

# CROSSHALL JUNIOR SCHOOL

## ATTENDANCE POLICY



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Crosshall Junior School recognises that positive behaviour and good attendance are central to maintaining standards and pupil attainment. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education, it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Attendance is a national priority. All schools must submit data electronically (both in an aggregated form and on an individual pupil basis) every term. It is a key indicator of an effective school and, as such, will be scrutinised by OfSTED.

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect his/her learning. Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class. **Please see below the table that explains the ratio between number of lessons missed and your child's attendance percentage:**

<b>If a child's attendance over a school year is ...</b>	<b>...he/she will miss this many days...</b> (Approx)	<b>...and this many lessons...</b>	<b>Descriptor</b>
<b>98% or above</b>	0 - 3	0 - 15	Excellent
<b>95% (to 97.9%)</b>	4 - 9	20 - 45	Good
<b>92% (to 94.9%)</b>	10 - 15	50 - 75	Concerns
<b>Below 91.9%</b>	15 - 19	75 - 95	Serious Concerns
<b>Below 90%</b>	19 +	95 +	Persistent Absentee

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend on a regular and full-time basis under **Section 444 Education Act 1996**.

Parents should ensure that if their child is absent from school for any unavoidable reason such as illness, they should contact the school before 8.45am every morning of absence.

### Promoting Regular Attendance

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

The school will employ a number of strategies to promote regular, punctual attendance:

- report to parents/carers annually on how their child's attendance with the annual school report;
- reward good attendance via the monthly newsletter
- contact parents of children whose attendance falls below 95%
- speak with parent of children who are regularly late.
- agreed attendance at Breakfast Club

## Understanding Types of Absence

### Authorised Absences

The Education Regulations (2006, updated in 2013) state that Head Teachers may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. The Department of Education (DfE) has issued guidelines to all schools detailing valid reasons for authorised absences:

- a child is ill or receiving medical attention; please try to arrange dental and routine medical appointments outside of school hours
- days of religious observation, notified in advance
- absence due to family circumstances (e.g. bereavement, serious illness).
- sporting/filming or acting/modelling activity

The DfE guidelines make it plain that, in the final analysis, it is the school that judges whether an absence is authorised or not. Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holidays and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. These make it clear that Head Teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. A note from the parent/carer does not make an absence justified or authorised.

### Unauthorised Absences

These are absences where:

- family holiday not authorised by the Head Teacher;
- there has been no explanation provided by parent(s)/carer;
- the absence does not fall into one of the Authorised Absence categories.

There are clearly some grey areas. The DfE guidelines look at areas of **Special Occasions** and make clear that only **truly exceptional** occasions should be classified as authorised; for example, absence resulting from a pupil attending the graduation of an older sibling could be counted as authorised; a birthday treat to a theme park would **not**.

### Persistent Absence (PA)

With effect from September 2015 the DfE reduced the PA threshold from 15% to 10%. This means that if a child has an overall attendance of 90% or less over a given period, they will be classified as a persistent absentee pupil.

The school attendance officer will work with the parents to investigate the reasons for poor attendance and work together to improve the situation. The attendance officer will determine whether Local Authority procedures are necessary.

## Holidays

Term time family holidays will not be authorised as it affects the student's learning. The time lost is detrimental to the student's education.

Recent Government Guidance has removed the head teacher's discretion agreeing to term time holiday requests. Due to the disruptive effect on a child's education, you are strongly urged by the government to avoid booking a family holiday during term time. Parents do not have any right or entitlement to take their child out of school for a term time holiday. Children only attend school for 190 days out of 365 and the government expects parents to take absences during the thirteen weeks of school holidays.

Any unauthorised leave of absence could result in a Penalty Notice fine being issued by the Local Authority. This is £60 per parent per child. Non-payment of this fine will result in the case being listed for prosecution in the Magistrates Courts, without further warnings being issued. Parents would then be likely prosecuted for further absences instead of fines being issued. Monies collected are kept by the local authority **not** the school.

Any application for a leave of absence for **exceptional circumstances** must be made in advance and the head teacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances which warrant the leave. If the parents do not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Exceptional circumstances guidance can be found here:

<https://www.crosshalljunior.co.uk/attachments/download.asp?file=3170&type=pdf>

Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted at the head teacher's discretion. Authorised absence means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

## Legal Action to Enforce Attendance

Formal legal proceedings may be implemented if actions taken by the Academy fail to result in the required improvement in attendance or if a student is removed from school when leave of absence has been denied.

Before a case goes to court, Parenting Contracts will be drawn up, setting targets for attendance levels; there may also be interviews which could lead to a fixed penalty notice.

Issuing of a penalty notice results in:

- a fine of £60 per parent/carer per child if payment is made to the Local Authority within 21 days;
- a fine of £120 per parent/carer per child if payment is made within 28 days;
- parents/carers who fail to pay the fine within this time will be liable to prosecution in a Magistrates Court where a fine of up to £2500 and/or up to three months in prison.

The prime aim of this action is to encourage the student to attend school on a regular basis. The decision regarding whether to follow legal proceedings will be made in partnership with the head teacher and Governing Body

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with such matters should be discussed with the school. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school, we will work with the family to understand the problem and allocate a named person to support the child.

## Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the school day, they miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arrival disrupts lessons and can be embarrassing for the child. Good time keeping is vital, a life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and into the wider world.

## How we Manage Lateness

The Blue Door is opened at **8:35** and children may attend from then on. The school day starts at **8.45**. We expect every child to be in school at that time.

Registers close at **8.55**. Children will receive a late mark if they are not present for registration.

If your child arrives after this time, they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site but the late arrival after the register has closed will be recorded as an unauthorised absence on the register system.

This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists. Children aged 7-11 years cannot be held responsible for their poor punctuality.

If your child has a persistent late record, parents will be asked to meet the Head Teacher to resolve the problem.

## Recommended Best Practice

The schools will follow up all unexplained absence in a timely manner with texts and phone calls.

Every effort will be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence. When the reason for the pupil's absence has been established, the register will be amended.

If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence, it will be recorded as unauthorised.

For day-to-day absences, please contact the school office to leave a message or speak to a member of staff: **01480 475972** or [office@crosshalljunior.co.uk](mailto:office@crosshalljunior.co.uk)

Or complete the online absence form on our website:

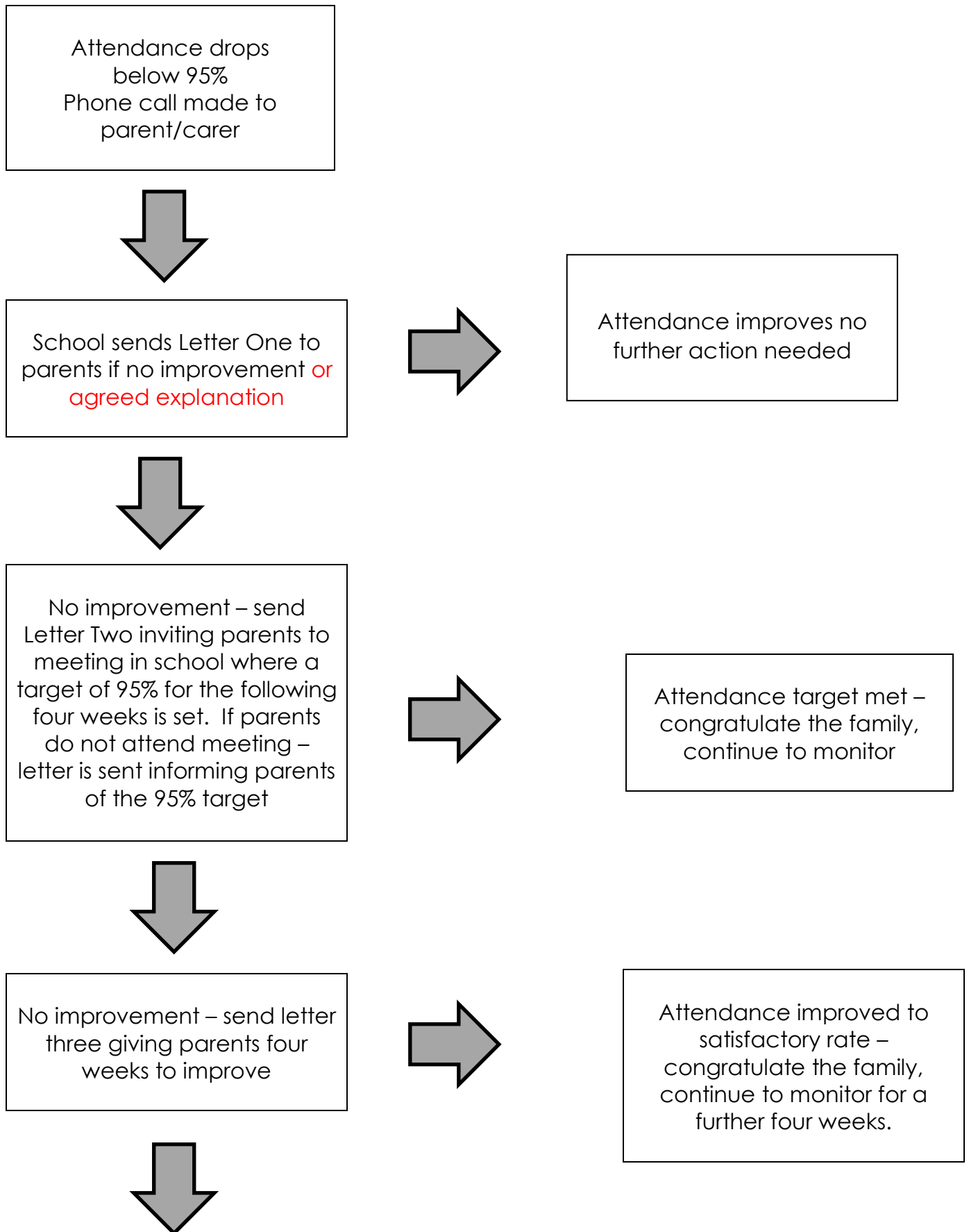
<https://www.crosshalljunior.co.uk/form/?pid=7&form=16>

If more support is needed, please speak to one of our Learning and Wellbeing Mentors, Class Teacher or Head of Year. They can be reached by contacting the school on the number and email above.

**Designated person for the monitoring of attendance and punctuality is:**

**Mrs Samantha Gilliam**  
**Office Manager**

## The Three Letter System



Send application to County  
Council for Penalty Notice