, report absence promptly, provide honest information and work with support offered.
- Pupils are expected to attend every day, arrive punctually and speak to a trusted adult if something is making attendance difficult.

4. The school day and registers

Gates and classroom doors open at 08:40. Pupils are expected to be in class by 08:50. The morning register is completed by 09:05 and closes at 09:20. Pupils arriving after the register has been taken but before 09:20 are coded late before closure; pupils arriving after 09:20 are coded as an unauthorised late arrival unless another authorised code applies.

The afternoon register is taken at 13:00 and closes at 13:10. The school will apply the same legal principles to the afternoon session. A pupil must not be marked present unless physically present at the approved place of education when the register is taken, except where a prescribed attendance code applies.

All changes to a register entry will preserve the original entry and record the amendment, reason, date and identity of the person making it. Registers will be retained for the period required by the Regulations and made available to authorised officers.

5. Reporting and responding to absence

Parents should contact the school before 09:00 on every day of an unplanned absence unless a longer period has already been agreed. They should give the reason and likely duration.

Where no satisfactory explanation has been received, the school will make prompt same-day contact using all available numbers. The response will be risk based. For a vulnerable pupil, an unusual absence, a pupil subject to safeguarding or social-care involvement, or

where contact cannot be made, the school will consult the DSL and may contact other professionals, undertake a welfare visit in line with local procedures or request a police welfare check.

The school will record the reason for absence, not merely that a message was received. Where the reason is unclear, staff will make proportionate enquiries and use the appropriate temporary code until the position is established.

6. Illness, medical needs and evidence

The school will authorise absence where a pupil is unable to attend because of illness, using the prescribed code. Parents will not routinely be required to provide medical evidence for a short illness. Evidence may be requested where there is genuine doubt, a repeated pattern or support is needed, but requests will be proportionate and will not create an unreasonable barrier to attendance.

The school will work with families and health professionals where physical or mental ill health affects attendance. Reasonable adjustments, an individual healthcare plan, pastoral support, SEND provision or alternative arrangements may be needed. Absence must not be treated as misconduct simply because it is connected to disability or unmet need.

7. Appointments, religious observance and other authorised absence

- Routine medical and dental appointments should be arranged outside school hours where possible. Where an appointment is unavoidable, only the necessary time will normally be authorised.
- Absence for religious observance will be authorised for a day exclusively set apart by the relevant religious body. Additional travel or family celebration is considered separately under the leave provisions.
- Other circumstances will be coded only as permitted by the Regulations, including approved educational activity, dual registration, participation in specified activities and absence connected with local-authority arrangements.

8. Leave of absence

The headteacher may grant leave only where the circumstances fall within regulation 11. Leave for a holiday or other exceptional reason will be considered individually. There is no automatic entitlement because a family has travelled a long distance, a parent's work pattern is difficult or travel is cheaper in term time.

Requests should be made in writing in advance using the school form, explaining the circumstances and dates. The headteacher will consider the specific facts, supporting information, the impact on education and any relevant equality or safeguarding factors. No list in this policy guarantees approval. Retrospective leave will not normally be granted unless the circumstances made advance application impossible.

9. Supporting pupils and families

The school will monitor emerging patterns and intervene early rather than wait for a threshold. Support will be adapted to the barrier and may include a trusted-adult check-in, reasonable adjustments, pastoral or SEND support, help with routines or transport, liaison with health services, an attendance plan, an early-help assessment or a multi-agency meeting.

The school will use an assess-plan-do-review cycle. Agreements will state the barrier, actions, responsible people, timescales and review date. Where voluntary support is unsuccessful or not engaged with, the school and local authority may formalise support through an attendance contract, education supervision order or other lawful route.

10. Persistent and severe absence

A pupil is persistently absent when they miss 10 per cent or more of possible sessions and severely absent when they miss 50 per cent or more. These are national analytical thresholds, not points at which the school first acts. The school will prioritise severely absent pupils for intensive, multi-agency support and maintain close safeguarding oversight.

Attendance data will be examined by year group, cohort and pupil group, including pupils with SEND, disadvantaged pupils, children known to social care and pupils with medical needs. Small-number data will be handled confidentially.

11. Temporary part-time timetables

A part-time timetable is not a behaviour sanction and must not be used to manage staffing or resource pressures. It may be used only in very exceptional circumstances, with parental agreement and, where relevant, professional and local-authority involvement. It must be time limited, regularly reviewed, safeguard the pupil, provide an appropriate education and include a clear route back to full-time attendance.

The school will follow CW&C requirements for notification and scrutiny of part-time timetables.

12. Children missing education and deletion from the admission register

Absence without contact or a pupil's failure to return may indicate safeguarding risk. The DSL and attendance champion will ensure reasonable enquiries are made promptly with the local authority and other agencies as appropriate.

The school will delete a pupil from the admission register only where a prescribed ground in the 2024 Regulations is fully met. It will make all required notifications to the local authority, complete joint reasonable enquiries where required and retain evidence of the decision. A period of absence alone does not create an automatic power to remove a pupil.

13. Legal intervention and penalty notices

The local authority may use legal intervention where support is not appropriate or has not worked. The school will provide accurate evidence and will comply with CW&C's current code of conduct.

The national threshold for considering a penalty notice is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks. Reaching the threshold does not mean a notice is automatic; the support-first test, the circumstances and the local code must be considered. At the date of this policy, a first notice is £160 per parent per child, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. The school will check the current national and local rules before every request.

14. Recognition and communication

The school will promote attendance positively and recognise improvement and commitment. Recognition will avoid penalising pupils whose absence relates to disability, illness, religious observance or another protected reason. Attendance percentages will not be used in a way that publicly shames pupils or encourages attendance when unwell.

The policy will be available on the website and explained through induction, newsletters, meetings and direct work with families. Translation, interpretation and accessible formats will be provided where reasonably required.

15. Monitoring, records and review

The senior attendance champion will review daily and weekly information, report patterns to leaders and provide termly information to governors. The school will evaluate the impact of interventions and record why decisions were made.

Attendance information is personal data and will be shared only where lawful and necessary. Records will be held securely in accordance with the school's retention schedule and data-protection policies.

This policy will be reviewed annually and immediately following a significant legal, DfE or CW&C change. The headteacher may make urgent procedural updates between formal reviews and will report them to the governing board.