



Cranford C E Primary School

Attendance Policy

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Committee Chair Signed/Date: <i>H Buckley 4/6/2019</i>		

Scope

This document is applicable to the following:

✓	Parent/s & Carers		Staff		Community
✓	Children	✓	Governors		Volunteers/Visitors
✓	Contracted external support				

Cranford C E Primary School Attendance Policy

Information for Parents/Carers

Cranford is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Obviously, we would like to see pupils as close to 100% as possible but understand that at times, we all get sick. Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any child's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution. Failing to attend this school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

1. Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility. To help us all to focus on this we will:

- report to you termly on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainment.
- reward good or improving attendance through discussions with children/parents as the Executive Headteacher feels necessary.

2. Tackling Absences

Absence Procedures

If your child is absent you must contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence preferably by 9.30 by phoning (a message can be left), emailing or delivering a letter or message personally to reception. If we have not heard from you by 9.30am we will attempt to contact you to discuss the absence.

We believe it is our responsibility to ensure a child's safety as well as his/her regular school attendance to have the best possible education. If we do not receive an explanation for the absence on the student's return to school, or if the explanation doesn't fall into the authorised absence criteria, the absence may not be recorded as authorised. Written, text or phone-call confirmation is expected from parents/carers to cover the whole period of the absence.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by you), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing. School attendance regulations changed from 1st September 2013 under Education Regulations 2013. As a result of this legislation, head teachers are not able to allow any holidays during term time. Any holiday taken will be treated as unauthorised regardless of the reasons for it. The 2013 regulations allow head teachers to authorise absence in exceptional circumstances.

The following list gives examples of occasions where absence is authorised:

- Sickness / illness;
- Emergency and planned medical appointments – wherever possible parents are requested to make routine appointments outside school hours;
- Hospital scheduled appointments /treatment;
- Day/s for specific religious observance;
- When school is closed due to unforeseen circumstances;
- Family bereavement or close friend bereavement;
- Other compassionate grounds;
- Family wedding/civil partnership taking part on school day– this does not include travelling to the wedding unless it is abroad;
- Family crisis;
- Examinations off site;
- Educational opportunities e.g., sport and performance;
- Attendance at an event at the request of a public organisation;
- Visit to a new school;
- Family relocation visit.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no “leave” has been given. These include:

- keeping your child(ren) off school unnecessarily
- truancy during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late (after the register has closed - see below)
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time.

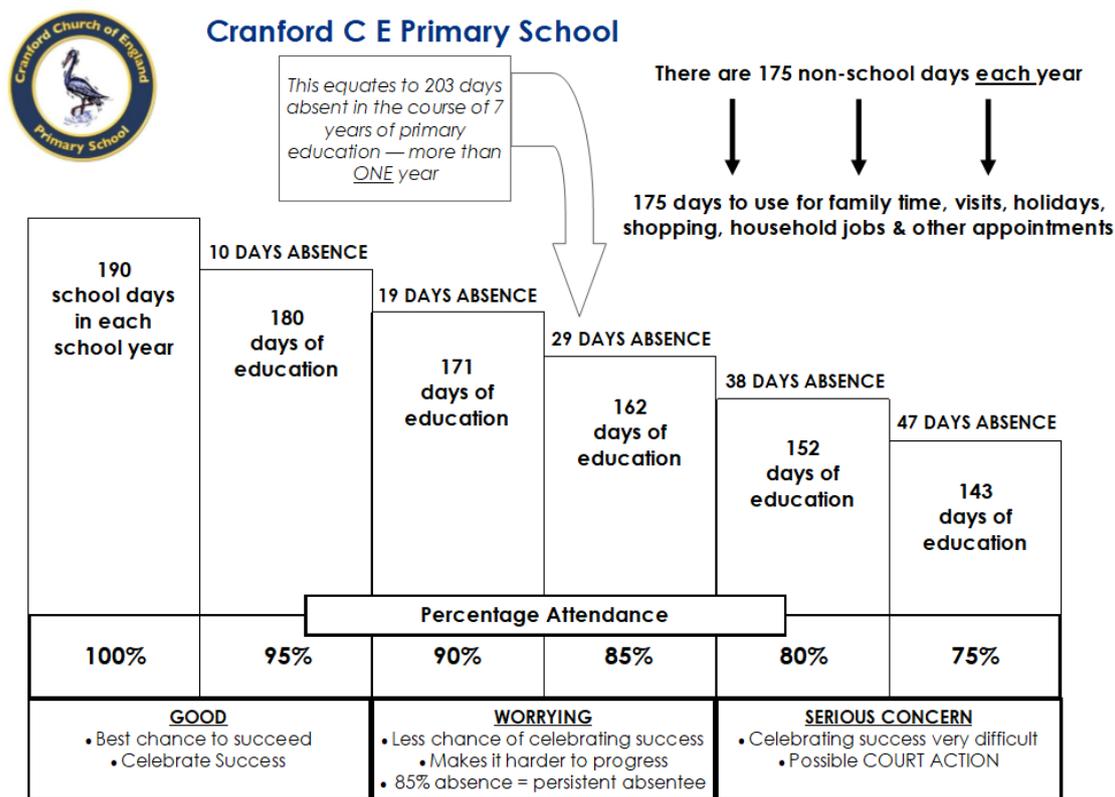
This type of absence can lead to the school using sanctions and/or legal proceedings (including penalty notices).

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, yourself and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse.

Persistent Absenteeism

In September 2015, the Department for Education reported (*“Pupil absence in schools in England: 2015 to 2016”, Department for Education*) that a pupil becomes a ‘persistent absentee’ when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child’s educational prospects. We need your fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

The below image illustrates this well:



As a school, however, we strive for all pupils' attendance to be greater than 96%.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the persistent absence mark (less than 96%) or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents will be informed of this immediately via the 1st attendance letter. Persistently absent pupils are tracked and monitored carefully we also combine this with academic tracking where absence affects attainment. All our PA pupils and their parents are subject to a period of monitoring, followed by a parenting contract if no improvement in attendance and then support via an outside agency, for example, an Early Help Assessment.

Attendance of all pupils is monitored termly and more regularly where there have been concerns. Any family with a child's attendance rate of less than 95% should expect to be contacted by the school for a period of attendance monitoring.

1. The family will receive a letter from the Executive Headteacher indicating that the child's attendance has fallen below the required 96% (at the same time stating actual attendance) and that a **5 week period of monitoring** their attendance will commence.
2. If, following this monitoring period, attendance has risen above 96% then the monitoring will cease. If, however, attendance has not risen to the required level, the family will be invited to an **attendance surgery** with the Executive Headteacher. At this meeting, reasons for absence will be discussed along with ways to improve attendance. A **parental contract** will be signed and a **second period of focused monitoring will commence**.
3. If, after the second monitoring period has completed, attendance has still not improved then the school will seek **support via an outside agency**, for example, an Early Help Assessment.

3. Encouraging Punctuality

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Your child arriving late can also disrupt lessons, be embarrassing for the child and also encourage absence.

How we manage lateness

The school day starts at 8.45am and we expect all children to be in the playground before this time ready to line up when the bell is rung. Any child arriving after the children have entered the classrooms must be taken to reception by you. Registers are marked by 9.00 am and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At 9.30am the registers will be closed. In accordance with the law, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence which could lead to legal sanctions if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with a member of senior leadership team to resolve the problem. You can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

4. Discouraging Holidays in Term Time

It is no longer lawful to authorise absences for holidays and day trips taking place on or after 1 September 2013. Therefore, if you choose to take your child on holiday or day trips during term time, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect you to help us by not to take children away in school time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, you have a duty to make sure that their children attend. All school staff are committed to working with you and your child(ren) in the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible and that every child's welfare and life opportunities are promoted.

We hope we can count on your co-operation.