

# **A WHOLE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY**



**Crow Orchard  
Primary School**

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## **1. RATIONALE**

At Crow Orchard Primary School we recognise that attending school regularly has a positive impact on learning, progress and therefore the best life chances for children. We will encourage good attendance for all pupils, by offering an environment in which pupils feel valued and part of the school community.

DfE guidance states that all schools should have effective systems and procedures for encouraging regular school attendance and investigating the underlying causes of poor attendance which should be set out in an attendance policy. These systems should be reviewed regularly and modified where necessary to reflect the circumstances of the school.

## **2. IMPLEMENTATION**

This policy received the full agreement of the Governing Body.

## **3. AIMS:**

We will

- Aim to improve the overall attendance of pupils at school by promoting a culture across the school, identifying the importance of regular and punctual attendance
- Make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school; this includes pupils, parents, teachers and governors.
- Further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school.
- Set targets to improve individual and whole school attendance levels, including statutory targets.

## **4. EXPECTATIONS:**

**We expect the following from all our pupils:**

- That they attend school regularly.
- That they will arrive on time and be appropriately prepared for the day.
- That they will tell a member of staff about any problem or reason that may prevent them from attending school.

**We expect the following from parents:**

- To ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually.
- To ensure that they contact the school as soon as is reasonably practical whenever their child is unable to attend.
- To ensure that their children arrive in school well prepared for the school day.
- To contact the school in confidence whenever any problem occurs that may affect their child's performance in school.

## **Parents and pupils can expect the following from school:**

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance.
- Early contact with parents when a pupil fails to attend school without providing good reason.
- Immediate and confidential action on any problem notified to us.
- Recognition and reward for good attendance.

## **5. ENCOURAGING ATTENDANCE THROUGH GOOD PRACTICE AND REWARDS**

### **We will encourage attendance in the following ways:**

- Accurate completion of registers at the beginning of each session.
- Use the computerised registration system to analyse year group, class and pupil level attendance data thus enabling timely intervention.
- Keep parents regularly informed using -
  - Termly traffic light letters (green – 95% and above, yellow – 90% to 94%, red – below 90%).
  - Attendance reports and printouts to accompany Autumn and Summer term reports.
- Identify and support pupils who have attendance problems in advance of the transition between Reception - KS1 and KS1 - KS2. All attendance information is transferred to the High Schools on transition to KS3.
- Establish support for any parent who is concerned that their child may be experiencing difficulty in attending school.
- Certificates and Rewards -
  - 100% attendance certificate (whole term)
  - Improved attendance certificate
  - Medals for 100% attendance and reward (whole year)
  - Highest weekly attendance - class to have 5 minutes extra playtime.
  - Winning class at the end of each term, will receive a treat of their own choice eg. Film and popcorn afternoon.

## **6. RESPONDING TO NON-ATTENDANCE:**

### **When a pupil does not attend, the school needs to respond effectively.**

- If a note or telephone call is not received from parents/guardians, they will be contacted either by letter or telephone, to give a reason for their child's attendance.
- Where there is no response, a second letter will be undertaken to explain the absence, or on some occasions parents/guardians may be approached by the headteacher in person to discuss the matter.
- Where non-attendance continues, the case will be discussed with relevant agencies.

- After 10 days, unless other action is planned, parents/guardians will be invited to attend a meeting in school. This meeting will include the appropriate staff.
- If there is no improvement, then the case will be discussed again with the relevant agency with a view to a formal referral being made.

### **Reintegration:**

- Pupil's returning to school after long-term absence may require special planning. For example, it may be appropriate to establish a Pastoral Support Programme as detailed in the DfE Social Inclusion: Pupil Support Guidance (Circular 10/99)
- Designated staff should be responsible for deciding on the **programme** for return and for the management of that programme.
- All staff need to be aware that returning to school can be a difficult process that will require careful handling and that any problems should be notified to the responsible staff member as soon as possible.
- Programmes may need to be tailored to meet individual needs and may involve phased, part-time re-entry with support in class as appropriate. Support from the SEN Co-ordinator may be required

The success of the Pastoral Support Programme will require the involvement of appropriate school staff, other agencies, the young person and parents. Programmes should be reviewed regularly and amended as necessary.

### **The taking of school holidays/extended leave during term time:**

In line with the Department for Education amendments to the 2006 regulations concerning family holidays/extended leave, Crow Orchard Primary school will not authorise any leave of absence unless under exceptional circumstances. The school will require evidence from employers, if a shutdown/availability of leave or a general practitioner if for medical reasons, as to why the holiday/extended leave must be taken. The maximum leave that will be granted in such instances will be determined by the Headteacher on a case by case basis, taking into account advice from the School Attendance Consultant and the Chair of Governors. There may be occasions where, even in exceptional circumstances, the school may not agree leave, for example during SATs week or important transitional periods. If children are taken out of school during term time without permission, there is a possibility a penalty notice will be issued. Holidays should not be booked before authorisation by the school.

## **7. SCHOOL ORGANISATION:**

In order for the attendance policy to be successful, every member of the staff must make attendance a high priority and should convey to pupils the importance and value of education.

In addition there may be specific responsibilities allocated to individual staff such as the following:

#### **Head Teacher:**

- To oversee and demonstrate ownership of the whole policy.
- To regularly report progress on attendance to governors, pupils and parents.
- To set challenging but achievable targets to reduce levels of absence.
- To liaise with relevant agencies.

#### **Attendance Officer with responsibility for overseeing and managing attendance.**

- Produce updates from weekly registers, error sheets, absence code sheets, weekly % information, OMR sheets.
- To oversee the efficient operation of the attendance system and the collation and analysis of attendance data.
- To oversee the weekly returns of teacher's registers and feed this information into the electronic systems.
- To produce the attendance profile for the whole school.
- To report termly, or more regularly if necessary, to the Head Teacher on attendance issues.
- To manage an attendance display area showing information on attendance and to change the attendance race results weekly.

#### **Class Teacher (SEE APPENDIX 1 for additional support)**

- To complete registers accurately and on time. If a child has not arrived within the half hour from registration start time, they will then be marked late, using L, after half an hour then U on the class register.
- To inform the Attendance Officer/School Office if a child is absent from school.
- To follow-up any unexplained absence by discussing with Headteacher or Attendance Officer
- To investigate any unreasonable or inappropriate reasons for absence and report to Headteacher or Attendance Officer.
- To record all reasons for absence in the register.
- To inform senior staff of concerns in a timely manner.

#### **Governors:**

- The Vice Chair attends and is part of the meeting for setting attendance targets.
- Request regular attendance progress reports for termly Governors' Meetings where the Headteacher always gives a report.

## **Parents: (SEE APPENDIX 2)**

- Contact with school on first day of absence or as soon as possible.
- Provide signed and dated absence notes for all absences.
- Support their child and the school in achieving maximum attendance.
- Inform school if there are any reasons why their child's attendance may be affected.

## **Education Attendance Consultant**

- Will liaise with identified school staff
- Will undertake home visits, either pre-arranged or without notice as considered necessary.
- Will work with identified groups of pupils.
- Will instigate legal proceedings on behalf of the LEA including parental prosecutions in the Magistrates' Court and applying for Education Supervision Orders through the Family Court.
- Will accept referrals and initiate contact with parents or carers and undertake assessments.
- Will plan and review casework.
- Will provide feedback to schools.
- Will offer strategic/policy advice and support in relation to matters of attendance.
- Will support schools in the establishment and management of school attendance.
- Will support schools in the use of penalty notices and parenting contracts within the provisions of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003

## **8. LIAISING WITH EXTERNAL AGENCIES**

Research has shown that schools in partnership with the full range of support services have a greater impact on school attendance than when they act alone or when the support services are uncoordinated or disjointed.

Poor school attendance may be a symptom of a wide range of institutional, community, family or individual circumstances. Many of these circumstances will demand expert support beyond the remit of the school. It is therefore vital that strong partnerships are established with all agencies that work with children and young people.

**Other Agencies** to be used where appropriate in individual cases.

- Educational Psychologists.
- Special Educational Needs Service.
- School Nurse
- Social Care.
- Local police

## **Data Protection Act**

The Data Protection Act places obligations on all agencies that process, store and share information on any individual. It is important to have full regard for the requirements of the Act. Each school has a Data Protection Notification which details the circumstances under which data is managed. Nothing in the legislation prevents a school sharing information with the police or social services where it is believed that a child or young person under the age of 18 is at risk of harm or is in need of safeguarding.

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **GUIDANCE FOR CLASS TEACHERS/ATTENDANCE OFFICER:**

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, it is the legal responsibility of parents to see that their child/children receive(s) regular education suitable to their age, aptitude and abilities....

#### **The Importance of Registration:**

- Attendance registers must be marked at the **BEGINNING** of **each morning and afternoon session**. Paper registers should be returned to the school office every Friday afternoon, to enable the inputting of data electronically.
- Authorised absences should be entered with the symbol for categorising the absence.
- Manual registers must be kept and corrections must be made in such a way that the original entry and the correction are both clearly distinguishable.
- Hard copies of the electronic register, current for each session, must be kept to observe the spirit of the law and for Health and Safety reasons.
- Accurate marking of registers, and appropriate maintenance of electronic and computerised systems can have a significant impact on overall school attendance and absence figures.

#### **Categorising Absence:**

##### **Symbols to be used in Registers (Categories)**

All schools are required to use a common set of codes to record pupil attendance and absence (from 1.09.2006)

The DfE believes that these codes are best used within electronic systems for recording attendance and absence of pupils. Such electronic systems are capable of producing the data necessary for absence returns to DfE without time consuming counting up of possible attendances and actual absences.

The use of fixed codes also assists both LAs and DfE in monitoring not only whether pupils are absent with or without the permission of the school, but why pupils are absent from school.

- **Only the school**, in the context of the law **can authorise absence**, a note or explanation from parents does not guarantee authorisation. If a class teacher does not accept the explanation offered for absence as a valid reason then the matter must be referred to the Attendance Officer.
- Emerging patterns of authorised absence should also be reported to the Attendance Officer.
- Reasons for absence should be entered in the register by the appropriate code symbol.
- Class teachers who experience difficulty in receiving a parental note should inform the Attendance Officer.

### **Authorised or Unauthorised Absence:**

**Authorised absence** is where the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil to be away or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as a satisfactory reason for absence. All other absences must be regarded as **unauthorised**.

The following may be reasons for **authorising** absences.

- Illness
- Family bereavements
- Family holiday/extended leave (under exceptional circumstances)
- Medical and dental appointments where proof is available.
- Days of religious observance.
- Fixed term exclusion
- Permanent exclusion until removed from roll or re-instated.

### **Approved Educational Activity**

Where pupils are away from school but are undertaking an approved educational activity, this should be marked in the usual way but are counted as present for calculating data for the DfE absence return. To avoid confusion in emergency situations pupils who are off site should not be marked as present. The following activities fall within this category.

- Field trips and educational visits both in this country and overseas.

Absences should **not be authorised** under the following circumstances.

- Shopping trips
- Holidays in term time (permission not granted)
- Minding the house or looking after siblings
- Lateness if registration is missed without explanation.

- Medical appointments that cannot be verified.
- No reason given
- School staff have cause to believe that the note is not genuine or not valid.

Unusual circumstances may arise that lead to a young person being absent from school. It is for the Head teacher to decide whether the explanation offered is reasonable. In such situations, the individual circumstances, previous attendance patterns and frequency of such incidents should be considered. Further advice is available in DfE Circular No. 10/99.

### **Lateness:**

Crow Orchard actively discourages late arrival by challenging the parents/guardians of children who are persistently late or arrive late without reasonable explanation.

Registers remain open, thirty minutes from the beginning of registration. In the event of bad weather this period can be extended.

Where a pupil arrives during the period when the register is open they will be marked L (late).

Where a pupil arrives after the register is closed, without good reason, they will be marked with a U (late after registers closed) to indicate that they are on site.

### **Removal from the school roll**

There are strict guidelines on the circumstances under which a pupil may be removed from the school roll. These are detailed in Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 (Reg. 8)

### **Removal from the school roll under circumstances other than those detailed below is illegal.**

- Where the school has been notified that the pupil has been registered as a pupil at another school.
- Where a pupil has ceased to attend the school and the parent(s) have satisfied the County Council that the pupil is receiving education otherwise than by attendance at school.
- Where the school has been notified that a pupil is unlikely to be in a fit state to attend school before becoming legally exempt from the obligation to attend school.
- Where the pupil has been absent without reasonable cause for 20 days and the Head Teacher of the school has failed, after reasonable enquiry and consultation with the Education Welfare Service to obtain information on the cause of the absence.
- Where the Head Teacher has been notified that the pupil has died.
- Where the pupil has been permanently excluded and this decision has been confirmed by the appropriate school governing body.

## **Ensuring Pupil Information is up to date**

The school will ensure, as far as possible, that the information we hold on pupils and parents is accurate and up to date. This will help to ensure that contact with families is productive and that referrals to other agencies can be actioned effectively. Principle 4 of the Data Protection Act 1998 states 'Personal Data shall be accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date'.

## **Pupils who are missing**

Where it is believed that a pupil has left the area and enquiries have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil, the Common Transfer File should be completed and uploaded to the DfE National Missing Pupils Database.

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS:**

#### **Suggestions for securing parental involvement in ensuring regular attendance.**

The Home-School Agreement gives the opportunity to underline the importance of regular and punctual attendance at school.

#### **How parents can help us:**

- Ensure their children attend school regularly and that they arrive on time.
- Contact the school whenever their child is absent, giving details of the reason of the absence and the length of time the child will be away.
- Help their child prepare for the school day by ensuring that homework has been done and the child has everything he/she needs for the day ahead.
- Attend Parents' Evenings to discuss progress or problems and talk to the staff if there are problems or changes in family circumstances which may affect the child.
- Contact the school if problems arise which may keep their child away from school, so that the school can help.
- To avoid, wherever possible, taking family holidays in term-time. Term time absences, especially during SATs and examination periods, may seriously affect the progress of your child.

Revised and adopted by the Governing body: .....

Date: .....