



Christ the King Catholic Primary School Attendance & Punctuality Policy

Updated November 2019

At Christ the King Catholic Primary School, we value the efforts that all parents and children make to attend school promptly and regularly. Frequent absences can affect the continuity of learning and can lead to poor attitudes to school. We do, therefore urge all parents to ensure that their children do not take unnecessary time off from school.

Registers:

Classroom doors open at 8.45am and close at 8.55am. School registers are taken at 8.55 am and following the Bournemouth guidelines the registers will be kept open until 9.10 am. During that time children will be marked present or absent. Children arriving after 8.55am will need to report to the office to be signed in, if they arrive after 9.10am they are recorded as late in the registers.

Lateness is considered as an unauthorised absence except for visits to the doctor or dentist, or a similar authorised event.

We ask all parents to notify the school as soon as possible to report the reason for their child's absence so that this can be recorded electronically as an authorised absence. Authorised absences include sickness; visit to the doctor, dentist or hospital, an agreed educational visit, and in other exceptional circumstances for which the Headteacher may give permission. All other absences are treated as unauthorised. Where medical absences become a frequent occurrence there may be a need to ask for medical evidence, particularly if the absences are prolonged. We would like parents to use the School Nurse who offers drop in sessions and can do this via the school office.

Leave of Absence in exceptional circumstances:

Headteachers may only grant leave of absence for exceptional circumstances. All requests for leave of absence in term time must be in writing addressed to the Headteacher. Bournemouth LA in consultation with Bournemouth Headteachers have agreed the following examples of such exceptional circumstances as a guide for Headteachers when considering leave of absence requests.

(Please refer to appendix i)

Following up Absences:

The school has a duty to monitor children's absences. On the first day of absence contact is made, via Groupcall text message service, with the parent / carer of the child to find out why the child is absent. There is also a Health and Safety aspect to First Day Calling – a child who is missing from school may well be injured or worse. If we are unable to confirm the child's absence and whereabouts contact will be made initially with you and if this is unsuccessful contact will be made with all other emergency contacts on your child's records. If this continues to be unsuccessful a home visit may be undertaken.

The Educational Social Worker works with the school to monitor attendance. In line with LA guidelines we operate a system of "warning" letters re persistent absence i.e. letters 1, 2 and 3 followed by a referral to ESW if efforts are not successful. Parents who have difficulties in getting their children to school should speak to the Headteacher about the matter. The Headteacher will endeavour to find a solution.

Reporting Attendance and Absence:

Attendance and absence will be recorded in the Headteacher's reports to the Governing body each half term. All parents will be given their child's record of attendance in the school report which they will receive each summer. Additionally, attendance will be reported to all school age children at the beginning of each term.

Children Missing Education (CME):

If families move away from the area, or wish to transfer their child to another school, the Headteacher must be informed in writing and this must include the child's forwarding address details and school information (including those that move out of the UK). Children cannot be removed from the school roll until we have been notified by another school that a place has been offered and accepted. Children who stop attending and who cannot be traced cannot be removed from the school roll; they are referred as CME to the local authority where further checks are undertaken in line with their CME policy.

Penalty Notices:

We, as all schools in Bournemouth are signed to the Penalty Notice code of conduct. The Headteacher may decide to request a Penalty Notice for persistent unauthorised absence or unauthorised holidays taken during term time. Under existing legislation, parents/carers commit an offence if a child fails to attend regularly and the absences are categorised as unauthorised (the school viewing reasons provided as unacceptable; or no explanations received; or 'truancy').

Depending on circumstances such cases may result in prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. However legislation allows the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice under Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 to each parent/carers with responsibility for a child in respect of the offence.

A Penalty Notice is seen as a simpler sanction to focus parents on their responsibilities and does not require an appearance in Court. Payment of a Penalty Notice offers a person the opportunity of discharging any liability to conviction of the offence under section 444(1) to which the notice relates.

(Appendix i)

Examples of any exceptional circumstances where leave may be granted during term time:

- Funeral of parent, grandparent or sibling – Headteachers should use their discretion having heard from parents about travel and funeral arrangements and taking into account the distance to be travelled
- Sudden loss of housing through eviction or domestic violence- up to a maximum of 3 days.
- Serious illness of a close relative – only if Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional
- Teenage parents responsible for the care of their own child – at the Headteacher’s discretion.
- Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement and agreed by the LA – as appropriate. Bournemouth Education Social Work Service can advise schools on individual circumstances if required.
- Time- off relating to Child Entertainment Performances, subject to a license being issued by Education Social Work Service
- Religious observance – The Education Act 1996 S444 (3) (c), states ‘on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his/her parent belongs’.
- This would include the Islamic Eids, as well as religious observance days of the orthodox Christian, Jewish and other religions. Headteachers may specify that only one day will be authorised at a time (most of the families who request leave on religious grounds are Muslim and the request is for the two Eids).
- Weddings of parents and siblings – weddings can be arranged at weekends or during school holidays; however we acknowledge that there are times when the dates are dependent on other factors, such as the needs of the couple getting married. Leave should only be authorised for this purpose when a Headteacher is satisfied that there is a persuasive reason for holding the wedding during term time. In difficult family situations the Headteacher may use his/her discretion in granting leave, for example where natural parents are separated, and in new relationships and it may cause a child further difficulties if he/she is excluded from a wedding. Each case should be addressed on its individual merits, taking into account the overall welfare of the child.

Examples of circumstances NOT considered as exceptional

- Holidays abroad for the purpose of visiting a sick relative, excepting where that person is seriously ill. Medical evidence may be requested.
- Pilgrimages by parents (e.g. Hajj). These are rare but can result in children being away from school for significant periods of time (at least 5 days). They are not regarded as exceptional as children themselves do not perform Hajj, but tend to travel with their parents when they go.
- Holidays taken in term time due to lower cost/parental work commitments.