



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Crofton Infant and Junior Schools are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Staff Responsible:	Head Teacher
Date of Review:	June 2018
Date of Next Review:	June 2019

VERSION CONTROL

Date	Change
January 2018	Changed to new format
March 2018	Policy rewritten to follow exemplar policy.
	Additional sections added to deal with situation in relation to separated families.

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1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons. Regular and punctual attendance is crucial for a child's future life chances and establishes a positive work ethic early in life and pupils will be expected to achieve 100% attendance.

The school staff, governors and trustees believe that all pupils benefit from regular school attendance and therefore will encourage and support all parents and carers in ensuring their children maximise their educational opportunities through regular attendance, and that any difficulties that impact upon attendance are identified and acted upon promptly.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. School procedures

3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

Present

Attending an approved off-site educational activity

Absent

Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Lessons start at 8.45 a.m. in the Juniors and 8:55 in the Infants. If a child misses registration they will be marked 'Late' (L) in the register. If they arrive after the start of the school day, 8.45 a.m. in the Juniors and 8.55am in the Infants, pupils **must** report to the school office to sign in. If a child arrives late and does not sign in, the school office will follow the usual procedure for students who are absent without a reason, and will text the primary contact to try to ascertain their whereabouts.

If they arrive after the closure of registration at 9.15am in the Juniors and 9.25am in the Infants, they will be marked as (U) and the lateness will be recorded as an unauthorised absence for the morning session.

The start of the afternoon session at the Junior School is 1.05 p.m. for upper school and 1.25 p.m. for lower school. At the Infant School, the afternoon session starts at 1:00pm for Reception children and 1:15pm for years 1 & 2. As in the mornings, attendance after this time will be marked as 'late' (L) and if the arrival is later than 30 minutes after afternoon registration has closed, children will again be marked as (U), an unauthorised absence for the afternoon session.

4. Parental responsibility

Parents/Carers should ensure their children attend school regularly and on time and be aware of their legal responsibilities. It is important that children arrive at school punctually, prepared for the school day.

It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school on the morning of each day of absence before 9 a.m. giving the reason for the absence and an estimation of how long the child is likely to be away from school. If the child does not return to school within 5 consecutive days, then the school will need medical evidence either in the form of an appointment card, doctor's certificate or a photocopy of the prescription in order to authorise the absence.

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment can be counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the

minimum amount of time necessary. The school does not expect a child to be absent all day for an AM or PM appointment but instead should be collected or returned to school before or after the appointment. Evidence of the appointment should also be given to the school. The absence will be recorded as authorised only upon receipt of medical evidence.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

If contact is not made by the parent/carer when a pupil does not attend school, they will be contacted by the school office. If there is no response to this, the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) will try to make contact to ascertain the reasons for absence.

Any absence that is not explained by an email or phone message will be classed as unauthorised. All children's absence will be monitored by the school and Education Welfare Officer.

5. Staff responsibilities

The school staff has a legal requirement to ensure that the register is taken a.m. and p.m. and will keep regular and accurate records of all attendance. Attendance will be monitored by school office staff who will attempt to make contact with parents/carers whose child fails to attend school with no reasonable explanation being given.

Members of the school's Inclusion Team will continue to promote and encourage good attendance and ensure that the school provides a safe and welcoming environment and atmosphere for the children. Any irregular and unjustified patterns of attendance, or frequent late arrivals, will be referred to the school's Education Welfare Officer and parents/carers may be asked to meet with the EWO and Head Teacher to discuss their child's attendance.

6. Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

7. Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

When a pupil does not attend school the school will respond in the following manner:

- On the first day of absence if a note or telephone call has not been received 9 a.m., the school will endeavour to contact the parent/carer that day. The initial contact will be via

text message to the primary contact, and if there is no response to this, it will be followed up on the first day with a telephone call.

- If by the second day there has still been no contact made, the school will send a letter of concern inviting the parent/carer into school to discuss the child's absence. It may also result in the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) carrying out a safeguarding visit.
- Persistent non-attendance including unauthorised holiday leave and/or lateness that cannot be justified in law could result in legal proceedings or consideration could be given to the issuing of a fixed penalty notice in accordance with the Local Authority's Penalty Notice protocol. In addition, the school will support the Education Welfare Officer in prosecutions brought under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

8. Reporting to parents

Details of pupil's attendance will be reported to parents and carers termly.

9. Authorised and unauthorised absence

Granting approval for term-time absence

Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. For the purpose of this policy, we define exceptional circumstances as bereavement of an immediate family member or holidays for service personnel where these are prescribed by the employer.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Head Teacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in section 4
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

10. Separated Parents

When parents are separated, and both retain parental responsibility for the child(ren), any leave of absence request forms signed by one parent must be accompanied by a letter of consent from the other parent. If there is no letter of consent from the other parent, then the school will contact that parent to ensure they are aware of the request.

11. Monitoring Attendance

The school will monitor the attendance levels of all pupils on a weekly basis. Where children have an attendance between 95% & 93% the school will monitor the pattern and reasons for the absence.

Where a child's absence is below 95% the school will issue a first letter informing parents/carers that their child's absence will be carefully monitored. If there is no improvement in the child's attendance, or the absence rate continues to rise, then a second letter will be issued instructing that all future absences must be verified/authorised by a medical professional that the child is not well enough to attend school or, they will be unauthorised. If there continues to be cause for concern, a third letter will be sent informing parents/carers that their case has been passed to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and parents/carers may be asked to attend a meeting to discuss their child's attendance.

Where the absence is below 90%, the Education Welfare Officer will become involved and they too will continue to monitor the absences, and liaise with the family. Parents/carers may also be asked to attend a meeting to discuss their child's attendance.

12 Legal sanctions

The Local Authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. Where absences are unauthorised:

- Referral can be made to the Educational Welfare Officer [EWO] where legal sanctions may be applied in the usual manner.
- Where 10 unauthorised sessions i.e. 5 days occur, the school, at the discretion of the Head Teacher, will apply to the Local Authority for the issuing of a penalty notice. This application would be made after consultation with the EWO.
- The offence of non-school attendance is absolute and the legal requirement regarding evidence is simply that the child did not attend.

The penalties are as follows:

- £120.00 fine for each adult/carer with parental responsibility, for each child absent in a household if paid within 28 days.
- £60.00 fine for each adult/carer with parental responsibility, for each child absent in a household if paid within 21 days.

Failure to pay will result in a summons to the magistrate's court.

13. Roles and responsibilities

The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Head Teacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Head Teacher

The Head Teacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The Head Teacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

14. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Head Teachers. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

15. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Separated Parents Policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made

H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day