



Christ Church CE Primary School

Preparing Sowing Growing

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Headteacher: Tracey Cansdale

2nd September 2024

Dear Parent/Carer

Important Update – Changes to Education-related Penalty Notices-Information for Parents whose children are of compulsory school age (term after they are 5)

There have been some important updates to the way in which attendance and absence are being treated by the Local Authority (LA) and Government which we want parents to be aware of at the beginning of term. We will support you to ensure that your child enjoys school and attends regularly. Where there is illness we ask that you continue to inform us via the School Office (telephone or email) by 9am of the morning and that when there are medical appointments which are unavoidable in school time, that you let us have copies of texts or letters so we can authorise these absences.

The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) who works for LA will look at children’s attendance every six weeks and where there is above average absence (less than 96% attendance), they will also offer support. There are other avenues too such as Early Help (support and help from Council’s Children’s Services or Parenting Team) or the School Nurse – which depending on the circumstances might be appropriate to involve and we will talk through this with you. Where a child has complex medical issues, we can also work together to make an attendance plan and ensure your child has support to access as much schooling as possible.

Regular attendance is viewed as children attending the vast majority of the time and being on time for school (being more than 15 minutes late for school is viewed as an unauthorised absence). **The aim is that children should be in school for between 97% and 100% of the time** – this allows time for illness absence. Even with 95% attendance which sounds high but is below average – children have missed 2 whole weeks of learning time – that is a lot of lessons. There is a clear link between attendance and how well children do at KS2 SATS and later on at GCSEs – the more time they miss, the lower their grades are likely to be. You may have seen in the news at the weekend that the Department for Education were talking about these links and how important it is that children are in school everyday for their future prospects.

Attendance Percentage	Days missed over a school year
100%	0 days
95%	10 days
90%	20 days
85%	30 days
80%	40 days

You may also be aware that the Department for Education has recently announced national changes to penalty notices issued for unauthorised absence in term time. These changes came into effect on 19th August 2024. As a school we will be issuing more penalty notices based on the new rules as they are mandatory for schools.

The changes to be aware of are:

- Penalty notices issued for offences that take place after 19 August 2024 will be charged at a new rate of £160 **per parent per child**. This can be paid at £80 if paid within 21 days.
- Any second penalty notice issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period will be issued at the rate of £160 to be paid within 28 days with no option for a discounted rate.





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- The threshold at which a penalty notice **must** be considered is set at 10 sessions (equivalent to 5 days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-school week period. **This includes absences as a result of arriving late after the register closes.** Our school register closes at 9.00am – 15 minutes after the start of the school day at 8.45am so if a child arrives after that, this still counts as an unauthorised absence, as over time lateness also means lost learning time. The 10 school weeks may span different terms or school years.
- A maximum of 2 penalty notices may be issued to a parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period, so at the 3rd (or subsequent) offence(s) another course of action will need to be considered (such as prosecution).
- Only penalty notices issued for absences taking place after 19 August 2024 will count towards the above thresholds.

As before these new rules come into force, we are unable to authorise family holidays, as taking a holiday when it is cheaper or to suit other family members, is not considered an exceptional reason. Where the EWO suspects that due to a pattern of absence (e.g. both children from a family being off for the same time/a long absence) a holiday has been taken in term time without school being informed, then even if illness has been reported by email/phone, the absence can be unauthorised.

A reminder that children should be at home with a temperature or when recovering from sickness bugs but for most common illnesses they can be in school if well enough and can be dosed up with calpol/neurofen. There is helpful advice from NHS here:

When should my child return to school?

Chicken Pox When all spots have crusted over	Conjunctivitis None*	Diarrhoea & Vomiting 48 hours from last episode	Glandular Fever None*	Hand, foot & mouth None*	Impetigo When lesions are crusted & healed or 48 Hours after commencing antibiotics
Measles or German Measles 4 days from onset of rash	Mumps 5 days from onset of swelling	Scabies After first treatment	Scarlet Fever 24 hours after commencing antibiotics	Slapped Cheek None*	Whooping Cough 48 Hours after commencing antibiotics
Flu Until recovered	Head Lice None*	Threadworms None*	Tonsillitis None*		

Cheshire West and Chester **This information is based on the Public Health Agency guide - full copy here** *No need to stay off but school or nursery should be informed. Cheshire East Council

We are aware that for some families there are circumstances which can make regular attendance feel harder: we are here to support and help and suggest that you talk to me or Mrs Partridge in the School Office.

Yours faithfully

Tracey Cansdale
Headteacher

