

Crest Infant School & Nursery



Attendance & Punctuality Policy

Person responsible: Mrs J Shields

Date of review: November 2020

Date of next review: November 2023

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ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Introduction

We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this 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 schooling 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.

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

Safeguarding: - Your child 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 this school on a regular basis may be considered as a safeguarding matter.

Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give you details on attendance in our regular newsletter;
- Report to you termly on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainment;
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements;
- Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions and certificates.

The law relating to attendance

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

- (a) Age, ability and aptitude and
- (b) Any special educational needs he/she may have'

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 then Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

Understanding 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, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other *unavoidable* cause.

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 local authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily e.g. because they have an appointment themselves rather than the child
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- 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

This school will seek advice from the Attendance Advisory Practitioner to issue a penalty notice for 10 or more unauthorised absences in any 6-week period (not counting mid-term or end of term holidays).

The sanction under a penalty notice is £60.00 for each adult/carer in the household if paid within 21 days of issue, or a £120.00 for each adult/carer in the household is paid within 28 days of issue and an automatic referral to the Magistrates court, if not paid.

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 to attend, 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 make things worse.

Persistent Absenteeism (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 causing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need the full support and co-operation of parents/guardians in order to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. If your child is reaching the PA mark (90%) or is at risk of moving towards this you will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

All our PA pupils and their parents are subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include: allocation of additional support through use of a supportive member of staff, of circle time, individual incentive programmes and participation in group activities around raising attendance. All PA cases are also automatically made known to Medway's Attendance Advisory Practitioner.

Absence Procedures

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us no later than 09:30am on the first day of absence with an explanation of the absence. This can be done via ParentMail, email to office@crestinf.medway.sch.uk, or leaving a voicemail on our absence line (01634 844127, option 1);
- Contact the school office on the third day of absence to advise us further, and if necessary arrange an appointment with a member of staff;

If your child is absent we will:

- Send a ParentMail or telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Send you a letter outlining your child's attendance record should the situation not improve;

- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Home/School Support Worker or Headteacher if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to Medway's Attendance Advisory Practitioner if attendance moves below 90%

Telephone numbers

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your current contact numbers at all times. Please help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date contact number. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

The Attendance Advisory Practitioner

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Attendance Advisory Practitioner. 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, these Practitioners can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrate's Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or Medway Council.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the AAP themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting Medway Council.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your 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 pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

How we manage lateness:

The gates open for the start of the day at **8.45am** and the school day starts at **8.55am**. We expect your child to be in class at that time.

Registers are marked at **8.55am** and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At **9.15am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time 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 you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice or court action if the problem persists.

Please note these times will vary during COVID-19 restrictions.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Headteacher and/or Home School Support Worker to resolve the problem. However, you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time and we will seek to help you with this. Please note the Attendance Advisory Practitioner may become involved to work alongside the school and the parents to resolve the persistent absence rates.

Holidays in term time

Under the revised attendance regulations from the DfE (September 2013), requests for term time holidays will **not** be authorised.

Leave of absence requests

Permission for leave of absence may be granted if there are considered to be **exceptional circumstances** i.e.

- a family bereavement or when a family needs to be together to support each other **in a time of crisis**
- where parents are service personnel with annual leave restrictions

In these cases, where the leave of absence is agreed, a **maximum of five days** will be approved.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as 'unauthorised' and as such may attract sanctions such as a penalty notice.

The sanction under a penalty notice is £60.00 for each adult/carer in the household if paid within 21 days of issue, or a £120.00 for each adult/carer in the household is paid within 28 days of issue and an automatic referral to the Magistrate's Court, if not paid.

School targets for attendance

Attendance is one of the areas Ofsted and the local authority monitor.

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

The minimum level of attendance for this school is **96%** attendance and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares. This is usually discussed at parent consultation evenings or by way of letter should your child's attendance fall below 95%.

Our target is to achieve beyond the nationally expected 96% because we know that excellent attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe our pupils can be amongst the best in Medway.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided in our newsletter and we ask for your full support.

Nursery Class Attendance

Nursery education is classed as non-statutory therefore not tracked by external agencies. However, we believe that regular attendance at Nursery is vital to cementing the foundations for learning and we do expect our Nursery age children to come to Nursery every session unless they are unwell.

Summary

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 pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible and that every child's welfare and life opportunities are promoted.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

This policy has been reviewed in accordance with Equalities Legislation on race, disability, age, gender, sexual orientation and gender identity, faith and belief.

This policy was reviewed in line with our School Improvement Plan 2015 -18.

Date of policy: October 2012

Date of reviews: October 2013 (DA)

May 2016 (JS)

September 2017 (JS)

Attendance & Punctuality at Crest Infant School & Nursery



I have received information from the school about the importance of attendance.

I understand my role as a parent in ensuring my child attends school regularly and on time.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Child's Name: _____ Class: _____

EVERY SCHOOL DAY COUNTS

Attendance percentages can be misleading.

Consider the following:

100% Attendance	0 Days Missed	Excellent	Gives your child the best chance of success and gets them off to a flying start.
95% Attendance	9 Days of Absence 1 week and 4 Days of Learning Missed	Satisfactory	
90% Attendance	19 Days of Absence 3 Weeks and 4 Days of Learning Missed	Poor	Less chance of success. Makes it harder to progress.
85% Attendance	27 Days of Absence 5 Weeks and 3 Days of Learning Missed Almost half a term missed	Very Poor	Serious implications on learning and progress.
80% Attendance	36 Days of Absence 7 Weeks and 3 Days of Learning Missed Half a term missed	Unacceptable	
75% Attendance	45 Days of Absence 9 Weeks and 1 Day of Learning Missed Almost 1 whole term missed	Unacceptable	



If your child has 90% attendance they will have the equivalent of:

- ½ a day off per week,
- 19 days off per year
- 247 days off over their school career of 13 academic years, equivalent to over 1 year of lost education.

Consider what this means for 80% or even 75% attendance