

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. The following guidance has been taken into consideration when developing this policy:

[WORKING TOGETHER TO IMPROVE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE. AUGUST 2024.](#)

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

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their 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:

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

Members of the Attendance Action Alliance have worked with the Department for Education to develop this short guide which helps parents understand how they can work with their school and local authority to support their children to attend school and get the right support. [School attendance: guidance for schools - GOV.UK](#)

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. If a child has been sick and/or has diarrhea, then they must be absent for 48 hours from the last episode of sickness and/or diarrhea and the parent will not need to phone every day that they are absent.

This link will also help determine whether your child should be in school if they are unwell: [Is my child too ill for school? - NHS](#)

For pupils who are absent where the reason is unknown, the office staff will initially send a text message and then call every contact, starting with the priority contact, until a reason for the absence is established.

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 employs a number of strategies to promote regular, punctual attendance:

- report to parents/carers annually on their child's attendance with the annual school report
- reward good attendance via our website, termly
- contact parents of children whose attendance falls below 95%
- speak with parents of children who are regularly late
- agreed attendance at Breakfast Club to help children attend school on time
- meetings with our Learning and Wellbeing Mentors for families who need support which may include access to external organisations

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 for 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:

- term-time leave is not authorised by the Head Teacher unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'
- 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**

Coding the register is always at the Head Teacher's discretion.

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.

Term-time Leave

Recent Government guidance has removed the Head Teacher's discretion of agreeing to term time holiday requests. Due to the disruptive effect on a child's education, parents/carers 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. 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: [7.6 - Exceptional Circumstances leaflet - guidance for parents Spring 2021](#)

The threshold is **10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks**. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 school weeks). These sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks).

The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term).

Penalty notice limit and escalation in cases of repeat offences

A penalty notice is an out of court settlement which is intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution. If repeated penalty notices are being issued and they are not working to change behaviour they are unlikely to be most appropriate tool.

Therefore, only 2 penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3 year rolling period and any second notice within that period is charged at a higher rate:

- The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
- A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution, but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.

Prosecutions issued by Cambridge County Council will be in line with Section 444 Education Act 1996 which may result in a fine of up to £2500 and/or three months in prison.

Where a leave of absence is granted, the Head Teacher will determine the number of authorised 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 may be drawn up, setting targets for attendance levels; there may also be interviews which could lead to a fixed penalty notice.

Payment of penalties

The payment must be paid directly to the local authority regardless of who issued the penalty notice.

If the penalty is not paid by the end of the 28 day period, the local authority must decide either to prosecute for the original offence to which the notice applies, or withdraw the notice. Parent(s) can only be prosecuted if 28 days have expired, and full payment has not been made.

There is no right of appeal by parents against a penalty notice.

The penalty notice system is not a money making scheme and local authorities should not have income targets. Any revenues collected through the system must be ringfenced for attendance.

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 could lead to a penalty notice if the number of late marks after the register has been taken meets the **ten sessions threshold within a ten week period**. e.g 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 school weeks.

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. Please report any changes to the contact details to the Office to ensure the school has the most up to date contact information.

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** / 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 the Attendance Officer.

Useful links:

[Crosshall Junior School Academy Trust - Attendance](#)

[Is my child too ill for school? - NHS](#)

[Local Authority School Attendance Leaflet September 2024](#)

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE PROCESS MAP

