



# Cropredy C of E Primary School

## Attendance Policy

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## **CROPREDY CE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

### **Attendance Policy**

#### **Introduction**

Cropredy CE Primary School is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.

We will endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance including e.g. newsletters and end of term reports.

School attendance is subject to various Education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education (DfE).

Each year the school will examine its attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets. These will reflect both national and Oxfordshire attendance targets.

The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

This policy will contain within it, the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

#### **Expectations of parents/carers**

- Parent/carers will ensure their child/ren attend school, aiming for a 100% attendance rate
- That they will contact school as soon as it is reasonably practical (eg by 9.00a.m.) whenever their child is unable to attend
- Parents need to contact school on subsequent days if their child is still unable to attend
- That they will inform the school if the child/ren is unavoidably late in the morning.
- To ensure that their child arrives in school in good time and well prepared for the school day
- To contact the school, in confidence, whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school
- To refrain from taking the child out of school for holidays, or occasional days, unless there are significant exceptional circumstances
- To inform the school in writing, if your child/ren has to have a medical or dental appointment during school time. Dates, times and collection arrangements for the child/ren should be passed to the class teacher/school office prior to the absence.

**(Wherever possible, we encourage parents to try to arrange these appointments out of school hours or during school breaks.)**

### **Expectations of school**

- To ensure regular, efficient and accurate recording of presence / absence
- To make 1st day absence contact with parents when a child fails to attend
- To refer to appropriate support agencies as required
- To communicate to all stakeholders clear expectations of what constitutes good attendance and why it is important
- To give clear guidance as to how good attendance is promoted

### **Expectations of governors**

- To monitor the effectiveness of the policy through Headteacher reports
- To support the school in encouraging good attendance through role modelling
- To communicate with parents and other agencies as appropriate

### **The School Day**

The school day starts at **8.25a.m.** for all children and finishes at 2.45p.m.

Children should not arrive on site **before 8.15a.m.** as we cannot accept responsibility for them before this time.

Parents should inform the school at the earliest opportunity if they are unable to collect their child/ren on time.

### **Registration**

The Register is taken between **8.25a.m. and 8.35a.m.** and again between **12.45pm and 12.50pm.** On completion, registers will be returned to the school office.

Registers are marked by **8.35a.m.** and your child will receive a late mark if he/she is not present in class by that time.

Registration closes at **8.45a.m.** In accordance with regulations, unless there are exceptional circumstances, if your child arrives after that time he/she will receive a mark to show that he/she is on site, but this will not count as a present mark and will mean an **Unauthorised Absence.**

1. Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised (/ \), unauthorised (O) or as an approved educational activity (V) (attendance out of school).

2. Only the Headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

### **Lateness**

Any child who arrives at school after 8.45a.m. will need to enter school by the main office door.

1. Any pupil arriving after these times will be marked as having an unauthorised absence (U) unless there is an acceptable explanation i.e. school transport was delayed.

2. In cases for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early

morning medical appointment, the appropriate absence code will be entered.

3. Pupils arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be treated for statistical purposes, as present, but will be coded as late (L) before registers close.

4. Parents/Carers must inform the school if their child is going to be absent on or before the first day. Parents should also contact the school on subsequent days if the absence is extended. If no reason is given within 2 weeks the absence will become unauthorised.

5. When making medical/dental appointments, every effort must be made to ensure appointments are outside school hours but we acknowledge that this is not always possible. Medical/Dental appointments must be accompanied by an appointment card or other written confirmation.

### **Persistent Lateness**

If a child arrives after the register has closed, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, unless there are exceptional circumstances. If the lateness is persistent and parents/carers fail to work with school to address the issues, the matter will be referred to the Home School Community Link Worker and/or the Early Intervention Hub, who will offer support. If there is no improvement, a Fixed Penalty Fine could be issued.

We are required to record all absences on our Data Collection returns and submit these to the LA and DfE .**This includes details of all Unauthorised Absences.**

### **Absence from School**

#### **First Day Absence**

Parents should phone the school before 9.00a.m. on the first day of absence.

If a message has not been received, office staff will phone the parent by 9.30a.m.

If no contact is made by phone, then contact will be attempted by text or email.

Any letters from parents regarding absences will be dated on receipt and put in the relevant registers.

If there is no initial reason given for the absence, or letter of explanation on the child's return, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

#### **Response to non attendance**

If a child is absent, and contact is not received from the parents, the parents will be contacted on the first day of absence by telephone. If no contact can be made, either through work or mobile numbers, the school will use the contacts list provided by parents.

Where there has been no response, or explanation, the school will post a letter to the parents/carers requesting information regarding the absence.

Where there continues to be no response to the school intervention, and the absence has persisted without explanation, the school will refer the issue to the Early Intervention Hub, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) (Alison Beasley) and/or Children Missing in Education (Alan Blackmore) depending on the length of absence.

If a child's attendance falls below 85% over a school term the school will initially write to parents/carers expressing concerns about levels of attendance and offering support if required. If the situation does not improve, there is a staged level of response in which the

Head Teacher will invite the parents in to discuss the issue and may request the support of the Early Intervention Hub and/ or the Home School Community Link Worker if there is no improvement.

### **Ten Day Absence**

Any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days will be referred to Oxfordshire County Council, which is a legal requirement. The school will include details of the action they have taken.

### **Absence Notes**

Absence notes received from parents explaining absence should be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil, that may require further investigation, then the notes may need to be retained for a longer period.

### **Frequent Absence**

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to be aware of and bring attention to, any emerging attendance concerns.

The Headteacher monitors rates of attendance on a regular basis. Current percentage rates of attendance are looked at as are the frequency of and reasons for absence. Rates of attendance from previous academic years can also be referred to within this process.

Where incidents of poor attendance and/or lateness are identified through monitoring parents/carers will be notified in writing that this is a cause for concern. In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve any concerns with parent/s. The Headteacher will liaise with the Attendance and Engagement Officer to ensure necessary action is taken when incidents of poor attendance and/or punctuality are identified. If this continues, the school will invite parents/carers in to discuss causes and ways forward.

An initial letter is sent home if a child has a current percentage rate of less than 90% and appears to be falling. The Headteacher may invite the parents to a meeting.

A further letter is sent home if further absences take place which lead to the rate of absence falling. At this point, school may request a note from a Doctor before authorising any further absences due to illness.

The Oxfordshire Attendance and Engagement team will be contacted if school has any concerns regarding the attendance of a child. They may then work with a family to support improvements in attendance.

### **Penalty Notices and Legal Action**

#### **The Law**

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient fulltime education suitable-

[a] To his age, ability and aptitude and

[b] To any special needs he may have. either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

In cases of persistent absenteeism, the school reserves the right to issue a Penalty Notice Warning which could result in a referral to The County Attendance Team to issue a fine or take further legal action through the courts.

A Penalty Notice is a fine that the County Attendance Team may decide to issue instead of taking legal action through the Magistrates' Court system.

A Parent/Carer can be issued with a penalty notice if:

they fail to ensure that their child attends school, or other education provision regularly, usually defined as six or more unauthorised absence sessions over a six week period;

they allow their child to take leave of absence during term time without the school's authorisation;

they fail to return their child to school on the agreed date after a period of authorised leave of absence;

their child persistently arrives late for school after registration is closed.

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) 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.

The school monitors all absence 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 parents will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully by the school and a parenting contract meeting will be offered between parent, pupil and school to try and help resolve any issues.

PA cases maybe referred to the County Attendance Team and if necessary, they have a range of legal powers open to them to enforce attendance including parenting orders, face a fine of up to £2,500 per parent and/or 3 months imprisonment.

### **A Welcome Back**

It is important that on return from an absence that all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to other pupils.

### **Promoting Attendance**

The school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents/carers that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education.

The Home/School agreement can be used in this way.

## **Attendance Awards**

Children with 100% attendance will be rewarded at the end of the Autumn, Spring and Summer terms.

They will also be praised within our celebration assembly on the last Friday of the Christmas term, spring term and summer term. Children who have 100% attendance for the whole year will also be presented with a special certificate.

## **Leave of Absence**

As of 1st September 2013, the Headteacher will not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are ***exceptional circumstances***.

Examples of what might be considered exceptional circumstances as such are:

- 1 Where it is company/organisational policy for an employee to take leave at a specified time in the year and there is no opportunity for a family holiday in school holidays. This must be supported by documentary evidence from the organisation.
- 2 Service personnel returning from/scheduled to embark upon a tour of duty abroad.
- 3 Where a holiday is recommended as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue. Evidence must be provided, from qualified professionals, such as a doctor.
- 4 Where it may be a unique/last opportunity to spend time with a relative or leave for bereavement of a family member or attending a funeral.
- 5 Where there are other factors which the headteacher may consider to be exceptional circumstances, this may be referred to the Local Authority for advice.

Parents/Carers should seek permission from the Headteacher prior to the leave of absence period in question. This request must be received by the Headteacher at least 14 days before the absence (except in the case of bereavement).

Parents must use the **Exceptional Circumstances Application Form for Leave of Absence** (See **Appendix 1**; forms also available from the school office on request); supplying additional written evidence if available when requesting absence leave for their child.

The decision will be made based on this information provided.

The Headteacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school **if** the leave is granted.

Parents/carers who remove their children from school without authorisation or do not return their child to school on the agreed date following an authorised period of leave of absence, may face a Penalty Notice Warning which could lead to a fine/prosecution (see Penalty Notices and Legal Action above).

## **Attendance Targets**

The school will set attendance targets each year. A system for analysing performance towards the targets will be established and a member of the senior leadership team will be responsible for overseeing this work.

Through the implementation of the policy, the following will be achieved:

- a 96.5% + attendance rate
- a positive partnership between parents and school, working for the benefit of the children's learning
- clear and transparent procedures and expectations understood by all stakeholders

### **Monitoring and evaluating effectiveness**

- The Headteacher will present analysed attendance data at the end of each of the six terms to identify issues and trends.
- The Curriculum Committee will review attendance as part of its terms of reference
- The Headteacher will discuss specific concerns with the nominated governor as appropriate
- The school will evaluate the success of the procedures by measuring the annual attendance
- % against their target at the end of the year, and their progress towards attaining the target in February.

### **Register and Admission Roll keeping.**

The legal requirements regarding register and admission roll keeping can be found in The Education [Pupil Registration] (England) Regulations 2006, including:

- Attendance registers, by law, must be kept for at least 3 years;
- Computer registers must be printed out at least once a month and bound into annual volumes (Phoenix report AO2) – alternatively electronic back-ups or micro- fiche copies can be made; these also need preserving for at least three years.

Entries in paper registers must be in ink.

All corrections must be visible (no correcting fluid) The registers must be safely stored on the on-line system.



## **Categorisation of Absence**

Any pupil who is on roll but not present in the school at the time of registration must be recorded within one of these categories:

1. Unauthorised Absence;
2. Authorised Absence;
3. Approved Educational Activity.

### **1. Unauthorised Absence**

An absence is classified as 'unauthorised' when a child is away from school without the permission of the school. Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without a good reason, even with the support of a parent.

Some examples of 'unauthorised absences' are:

- Family holidays
- Family day visit
- Shopping
- Keeping a hairdressing appointment
- A birthday treat

### **2. Authorised Absence**

This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.

An absence is classified as 'authorised' when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.

Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority.

Consequently not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

Some examples of 'authorised' absences are:

- when a child is ill or receiving medical attention (appointment cards should be available)
- when a close family member has died
- when prior consent has been obtained from the Headteacher, for example for a music examination

### **3. Approved Educational Activity**

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school.

This would include:

- Field trips and educational visits;
- Sporting activities;
- Link courses or approved education off site;
- Most types of dual registration.

**Note: Pupils recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.**

**Key Contact Details:**

**School Telephone Number:** 01295 750210

**School Email Address:** [office.3000@cropredy.oxon.sch.uk](mailto:office.3000@cropredy.oxon.sch.uk)

**Oxfordshire Local Authority Attendance and Engagement Officer Telephone Number:** 01865 323513

## Appendix 1

### APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE FOR A SCHOOL PUPIL IN TERM TIME IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES ONLY

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 only allow Head Teacher to authorise leave of absence (for any purpose) in **exceptional circumstances**
- **If** the exceptional circumstances are agreed, the Head Teacher will determine the length of the absence authorised
- Requests for Leave of Absence should be made in advance and before any arrangements confirmed or money committed
- If Leave of Absence is granted, please contact school to discuss measures to minimise the impact of the absence on your child's academic progress
- This form **MUST** be completed by the resident parent(s) carer(s) before requests will be considered
- Please complete a Leave of Absence form for each child
- Failure to make a request for a Leave of Absence in advance will result in the absence being recorded as unauthorised

Please note: **Parents do not have any legal entitlement to take their child on holiday during term time.**

I wish to apply for Leave of Absence from school to be granted to:

Name of Child/Children: \_\_\_\_\_ Year Group/s: \_\_\_\_\_

First Date of Proposed Absence: \_\_\_\_\_ Last Date of Proposed Absence: \_\_\_\_\_

Expected date of return to school: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for Proposed Absence – please provide reasons to support the application including evidence (they can only be exceptional circumstances (please refer to policy before completing))

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

Total number of school days requested on this occasion

Signature of resident

Parent/Carer: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**For school use only: NAME OF CHILD:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date received by school:** \_\_\_\_\_

First date of absence requested: \_\_\_\_\_ Last date of absence requested: \_\_\_\_\_

Absence Authorised: Yes / No if absence authorised, expected date of return to school:

\_\_\_\_\_

The reasons for this decision are: \_\_\_\_\_

- **Leave Of Absence record sheet to be completed by school and submitted where verbal requests made/for other relevant information**

Head Teacher/Attendance Lead: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Copy of this completed section to be sent back to the parent with appropriate letter**

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 state:

1. Head Teachers **shall not grant any** leave of absence during term time **unless:**
  - A) *An application has been made 14 days in advance of the requested absence, by the parent with whom the child normally resides (except in the case of bereavement)*

**AND**

- B) *They consider there to be exceptional circumstances relating to the application for absence. For further detailing please refer to Attendance Policy (see school website or request a copy from the school office)*
2. The Head Teacher must be satisfied that exceptional circumstances warrant the granting of a leave of absence.
3. The Head Teacher can determine how long an absence should be and any additional absence will not be authorised.

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**Additional Information**

- Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full time education through regular attendance at a school or otherwise (i.e. home education) (Section 7 Education Act 1996)
- If a child who is of compulsory age, who is registered at school and fails to attend regularly, it is the parent that will be guilty of an offence (Section 444 (1) Education Act 1996).

Parents do need to be aware that children who have unauthorised absences from school may be subject to a Fixed Penalty Notice and/or prosecution. Ref: The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013

- Any Fixed Penalty Notices issued and/or prosecution may apply to each parent for each child who fails to attend school.

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**Parents:**

1. The application must be made in advance by the parent(s) that the child normally resides with. In line with our attendance policy, this request must be received by the school at least 14 days prior to the requested absence (except in the case of bereavement)
2. Any leave of absence taken which has not been requested in advance will be recorded as unauthorised.
3. In line with The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013, parents can be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice or prosecuted for unauthorised absence including holidays.

**We have a shared responsibility to ensure that the law is upheld and that your child achieves to his/her full potential. We look forward to your co-operation.**