

CORPUS CHRISTI  
CATHOLIC SCHOOL



# Attendance & Punctuality Policy

Reviewed June  
2017

## Introduction

Corpus Christi is continually striving to improve the way we do things; attendance and punctuality are vitally important to the outcome of the children's learning. To this end we have written this policy to clearly state the schools position on matter and how we aim to achieve high levels in both areas.

At Corpus Christi, attendance and punctuality are a very high priority. We want motivated enthusiastic learners who get to school on time, ready to learn and who thus establish good habits for lifelong learning, in line with the schools values and ethos.

Parents and carers have a legal responsibility to make sure that children come to school regularly and on time. The school has a legal duty to mark the register and record the attendance of every child on its roll and to specifically code which children are absent or late and why. There is now a statutory requirement that schools publish statistics about their attendance rates.

The school will establish an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of pupils to improve their attendance and timekeeping and will challenge the behaviour of those pupils and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

We will work closely with the Local Authority Welfare Officers who externally audit our attendance data and procedures to ensure the regulations are met. In cases where absenteeism is a problem, the case Education Welfare Officers (EWO) will work with families directly, to reduce obstacles to learning (including absenteeism) and enforce penalties and other sanctions to ensure children attend school regularly.

## Definitions

At Corpus Christi we define absence in two ways, authorised and unauthorised.

### What are authorised absences?

Authorised absences involve children having time out of school for approved reasons, for example: illness, urgent medical appointments or visits to new schools. The school will need an explanation from parents or guardians (a note, telephone call or message in person) if we are to authorise the child's absence. This is then recorded in the absence diary and transferred to the school's information management system (SIMS) later.

Every effort should be made to arrange routine dentists and GP appointments outside school hours. However, it is understood that specialist hospital or clinic appointments may have to be made during school hours. The school should be notified of these at the earliest opportunity. You may be asked for a medical certificate or appointment card if your child is regularly absent due to illness or dental/medical appointments.

### Exceptional authorised leave

Parents who wish to take their children out of school for any other reason during school time are asked to make this request to the Co Headteachers, by completing the Leave of Absence Form; supporting information may be submitted in writing and attached to the form. It is important to make the request in good time before the period of requested leave; it is not acceptable to tell the school afterwards, as this will be treated as unauthorised.

The Headteacher will respond quickly by phone, letter, and e-mail or in person.

Each request for exceptional leave will be considered as a separate case and the Headteacher's decision is final. There is no appeal process where leave has been declined.

We will take into account the following criteria:

- The reason for the leave and why it could not be taken in school holidays;
- The exceptional circumstance, as determined by the Co Headteachers, with supporting documentation;
- The number of days requested;
  - Previous requests for leave during term-time; only **one** extended period of leave will be granted during the child's time at Corpus Christi.

- The child's attendance and punctuality record; we would expect a pattern of attendance consistently around 95% + and under 5 incidence of lateness. Authorisation will not usually be considered for children with attendance below this level

At Corpus Christi we consider;

100 – 99.1%	attendance is Excellent
99 - 97.1%	attendance is Very Good
97 - 95.1%	attendance is Average
95 – 93.1%	attendance is Below Average
93 - 90%	attendance is Unsatisfactory

- The age of the child;
- The time of year proposed for the trip; **Authorisations will not be given in the period leading to tests in years 2 & 6.**
- The child's stage of education, any additional needs they may have, their current attainment and level of progress and any impact the leave will have on their learning.

**There is no entitlement to holiday in term-time.** We strongly discourage missing school for this reason. Children miss out on crucial work and friendships and may lose their sense of engagement and involvement with school life. Since 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013 headteachers are no longer allowed to grant any absence outside school holidays, except under "exceptional circumstances"

### What are unauthorised absences? The Legal Definition of unauthorised absence is Truancy.

Unauthorised absences involves children having time out of school without explanation, or where the reason for absence is one that the school cannot authorise, for example: shopping, birthdays, baby-sitting for younger children, too tired, late night due to birthday, not realising term had started, flight delays or because other members of the family are ill. If the Headteacher does not authorise a holiday or exceptional leave in term time, and either is still taken. The school website has the term's dates in advance, so these should be checked before planning holidays.

#### Penalty Notices

1. You are committing an offence if your child doesn't attend school regularly and it is not agreed by the school (unauthorised absence). In some cases unauthorised absence may result in prosecution.
2. Penalty Notices were introduced as an alternative to prosecution. If paid within deadlines, a Penalty Notice does not require a court appearance, but still aims to improve attendance.

#### Cost of a Penalty Notice

£60 if payment is made within 21 days.

£120 if paid after this but within 28 days.

You have up to **28 days** from receipt to pay the Penalty Notice in full. If full payment is not received within this time, we are required under the Act to commence proceedings in the Magistrates Court for the original offence of unauthorised absence by your child.

If proven, this can result in fines of up to £2,500 and/or a range of measures such as Parenting Orders, Community Sentences and imprisonment.

If a parent is found guilty of the offence of failing to secure appropriate levels of attendance the parent will receive a criminal record.

## When Penalty Notices are used

When the school agrees for your child to miss school in advance or accepts your explanation, absence is 'authorised'. All other absence is 'unauthorised'. The school will refer cases of unauthorised absence to the Local Authority who may issue penalty notices for example when:

- a parent has taken their child on holiday during term without authorisation, especially when this means pupils miss exams, eg SATs .
- enquiries made at school after a truancy sweep show the pupil's absence at that time as unauthorised
- pupils are regularly late for school after the register has closed.
- a pupil has eight or more unauthorised absences within the previous ten week period

## If a child continues to miss school

### Absences

The Headteachers will formally meet with parents, where attendance starts falling below 95%. Prosecution might be considered for further periods of unauthorised absence not covered by the Penalty Notice, depending upon the circumstances. If this is an issue, it is vital that you work closely with us and support agencies.

Should a child be absent for 20 consecutive days for any reason other than exceptional circumstance, the child will be taken off roll and may be reported as missing from education to Lambeth Council's attendance team. At this stage the partner/carer will be notified in writing that the child has been taken off roll.

### Absence directly before or after Holidays

Where sickness absence occurs immediately before or after a school holiday, the school requires proof that the child has had medical attention or advice. Please note that GP surgeries may charge you for providing a letter to confirm this. However if a child has been prescribed medication this will be sufficient proof. Any unsubstantiated absence will be treated as unauthorised absence and will be referred to the EWO.

### Lateness

The start of the school day is 8.50am, although pupils should be in the school playgrounds for lining up at 8.45 am. Pupils arriving after this time needs to be signed in late by a member of staff at the school gate or at the school office. Genuine delays will be considered as acceptable by the attendance officer. Pupils arriving after 9.05am will be marked as "unauthorised late" which counts as absent.

There is also an expectation that children are collected on time at the end of the school day. Parents need to inform the school office if they are delayed, at the earliest opportunity.

Penalty notices may be issued for persistent lateness as detailed above.

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## Application for Leave of Absence

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Please note that there is **no automatic right** for pupils to be granted authorised absence. Corpus Christi Catholic Primary School considers every request for absence in relation to the individual pupil's attendance and educational attainment.

**Regular attendance is an important factor in your child's performance at school. Please think carefully before deciding to request leave of absence.**

Name of Pupil:

Date of Birth:

Class:

Address:

Holiday requested from Dates

to

Reason for term time holiday request

Name of Parent/Carer:

Signature:

Date:

This is an example of the number of lessons your child will miss. Remember these will not be repeated.

**1 days absence = 5 lessons missed**  
**3 days absence = 15 lessons missed**  
**1 weeks absence = 25 lessons missed**  
**2 weeks absence = 50 lessons missed**

The school cannot agree to a holiday during term time. If the school agrees exceptional leave, it is important that your child comes back to school on the agreed date. If a pupil fails to return on the agreed date and the school is not informed of the reason we may remove your child's name from the school roll. Please do not to ask for absence when your child is preparing for exams and important tests, as it will not be agreed. We can advise you of these dates.

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### For School Use:

Attendance %

Previous Absence Leave requested :

Yes/No

No. of days

Arrange to meet with parent/carer Yes/No

Request authorised

Yes/No

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**Headteacher**

## Did you know..?

Children spend only 190 days out of 365 in school.

Children who lose time from school do not do as well as they could.

There is never a good time to take children away from their lessons especially:

- When children have important tests and coursework to complete for example Years 2, 6, 9, 10, or 11.
  - When they move from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2.
- When they move from Primary to Senior School (Year 6 to Year 7) (Key Stages 3 to 4).

It is not true

- That they catch up. Research shows that by missing lessons, pupils soon fall behind. Lessons they miss are **not** repeated at a later date.
- That you automatically have 10 days extra school holiday each year.
- That for younger children, lost schooling does not matter. It is just the opposite!

### Every School Day Counts - Always

- Check school holiday dates and discuss with your child's school any holiday plans or visits which do not coincide with these dates. Annual term/holiday dates together with termly diary dates are available for all on the school website and in paper form.

### Please put your child's education First

- Parents/carers who take their children out of school during term time without the Head Teacher's authorisation beyond an agreed date:
  - risk losing their child's place at the school
  - risk being taken to court or being given a fixed penalty fine.
  - risk their child's future
  - risk their child feeling left behind or left out.

90% attendance means that your child is absent from lessons for the equivalent of ½ day each week.

Minutes Late Per Day	Equivalent of missing
5 mins	3.4 school day per year
10 mins	6.9 school days per year
15 mins	10.3 school days per year
20 mins	13.8 school days per year
30 mins	20.7 school days per year

***Stop and think what it will cost your child  
Every lesson counts!***

## School attendance codes

Code	Reason	Collected in school census?
/	Present (AM)	No
\	Present (PM)	No
L	Late (before registers closed) marked as present	No
I	Authorised absence due to illness (NOT medical or dental appointments etc)	Yes
M	Authorised absence due to medical/dental appointments	Yes
H	Authorised absence due to authorised family reason	Yes
C	Authorised absence for reasons not covered by any other authorised absence code, this code should only be used in exceptional circumstances	Yes
B	Approved educational activity as pupil being educated off site	No
J	Approved educational activity as pupil is attending interview with prospective educational establishment	No
G	Unauthorised absence as pupil is on a family holiday, not agreed, or is taking days in excess of an agreed family reason	Yes
U	Unauthorised absence as pupil arrived after registration closed	Yes
O	Unauthorised absence as the school is not satisfied with the reason given for the absence, has not authorised the absence and it is not covered by any other code/description	Yes
N	Unauthorised absence as pupil missed session/s for a reason that has not yet been provided	Yes
#	Planned whole or partial school closure-not counted in possible attendances	<b>No</b>