



Attendance Policy Reception – Year 11

<u>Date Updated</u>	July 2021
<u>Next Update</u>	July 2022 (or sooner if necessary)
<u>Author</u>	Miss R Crockatt

Contents

Why is attendance important?	3
Statutory Framework	3
Parental responsibilities.....	4
Student responsibilities	5
College responsibilities	5
Absence.....	5
Authorised Absence	6
Unauthorised Absence.....	6
Holiday/Planned Absence During Term Time	7
Punctuality	7
Fixed Penalty Notice	8
Staged response for poor attendance and/or punctuality	8

Why is attendance important?

School attendance is subject to various Education laws and this college attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education.

At Christ's College, we believe that good attendance and punctuality are important in helping students achieve the best that they can be. Students should be at the college on time and dressed in accordance with the college uniform policy. Students should be ready to learn, every day the college is open, unless the reason for absence is unavoidable.

Promoting excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole college community including students, parents, governors and staff.

It is a parent's legal responsibility to ensure their child receives an appropriate education. Poor attendance disrupts a student's education as well as their peers'. Good attendance is important because:

- statistics show a direct relation between underachievement and poor attendance;
- regular attenders make better progress academically;
- regular attenders make better progress socially.

Statutory Framework

Under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act a student is required to attend regularly at school should a student fail to attend regularly legal action may be taken. A parent(s)* may receive a Fixed Penalty Notice or could be fined up to £2,500, face three months in prison and receive a parenting order. An Education Supervision Order could be sought.

The college is required to complete a register twice during the college day. This is once at the start of the college day, 8:30am (senior school and primary school), and again for the afternoon session at 12:50pm for Primary and 13:40pm for Seniors. *NB – Please note that students must be on the college yard by 8:25am, otherwise they will have to sign in and will be marked as 'late'. Please see punctuality section for more detail.*

The college is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not itself authorise an absence. It is for the college to determine if an absence is to be authorised (The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006).

**Parent - Education Law defines a parent as:*

- *All natural parents, whether they are married or not;*
- *Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and,*
- *Any person who has care of a child or young person i.e. lives with and looks after the child on a daily basis.*

It is important to note that even though a parent may not live in the same home as the student, that parent is still responsible for ensuring the child attends the college every day.

Parental responsibilities

- Support the college and your child in aiming for 100% attendance each academic year.
- Ensure your child attends the college every day, punctually, dressed in accordance with the college uniform policy, fully equipped, with a positive attitude to learn.
- Ensure your child is present at the college by the start time of 8:25am.
- Contact the college office before 8:30am (*0191 5344444 or info@grindonhall.com*) to provide an explanation if your child is ill and unable to attend the college.
- Provide a signed, written note on the day your child returns to the college after being absent. Notes should be placed in the student planner for students in Year 7-11. Supporting evidence should be supplied to help the college to decide if an absence is authorised (e.g. medical appointment card with one appointment entered, letter from a professional, doctor's note, medication prescribed by a doctor, copy of prescription, print screen of medical notes, as well as letters concerning hospital appointments or any other relevant evidence). **If a written note is not provided within 2 weeks of your child returning to the college following an absence, this will automatically be recorded as unauthorised.**
- If illness is frequently claimed as a reason for absence then supporting evidence should be provided; see the above bullet point for examples of suitable evidence. If this evidence is not provided, then the absence will be marked as unauthorised.
- Ensure appointments (e.g. medical, dental etc) are made outside of college hours.
 - If this is not possible, a written note must be provided; this should include the date, time and location of the appointment. Supporting documentation e.g. appointment card, medical appointment letter etc must also be provided. If supporting documentation is not brought into the college then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
- Ensure your child returns to the college immediately after any appointments.
- Ensure holidays are booked outside of term dates.
- Only request leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance.
- Ensure the college has updated contact numbers and address details. It is essential that the college is kept informed of changes to contact details such as phone numbers and addresses. In cases where we continue to be concerned we may make a 'home visit' or request the police to undertake a 'Safe and Well' welfare visit.
- Actively work with the college staff and relevant multi-agency staff to solve any attendance issues as and when they occur.

Student responsibilities

- Aim for 100% attendance and punctuality for registration, lessons and be appropriately prepared for the day (correct uniform and equipment).
- Proactively approach staff to catch up with missed work as soon as they return to the college.
- Remain on college premises all day and not truant from any lessons.
- Attend the college every day.
- Tell a member of staff about any problem or reason that may prevent them from attending the college.
- Take responsibility for registering at the main college office if they are late or are leaving the college site during college hours.

College responsibilities

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence, ensure every student has access to full-time education to which they are entitled and differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence in order to act early to address patterns of absence.
- Contact parents on the first day when a student fails to attend the college without providing good reason.
- Take timely action on any problem notified to us and involve appropriate outside agencies in order to support students and their families. This may include a 'home visit' or a request to the police to undertake a 'Safe and Well' welfare visit.
- Keep parents fully informed of their child's attendance/punctuality record.

Absence

Any student who is on roll but not present in the college must be recorded within one of these categories:

1. Unauthorised absence

This is for those students where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason.

2. Authorised absence

This is for those students who are away from the college for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.

3. Approved Educational Activity

Students recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the college.

This would include:

- Work experience placements
- Field trips and educational visits
- Sporting activities
- Link courses or approved education off site

Under the 1996 Education Act parents commit an offence if the child does not attend the college regularly. If your child cannot come to the college because of illness you should advise the college on the first day of absence by telephone. If no message is received, we will make every effort to contact you.

Authorised Absence

Some absences are allowed by law to be recorded on the college register as 'authorised'; this is for those students who are away from college for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996. Under the 1996 Education Act parents commit an offence if the child does not attend the college regularly. If your child cannot come to the college because of illness you should advise the college on the first day of absence by telephone. If no message is received, we will make every effort to contact you. Where there is persistent illness, parents will be asked to supply medical documentation demonstrating that their child has been seen by a relevant healthcare professional.

Parents are asked to make routine medical and dental appointments outside college hours wherever possible. Where such appointments in college time are unavoidable, parents should inform the college in advance and submit a copy of the appointment card. The absence will be marked unauthorised if the parent fails to submit the appointment card. If a parent rings the college to confirm the student is unwell, the college may request supporting evidence; this could be in the form of:

- medical appointment card with one appointment entered
- letter from a professional
- doctor's note
- medication prescribed by a doctor
- copy of prescription
- print screen of medical notes, as well as letters concerning hospital appointments or any other relevant evidence.

The college may choose not to authorise absence without this supporting evidence as it is for the college to determine if an absence is to be authorised. ***If illness is frequently claimed as a reason for absence then supporting evidence should be provided; see the above bullet points for examples of suitable evidence. If this evidence is not sent in, then the absence will be marked as unauthorised.***

It is down to the college (not parents) to decide whether absence is recorded as authorised. Where the college is not satisfied with the reason(s) supplied for an absence, this will be recorded as 'unauthorised absence'. Providing evidence listed above will help us to decide if your child's absence is deemed to be for an authorised reason.

We will closely monitor your child's attendance and alert you if we feel there is an issue. The college undertakes a range of measures to support students where attendance is an issue. Where we fail to see an improvement in a student's attendance, it may be necessary to make a referral to an appropriate external agency to ensure the student receives the support required. It is important that parents work with the relevant external agency in order to improve their child's attendance.

If your child is experiencing difficulties, you should contact the college at an early stage and work together with staff in resolving the difficulties. This is nearly always successful. If the difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the college will make a referral to the Local Authority Attendance Team they will assess the case to determine the appropriateness of use of statutory enforcement procedures i.e. Fixed Penalty Notices, Magistrates Court or seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment a parenting order can also be imposed.

Unauthorised Absence

If a child is absent from school for a reason which is not permitted by law, this will be recorded on the college register as 'unauthorised absence'. Examples of unauthorised absence are:

- Staying off due to Birthday
- Issues with transport resulting in student being absent
- Going on holiday
- Parental illness
- Family gathering/Visiting family
- Family day out
- Sleeping in and staying off
- Not having uniform

An absence will be recorded as 'unauthorised' when an explanation has not been provided for an absence, or when the college is not satisfied with the reason provided. A note from a parent does not automatically mean an absence

is authorised; it is down to the college to decide if the reason for absence is acceptable and will investigate further where necessary.

Please see the 'authorised absence' section for examples of supporting evidence that help the college to decide if an absence should be recorded as authorised.

Holiday/Planned Absence During Term Time

Time off from the college for family holidays cannot be authorised. There are strict regulations regarding the holidays during term time issued by the Government. **The Principal is not allowed by law to grant holidays during term time.** Parents have no entitlement to remove their child from education to go on holiday unless there is an exceptional circumstance. The law states:

"Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances"

Any parent who is wishing to remove their child from the college for any period of time must write to the Principal at least 4 weeks in advance by using the 'leave of absence form'; this is available from the college office and also downloadable from the college website.

Consideration is given to each request before a decision is reached by the Principal; on behalf of the Governing Body (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Each case will be judged on its individual circumstances.

Any leave of absence that has been declined or the parent(s) has not sought approval for will be recorded as unauthorised. These cases will be referred to the Local Authority and a Fixed Penalty Notice could be issued to each parent for each student.

Punctuality

The start time for students is 8:25am.

All Senior students must be at their entry gate (A,B or C) by 8:25am, otherwise they will have to sign in at the front office and will receive a 'late' mark on the register. The PM register is taken at the beginning of lesson 5 at 13:40pm and closes at 14:10pm.

Primary students must be at their entry gate (A,B or C) by 8:25am. Primary students arriving after 8:25am must sign in at the front office and will receive a 'late' mark. The PM register is taken at 12:50pm and closes at 13:20pm.

The college registers close at 8:55am for the whole college for the AM session. The college registers close at the times stated above or the PM session. This means that a student arriving after the stated register closed times will be marked with an *unauthorised late mark (U code)*, unless there is a good reason (e.g. *emergency* appointment with proof supplied). Accumulating numerous **unauthorised late marks can lead to a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued by the Local Authority**. Any child who arrives after the AM or PM registers close is marked on the register with a code that **DOES NOT** count towards their attendance percentage, whether this is legitimate (e.g. *emergency* appointment) or not. To prevent your child's attendance percentage being impacted, **please ensure all appointments are booked outside of college hours** and your child is present for their AM and PM register marks.

Fixed Penalty Notice

The college has powers to request that the Local Authority issue a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) for poor attendance and punctuality. Fixed Penalty Notices can be issued when a student of compulsory school age has been absent and the absence has not been authorised, or where a student has persistently arrived late after the register has been taken.

A FPN is currently:

- £60 per child if the Penalty Notice is paid within 21 days.
- £120 per child if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.

The college will request that a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued when a holiday is taken during term time or for when a student has reached the number of unauthorised absences that allow a FPN to be issued by the Local Authority.

Further detail about Fixed Penalty Notices can be found on the Sunderland Council website.

Staged response for poor attendance and/or punctuality

When attendance or punctuality become a cause for concern, a staged response system is in place to help rectify concerns.

Stage	Reasons for concern	Actions
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance concern - A student has been absent for numerous sessions. • Punctuality concern. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting takes place with the student. Outcomes agreed for improvement. Copy stored in school. <p>AND/OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard letter sent to parents to state the punctuality or attendance concern.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance has not improved. • Punctuality has not improved. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second letter sent to parents. <p>AND/OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance meeting with parent(s) to discuss and resolve any issues or to refer to other support agencies i.e. strengthening Families. Copy of form with agreed actions sent to parents.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No improvement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serious concern letter advising of referral to LA Attendance Team. Involvement of Local Authority attendance team. • Local Authority attendance team could: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Issue a Fixed Penalty Notice to each parent in respect of each child ○ Summons each parent to attend the Magistrates Court (a finding of guilty will result in a criminal conviction) in respect of each child ○ Apply for an Education Supervision Order

Please note: A referral to the Local Authority Attendance team can be made at any point when attendance fails to improve after any intervention.