

# ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

St John's CofE Primary School Crossens is committed to providing excellence for children of all abilities. High attendance and good punctuality are essential for children to work to their potential, be successful and benefit from the opportunities available to them at the School. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly.

Achieving high attendance is a necessity in preparing children for future working life as an adult. Children should be at the School, **on time and every day** that the School is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that parents and carers recognise their responsibility and obligation to make sure that children attend regularly. This Policy sets out how the School, its partners and parents/carers can work together to achieve this.

### 1.1 The Importance of Regular Attendance:

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any child's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring children' regular attendance at the School is the **legal responsibility of Parents By law, all children of compulsory school age must attend school.** Poor attendance not only undermines a child's education and future life chances, it sometimes puts children at risk, encouraging anti-social behaviour. Permitting absence from the School without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

### 1.2 Promoting Regular Attendance:

Helping to create a habit of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, children and all members of School staff.

#### To maintain a focus on this the School will:

- Report to parents every term (Parents' Evening or written report) on how their child is performing at the School. This will include information about their attendance and punctuality.
- Celebrate good attendance in assemblies and with certificates, as well as Governors' awards;
- Reward good or improving attendance in a variety of ways

## 2.0 ABSENCE PROCEDURES

### 2.1 If a child is absent parents should:

- Contact the School by 9am ideally on the first day of absence; the dedicated telephone number is 01704227441
- Parents/Carers may be required to send in a note on the child's day of return (absences 1-4 days)
- Parent/carers may also call into the School and report to reception staff, who, on school days may arrange for a member of staff to speak with them.
- For absences that extend beyond a week (5 school days) a written note/letter will be required on the day of return
- For absences that extend beyond a week (5 school days) some form of medical evidence may be required; this can be in the form of a Doctor's note/copy prescription/sight of prescribed medication/completed School form.

### 2.2 If a child is absent the School will:

- Telephone or text parents/carers on the first day of absence if a message (that explains the absence) has not been received;
- Invite parents in to discuss the situation with the Senior Teacher responsible for Attendance and/or the Head teacher, if absences persist;

### 2.3 Telephone numbers:

- There are times when the School will need to contact parents on a range of issues, including absence, so it is essential that the School has up to date contact numbers at all times. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

## 3.0 LATENESS

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving children also disrupt lessons. Persistent poor punctuality will result in sanctions being applied e.g. an attendance or punctuality contract with parents/carers.

### 3.1 How we manage lateness:

- from **8.40** children can access the School playground but **must be supervised** by their parents/carers until 8.45.

**The parents/carers of children who come to school on their own should be aware that there will be no teacher on the playground until 8.45am**

- at **8.45** the first bell sounds and all children who have arrived on the playground will be required to go into class
- at **8.55am** (sharp) gates close – all children should be in class by this time. Any child arriving in class after this time will be marked as late.
- at **8.55** the registers are closed.

If any child is persistently late, parents/carers will be invited to discuss the situation with the Senior Teacher responsible for Attendance and/or the Head teacher. (Parents/carers can approach the School at any time if they experience problems getting their child to the School on time.) If lateness remains an issue then the following may be invoked:

*'In accordance with the Regulations, if children arrive after **8.55** they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an **unauthorised absence**. This may mean that parents could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.'*

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#### **4.0 UNDERSTANDING TYPES OF ABSENCES**

Every half-day absence from the School has to be classified by the School (not by the parents), as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**.

Registers are taken twice a day by staff to record attendance marks for class. Registers are legal documents so the School staff are obliged to complete them accurately. Attendance marks are also recorded at every lesson to monitor child punctuality and guard against truancy. Information about the cause of any absence is always required from parents/carers, preferably in writing.

##### **4.1 Authorised**

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from the School for a good reason such as illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in School time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes.

##### **4.2 Unauthorised**

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 Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the School day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.
- Oversleeping
- Absent to look after an unwell sibling
- Confusion over terms dates

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 a child is reluctant to attend, parents/carers should not condone their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending as this gives the child the impression that attendance does not matter.

## **5.0 EXCEPTIONAL LEAVE IN TERM TIME**

There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off during school term time to have exceptional leave. Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the School, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

### **5.1 Holiday during Term Time**

It is the School's policy not to automatically grant applications for holidays in term time.

### **5.2 Exceptional Leave**

Children have a total of 13 weeks holiday a year so parents should only request that they be able to take their child out of school under **exceptional circumstances**. This is known as exceptional leave and must be applied for in writing addressed to the Head teacher. In this letter parents/carers should make clear the reasons why it is necessary to take their child(ren) out of school. Taking holidays in term time will affect a child's education and is not acceptable. All application letters for exceptional leave must be made two weeks in advance.

It is at the discretion of the Head teacher that a maximum of 5 days in any academic year may be authorised. In making a decision the Head teacher will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave in term time; a child's attendance and punctuality record at the time of application; the time of year.

**Absences requested between September and May for children in Year 6 will be unauthorised.**

**Any absence requested during SATs week or the school's assessment week will be unauthorised.**

## **6.0 PERSISTENT ABSENTEEISM (PA)**

A child becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 15% or more schooling across the School year for whatever reason. Absence at this level will do considerable damage to any child's educational prospects. The School expects parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. All absence is monitored thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority. Parents/carers will be informed of the concern immediately. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system.

## **7.0 PENALTY NOTICE PROCEEDINGS**

Penalty Notices for absence from school can be issued by the Attendance and Welfare Service based on requests from schools.

The following circumstances are considered appropriate as reasons for the issuing of Penalty Notices:

- Truancy, including attendance and exclusion sweeps (formerly truancy sweeps).
- Parentally-condoned absences.

- Excessive holidays in term time.
- Excessive delayed return from extended holidays.
- Persistent lateness after the register has closed.

A pupil has to be absent from school in one of these circumstances for at least a minimum evidential requirement of twelve (12) school sessions lost to unauthorised absence in the current term **and/or** twenty (20) sessions lost to unauthorised absence over two consecutive terms will be required to trigger the process.

Payment of a penalty within 28 days of receipt of the notice is £60. Payment after this time, but within 42 days of receipt of the notice is £120, **[The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012]**.

Following a request by the school for the issuing of a Penalty Notice a check is made by the Attendance and Welfare Service to ensure that the request meets the terms of the Code of Conduct.

### **8.0 THE ROLE OF THE SENIOR TEACHER WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR ATTENDANCE (Mrs Anna Patterson):**

- Monitor attendance and punctuality of all children and specific groups on a half termly basis
- Investigate the attendance and punctuality of any child causing concern identified by their class teacher
- Follow up any unexplained absences
- Liaise with Attendance and Welfare Officers in the Local Authority
- Support parents/carers in ensuring their child attends school and arrives on time
- Implement rewards on a termly basis for children whose attendance is 98% or over at the end of a term and children whose attendance or punctuality has improved
- Keep all classes informed of their attendance and punctuality figures
- Report to the Ethos and Safeguarding Committee on a termly basis
- Analyse attendance figures against the national average and other benchmarks

Parents are expected to contact the School at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist the case will be referred to the local authority who will invite the parent to a school attendance panel. It is here they will receive a formal warning in relation to their child's attendance at school. .

### **9.0 CHILDREN MISSING IN EDUCATION**

No child will be removed from roll without consultation between the Head teacher or deputy Head teacher (Child Welfare) and the Attendance & Welfare Service. Where a child is missing from education with prolonged absences that are unexplained or if a family move away from the area but do not register with another school, the School will alert the local authority who will then take action according to child missing in

education policy and procedures. Movement of children between local authorities and schools is tracked nationally.

#### **10.0 PUBLICATION OF ATTENDANCE FIGURES**

The School has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. All School staff are committed to working with parents and children as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.