

**Attendance & Lateness Policy**

**Policy Date: September 2021**

**Review Date: September 2022**

**ATTENDANCE, ABSENCE AND LATENESS POLICY**

Reviewed by Crawley Schools: Sept 2016

(This policy should be read alongside the Mill TKAT Safeguarding Policy)

**INTRODUCTION**

Staff at The Mill Primary Academy place a high priority on excellent attendance in order to support the achievement of pupils in all aspects of school life. Regular and punctual attendance is seen as fundamental to maximising pupil performance and the value we place on it demonstrates our care and concern for each pupil.

Parents are informed from the outset of their responsibilities in ensuring regular and punctual attendance; their duty to inform school of the reason for absence; and of the role of the Education Welfare Service.

The Mill Primary Academy follows a policy of first day contact. If a child is absent, and there has not been a phone call or message from parents / carers, school will make contact with the parent. This will be the responsibility of the administration assistants in the office.

**The Headteacher will:**

* Ensure that all staff are aware that the class register is a legal document and needs to be complete in accordance with instructions (inside register & Staff Handbook)
* Ensure that all staff are aware that attendance is monitored
* Ensure that good attendance is rewarded. (A certificate for children with 100% attendance and no lates at the end of each term will be issued and an attendance treat may be arranged)
* Monitor attendance each term
* Work closely with the Education Welfare Service to support families of children whose attendance is causing concern and/or hindering their learning progress
* Report attendance figures to the Governing Body

**The Attendance Administrator will:**

* Complete the attendance module using data provided from the class registers
* Contact parents if there are unexplained absences
* Inform the Headteacher half termly of any child whose attendance is below 95%, 90%, 85% and issue corresponding letters (Letters 1,2)
* Liaise with the Headteachers half termly and issue letters re lateness, absence due to high levels of sickness and return from holiday and impact on attendance (Letters 3, 4)
* Liaise with the EWO regarding attendance issues and concerns
* Sort / file letters regarding absence into pupils’ files
* Collect / collate request for absence forms and hand to the head teacher
* Record decisions made by governors regarding requests for absence in class registers

**Teachers will:**

* Mark the register each day in accordance with LA and statutory policies, noting the reason for absence once known
* Save the register to the office by 9.00 am and 1 pm
* Retain any letters regarding absence and deliver these to the office in the register
* Inform the Headteacher of any child whose attendance or punctuality is causing concern
* Ensure that no child leaves the school site without permission.

**REQUESTS FOR ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME**

Parents are required to submit a form, included at the end of this policy, requesting permission for absence during term time

The Governors have determined that the implementation of this policy will be delegated to the Headteacher

**Crawley Schools Attendance and Punctuality Policy**

***The Government expects:***

* Schools and local authorities to:
	+ Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
	+ Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled; and,
	+ Act early to address patterns of absence.
* Parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age, who are registered at school, attend regularly.
* All pupils to be punctual to their lessons.

To enable children to achieve all they are capable of, it is essential that they attend regularly and punctually.

All schools are expected to achieve an overall rate of 95% attendance. It is the responsibility of all school staff to be welcoming to children and their parents, creating an atmosphere where they both feel able to raise concerns and share any information that could affect the children’s attendance. Due regard will be given to the fact that a register is a legal document and, taking this into account, registers will be marked regularly and conscientiously at the beginning of both the morning and afternoon sessions. The times after which a child is marked late or absent are given in the individual school prospectuses. The local authority recommends that, unless there is prior agreement or good reason, should a pupil arrive more than half an hour late after the registration closes, this should be an unauthorised absence (U).

It is important that all children arrive at school punctually. If a child is late, s/he should report to the school office to be marked in and ensure that in case of emergency the school has an accurate head count. It is most important that parents discuss any problem with either the class teacher or the Headteacher so that appropriate help can be offered. Equally, if a child needs to leave school for a medical appointment during school hours s/he must be signed out, and in again on return, at the office. Parents/carers are asked to make every possible effort to make appointments out of school hours.

If a child is absent for the day, the school expects parents/carers to make contact as early as possible, giving the reason for the absence and the expected day of return. If no word is received from the parent/carer the school will contact the parent/carer on that day. The school follows up absences where no reasons are given. If the reasons for these absences remain unspecified they will be classed as unauthorised.

It is the parents’ legal responsibility to ensure their child’s good school attendance and punctuality. If attendance or punctuality is persistently unsatisfactory, initially the school will liaise with the parent verbally and/or by letter. If the situation does not improve i.e. the child’s unauthorised absences build up to 10 days, the school will consider a referral to Pupil Entitlement: Investigation (PEI) of West Sussex County Council (WSCC). Should a child’s attendance/punctuality still not improve, PEI will consider whether legal action should be instigated against the parent/carer under the Education Act 1996. Alternatively, PEI may seek an Education Supervision Order in the family proceedings court.

**The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 and Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006**

Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. If the leave is granted, they should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school.

A form obtained from the school office must be completed when withdrawal from learning is being requested (see Appendix A).

Parents/carers should be aware that Crawley Schools will follow the WSCC guidelines on issuing FPN and unauthorised absence, i.e. issue a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) if a child accrues 10 or more unauthorised absences in a 10-week period (each half day counts as one absence),

* by non-attendance at school
* by arriving persistently late at school (after registration has closed)
* by parents/carers taking their child on an unauthorised holiday during the school term.

The FPN is an alternative to prosecution and gives parents/carers an opportunity to discharge their criminal liability by paying a fine of £120, which must be paid within 28 days. If paid within 21 days, the fine is reduced to £60. After 28 days, the Pupil Entitlement: Investigation (PEI) will consider prosecuting for the original non-attendance, not for the non-payment of the FPN. Further information on legal action can be found on GOV.UK.

In exceptional circumstances a pupil may be granted authorised leave. However, regardless of whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised, if after ten days the pupil fails to return and no contact can be made with the parents/carers, the school will make a referral to PEI which will make reasonable enquiries and consult with the Child Missing Education Team (CME). If the school can make contact with the parents/carers, it will warn them, if possible in writing, that it will consider taking the pupil off roll if s/he does not return by an agreed date. If the pupil does not return within 20 days and no reasonable explanation is given, the school will consult with CME and, in line with DfE guidance, consider taking the pupil off roll. If taken off roll, parents/carers would need to reapply for a place through West Sussex County Council Admissions (North) on their return. A place cannot be guaranteed at the current school.

Genuine illness will be authorised, although the school reserves the right to ask for medical clarification if a child’s medical absences are above the amount expected for a usually healthy child. If it has been necessary for a child to have extended absence due to illness, the school will work with the child, parents/carers and any other involved agencies to instigate a re- integration programme for that child.

Crawley Schools provide a broad, balanced curriculum but for children to access the many opportunities that are provided, it is necessary for them to attend school regularly and punctually. Good school attendance will be recognised; schools use reward systems e.g. children with 100% attendance at the end of the year may be awarded a special certificate in assembly.



**REQUEST FOR WITHDRAWAL FROM LEARNING - TERM TIME ABSENCE**

Before making your request you are advised to consider the following information:

1. Absence from learning has been proven to adversely affect children’s academic progress
2. Genuine illness will be authorised, although the school reserves the right to ask for confirmation from a medical professional if a child’s absences are above the amount expected for a usually healthy child. Unacceptable reasons for absence will be classed as unauthorised
3. Only in exceptional circumstances will a request for absence from school be authorised and this will only be for a very short period of time

*Examples of this would be:*

* *Funeral of an immediate relative – 1 day*
* *Religious observation on days officially set apart by the religious body to which the parents belong – 1 day*
* *Close family wedding – 1 day*
* *Medical appointments which cannot be arranged outside the school day*

All requests should provide details and reasons why the absence is considered to be exceptional. The Headteacher, in accordance with the above criteria agreed by Crawley Primary Headteachers, will determine if the absence will be authorised

1. Parents/Guardians do not have an automatic right to take a child out of school for holiday purposes. Permission must be obtained in advance. If a child is taken away without prior written permission, this will be recorded as unauthorised absence
2. All requests must be accompanied by a letter providing full details and reasons why the absence is considered to be essential. Absence requests due to company policy, must also be accompanied by an authorised letter from your employer
3. Absence should be planned to minimise disruption to your child’s education. (e.g. Taken within school holiday)
4. Family holidays do not meet the criteria for exceptional circumstances. Consequently, absence for holidays will not be authorised and will be recorded as unauthorised
5. If a child has 5 or more days of unauthorised absence, a Fixed Penalty Notice fine will be issued to both parents for each child
6. In very exceptional circumstances, pupils could be granted twenty days, unauthorised absence. After that, pupils may be removed from the roll. On return, parents will need to reapply for a place through West Sussex County Council Admissions (North). A place cannot be guaranteed at the current school
7. The number of days absence incurred will be noted in your child’s personal records, including the end of year report. Your child’s attendance history is part of their school records

*Continued overleaf*

1. No requests will be authorised if any of the following apply:
* If the requested absence will bring a child’s attendance below 95%
* In the first 2 weeks of school in September when children need to be at school to settle into new classes / year groups.
* In the second half of the Spring term and the first half of the Summer term which is the main assessment period at school
1. The school can only authorise a maximum of 10 days absence. If a child is kept away for longer than the period of agreed authorised absence, the additional time will be recorded as unauthorised.
2. Schools are not permitted to keep a place open for a child who is absent for a period in excess of 10 days. Your child’s place may be lost if another pupil is admitted during a period of unauthorised absence.
3. The number of days absence incurred will be noted in your child’s personal records, including the end of year report. Your child’s attendance history is part of their school records.
4. You are advised that homework during absence will not be set by school staff. Parents are encouraged to organise periods of study for their child.

***Unauthorised absence of 5 or more school days may result in parents being issued with a Fixed Penatly Notice fine (£60 per child, per parent)***