



## Pupil Attendance Policy

<b>Audience:</b>	School and academy staff, particularly Headteachers and administrative staff Local Governing Bodies
<b>Reviewed on:</b>	November 2023
<b>Review</b>	September 2024
<b>Other related policies / procedures</b>	Medical Needs Policy Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy SEN Policy
<b>Owner</b>	Director of Education Headteacher Senior Attendance Lead Attendance Officer
<b>Policy / procedure model</b>	MAT Policy

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## 1. Introduction, aims and why regular attendance is important

As part of the Crofty MAT, our school is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all children. A key element of this is ensuring a child's attendance at school. Regular and punctual attendance of students at school is, under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, a legal requirement. Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring that any child of compulsory school age receives efficient full-time education that is suitable to their age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs the child may have.

It is very important therefore that parents/carers make sure that their child(ren) attends school regularly and this policy sets out how together we will achieve this. Our school, as part of the Crofty MAT, is committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled

For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential throughout the whole of their academic career. It is essential for children to attend school regularly in order to maximise the opportunities available to them. We will work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all of our children.

- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

**Regular attendance is important because it affects learning.** Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Pupils' absence disrupts teaching routines and will inevitably cause gaps in learning and limit progress.

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is the parents'/carers' legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Failing to attend school on a regular basis is considered a safeguarding matter. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, we will adhere to:

- Protecting children from maltreatment.
- Preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development.
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Taking action to enable all children have the best life chances.
- (Working Together to Safeguard Children)

However, we do accept that illness is inevitable on some occasions.

Every opportunity will be used to convey to children and their parents/carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance. The Trust's attendance targets are for all children to achieve above 96% with attendance over 97% seen as excellent attendance. A level of attendance under 95% is not considered to be regular attendance with any child who has attendance under 90%

classified as a “persistent absentee” (PA). Where a child’s attendance falls below 95%, their attendance record is reviewed and action may be taken including referral to the Local Authority’s Education Welfare Officer, contact home by a member of staff, invitation to parents to attend an attendance clinic with their child and the Local Authority’s Education Welfare Officer or request for medical evidence. These actions will be considered for all children and activated where necessary to help and support the child and their family to improve attendance at school.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [Working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE’s statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (and [2010](#), [2011](#), [2013](#), [2016](#) amendments)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE’s guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

### 3.1 Governance

#### The Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees are responsible for:

- Reviewing and ensuring the policy is implemented.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data at board meetings.
- Sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools.

#### The Local Governing Board

Governors are responsible for:

- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school, on behalf of the Trust Board on at least a termly basis.
- Monitoring the implementation and impact of this policy, reporting any concerns to the Trust Board.
- Ensuring school staff receive adequate training on attendance.

### 3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Establishing and maintaining an effective culture of attendance at the academy

- Whole school absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supervising staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Providing evidence for prosecution to Cornwall Council
- Providing evidence for fixed-penalty notices to Cornwall Council
- Monitoring of attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Working with education welfare officers to reduce absence across the whole school population
- Ensuring the correct use of the school system used to record and monitor attendance
- Agreeing any part-time timetables within the school

### 3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the Senior Leadership Team when pupil absence crosses thresholds that require action
- The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is \_\_\_\_\_ and can be contacted via \_\_\_\_\_ and/or \_\_\_\_\_

### 3.4 The attendance officer (for those schools where a member of staff has this role)

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- The attendance officer is \_\_\_\_\_ and can be contacted via \_\_\_\_\_ and/or \_\_\_\_\_

### 3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for taking the class register twice a day and submitting this information to the school office. The register is taken on SIMs (School Information Management System). Class teachers positively promote good attendance and alert SLT to any concerns they have or any patterns they notice in regards to attendance.

### 3.6 School Office staff/Designated Attendance Officer

Designated staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record any explanations provided on the school system. This can be done by calling the school via \_\_\_\_\_ or emailing \_\_\_\_\_

Any unexplained absences are promptly followed up by the designated office staff or Attendance Officer with a text or telephone call home to the parents/carers to ascertain the reason for the non-attendance.

### 3.7 Parents/Carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every session on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before **8.50am** on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence unless a doctor's note has been provided), and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

### Who is considered a parent in education law?

Section 576 Education Act 1996 defines a 'parent' widely to include:

- a biological parent of the child (even if they do not have Parental Responsibility and even if the child does not reside with that parent).
- any person who is not a parent but has Parental Responsibility for the child (for example through a Residence Order, Child Arrangements Order, Special Guardianship Order, Step-Parental Responsibility Order, Adoption Order, or Care Order).
- someone who has care of the child.

## 4. Recording attendance

### 4.1 Attendance register

The register is an accurate reflection of a pupil's attendance and a legal document which may be used as evidence in court. The decision on whether to authorise an absence rests with the headteacher. The class teacher will record attendance of a child once during either the AM and/or PM register.

We keep an attendance register using SIMs and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

The office staff will make any notes on the register with details of the reason for the absence.

At **School**, pupils must arrive in school by **8.50am** on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at **8:50am** and will be kept open until **9.10 am**. The register for the second session will be taken at **1.15pm** and will be kept open until **1.35pm**. Any child arriving after these times will be considered 'late'.

## 4.2 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed children will be marked as unauthorised late, using the appropriate code. This means that children arriving after this time will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark. It will mean that they have an unauthorised absence unless the explanation for the late arrival is accepted by the head teacher, in which case they will be marked as late using the appropriate code.

If your child has a persistent late record, you will be asked to meet with a member of school staff and/or the Education Welfare Officer to resolve the problem. Please feel free to approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school. Should we be unable to resolve any ongoing lateness issues, we reserve the right to bring forward the close of register. This may mean that your child's lateness could be recorded as unauthorised which could result in the Education Welfare Service considering enforcement proceedings against you. We will always inform you in writing should this action be necessary.

## 5. Understanding types of absence

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

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for an unavoidable reason like illness/medical appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies, or other unavoidable cause. However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. Examples of this type of absence include:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained or where supporting evidence has not been received
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant or anxious about attending school, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse.

Any pupil who has attendance below 93% may be asked to provide medical evidence.

### 5.1 Following up absence

If any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason
- Ensure schools safeguarding protocol and process is followed
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

## 5.2 Reporting to parents

Attendance is reported to parents every term. Parents may also request attendance figures for their child from the office.

In addition, we notify parents in writing when a child's attendance falls below 95%, 93% and 90% respectively.

Please note: a pupil is classified as a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. We monitor all absence thoroughly. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully. The school looks at ways to support the family with improving attendance and may involve the education welfare officer as needed.

## 5.3 Legal sanctions

Where a child is absent from school without authorisation, the parent(s) will be committing an offence under the Education Act 1996. Schools have the right to submit a request to Cornwall Council for a Penalty Notice to be issued, in accordance with Sections 444A and 444B of the said Act. Penalty Notices are issued per liable parent, per child and each carry a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid after this but within 28 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in legal action.

Absence not authorised by the school may result in a prosecution in the Magistrates' Court under Section 444(1) or Section 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996, leading to a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a custodial sentence. Cornwall Council may also apply for the costs incurred in taking the matter to Court. Schools will collaborate with the Education Welfare Officer who will oversee this process on behalf of school.

## 5.4 Leave of Absence in term time

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in term time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday and the government made an amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 in September 2013 to reflect this.

Leave of absence shall not be granted unless —



- (a) an application has been made in advance to the proprietor by a parent with whom the pupil normally resides: and
- (b) the proprietor, or a person authorised by the proprietor in accordance with paragraph (z), considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the exceptional circumstances relating to that application.

All applications should be made in writing to the Head of School at least 20 school days prior to the requested leave date. Where the decision is made not to authorise leave in term time, school will inform parent/carers in writing. Please do not book a holiday before being given permission for absence from the school.

A general guide for parents is leave for any holiday, activity or event that could be arranged during the annual 13-week holiday time would not be authorised.

On any occasion that school refuses a request for leave in term time, should a parent/carer proceed with the leave it will be recorded as code (G) (family holiday not agreed or in excess of agreement), on the school's register.

Where a leave of absence has been unauthorised, penalty notices will be considered in line with Cornwall Council's Code of Conduct for issuing Penalty Notices in respect of unauthorised absence or children present in a public place whilst excluded from school. Crofty Trust will ensure that a minimum of one other headteacher considers the exceptional circumstance before any decision is made to unauthorise a leave of absence request where the issue of a Penalty Notice is required.

Failure to notify and/or request leave of absence in term time, providing at least 5 days notice may result in all absence being recorded as (O) (unauthorised absence not covered by any other description).

**If your child is absent from school without authorisation, you will be committing an offence under the Education Act 1996. We may submit a request to Cornwall Council for a Penalty Notice to be issued, in accordance with Sections 444A and 444B of the said Act. Penalty Notices are issued per liable parent, per child and each carry a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid after this but within 28 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in legal action. Absence not authorised by the school may result in a prosecution in the Magistrates' Court under Section 444(1) or Section 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996, leading to a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a custodial sentence. Cornwall Council may also apply for the costs incurred in taking the matter to Court.**

## 6. Pupils with Ongoing Medical Conditions

Parents/Carers should inform the school of any medical conditions that could impact on Attendance and Wellbeing. A Healthcare Plan should be agreed with Health Services on how to ensure the pupil is able to access their full potential and attend school.

In some cases, a child can be educated at home whereby the school environment is detrimental to either condition or causes a risk (of infection etc.) to said pupil.

Pupils should not be penalised if their absence from school is related to their medical condition, such as attending hospital appointments. To avoid being fined for non-attendance, parents must obtain permission from the school in advance of the appointment, so that the absence can be

treated as authorised. An absence can also be authorised if the child is too ill to attend school and the school is notified of that as soon as possible.

A school should not encourage non-attendance, such as sending a pupil with medical conditions home frequently or preventing a pupil from staying for normal school activities, including lunch. This will only be justified if it is in accordance with the pupil's individual healthcare plan and is necessary. If a child is regularly sent home at lunch or placed on a part-time timetable which has not been fully agreed to, these absences may amount to unofficial exclusions.

The Equality Act 2010 states that the school's governing bodies or proprietors must make reasonable adjustments to ensure that children and young people with disability are not put at a substantial disadvantage compared to other students. Therefore, some pupils may be exempt from the consequences of poor attendance due to their, but only if their poor attendance is supported with medical evidence from medical practitioners.

The Children and Families Act 2014 includes a duty on schools to support children with medical conditions. This is inclusive of children with conditions such as diabetes. Schools must make arrangements for supporting pupils at schools with medical conditions and in meeting that duty they must have regard to the statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

## 7. Strategies for promoting attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff. We give you details on attendance in our regular correspondence and remind parents about the importance of good attendance on our newsletter. We talk to the children about the importance of good attendance. We meet and discuss attendance issues with families and offer relevant support when needed.

### **At Crofty schools we celebrate attendance in many ways. For example:**

- A warm welcome from the class team
- A rich and diverse curriculum
- Praised for working hard
- Ensuring that your child attends a safe and nurturing environment
- An 'open door' policy for parents to seek support and advice

## 8. Attendance monitoring

8.1 The school office/attendance officer monitors pupil absence on a daily basis. Attendance is reviewed at least every half term.

A pupil's parent/carer is required to inform the school before **8:50am** if their child is going to be absent due to ill health.

Regular contact will be made during periods of absence by the school.

Attendance and absence data is analysed regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and the school uses this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families.

The school looks at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develops strategies to address these patterns.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the governing board.

## **8.2 Reducing persistent and severe absence**

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
  - Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
  - Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
  - Send letters to parents of those children who are at risk of becoming persistently absent
- Half-termly attendance monitoring/tracking meetings
- Closer monitoring of identified children

## **9. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every year by the headteacher in consultation with Crofty MAT.

## **10. Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Medical Needs Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy

## Appendix 1. Attendance codes

The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Present
\	Present (pm)	Present
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
B	Educated Off-site (NOT dual registration) at an establishment approved by the school	Approved Education Activity
D	Dual registration (I.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
J	Interview with prospective employers or at another educational establishment.	Approved Education Activity
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience (final two years of compulsory education).	Approved Education Activity

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
<b>C</b>	Leave of absence granted by the school- Other Authorised, exceptional circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description). School should approach each case individually. C code to be used at Headteacher's discretion.	Authorised absence
<b>E</b>	Excluded (No alternative provision).	Authorised absence
<b>H</b>	Family Holiday (Agreed)	Authorised absence
<b>I</b>	Illness not medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointments	Authorised absence
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Authorised absence
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Authorised absence
<b>T</b>	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Family holiday (Not agreed, <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence

<b>N</b>	No reason yet provided for absence (these should not stay on school's register for more than 5 days. If no reason has been provided after 5 days, schools should change the code to O).	Unauthorised absence
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence (Not covered by any other code/description) or if school is not satisfied the reason given is an authorised absence.	Unauthorised absence
<b>U</b>	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Z</b>	Prospective pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>#</b>	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

Appendix 2

There are 175 non-school days in a year and 190 school days each year.

Absence in terms of days	190 school days in each year	7 days absence 183 days in school	10 days absence 180 days in school	19 days absence 171 days in school and the equivalent of a month not in school that year	28 days absence 162 days in school If it 85% each year, your child is missing the equivalent of a year of education over their time at primary school	47 days absence 143 days in school	
	190 days for your child's education						
percentage	100%	96%	95%	90%	85%	75%	
	<b>Good</b> -Best chance of success -Gets your child off to a flying start -Helps their confidence, social development as well as their academic progress -Over 97% is considered excellent attendance		<b>Some Concern</b> -Harder for your child to make progress -School starts tracking your child's attendance closely, - -Once below 93% medical evidence may be required to authorised further absences linked to illness		<b>Worrying</b> -Your child is now classified as a 'persistent absentee' - Education Welfare Officer involvement is likely		<b>Serious Concern</b> -Having a significant impact on your child's education and well-being -Legal Action may be taken

Appendix 3



**Request for a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances**

Please note that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Child's name: ..... Class: .....

First day of absence from school: .....

Last day of absence from school: .....

Returning to school on: .....

Total number of days absence: .....

Reason for request during term time

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Signed..... Date.....

**FOR OFFICE USE ONLY**

Percentage Attendance:

Request - approved / not approved

Headteachers Comments

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Headteacher's Signature: .....Date:.....



## Leave of Absence in term time

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Leave of absence shall not be granted unless —

1. an application has been made in advance to the proprietor by a parent with whom the pupil normally resides: and
2. the proprietor, or a person authorised by the proprietor in accordance with paragraph (z), considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the exceptional circumstances relating to that application.

All applications should be made in writing to the Head of School at least 20 school days prior to the requested leave date. Where the decision is made not to authorise leave in term time, school will inform parent/carers in writing. Please do not book a holiday before being given permission for absence from the school.

A general guide for parents is leave for any holiday, activity or event that could be arranged during the annual 13-week holiday time would not be authorised.

On any occasion that school refuses a request for leave in term time, should a parent/carer proceed with the leave it will be recorded as code (G) (family holiday not agreed or in excess of agreement), on the school's register.

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