



Croyland Primary School

Pupil Attendance Policy

Reviewed for September 2018
To be reviewed September 2019

"If we show Croyland values, we will have a happy school. Our learning will be exciting and we will be experts in lots of things."

Jayden Bailey July 2014

INTRODUCTION

Regular attendance at school is crucial if our pupils are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. Absence leaves children vulnerable to falling behind academically. The impact of poor attendance can also be observed in a child's self-esteem and confidence within school and their ability to have and maintain friendships.

WHAT THE LAW SAYS

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority.

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to below 90% by the end of the school year, has missed at least 20 school days. If this continues every school year from Foundation Stage to Year 6, it equates to half a school year. This will undoubtedly leave your child with academic and social gaps or, academically behind their peers as they leave us.

OUR ATTENDANCE STRATEGY

The purpose of writing this attendance policy is to ensure that all Croyland staff and the Governing Body are fully aware of the actions that are necessary, in order to promote good attendance.

As a school community, our focus is to:

- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and are valued by all staff.
- Ensure a pupil's achievement is not hindered by low levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Raise awareness to parents, carers and our pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of education and that potential is hindered by unnecessary absence.
- Actively challenge the attitudes of those parents and pupils who give low priority to attendance and punctuality
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and are intrinsically motivated to come to school.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance.

AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES

Every half day absence from school is classified as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of an absence is always required. Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a reason such as illness or another unavoidable cause. As a school, we follow up any absences to ascertain the reason for it before we make a decision regarding entry to the school register.

Authorised Absence:

Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for the child to be absent or where an explanation offered afterwards has been accepted as satisfactory justification for a child's non-attendance at school. Absence may generally be authorised for the following reasons:

- illness, medical or dental appointments;
- days of religious observance;
- exclusion;
- traveller child travelling for the purposes of parent's employment
- family bereavement;
- involvement in a public performance;
- 'exceptional' occasions (the nature of such occasions will be determined by school on an individual basis);

The National Associations for Headteachers have defined what constitutes exceptional circumstances for granting absence during term time.

“Head teachers already have discretion over the granting of absence during term time. They rightly prioritise learning over holidays. Headteachers are able to - and do - authorise absence in exceptional circumstances.

“The fundamental principles for defining ‘exceptional’ are where requests are rare, significant, unavoidable and short.

Unauthorised Absence:

Unauthorised absence is where no explanation has been given for the child's absence or where the explanation offered is considered by the school to be unsatisfactory.

Absence will **not** be authorised in the following circumstances:

- no explanation is offered by the parent/carer;
- a parent medical need or sickness;
- a sibling medical need or sickness;
- the explanation offered is unsatisfactory (eg shopping, minding the house, lack of transport to school etc);
- family holidays;
- Children who arrive at school after the close of the register at 9.25 am without an authorised reason.

SCHOOL PROCEDURES

We are required by law to call attendance registers twice daily - once at the start of the morning session and again during the afternoon session. Croyland Primary School expects parents/carers

to ensure that children are on the school premises by 8.55 am and again at 1.10/1.25 pm. The morning register closes at 9.25 so pupils arriving between 8.55 and 9.25 will be marked with an L, indicating they are late for school. However, pupils arriving after the register has closed will be registered with a U showing they are present in school but were late enough to affect their learning.

In considering attendance levels, the class register is of paramount importance. Registers are legal documents. Should parents/ carers of a persistent non-attender be prosecuted by the Local Authority under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act, then the information which the register contains will be the main source of evidence presented to the court. The regulatory requirements placed on schools with regard to the keeping of registers are to be found in the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006.

The data which is extracted from attendance registers is used to support the more effective management of whole-school attendance matters. Such data can be used to:

- support and underpin the target-setting process (for individual pupils, year groups, identified cohorts, the whole school) in relation to overall attendance and unauthorised absence on a (half) termly and yearly basis;
- identify individual children and particular groups of children who are or may be at risk of becoming persistent absentees;
- facilitate and encourage early intervention;
- identify particular types or patterns of absenteeism (for example, time lost to term-time holidays, regular absences on Mondays and/or Fridays, etc); match attendance trends with attainment trends;
- identify possible inconsistencies in the implementation of school policy;
- report attendance matters to parents/carers

As a vigilant and caring school, we apply first-call response to pupil absence. This means we make a determined and sustained effort to respond to unexplained absence on the first morning of absence, usually through a telephone call. We would prefer that parents were active in informing us of their child's absence before the school day begins to minimise the time this follow up takes.

In order to ensure that our registers are accurate and our pupils are identified as safe, as early as possible within the school day, we request that parents **contact school before 8.30am on the first day of absence.** There is an automated voicemail service available so messages can be left.

If we don't receive a call or voicemail message, school will contact the named parent/carers in the morning to ascertain the reason for their child's absence. **A phone call will be made each day the child is absent, unless it is known in advance how long the child will be absent from**

school. As a record of the absence, we request that it is followed up with a written note or completion of a school 'absence form' available from the School Office.

A note/letter from a parent does not make the absence authorised. Reasons for a pupil's absence such as shopping, birthday treats and siblings' birthdays are not unavoidable causes, warranting authorised absence. Parents should avoid, where possible, making medical and dental appointments for their child during school time. Special Leave may however, be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for hospital medical appointments which must be in school time.

Where parents have not contacted the school to explain their child's absence and a reason is not returned within seven days, the absence is registered as unauthorised.

If a child is subject to a Child Protection Plan and, does not arrive at school or a reason is received, the child's Social Worker will be contacted as a matter of urgency.

If we are in anyway concerned about a child's non-attendance at school during the period prior to being missing from education, we will ask the Police to undertake a Welfare Check.

HOLIDAYS

In accordance with The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations which were revised in 2013, time off school for a family holiday is no longer permitted and will not be authorised or deemed Exceptional Leave regardless of the reasons given.

EXCEPTIONAL LEAVE

If a parent requires Exceptional Leave, they must complete the request form two weeks before the start date of their request for leave. We will consider the request based upon the information that has been received. A written response noting whether the Exceptional Leave has been granted or refused will be sent to the parent. If granted, the exceptional leave will be recorded as an authorised absence.

If parents choose to take their children out of school during term time, the school will not be responsible for setting the work missed or preparing additional work whilst the child is absent. A child's learning needs are based on on-going daily assessments which require the child to be in school. Teachers will however provide a child with an exercise book if they wish to keep a diary of their experience. In doing this, **THIS DOES NOT MEAN WE ARE SUPPORTING THE ABSENCE IN ANY WAY.**

Every request for exception leave is reviewed on an individual basis.

If we have reason to believe that a family/child is on holiday, despite reasons given through messages left on the school answering machine, the attendance will be recorded as unauthorised. To support our judgement, we may make a home visit or return the original phone call for further clarification.

WORKING WITH AND COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS IN REGARD TO ATTENDANCE

All parents receive a termly attendance report informing them of their child's attendance for the term. The last report for the year is sent within the school report. It is made very clear on this letter as to whether the attendance is satisfactory or poor.

Every term a member of the SLT, and the Attendance Lead and School Secretary meet together to review whole school key stage attendance and individual children. An attendance report is prepared prior to this meeting with comparison data. It includes authorised and unauthorised attendance and persistent absences for the term and year to date.

Where a child's attendance is between 90% and 96%, a letter will be sent to parents making clear that their child's attendance must improve. (Appendix 1)

Where a child is listed on the school's persistent absence report, which is below 90% to date, a parent may be invited into school to discuss how their child's attendance can be improved. We would not meet with a parent where an unauthorised holiday has been taken and historic or current attendance is good or, there has been a medical need for the child.

We may decide to undertake, for those parents who do not attend on the date and time that has been arranged and who do not inform us of their lack of availability, to conduct a home visit to address our concerns.

If after an agreed period of time, there has not been a significant improvement of attendance, a Parent Contract Meeting will be arranged. All contracts set 100% attendance target over 5 weeks period. If this target is not met a referral to the Educational Inclusion and Partnerships Team will be made by the school.

When a parent contract is initiated, any absence must be accompanied by medical evidence for it to be authorised.

PENALTY NOTICES

Take directly from Northamptonshire County Council Web site:

What is a penalty notice?

A penalty notice (PN) is an alternative to prosecution and requires the parent(s) to pay a fixed amount as a fine for their child's irregular attendance at school. It is issued per parent, per child.

Who issues them?

In Northamptonshire the Local Authority issues them through the Educational Inclusion and Partnership Team following notification from the school.

When are they used?

- When a pupil has a minimum of 10 school sessions recorded as unauthorised in a 6 school week period; (a school day is two sessions -morning and afternoon) or
- When a pupil has a series of unauthorised absences leading to irregular attendance

This includes:

- Any absence marked in the register as unauthorised.
- Persistent late arrival at school after the register has been taken and is recorded as an unauthorised absence.

- An absence in term time which has not been authorised by the Headteacher. The Government has directed that Headteachers may only grant leave in exceptional circumstances.
- PNs can also be used during the first 5 days of exclusion. Parents are made aware of the consequences by letter when a child is excluded from school.

Please note

If the school refers a period of absence that is longer than 15 consecutive school days, the Educational and Inclusion Partnership team may consider that a penalty notice is not appropriate.

In these instances the matter may proceed to a prosecution. If a parent knows that their child is failing to attend school regularly and there is reasonable justification for not ensuring that their child attends then it is for the parent or carers to prove that reasonable justification.

LATENESS

Children are expected to be punctual and lateness is unacceptable. Children should be on the school premises by 8.50am. The school day officially starts at 8.55am (when the register is called). Children who arrive after this time will be issued with a Late Card. A record will be maintained of all children who are late and the reason for their lateness. Those children late after the close of the register (at 9.25am) will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. Persistent lateness is addressed through the Pastoral Team and Headteacher if it is required and further advice may be taken from the Educational Inclusion and partnerships Team.

CHILDREN RELUCTANT TO ATTEND SCHOOL

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best resolved by contacting the school and discussing the specific issues initially with the child's class teacher. If a child is reluctant to attend school, do not attempt to cover up their absence or give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse in the longer term.

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE

Religious observance is for festivals such as Eid ul-Fitr or Diwali where school will only authorize **the actual days of the festivals**. The Jehovah Witness Summer Convention day will also be authorised. If a family has to travel abroad for a festival, then a day will be authorised for the event, plus up to two days travel. Absence due to religious observance will be authorised, but the day must be:

- exclusively set apart for religious observance; and
- set apart by the parents' religious body (not the parents)

CHILDREN NOT COLLECTED AFTER SCHOOL HOURS

There are rare occasions when perhaps due to an emergency, parents are not able to collect their children promptly from school, or make arrangements for their collection at the end of the school day. Parents should always attempt to contact the school as soon as possible if they are likely to be late collecting their child.

In accordance with Northamptonshire County Council Policy, if a child is not collected, the school will make enquiries to find the parents using the emergency contact numbers provided by the parents. If after one hour it has not been possible to contact parents/carers then the local Police will be informed of the situation. The school will also contact the Initial Contact Team (Social Services) to inform them of a possible problem.

SCHOOL TARGETS

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to monitor attendance and punctuality regularly. The Governing Body sets attendance targets annually and are kept informed on attendance figures

The school has adopted the following attendance targets:

Achieve a minimum of 96% attendance for all children, apart from those with chronic health issues.

OPERATIONAL ISSUES

The Pastoral Team oversee the attendance and punctuality matters in the first instance. A member of the team records punctuality on a daily basis and reports individual cases at a termly pastoral review. Attendance is addressed in the same way, with delegated actions to address school concerns.

All Parental Contracts are filed in the pupil's personal file on successful completion of the contract. Working contracts are held by the Lead Practitioner for Pastoral Intervention.

The Headteacher, Assistant Headteacher for Inclusion and Christine Baillie are currently those designated to making referrals to the Educational Inclusion and partnership Team

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

The Governing Body will review this policy periodically and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school.

Croyland Primary School

Headteacher:
Miss Lucy Deakin

bursar@croyland-pri.northants-ecl.gov.uk
Website: www.croylandprimary.co.uk



Croyland Road
Wellingborough
Northamptonshire
NN8 2AX

Tel: 01933 224169
Fax: 01933 275831

REQUEST FOR EXCEPTIONAL LEAVE WITHIN THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2017-2018

Please note that in accordance with The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 which have been revised in 2013, time off school for a family holiday is no longer permitted and will not be authorised.

If you require Exceptional Leave, please complete the form below and return it to school at least two weeks before the start date of your request for leave. The school will consider your request in accordance with the Attendance Policy. You will receive written notification of our decision. If granted, the exceptional leave will be recorded as an authorised absence. Children, who acquire five days of unauthorised absence, will be referred to the Education Inclusions and Partnership Team within the Local Authority. The consequences of this may be a fixed penalty notice of £60 per child, rising to £120 if not paid within 21 days.

Thank you.

Mrs. C. Baillie
Home School Support Worker (Attendance Management)

✂-----

FAO: Mrs. C. Baillie

OFFICE USE:

_____ %

Today's date: _____

Name of Pupil: _____ Class: _____

I request Exceptional Leave for the above named child.

Please complete the details below – **one form for each child** - and attach a letter explaining clearly the exceptional circumstances that you feel warrant your child being granted exceptional leave during term time.

Exceptional leave from (date): _____ to:

Total number of (school) days leave requested: _____

During the current school year, I have / have not made a request for exceptional leave previously.*

Signed: _____ (Parent/Guardian)

*Please delete as appropriate

Croyland Primary School

Headteacher
Miss L. Deakin

bursar@croyland-pri.northants-ecl.gov.uk
Website: www.croylandprimary.co.uk



Croyland Road
Wellingborough
Northamptonshire
NN8 2AX

Tel: 01933 224169
Fax: 01933 275831

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO REQUEST FOR EXCEPTIONAL LEAVE

Today's date: _____

Dear Parents/Guardians of _____ in Class _____

Thank you for your request for Exceptional Leave from _____ to _____.

Due regard has been given to your supporting letter and the reasons for requesting Exceptional Leave in accordance with the governors' Attendance Policy.

Exceptional Leave has been granted for the entire period that was requested; the expected return date is: _____. Parents are expected to contact the school if there are any delays in the pupil returning to the school when expected.

Exceptional Leave has been granted for part of the period requested – a total of _____ days. **Any additional days taken will be recorded as unauthorised absence.**

 Exceptional Leave has been refused – **please note that if you keep your child off school, their absence will be recorded as unauthorised. If this leave totals more than five days, or combines so that your child has a combined total of five or more days unauthorised absence within the year, the school has no option but to refer your case to the Educational and Inclusion Partnership team within the Local Authority. They then may decide to enforce a fine.**

Yours sincerely,

Miss L. Deakin
Headteacher

cc. Pupil's File, Class teacher