

## Christ the Word Catholic School

### Attendance Newsletter: October 7<sup>th</sup> 2024

Hello parents and carers,

Thank you for reading this important newsletter which explains how we will be managing Attendance in the future. My name is Joe White. I am the Pastoral Deputy Headteacher at school but my role also includes being the Designated Safeguarding Lead and also the Attendance Lead for Christ the Word.

#### New Attendance Policy

In September 2024, a new Attendance Policy was launched by Denbighshire County Council to be rolled out in all DCC schools. The policy is set out to help school, parents and carers be clear about responsibilities and how we will manage positive attendance – and also circumstances when the attendance of students isn't what it should be.

Attendance is a critically important issue for students in our school and throughout the county. One of the issues recognised by the Local Authority and by Welsh Government is that attendance rates have not yet returned to their pre-pandemic rates. In our school it is **well below** pre-pandemic rates and I am delighted to have been invited to work with Governors, staff and parents and carers to help improve this.

The attendance rate which is considered the **minimum** acceptable at this time is 90%. This is still considered quite low. Ideally students should be achieving as close to 100% attendance as possible.

#### The Benefits of Good Attendance:

Good attendance is closely linked with students' success in learning and in achieving good and better paid employment in the future. By not attending well, students are being denied these opportunities. They also miss out on vital important opportunities to socialise with friends and classmates – which is hugely important for their well-being.

We need to make you aware that for these and other reasons, lack of student attendance is viewed as a **serious safeguarding** issue and will need to be handled as such by the school.

#### Who is Responsible for the Attendance of Students?

Welsh Government are very clear about this. Attendance is the responsibility of parents and carers. It is vital for parents and carers to ensure that their children attend as frequently as possible.

For clarity – school isn't responsible for children's attendance – but is responsible for **addressing concerns of attendance** with parents and carers

#### Necessary Absence – What should parents do?

Even with mild medical issues, it is important for pupils to understand that they need to carry on and attend school, as far as possible. However, when an illness or accident is severe enough, it is vital that parents contact school **every single day of absence**. If a student is absent and we haven't received contact – we will need to be in touch with parents – but this can be tricky for all concerned and it will be much better all round if you are able to be in touch with school.

### **How to Inform School of Pupil Absence:**

There are three recommended ways of letting school know **for each day of absence, please.**

Please always make clear the reason for absence – and in the case of medical reason please specify the nature of the problem. (This information is handled confidentially.)

- 1) Telephone **01745 352999** and follow the menu system to leave a report of absence
- 2) Use School Comms App to leave a message
- 3) Email school at [receptiondesk@christtheword.co.uk](mailto:receptiondesk@christtheword.co.uk) to leave a message

Please ensure you identify the child / children you are contacting about and their year group

### **What Happens if Attendance Doesn't Improve?**

As a school we are required, and also wish to support parents and carers with ensuring that children attend school as close to 100% as possible. When problems occur, we may contact you for the following reasons:

- a) To let you know your child is absent
- b) To let you know that your child continues with absence (especially if we have not been informed of a reason.)
- c) To send a **Letter of Concern** and invite you into a meeting to discuss the issue, understand any problems and also provide support for you and your child in improving attendance. The meeting is likely to be with me, Mrs. Austin, Assistant Headteacher or your child's Head of Year.

Unfortunately, following this meeting, or if the meeting isn't attended – it may be possible to move further into the Attendance Policy which could result in the involvement of the Educational Welfare Service and / or a Fixed Penalty Notice. We wish to avoid doing this, but please be aware – if this happens it is our responsibility to ensure that the policy is followed and is not a personal issue.

I trust that this helps you understand our policy better and I wish you all well for the coming weeks and months of full attendance for your child/ren.

Kind regards

Joe White

Please see <https://www.christtheword.co.uk/parents-carers/attendance-reporting-absence/> for further and full details and helpful videos.