



Attendance

Policy

Introduction

It is our aim at Crossley Fields Junior & Infant School to provide our pupils with every opportunity for the best possible education. To enable this to happen, punctuality and good attendance are vital and is the key to outstanding progress. At Crossley Fields Junior & Infant School we are committed to ensuring maximum attendance for all our pupils and any problems regarding punctuality and poor attendance will be identified and addressed as soon as possible.

The minimum level of attendance is 96% across school with the aspiration that all pupils aim to reach 100%. It is very important that you make sure your child attends regularly and our policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Why regular attendance is so important

Learning

- any absence affects the pattern of a child's learning and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class
- please ensure your child's regular attendance at school. It is your legal responsibility and any absence from school without a good reason is an offence in law and may result in prosecution

Safeguarding

Your child/ren may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses:-

- Attendance
- Behaviour Management
- Health and Safety
- Access to the curriculum
- Anti-bullying

Failing to attend school on a regular basis will be considered a safeguarding matter.

Promoting regular attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everyone's responsibility – parents, pupils and all members of school staff. As a school we will:-

- promote and encourage 100% attendance for all our pupils by awarding certificates for 100% attendance at the end of each half term and at the end of the academic year
- celebrate good attendance each week in assemblies. A class in Reception, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is awarded an 'Ace Attendance' trophy for the best class attendance that week
- give you details on attendance at parents' evenings and end of year reports

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 a good reason, such as illness, medical/dental appointments (please provide school with proof of medical/dental appointments e.g. appointment letters/slips/texts/emails which unavoidably fall in school time. Failure to provide evidence of medical/dental appointments will generate an unauthorised mark against your child's absence), emergencies or other unavoidable reasons.

Unauthorised absences are those which school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This type of absence can lead to school and the Attendance and Pupil Support Service at Kirklees using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:-

- parents/carers keeping children out of school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- pupils who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed
- not returning after a period of exclusion

Whilst any child may be absent because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend the school. Any problems with regular attendance are best resolved between school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never acceptable 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. Please speak to school staff if you become aware this is an issue for your child and we can work together to support you and your child with this.

Pupils can request **up** to 3 days authorised absence from school each academic year for religious observance if religious observance falls within school days. If religious observance falls on a weekend then school will not authorise leave for subsequent school days. Parents are responsible for informing school of their child's absence.

Persistent Absentees (PA)

A pupil becomes 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 education prospects and we need parents' full support and co-operation to tackle this.

Steps we can take as a school are:-

- we monitor all absences thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark **or** is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.
- every half term attendance data will be analysed - pupils falling below 96% will be notified by letter
- if no improvement is made a further letter will be sent home
- if attendance continues to fall a letter will be sent home inviting parents to meet with the Attendance Officer in school, Attendance and Pupil Support Officer and if necessary/helpful the School Nurse and a formal referral will be made to the Attendance and Pupil Support Service. This can result in a parenting contract or court action and fines being issued.

- PA pupils are tracked and monitored vigilantly by the Attendance Officer, the Attendance and Pupil Support Officer and the Attendance and Inclusion Committee.

Absence Procedures

Only keep your child away from school if really necessary. Please remember if pupils are taken ill at school, we will contact you and arrange to send them home.

If your child is absent you must:

- contact school by **9.00am** on the first day and each day of absence, to explain the reason for the absence (tel: 01924 499608 extension 1 with answerphone) or email attendance.crossleyfields@kirkleeseducation.uk. It is your duty to inform us of any absence. If this does not happen school will ring each contact on your child's contact list. Failure to contact anyone a text message will be sent home to parents asking them to contact school as a matter of urgency. If no contact is made school will inform the Attendance and Pupil Support Officer to carry out a home visit.
- where possible avoid medical/dental appointments in school time, but if it is absolutely necessary then please ensure your child attends prior to and after the appointment. Medical/dental appointments should be covered by a letter/note (see note under 'Understanding Types of Absence'). If pupils have to leave school during school time they must sign out at reception and sign back in at reception on return.
- Inform school if and why your child is going to be late. Parents must accompany pupils to the main office in Key Stage 1 or Key Stage 2 to sign in so we know that they have arrived.
- Avoid any other time off unless absolutely necessary, in which case the request should be made in writing to Mrs Dell the Headteacher, at whose discretion absences may or may not be authorised.

Telephone numbers

There are times when we need to make contact with parents about other things, including absence, so **we need to have your contact numbers at all times**. Please help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed.

The Attendance and Pupil Support Officer

Parent are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, school may refer the pupil to our designated Attendance and Pupil Support Officer at Kirklees. S/he will also try to resolve the situation by agreement. S/he may ring, visit your home, or ask you to attend a meeting either at school or Kirklees Offices. If other ways of trying to improve pupil's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as penalty notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they are missing valuable lesson time. Pupils who arrive late also disrupt lessons, which can be embarrassing for the pupil and can also encourage further absence.

How we manage lateness

Parents must give themselves reasonable time to get their child to school each day. It is busy every day and winter months can make a difference to travel times. Setting off a little earlier would ensure that pupils arrive at school on time.

The school doors open at 8.45am and pupils must be in their classrooms by 8.55am.

If your child is late to school twice in the morning, school will send you a text message followed by a letter. If lateness continues, you will be invited to meet with our Attendance and Pupil Support Officer to resolve the problem, however you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time. If there is a continuing concern regarding lateness, then it will be referred to the Attendance and Pupil Support Officer.

If your child arrives at school after 9.05am they must enter school through the main office entrance in key stage 1 or key stage 2 and they will automatically receive a late mark for the morning. If your child arrives after registers have closed they will receive an unauthorised late mark.

Term Time Leave

It is less disruptive to a pupil's education if family holidays are planned during school holiday periods. If, in exceptional circumstances, parents require leave of absence for their child/ren during term time, they need to ensure they put this in writing to the Headteacher.

In 2013 the Department for Education (DfE) issued revised advice on school attendance and amended the Pupil Registration Regulations 2013. The amendments to the 2006 regulations (which came into force on 1 September 2013) were to:

- remove references to family holiday and extended leave;
- remove references to the statutory threshold of ten school days;
- make clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances

Any leave of absence taken without written authorisation will be classed as unauthorised absence and a Penalty Notice may be issued.

Parents are asked to request in writing should they require leave of absence for their child during term-time. If a request is rejected, the parents are warned, in writing, that more than twenty days' absence could result in the pupil being removed from the school register.

Parents wanting to take their child abroad or on holiday in the UK need to provide copies of the family's travel itinerary and tickets – inbound and outbound journeys.

Where parents continue to take unauthorised leave of absences in term time, despite having previously been issued with a Penalty Notice, school will forward the information to the Local Authority to consider a prosecution under S444 of the Education Act 1996.

We want to ensure every child receives the best education and therefore good attendance at school is vital. We will continue to monitor punctuality and attendance to reflect our attendance policy. If you would like to see the attendance policy then this is available from reception and on our school website.

Penalty Notices

The penalty charge is currently £60.00 for each parent of each child if paid within 21 days, and £120.00 if paid after this date but within 28 days. The penalty notice is issued by Kirklees Council.

Failure to pay the penalty charge could result in Kirklees Children and Young People Service starting legal proceedings against you for the offence of not ensuring your child's attendance at school. Parents can only be prosecuted if 28 days have expired and full payment has not been made. Such prosecutions could lead to a criminal record.

There is no right of appeal by parents against the penalty notice. If the penalty notice is not paid in full 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.

The local authority administers the scheme for all schools in its area, including academies and free schools.

The Law relating to attendance

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that "the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full time education suitable:-

- to age, ability and aptitude
- to any special educational needs he/she may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise

The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003

Gives provision for Headteachers and designated staff to issue penalty notices to parents who have failed to comply with the provisions of the Education Act 1996.

The Law relating to safeguarding

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on Local Authorities and Governing Bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and pupils under the age of 18.

Children Missing Education (CME)

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an efficient, full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have.

Children missing education are at a significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.

Therefore, effective information sharing between Crossley Fields staff, parents and the Local Authority is critical to ensuring that all children of compulsory school age are safe and receiving suitable education.

Parents have a duty to ensure that their children of compulsory school age are receiving suitable full-time education.

Schools and Local Authorities should focus their resources effectively in intervening early in the lives of vulnerable children to help prevent poor outcomes.

If a pupil fails to attend on an agreed date, the school should undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the child's whereabouts and consider notifying the Local Authority at the earliest opportunity. The new Reception intake, in particular, is closely monitored and non-arrivals at the start of September – after reasonable enquiries, are referred to CME. This is undertaken by the attendance officer.

Crossley Fields monitors all pupils' attendance through their daily register on Integris G2. We will inform the Local Authority Attendance and Pupil Support Officer (APSO) of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or have missed school days without permission. Crossley Fields monitors attendance closely and addresses poor or irregular attendance. It is important that pupils' poor attendance is referred to the Local Authority.

At Crossley Fields we work closely with our Attendance and Pupil Support Officer from Kirklees Local Authority and referrals of those pupils whose attendance is, or potentially is, a cause for concern are regularly made.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive days, the pupil can be removed from the admission register when the school and CME – after an official completed referral – have failed after jointly making reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the child. (This only applies if the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause).

The Attendance Officer will contact CME the day the pupil was expected back in school if they do not arrive.

Parents of those pupils – who suddenly 'disappear' from school and return to their home country are contacted immediately by telephone by the Attendance Officer and home visits are done as an immediate follow up to try and ascertain the pupils' exact whereabouts. This is carried out by the Attendance and Pupil Support Officer.

Letters are written to the family warning that more than twenty days' absence could result in the pupil being removed from the register. These letters, as well as an official referral, are forwarded onto CME after the twentieth day of absence and after the pupil has been taken off roll.

All schools have a safeguarding duty in respect of their pupils, and as part of this should investigate any unexplained absences.

It is important that all pupils' basic details and contact information is accurate and kept up to date. Crossley Fields encourage parents to inform school of any changes when they occur and are given update forms at parents evenings. This assists both the school and Local Authority when making enquiries to locate children missing education.

When a parent of a pupil notifies the school that the pupil is, or will be in the future, registered at another school, the school records the name of the new school and the start date. This is then verified by the Attendance Officer with a phone call to the new school.

School notifies the Local Authority when a pupil's name is to be removed from the admission register, as soon as the grounds for removal are met and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is removed from the register. The Attendance Officer will ring the new school and confirm attendance on the first day they are due to go on roll.

If a pupil leaves the UK to go to a school abroad, school staff will ring the new school or the family themselves to make sure the pupil is safely where they said they would be. All schools are required to notify the Local Authority within five days when a pupil's name is added to the admission register. Schools will need to provide the Local Authority with all the information held within the admission register about a pupil.

When the whereabouts of a child is unclear or unknown, it is reasonable to expect that we will complete and record one or more of the following actions:

- Make contact with the parent, relatives, neighbours using known contact details
- Home visits made by Attendance and Pupil Support Officer
- Letters – mainly warning parents that unauthorised leave of absence could result in a pupil being taken off the admission register
- Check with any Local Authority and school to which a child may have moved

This list is not exhaustive or prescriptive, and so Crossley Fields (and the Local Authority) should treat each case on its individual merits and use their judgement, ensuring they have taken into account all of the facts of the case

Making these enquiries may not always lead to establishing the location of the child, but will provide a steer on what action should be taken next.

Removal from the register

A pupil's name can only be removed from the admission register if Crossley Fields and the Local Authority have failed to establish the pupil's whereabouts after jointly taking reasonable enquiries.

If there is evidence to suggest the child has moved to a different Local Authority area, Crossley Fields will contact the named person in the new authority using secure communication methods. The Local Authority should maintain a record of the child's details until they are located or attain school leaving age.

Where a parent notifies the school in writing that they are home educating, Crossley Fields must inform the Local Authority and take the child's name off the school register. Our Attendance and Pupil Support Officer will always be involved in this process.