

Churchfield C.E. Primary Academy



Attendance and Punctuality Policy 2025

Signed by:

G. Lloyd

Head of School

Date: 01/10/2026

K. Taylor

Chair of LAC

Date:

Walking together in the light of the Lord, we aim to create a supportive and safe environment where we encourage each other to be the best we can be. At Churchfield we learn to take pride in our successes and aspire to make a positive difference for ourselves, the local community, and the wider world.

1. Introduction

We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the academy is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards learning. To this end, we strive to make our academy a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to academy.

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, the Local Academy Committee are responsible for making sure the academy keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the academy day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised. Registers are completed using SIMs within each classroom and are checked daily by the office (see GDPR Policy)

The Academy Senior Attendance Champion is Mr. Lloyd, who can be contacted via the office on 01889 224520. If parents need to discuss attendance issues this should be done with the class teacher in the first instance.

2. Definitions

2.1. Authorised absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from academy for a legitimate reason and the academy has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent writes a note or telephones the academy to explain the absence. A phone call will be made by the office before 10.30 am and the call will be logged.

Only the Executive Principal or Head of School can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

2.2. Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from academy without the permission of both the academy and a parent. Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from academy without good reason, even with the support of a parent. We have a traffic lights system for attendance in use. If attendance at the time of the absence is below 90% medical evidence of illness will be requested.

3. If a child is absent

When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, and will inform the academy office, which will endeavour to contact a parent or guardian.

A note may be sent to the academy prior to the day of absence, e.g. if a child has a medical appointment.

If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the academy office. The academy will then be in contact straight away with the parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child.

4. Requests for leave of absence

We believe that children need to be in the academy for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are circumstances under which a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child to attend, e.g. religious observance or a special event. We expect parents to contact the academy at least a week in advance wherever possible. School Attendance Regulations 2006 were amended with effect from September 2013 which mean that unless there are 'exceptional circumstances' requests for leave of absence will be unauthorised.

5. Long-term absence

When children have an illness that means they will be away from academy for over five days, the academy will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their learning if this is appropriate.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the academy will seek the support of other services in conjunction with parents.

6. Repeated unauthorised absences

The academy will contact the parent or guardian of any child who has an unauthorised absence by phone and text message on the day the child is absent. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the child's teacher will call or speak to parents to establish the reasons and how best to support improving attendance. Details of this call will be logged. If this pattern continues, the parents or guardians will be asked to visit the academy and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the academy will offer support which may include Local Support Team, Education and Welfare or School Nurse referrals. However, if attendance does not improve despite support, a penalty notice may be sent to Education Welfare.

The Local Academy Committee, supported by the LA, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to academy on a regular basis. This would lead to Education Penalty Notices being put in place.

7. Unrequested Leave

Where the Academy has reason to believe that a child's absences were due to unrequested leave, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence unless evidence is provided to the

contrary. Reasons why the Academy may believe an absence to be due to unrequested leave include (but are not limited to):

- calling and receiving a foreign dial tone,
- calling and being informed the child is on holiday,
- the child telling their teacher that they are going on holiday,
- home visits (see Safe and Well Checks below) with no answer.

All absences where the thresholds detailed below are met will lead to the academy notifying the Local Authority.

8. Issuing of Penalty Notices due to unauthorised leave in term time

In February 2024 the DfE published Working together to improve school attendance – which is now statutory guidance. The changes to the law are introduced through the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 and came into effect from 19 August 2024.

The changes to the regulations are significant.

New two penalty notice limit in a three-year period

The first Penalty Notices for leave in term time will increase to £160 per parent per child but can be reduced to £80 per parent per child if paid within 21 days.

A three-year rolling period starts for parents when the first penalty notice is issued to them after the 19th August 2024.

If a second penalty notice is issued within three years of the first penalty notice, then this will be at a fixed rate of £160 per parent per child, with no reduction for early payment.

A third penalty notice cannot be issued within the three-year period; therefore, the county council will deal with any further unauthorised leave through prosecution in the Magistrates Court. If found guilty the potential fine is up to £1000.

National threshold for issuing penalty notices.

The new national threshold for issuing penalty notices has been set at 10 sessions (5 school days) of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. However the local authority retains the discretion to issue penalty notices before the threshold is met. For example if the local authority believes parents are deliberately avoiding the national threshold by taking several term time holidays of less than 5 days, or for repeated absence for birthdays or other family events.

When school becomes aware that the threshold has been met, we are expected in every case to notify the local authority.

9. Rewards for good attendance

Attendance and punctuality are monitored and these are rewarded with Dojo points. All the children who have 100 per cent attendance in a term will receive an excellence certificate for attendance, awarded at the last assembly of the each term. Further incentives may be put in place for specific classes or groups of children as required.

10. Punctuality

The academy day starts at 8:55am and all children are expected to have arrived by this time. Gates are open from 8:40am and children are welcome to arrive from that time.

Any child arriving after 8:55am will be recorded as being late. Arrivals after 9:30am will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (see above).

The first part of the day is an important social time for children, a chance for children, teachers and parents to talk and for children to make choices about lunchtimes. Learning also starts from the moment the children walk in, and those who are late will miss learning, time to read to an adult, and interventions.

If a child has a repeated number of lates, the child's teacher will call or speak to parents to establish the reasons and how best to support improving attendance. If this pattern continues, the parents or guardians will be asked to visit the academy and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the academy will offer support which may include Local Support Team or Education and Welfare.

11. Safe and Well Checks

If a child is absent and no contact has been made by parent/ guardian despite efforts made by academy staff (text messages and phone calls) a Safe and Well Check may be carried out by a member of SLT accompanied by an additional member of staff. Safe and Well Checks may also be carried out if a child has not been seen for at least four days or if a child is absent and attendance is below 90%.

If a child is not seen during a Safe and Well Check, this information will be shared with Social Services, via the Front Door service. The document in appendix 1 outlines the process and will be given to parents when a check is carried out, or left at the home if no contact is made.

All Safe and Well Checks carried out will be logged as a safeguarding report.

12. Monitoring and review

12.1. Class Teacher role

Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class, with the assistance of reports run by office staff, and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the Head of School. In the first instance this will be addressed by the class teacher with support from SLT as needed. If necessary the concern can be escalated to SLT.

12.2. Reporting of attendance to parents

Each child's attendance record will be included in the yearly written report to parents.

Attendance reports and letters will be generated through SIMS, these will be held electronically in SIMS and sent to parents where their child's attendance is less than 90%. These letters should not be sent without either the class teacher or a member of SLT having first discussed the issue with parents.

Class teachers and SLT will be made aware of who will be receiving letters prior to them being sent.

The academy will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.

12.3. Local Academy Committee Role

It is the responsibility of the Local Academy Committee to monitor overall attendance. The Local Academy Committee also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The members will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.

This policy will be reviewed by the local academy committee every year, or earlier if considered necessary. The next review is due in September 2025.

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Attendance / Safe and Well Check Procedure

Academy office staff will telephone and text parents who have not informed school of their child's absence. The following information will then be logged onto SIMS

- Name of parent/carer spoken to.
- Reason for not attending.
- The time call was made.

Text messages will also be sent out to parents who have not informed school of their child's absence, requesting them to contact the academy with reason for absence.

Daily home visits may be carried out if the academy has not been notified of a child's absence.

Safe and Well Checks may be conducted by a member of the leadership team, if no contact has been made with school, if a child has not been seen in school for at least four days, if attendance is below 90% or if there is reason to believe the absence is due to unrequested leave.

During a Safe and Well check if the child has not been seen, this concern will be shared with Social Services.

A Safe and Well Check has been carried out today by _____

We visited at _____ on _____

This is because _____ is absent and:

- no contact has been made with school.
- has not been seen for at least four days.
- his/ her attendance rate has fallen below 90%
- there is reason to believe the absence is due to unrequested leave

Appendix 2

Churchfield CE Primary Academy: Absence Procedures

