Attendance Policy

Statement of intent

We aim to maximise attendance rates and secure high levels of punctuality in order to ensure that all pupils are able to take the fullest advantage of the learning experiences available to them. We believe it also benefits pupils greatly if they participate in learning with the rest of their class and avoid learning gaps that occur due to absence. Most pupils have excellent attendance, but we are aware that absence rates increase particularly at the beginning and end of terms. Our partnership with parents plays a vital role in ensuring that high attendance levels are achieved and maintained.

We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils may sometimes find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents.

The school's attendance officer is the School Administrator who can be contacted via mail@londonchristianschool.com or on 020 3130 6430.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- Working together to improve school attendance
- Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2026
- Children missing education

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Children Missing Education Policy

2. Roles and responsibilities

The governing board has overall responsibility for monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The overall strategic approach to attendance in school.
- Championing and improving attendance in school and setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance, establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence and making sure they are followed by all staff and has a strong grasp of absence data to focus the collective efforts of the school.
- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.

The attendance officer is responsible for completing the attendance registers in line with this policy and following up on attendance as set out in paragraph 4.

Parents are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- The attendance of their children at school.
- Promoting good attendance with their children.
- Proactively engaging with any attendance support offered by the school (and the Local Authority (LA) if relevant)
- Notifying the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent.
- Requesting leave of absence only in exceptional circumstances, and in advance.
- Booking any medical appointments around school where possible.

3. Attendance expectations

The school has high expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality, and ensures that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents and pupils.

Pupils will be expected to attend school punctually every day they are required to be at school, for the full day.

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register. We will mark attendance and absence in accordance with the codes in the DfE's guidance.

The morning register is taken at **8.45am**. If a pupil arrives at school **between 8.45 and 8.55am**, he or she will be marked **late.**

If a pupil arrives **after 9.00am**, he or she will be marked **absent for the morning session. This will be an unauthorised absence if no satisfactory explanation can be given.**

The afternoon register is taken at various times after 1.00pm depending on the timetabled activities for the class.

4. Absence procedures

Parents or carers are required to inform the school office by telephone or email (mail@londonchristianschool.com) by 8.40 am on every day of the pupil's absence, with a reason for the absence. If a pupil is unwell, then the nature of the illness should be indicated.

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may contact the parents of other pupils who are known to be close contacts and/or the police.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not.
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained.
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary.

Where a pupil is absent for more than three school days in a row, or more than 10 school days in one term, the pupil's parent will be expected to provide a signed letter with an explanation for the absence(s).

The school will not request medical evidence in most circumstances where a pupil is absent due to illness; however, the school reserves the right to request supporting evidence where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness.

5. Attendance register

The school uses Engage to keep attendance registers to ensure they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities.

Designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present
- Absent
- Attending an approved educational visit
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

- # = planned whole school closure
- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Leave of absence granted by the school for exceptional circumstances
- S = Study leave
- C1 = Leave of absence for participating in a regulated performance or employment abroad
- C2 = Leave of absence for part-time pupils
- E = Suspended or permanently excluded but no alternative provision made
- J1 = Leave of absence for job or education interviews
- I = Illness
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- K = Attending provision arranged by the LA
- R = Religious observance
- B = Off-site education activity
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- O = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- N = Reason not yet provided
- X = Not required to be in school
- T = Traveller absence
- Q = Absent due to a lack of access arrangements or due to the pupil having to attend a school that does not qualify for travel arrangements and is more than walking distance from where they live.
- V = Educational visit or trip
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity, with supervision being physically provided by an appropriately trained and knowledgeable person
- D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment
- W = Attending work experience
- Y1 = Absent due to their regular transport not being available
- Y2 = Absent due to travel disruption
- Y3 = Absent due to part of the school premises being closed
- Y4 = Absent due to the school site being closed
- Y5 = Absent due to being in criminal justice detention
- Y6 = Absent due to public health guidance or law, despite the pupil being well enough to attend
- Y7 = Absent due to any other unavoidable cause, the nature of which must be documented by the school.
- Z = Pupil not on admission register

When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code '#' will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent.

Pupils who are absent from school but are receiving remote education for any reason will be marked as absent in the register.

All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for three years.

6. Authorising parental absence requests

Parents will be required to request certain types of absence in advance. All requests for absence will be handled by the headteacher – the decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the sole discretion of the headteacher, taking the best interests of the pupil and the impact on the pupil's education into account. The headteacher's decision is not subject to appeal; however, the school will be sympathetic to requests for absence by parents, and will not deny any request without good reason.

Leave of absence

The school will only grant a pupil a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. In order to have requests for a leave of absence considered, the school will expect parents to contact the headteacher in writing at least two weeks prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur.

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account. Where the absence is granted, the headteacher will determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from school.

Absence will generally only be considered for authorisation in the following exceptional circumstances:

- Illness (including mental illness)
- Medical or dental appointments (though we encourage parents to make non emergency appointments out of school where possible).
- Days of religious observance
- Family bereavement
- Senior school visits and assessments
- Involvement in a public performance (depending on circumstances)
- Special occasions - the nature of such special occasions will be determined by the headteacher on an individual basis
- Lateness (when the pupil arrives after the register has closed and offers a satisfactory explanation)

Absence is unlikely to be authorised for:

- Availability of cheaper holidays
- Overlap with beginning or end of term
- Attending a wedding that is not immediate family
- Family birthdays

If term-time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. The school cannot grant leaves of absence retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by the school in advance will be marked as unauthorised, unless a satisfactory explanation is given.

Illness and healthcare appointments

Parents will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents will be expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as is practicable. Parents will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment.

Performances and activities, including paid work

The school will ensure that all parents of pupils engaging in performances or activities, whether they receive payment or not, which require them to be absent from school, understand that they will be required to obtain a licence from the LA which authorises the school's absence(s). The school will not necessarily authorise such absence.

Religious observance

The school will only accept requests from parents for absence on grounds of religious observance for days that are exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body. The school will define this as a day where the pupil's parents would be expected by an established religious body to stay away from their employment to mark the occasion.

The school may seek advice from the religious body in question where there is doubt over the request.

7. SEND and health-related absences

The school recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult.

In line with the SEND Policy, the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC plans or IHPs that have been implemented. The school will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

Where the school has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Safeguarding Policy will be followed. All pupils will be supported with their mental health in accordance with the school's Mental Health Policy.

The school will incorporate an action plan to help any pupils with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them.

8. Working with parents to improve attendance

The school will ensure that parents are aware of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and to facilitate their child's legal right to a full-time education – parents will be made aware that this means their child must attend school every day that it is open, save for in certain circumstances, e.g. sickness or absences that have been authorised by the headteacher in advance. The school will regularly inform parents about their child's levels of attendance, absence and punctuality, and will ensure that parents are aware of the benefits that regular attendance at school can have for their child educationally, socially and developmentally.

If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, the school will work collaboratively with the pupil and their parents to improve attendance by addressing the specific barriers that prevent the pupil from being able to attend school regularly. The school will always take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for pupil absence and will approach families to offer support rather than immediately reach for punitive approaches. Where these barriers are related to the pupil's experience in school, e.g. bullying, the headteacher and any relevant school staff, e.g. the DSL and SENCO, will work with parents to address this.

9. Monitoring and analysing absence

The school monitors and analyses attendance and absence trends half termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual level. Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school.

The school will meet with parents of pupils who are persistently absent (regardless of whether the absence is authorised or not) with a view to finding ways in which to improve attendance.

If a pupil's attendance drops below 90 percent, the attendance officer will be informed, and a formal meeting will be arranged with the pupil's parent.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove the pupil from the admissions register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil after making reasonable enquiries.

10. Training of staff

The school recognises that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. Staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils as part of their induction and refresher training.

Training will cover at least the following:

- The importance of good attendance
- That absence is almost invariably a result of wider circumstances and could indicate a safeguarding concern
- The legal requirements on schools, e.g. the keeping of registers
- The school's strategies and procedures for monitoring and improving attendance

11. Deletions of names from the admission register

The school will ensure that it only deletes names from the admission register for a reason set out in regulation 9 of the School Attendance Regulations. A pupil's name will never be removed for any other reason and the school is aware that doing so could constitute off-rolling.

The school will make returns to the LA when pupils' names are deleted from the admission register. This will be with the exception of pupils whose name has been deleted from the register at or after the end of the last term of the school year when they are in the most senior year group, unless the LA has requested this information.

When the school is notifying the LA that a pupil's name is being deleted from the admission register, the following information about the pupil will be provided:

- Full name
- Address
- The full name and address of any parent the pupil normally lives with
- At least one telephone number by which any parent the pupil normally lives with can be contacted in an emergency
- If applicable, the pupil's future address, the full name and address of the parent who the pupil is going to live with and the date the pupil will start living there
- If applicable, the name of the pupil's other school and when the pupil began or will begin to attend the school
- The reason under which the pupil's name has been deleted from the admission register
- Names will never be retrospectively deleted from the admission or attendance register – these registers will remain an accurate record of who is a registered pupil and their attendance at any given time. Pupils' attendance will be recorded up until the date that their name is deleted from the admission register.

12. Monitoring and review

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. The school's attendance target is 96 percent.

Policy Approved by the Headteacher: September 2026
Review Date: September 2027