



## ATTENDANCE POLICY

### To be read in conjunction with the Addendum to the Attendance Policy for Academic Year 2021-22

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Governing Body on an annual basis.

Signature ..... Date .....

Early Years Manager at Carmel Christian School

Signature ..... Date .....

Chairperson of the Governing Body

Signature ..... Date .....

Wayne Skinner, Chairperson CMI Board of Trustees

| Revision table  | Date             | Details                                 |
|-----------------|------------------|---|
| Review          | 18 January 2017  | Major rebuild of several sections       |
| Review          | 11 April 2018    | Review of the policy by the Governors   |
| Review          | 11 February 2019 | Review                                  |
| Review          | 27 August 2019   | Review                                  |
| Review          | 27 August 2020   | Review                                  |
| Review          | 17 May 2021      | Review due to staff and setting changes |
| Next review due | 17 May 2022      |   |

## **INTRODUCTION**

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Children need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning, which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age-related learning expectations.

Carmel Christian School fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure pupils are in school and on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours. Our policy applies to all children registered at this school and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of pupils who are registered at our school, if requested.

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Early Years Manager and the Governors/Trustees at our school work together to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

## **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

This policy ensures that all staff and governors/trustees in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this policy we aim to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a minimum of 95% attendance for all children, apart from those with chronic health issues.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness to parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Ensure that our policy promotes good habits at an early age.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents and staff so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage pupils to have a sense of their own responsibility.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff in promoting good attendance.

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We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and pupils.
- Ensuring that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development.
- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, pupils, staff and governors/trustees on school attendance matters.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school that are preventing good attendance.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.

### **DEFINITIONS**

**Authorised Absence:** An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence.

Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

**Unauthorised Absence:** An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school.

Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

### **PROCEDURES**

Our school will undertake to follow the following procedures to support good attendance:

- To maintain appropriate registration processes.
- To maintain appropriate attendance data.
- To communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, governors, parents and pupils.
- To have consistent and systematic daily records that give details of any absence and lateness.

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- To follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school.
- To inform parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
- To discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time.
- To work with parents to improve individual pupils' attendance and punctuality.
- To refer to the Educational Welfare Service any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve.
- To report attendance statistics to the DfE where requested.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES**

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

**Teachers** are responsible for:

The **Early Years Manager** is responsible for:

- Overall monitoring of school attendance
- Keeping an overview of individual attendance, looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers
- Trends in authorised and unauthorised absence
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised
- Discussing attendance issues at parent's evenings where necessary
- Sending out standard letters regarding attendance
- Providing reports and background information to inform discussion with the Governing Body/Trustees

**Teaching Assistants** are responsible for:

- Informing the Early Years Manager where there are concerns and acting upon them
- Providing background information to support referrals
- Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness
- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation which should be noted inside the register

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**All Early Years staff** are responsible for:

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information
- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence
- Ensuring the parent contact log is completed
- Contacting parents of absent children where no contact has been made.
- Recording details of children who arrive late or go home

**Parents/Carers** are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment
- Contacting the school office on the first morning of absence
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence, the school requires evidence from the doctor or dentist (appointment card/letter)
- Making requests for authorised absence in term time, only if absolutely necessary as these are not automatically authorised.
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

### **REGISTRATION**

The Early Years door is open at 8.30am and will be closed at 9.00am. This time is sufficient for all pupils to arrive for the school day.

The Early Years Manager has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance. Any pupil who is absent must be recorded at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session. The attendance register must be completed by 9.00am and 1.00pm.

Attendance registers are legal documents and these must be kept secure and preserved for a period of three years after the date they were last used.

### **LATENESS**

Any pupil who comes into school after 9.00am will be marked as late in the attendance record. Records are kept of those pupils who are late; this is documented register for each pupil (attendance code L).

Any child who arrives for school later than 9.30am will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning (attendance code U).

Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school later than 10.00am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (attendance code M).

Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness, parents/carers will receive a letter advising them of the concerns and the school will provide opportunities for parents/carers to seek support and advice to address these issues.

### **ABSENCES**

Parents/carers should contact the school on the first day of their child's absence. When parents/carers notify us of their child's absence, it is important that they provide us with details of the reason for their absence.

All absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised absences on the register. It is important that we receive accurate information from parents with reasons for the child's absence. This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. The Early Years Manager has the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.

Where we have not received reasons for a child's absence, we send a letter requesting these details to parents/carers to complete. If this letter is not completed and returned by the specified date then the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (attendance Code U).

### **FIRST DAY CONTACT**

Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, then we initiate a first day contact process. The Early Years Manager will check the register on a daily basis, to identify those pupils who are absent. There are occasions when we are unaware why the child is absent and we will contact the parent to check the reasons for the child's absence.

### **ILLNESS**

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school long-term, the school will suggest that learning that can be carried out at home.

Where, over the course of an academic year, a child has repeated periods of illness, the school will write to parents to ask them to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness related absence. This evidence could be a doctor's note, appointment card or copy of a prescription. The school may seek written permission from parents to make their own enquiries.

### **PARENTAL REQUEST FOR ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL FOR HOLIDAY**

Independent schools do not have to comply with the government guidelines regarding authorising absence specifically for holidays; therefore, we will consider authorising holidays taken during term time. However, we would discourage unnecessary absence in certain circumstances.

### **ADDRESSING ATTENDANCE CONCERNS**

The school expects attendance of at least 95%.

It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their school career. It is the responsibility of the Early Years Manager and the governors/trustees to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly.

In Carmel Christian School, we rely upon parents to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually and, therefore, where there are concerns regarding attendance, parents are always informed of our concerns. Initially, concerns about attendance are raised with parents via letters. There will be opportunities for the parent/carer to discuss reasons for absence and support will be available by the school with the aim to improve attendance. Where a child's attendance record does not improve over a period of time, then the school has a responsibility to make a referral to the Educational Welfare Service.

### **MONITORING ATTENDANCE**

Carmel Christian School has the responsibility for ensuring that all of the attendance data is accurately recorded in the register(s). Regular meetings are held with staff to discuss all attendance concerns and appropriate actions are taken following these meetings, such as letters sent to parents or meetings arranged to discuss attendance concerns with parents.