



Small enough to care...big enough to inspire

Attendance Policy

Introduction

Crawford Village Primary School is a successful school and every 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 arrive on time every day the school is open unless the reason for absence is unavoidable.

It is important, therefore, that all children attend school regularly and this policy sets out the systems in place to promote and support good attendance, respond to absence and ensure that children receive their full educational entitlement.

This policy should be read alongside the Department for Education's statutory guidance **Working together to improve school attendance**, the **School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024**, the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and relevant local authority guidance.

The Importance of Regular Attendance

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence can seriously affect their learning. Pupil absence can disrupt teaching routines and may affect the learning of others in the class.

Regular attendance is also important because being in school provides children with opportunities to learn, develop friendships, access support and enables staff to identify concerns about their wellbeing and safeguarding.

Ensuring regular attendance is a shared responsibility between parents/carers, pupils, school staff and governors.

Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child receives a suitable full-time education.

Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everyone's responsibility – parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To support regular attendance, we will:

- promote a culture across the school which identifies the importance of regular and punctual attendance;
- provide parents/carers with information about their child's attendance;

- report to parents/carers about how their child is performing in school, including their attendance and punctuality;
- celebrate good attendance and recognise improvement;
- develop positive and consistent communication between home and school;
- make attendance and punctuality a priority for everyone associated with school, including parents, pupils, staff and governors;
- set targets to improve individual pupil and whole-school attendance;
- identify pupils whose attendance is causing concern at an early stage;
- work with pupils and families to understand and address barriers to attendance;
- consider the wider circumstances and safeguarding context when attendance gives cause for concern.

Understanding Types of Absence

Every session of absence from school must be recorded using the appropriate attendance code in accordance with current statutory requirements.

Information about the reason for any absence is therefore required.

Authorised absence

An authorised absence is an absence which the school has accepted as being permitted under the relevant attendance regulations and guidance.

This may include absence due to illness, medical or dental appointments which cannot reasonably be arranged outside school hours, or other circumstances where the school has authorised the absence.

Unauthorised absence

An absence may be recorded as unauthorised where the school does not consider the reason to be acceptable or where the absence has not been authorised.

Examples may include:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily;
- absence which has not been properly explained;
- truancy;
- arriving after the register has closed without an appropriate reason;
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays;
- holidays or other leave during term time which has not been authorised;
- days which exceed the amount of leave agreed by the Headteacher.

The decision whether to authorise an absence rests with the school. Where there is uncertainty about the reason for an absence, the school may request further information or evidence.

Persistent Absence

A pupil is considered a **persistent absentee** when they miss **10% or more of their schooling** across the school year, regardless of the reason for absence.

Absence at this level can have a significant impact on a child's educational progress and wellbeing.

All absence is monitored carefully. Any pupil whose attendance indicates that they are at risk of becoming persistently absent will receive priority consideration and parents/carers will be informed.

Persistent absence will be addressed through appropriate support and intervention. This may include:

- discussion with parents/carers;
- individual attendance plans;
- additional support or mentoring;
- attendance incentives;
- parenting contracts where appropriate;
- Early Help or other appropriate support;
- referral to the Local Authority Attendance Team where appropriate;
- legal intervention where appropriate and in accordance with local authority procedures.

Where attendance concerns indicate that a child may also be experiencing safeguarding or welfare difficulties, these will be considered alongside the attendance concerns and referred to the DSL where appropriate.

Attendance and Safeguarding

Regular attendance is an important safeguarding issue.

Poor, irregular or deteriorating attendance may sometimes indicate that a child is experiencing difficulties at home, neglect, abuse, exploitation, anxiety, bullying, mental health difficulties or other barriers to attending school.

School will therefore consider attendance alongside the **wider safeguarding and welfare context** for each child.

Staff must remain alert to:

- repeated or unexplained absence;
- sudden changes in attendance patterns;
- persistent lateness;
- children who appear reluctant to attend;
- unexplained changes in behaviour or presentation alongside attendance concerns;
- absence which coincides with other safeguarding concerns;
- concerns about a child's whereabouts;
- families who become difficult or impossible to contact.

Any safeguarding concern arising from attendance or absence must be reported to the DSL without delay.

The DSL will consider whether attendance concerns should form part of a wider safeguarding assessment and whether advice or referral to other agencies is required.

Attendance information will be shared appropriately where this is necessary to safeguard a child.

Absence Procedures

Parental responsibilities

If your child is absent, you must:

- contact school as soon as possible on the first day of absence, either by telephone or in person;
- provide an appropriate explanation for the absence;
- provide any information or evidence requested by school where this is necessary to make an attendance decision.

If we do not hear from you

If your child is absent and we have not received a reason, we will:

- contact you on the first day of absence;
- make further contact where necessary;
- monitor the child's attendance and absence pattern;
- invite you to discuss the situation with the Headteacher where absence persists or causes concern;
- consider whether there are underlying welfare or safeguarding concerns;
- refer to the Local Authority Attendance Team where appropriate and in accordance with current local authority procedures.

Unexplained Absence and Safeguarding

Where a child is absent without explanation, school will make reasonable enquiries to establish the reason for the absence and the child's welfare.

This will normally include contacting parents/carers and, where necessary, emergency contacts.

Where appropriate, the school may:

- make further attempts to contact the family;
- check information held by school;
- undertake a home visit;
- seek advice from the DSL;
- contact relevant agencies;

- request a police welfare check where there is a serious concern about a child's immediate safety;
- make a referral to Children's Social Care where safeguarding thresholds are met.

Staff should not assume that unexplained absence is simply an attendance matter. The circumstances of the individual child and family will be considered.

Children Missing Education (CME)

A child is considered to be **missing education (CME)** when they are of compulsory school age, are not registered at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at school.

Children missing education can be at increased risk of poor educational outcomes and may also be vulnerable to safeguarding risks.

Crawford Village Primary School will follow current Department for Education and Lancashire County Council guidance relating to Children Missing Education.

Where a child is absent from school and the school has been unable to establish their whereabouts or where their educational provision is unclear, the school will make reasonable enquiries and take appropriate action.

This may include:

- contacting parents/carers and emergency contacts;
- checking information held by school;
- making appropriate enquiries with relevant agencies;
- contacting the Lancashire Children Missing Education team where appropriate;
- making a safeguarding referral where concerns about the child's welfare or safety are identified.

Where a child is believed to have moved to another area or school, the school will make appropriate enquiries and follow current local authority procedures.

The school will maintain accurate records of enquiries and actions taken.

The school's website provides a link to the current Lancashire County Council information and reporting arrangements for Children Missing Education.

The Local Authority Attendance Team

If attendance difficulties cannot be resolved through appropriate school-based support, the school may refer the child to the Local Authority Attendance Team in accordance with current local authority procedures.

The Attendance Team may provide support to the family and, where appropriate, consider formal legal intervention where attendance does not improve.

The school will work cooperatively with the Local Authority and provide information required to support attendance interventions.

Lateness

Being punctual to school is extremely important. If a child misses the start of the school day, they may miss important information, learning and routines.

The school day starts at **8.50am** and we expect children to be in class and ready to learn at that time.

Registers are marked at **9.00am**.

The attendance register will close at **9.30am**.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will receive the appropriate attendance code in accordance with statutory guidance and this may count as an unauthorised absence.

If a child has a persistent late record, parents/carers will be invited to discuss the situation with the Headteacher. Parents/carers are encouraged to approach school at any time if they are experiencing difficulties getting their child to school on time.

Leave in Term Time

Taking a child out of school during term time can affect their education and learning.

There is **no automatic entitlement to take leave during term time**.

Applications for leave must be made in advance by the parent/carer using the school's request for leave of absence form.

Leave will only be authorised where the circumstances meet the requirements for exceptional circumstances under current statutory guidance.

In considering requests, the school may take account of:

- the timing of the request;
- the child's attendance record;
- previous periods of leave;
- whether the child is currently experiencing attendance difficulties;
- whether the absence would affect important assessment or transition periods;
- the individual circumstances of the request.

Where leave is taken without authorisation, the absence will be recorded in accordance with statutory attendance requirements and may result in legal intervention by the Local Authority where the relevant threshold is met.

Parents/carers should be aware that a child may be at risk of losing their place on the school roll in circumstances where they do not return to school following an agreed period of leave and the legal requirements for removal from roll are met.

The school will follow the current statutory requirements regarding removal of pupils from the admission register.

Religious Absence

The school will authorise absence for religious observance where this is in accordance with statutory attendance requirements.

Parents/carers should request religious absence in advance wherever possible.

Roles and Responsibilities for Attendance

Parents/Carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually;
- contact school on the first day of absence;
- avoid taking children out of school during term time unless the circumstances are exceptional;
- attend meetings with school where attendance is causing concern;
- participate in attendance support and interventions where appropriate;
- work with school and other agencies to remove barriers to attendance;
- provide accurate and up-to-date contact information.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- attend school and registration punctually;
- speak to a parent/carer or member of staff if issues arise which may affect their attendance;
- cooperate with support and interventions designed to improve attendance.

Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

- take the lead in ensuring attendance has a high profile within the school;
- ensure designated staff have day-to-day responsibility for attendance matters;
- ensure adequate time is allocated to attendance responsibilities;
- take overall responsibility for ensuring the school complies with statutory attendance requirements;
- consider requests for leave in accordance with statutory guidance and the school's criteria;
- ensure attendance concerns are appropriately followed up;

- ensure attendance and safeguarding concerns are considered together where appropriate;
- work with the Local Authority Attendance Team and other agencies where necessary;
- ensure appropriate arrangements are in place for identifying and responding to Children Missing Education.

Designated Attendance Staff

Designated staff will:

- make first-day contact where a reason for absence has not been provided;
- input and update attendance registers accurately;
- regularly identify and monitor pupil, class and whole-school attendance and punctuality;
- particularly monitor attendance of vulnerable pupils;
- communicate attendance and punctuality information to parents/carers;
- work with children and parents/carers to remove barriers to regular attendance;
- follow the school's attendance procedures and appropriate local authority processes;
- raise safeguarding concerns arising from attendance with the DSL.

All School Staff

All school staff will:

- provide a welcoming atmosphere for children;
- provide a safe learning environment;
- provide a responsive and appropriate curriculum;
- provide a sympathetic response to pupils' concerns;
- be aware of factors that may contribute to non-attendance;
- understand that attendance is the responsibility of all school staff;
- participate in training regarding school attendance systems and procedures;
- report safeguarding concerns arising from attendance to the DSL without delay;
- remain alert to unexplained or concerning changes in a child's attendance or presentation.

Governors

Governors will:

- adopt the whole-school attendance policy and review it regularly;
- monitor the consistent implementation of the attendance policy;
- receive information about attendance and persistent absence;
- provide appropriate challenge and support regarding attendance;
- set aspirational targets for improving attendance;
- monitor the impact of attendance strategies;
- work with the Headteacher in establishing criteria against which requests for leave will be considered.

Attendance Monitoring

Through the school year, attendance and punctuality will be monitored regularly to identify where

improvements or additional support may be required.

The school will monitor:

- whole-school attendance;
- individual pupil attendance;
- persistent absence;
- patterns of absence;
- lateness;
- attendance of vulnerable groups;
- attendance where there are safeguarding concerns.

Where attendance is causing concern, the school will consider the reasons behind the absence and work with the child and family to identify appropriate support.

Attendance information may be shared with governors and relevant agencies where appropriate.

School Targets, Projects and Special Initiatives

The school has targets to improve attendance and all children have an important part to play in meeting these targets.

A variety of attendance rewards and initiatives may be used to promote good attendance, including weekly class attendance rewards, termly class attendance awards and termly or annual recognition for good attendance.

At Crawford Village Primary School, **96% is regarded as the minimum expected level of attendance**, and we will keep parents/carers regularly informed about attendance and how their child's attendance compares with this level.

Our whole-school target is to achieve **better than 96%**.

We recognise that some absence is unavoidable, particularly where children are unwell. Attendance information will therefore always be considered in context and the school will work with families to support improvement where attendance is a concern.

Support for Attendance Difficulties

The school recognises that there can be many reasons why a child may struggle to attend regularly.

Where attendance is causing concern, we will seek to understand the barriers affecting the child and family and, where appropriate, offer support.

This may include:

- meetings with parents/carers and pupils;
- individual attendance plans;

- additional pastoral support;
- mentoring;
- Early Help;
- support from the Local Authority Attendance Team;
- referrals to appropriate external agencies;
- parenting contracts where appropriate;
- other interventions tailored to the needs of the child and family.

Where a child has SEND, medical needs, mental health difficulties or other vulnerabilities, these will be taken into account when considering attendance and appropriate support.

Summary

The school has a legal duty to promote good attendance, maintain accurate attendance records and follow statutory requirements relating to attendance and pupil registration.

Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that their children receive suitable education.

All school staff are committed to working with pupils and families to support regular attendance and remove barriers where possible.

Regular attendance is both an educational and safeguarding priority. Where attendance concerns indicate that a child may be at risk of harm, neglect, exploitation or other safeguarding concerns, these will be referred to the DSL without delay.

Where a child may be missing education, the school will follow current Department for Education and Lancashire County Council procedures and take prompt action to establish the child's whereabouts and educational provision.

Relevant Guidance

This policy should be read alongside the most current versions of:

- **Department for Education – Working together to improve school attendance**
- **Department for Education – Children missing education: statutory guidance for local authorities and schools**
- **School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024**
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education**
- **Crawford Village Primary School Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**
- relevant Lancashire County Council attendance and Children Missing Education procedures.

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