



# Pupil Attendance Policy

This policy was approved and adopted by  
the Local Academy Board  
on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2023

It will be reviewed in Autumn 2024



## 1. RATIONALE

The school staff, alongside the Local Authority (LA), firmly believes that all pupils benefit from regular school attendance. To this end we will do all we can to encourage parents/carers to ensure that the children in their care achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems which prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly.

This policy is designed to ensure

- clarity for pupils, parents and staff
- consistent practice throughout the school
- that pupil attendance at school is maintained at high levels to ensure maximum educational impact is obtained.

## 2. PRINCIPLES

It is the responsibility of the school to provide the very best education to the children in its care; it is the responsibility of parents to ensure that their children are given the very best opportunity to benefit from that education.

Continuity of education and the discipline of regular attendance are important. Attendance is about much more than merely turning up for school. Working in partnership, school and parents should do their best to ensure that the children recognise the importance of keeping commitments and exercising responsibility and help them to value education, whilst working to foster in them their value to and place of belonging in the school community.

## 3. PROCEDURES/GUIDANCE FOR USE

### 3.1 Expectations

As a school we recognise our responsibility to ensure that the school is open for the agreed times during term. In the event of exceptional circumstances, eg weather conditions, every effort will be made by all staff to ensure that the school remains open. If the school closes absences would be authorised and may also be authorised where parents are unable to bring their children into school due to adverse prevailing weather conditions.

We expect that all pupils will:

- attend school regularly;
- attend school punctually;
- attend school appropriately prepared for the day.

We expect that all parents/carers/persons who have day to day responsibility for the children will:



- encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities;
- ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at school punctually, prepared for the school day;
- ensure that their child is handed into the care of the school staff, having gone into school through the appropriate door;
- ensure that they contact the school whenever the child/children is unable to attend school;
- contact the school on the first day of the child's absence;
- contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child away from school;
- ensure the school has up to date contact numbers.

We expect that school staff will:

- keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils, at least twice daily;
- monitor every pupil's attendance;
- follow up all unexplained absences;
- encourage good attendance and punctuality;
- provide a welcoming atmosphere for children, a safe learning environment and a sympathetic response to any pupil's concerns;
- make initial enquiries of parents/carers of pupils who are not attending regularly, express their concern and clarify the school's and the LA's expectations with regard to regular school attendance;
- refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the LA Inclusion Officer via the Headteacher;
- meet with parents of children whose attendance causes concern.

### **3.2 Holidays / Special Occasions**

We ask parents not to remove children from school in term time. The school holiday dates are published a year in advance, and we expect parents to book their family holidays during the school holidays. If a family holiday or absence in term time is unavoidable, a Leave of Absence form must be completed prior to the planned absence. This can be obtained from the school office. (See Appendix 1.) Whilst we recognise that there are some genuine reasons for taking a child out of school, we ask parents to consider carefully the factors listed below before requesting leave of absence for their child:

#### **Why keep your child in school?**

Some areas to consider:

- Children have a right to the education that is planned and provided by school.
- Taking a child out of school is disruptive to the child concerned both at the time, before and after the event.
- Absence may be disruptive to others in the class.
- Children away from school miss the scheduled work. The learning experiences cannot be packaged and sent home and are part of ongoing work. For this reason, children may not be able to maintain progress. Groupings may need to be changed as a result.



- Confidence and self-esteem may be damaged as the child no longer feels part of the class and the learning situation has moved forward without them.
- A high number of absences in a class impacts on the general level and pace of learning. Teaching may need to be adjusted for the whole class as foundations for the next stage may have been undermined.
- Taking children out of school conveys a hidden message about values that are placed on education suggesting that a holiday/special occasion is more important than the learning taking place in school. This attitude may be adopted by the child.

All absences from school for holidays and special occasions will be regarded as unauthorised and coded on registers as such.

Exceptions covering other circumstances include:

- Interview or visit to another school
- Religious observance
- Compassionate leave, e.g., death or serious illness in immediate family

### 3.3 Encouraging Attendance

Crawley Ridge Infant School encourages regular attendance in the following ways:

- by providing a caring and welcoming learning environment;
- by responding promptly to a child's or parent's concerns about the school or other pupils;
- by marking registers accurately and punctually during morning and afternoon registration; (If pupils arrive at school after registration has taken place (8.45 am) they must report to the school office and the relevant coding will be used. A school/home letter regarding persistent lateness of pupils is used as required.)
- by publishing attendance statistics on KS1 reports;
- by monitoring pupils, informing parents/carers in writing of irregular attendance, arranging meetings with them if necessary and referring the family to the LA Inclusion Officer if the irregular attendance continues.

### Punctuality/Lateness

Punctual arrival at school is crucial and registration at the beginning of the day with a student's class teacher is important. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other students in the class. It is paramount therefore that all students arrive at school on time.

- Registration takes place at 8.45 am and students who arrive after the register has been taken will be recorded as late for school – coded 'L' on the registration certificate.
- Registers close at 9.15, and after this lateness is recorded as an unauthorised absence – 'U' on the registration certificate - and can be subject to referral to the LA Inclusion Officer and possible prosecution by the Local Authority.



- Persistent lateness is monitored by the Headteacher.

### 3.4 Responding to Non-Attendance

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

- On the first day of absence, if no note or telephone call is received from the parent/carer by 9.15 am the school will endeavour to contact them that day.
- If there is no response, the school will continue to try to contact the parent/carer/emergency contacts.
- If there is persistent absence, then the school will discuss this with parents/carers and inform them of the role of the LA Inclusion Officer.
- If the absence persists then a referral will be made to the NW Inclusion Service.
- Failure to comply with the expectations set by the Inclusion Service may result in further action, an application for an Education Supervision Order, or court prosecution.
- Parents are requested to telephone the school on the first day of absence and to write a letter confirming details of absence on return. These letters are kept on file for 3 years.

### Penalty Notices

In line with the guidance from the DfE the Headteacher can now request that the Local Authority consider issuing a Penalty Notice to parents, when students are taken out of school for 5 or more days holiday or leave of absence without school authorisation.

Penalty Notices may also be issued when a student is stopped by Truancy Patrol or at the discretion of the Inclusion Manager if a parent/carer fails to ensure regular school attendance. **Please see Appendix 2 for further information.**

### 3.5 Changing Schools

It is important that if families decide to send the child/children in their care to a different school that they inform Crawley Ridge Infant School staff as soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from this school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- the date the pupil will be leaving this school and starting the next;
- the address of the new school;
- the new home address, if it is known.

The pupil's school records will then be sent on to the new school as soon as possible. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the Inclusion Service.



### 3.6 School Organisation

In order for the school's Attendance Policy to be successful, every member of staff must make attendance a high priority and convey this to the pupils at all times. Parents/carers need to support these views in the home to ensure that children are receiving corresponding messages about the value of education.

In addition to this, the school has the following responsibilities:

#### 3.6.1 Headteacher, Governors and designated member of school staff with overall responsibility for attendance to:

- adopt the whole policy;
- ensure that the registration procedures are carried out efficiently and that appropriate resources are provided;
- ensure that all reasons for absences are recorded in the register;
- contact parents where there is a concern;
- consult and liaise closely with the Inclusion Service on a regular basis and take responsibility for ensuring appropriate pupils are identified and referred without delay;
- work in close collaboration with the Inclusion Service during their termly/half termly register analysis
- ensure that attendance targets are set yearly;
- monitor and evaluate attendance with the Inclusion Service.

#### 3.6.2 Class teachers

- to complete registers accurately and punctually at least twice daily;
- to follow up any unexplained non-attendance;
- to inform the Headteacher of concerns.

## 4. MONITORING EVALUATION AND REVIEW

The LA monitors attendance through returns and visits to the school by the LA Inclusion Officer.

The Headteacher monitors all absences.

Annual absence statistics are collected and reported to governors. Particular regard is taken of holiday absence.

## 5. LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES / DOCUMENTS

- Behaviour Policy
- Pupils with Additional Health Needs Attendance Policy



**Policy: Pupil Attendance**

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- *Memorandum of Understanding between Schools in Surrey and Surrey Police in relation to Children Missing During the School Day*, July 2018
- *Working together to improve school attendance – Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities*, May 2022 DfE
- *Keeping children safe in education*, September 2023 DfE
- *Children missing education – Statutory guidance for local authorities*, September 2016 DfE



## Appendix 1

### Guidance for parents on pupil attendance and leave of absence

Parents are asked to consider very carefully the implications for their own child and others before making a decision to remove their child from the education that is provided in school in term time. Children should only be removed in **exceptional circumstances**. These circumstances and the factors to be taken into account by parents in considering such absence are given overleaf. If you intend to take your child out of school, please complete the form overleaf, giving as much notice as possible.

The school is required to record all absences as Authorised or Unauthorised. The decision is based on the information given below. Should a parent who is considering taking their child out of school wish to discuss the implications please contact the school office to make an appointment to see the Headteacher.

We recognise that there are some genuine difficulties and tensions for parents when they make a decision to take their child out of school.

The following information is offered to help:

#### Why keep your child in school?

Some areas to consider:

- Children have a right to the education that is planned and provided by school.
- Taking a child out of school is disruptive to the child concerned both at the time, before and after the event.
- Absence may be disruptive to others in the class.
- Children away from school miss the scheduled work. The learning experiences cannot be packaged and sent home and are part of ongoing work. For this reason, children may not be able to maintain progress. Groupings may need to be changed as a result.
- Confidence and self-esteem may be damaged as the child no longer feels part of the class and the learning situation has moved forward without them.
- A high number of absences in a class impact on the general level and pace of learning. Teaching may need to be adjusted for the whole class as foundations for the next stage may have been undermined.
- Taking children out of school conveys a hidden message about values that are placed on education: a holiday /special occasion is more important than the learning taking place in school. This attitude may be adopted by the child.

#### Why take your child out of school?

There may be genuinely exceptional reasons for taking a child out of school as listed on the following page. School policy is that absence for other reasons is not authorised.

If, after taking all the factors above into account, parents decide to take their child out of school for other than exceptional reasons as described, the parents should take responsibility for this decision and appreciate that their child's absence shall be regarded as Unauthorised.

As a school we seek to provide the very best learning experiences for your children and this principle is behind our views on time out of school. We hope this is helpful and I am very happy to discuss individual circumstances with you.





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## LEAVE OF ABSENCE FORM

Please complete the following after you have read the guidance overleaf.

For office use only:

HT ☐ SPack ☐  
Teacher ☐



Name of Child: Tick box if child will be under 5 on date of absence:		Class:
Date of absence/s:		No. of school days:
If not absent all day please state: Arrival time: _____ or Collection time: _____ In for lunch? Yes/No		
Please tick the appropriate box for the reason for your decision to take your child out of school:		
Medical/dental appointment	<input type="checkbox"/>	Authorised
Interview/Visit to another school	<input type="checkbox"/>	Authorised
Religious observance	<input type="checkbox"/>	Authorised
Holiday	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unauthorised
Special Occasion	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unauthorised
Compassionate leave	<input type="checkbox"/>	May be Authorised
Please provide details below:		
This cannot be taken in school holidays because:		
Has your child already had leave of absence in this school year? Yes / No Number of days:		
If yes please give reasons for leave of absence:		
I have considered the implications for both my child and others in making this decision.		
Signed: Parent/carer		Date:



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<b>To be completed by the Headteacher</b>	
Child's attendance over last 12 months:	%
Having considered your request carefully, my decision is that your leave of absence is:	
The absence will be recorded as authorised	
The absence will be recorded as unauthorised	
Signed: Headteacher	Date:



## Appendix 2

### Penalty Notices

The Inclusion Service, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school and requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount.

The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority must prosecute the parent/carer for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

For more information, visit the Surrey County Council website:

- <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/schools/at-school/attendance-and-absence/legal-processes-used-to-enforce-school-attendance-guidance-for-parents>

### Circumstances when a Penalty Notice may be issued

A Penalty Notice may be issued to parents/carers who are failing to secure their child's regular school attendance and are failing to engage with supportive measures to improve attendance proposed by the school or LA Inclusion Officer.

Where a child is taken out of school during term time for 5 days or more without the authority of the Headteacher, each parent is liable to receive a penalty notice for each child. In these circumstances a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised and that they will be liable to receive a Penalty Notice if they persist in taking their child out of school for unauthorised leave.

Pupils identified by police and LA Inclusion Officers engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences.

The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where attendance has fallen below 85% and there are no less than 10 unauthorised sessions during the preceding half-term. The parents' failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school or LA Inclusion Officer will be a factor when considering the issue of a Penalty Notice. Unauthorised absence will include late arrival after the close of registration without good reason.

With the exception of authorised leave taken in term time, parents will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.