

# **THE CROSSWAYS SCHOOLS**

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

*Learning Together, Stronger Together*

### **RATIONALE**

The Crossways Schools recognise that positive behaviour and good attendance are central to raising standards and pupils' achievement. It is, therefore, important for pupils to attend school regularly and punctually in order to take part fully in the life of the school and to take advantage of the learning opportunities offered.

This is the responsibility of everyone involved: pupils, parents/ carers and all members of school staff.

### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to set out the ways by which attendance and punctuality are managed by the school and to clarify the role of the parents/ carers.

### **AIMS**

- To provide clear and coherent information for parents/ carers about attendance.
- To keep parents/ carers and staff informed of their responsibilities for attendance and punctuality
- To encourage every pupil to develop positive attitudes towards attendance and punctuality
- To set good attendance patterns
- To promote high attendance for all pupils ensuring continuity and quality of education by:
  - Promoting a positive school vision and ethos where everyone is valued
  - Promoting a positive school environment in which pupils feel secure and safe
  - Promoting positive behaviour and increased self-esteem
  - Being inclusive and offering equal opportunities to all, irrespective of age, gender, ethnicity, SEN etc.
  - Offering a broad, balanced curriculum which emphasises enjoyment and a commitment to learning
  - Providing high quality Personal Development and Well being

### **GUIDELINES**

#### **Parental Roles and Responsibilities for School Attendance**

Parents/ carers are legally responsible for ensuring their child attends school regularly and punctually.

#### **We expect the parent/carer to:**

- Understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality and promote this with their child
- Provide up to date contact numbers and changes of address
- Notify the school when their child is unable to attend, with a reason, on the first day and every subsequent day of the absence
- Provide a letter, email or phone call indicating absence due to illness, medical/ dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time or emergencies
- Ensure that their child arrives at school on time each day
- Let the school know if their child is going to be late, e.g. if a car breaks down; if an urgent appointment has been made

#### **Staff Roles and Responsibilities for School Attendance and Lateness**

#### **The School will:**

- Give attendance and punctuality a high priority.
- Ensure all new parents/ carers are made aware of the Policy and information on attendance in the School Prospectus and through the website.
- Provide and promote a welcoming and positive atmosphere so that children feel safe and their presence is valued.
- Work to ensure that there is enjoyment and commitment to learning among the children.

- Encourage the children to have a positive attitude towards attendance and punctuality.
- Ensure that attendance is effectively monitored and any unexplained absences are followed up promptly.
- Contact individual parents/ carers where there is concern about their child's attendance or punctuality.
- Investigate whether there are any home or school factors (or both), which are affecting a child's school attendance.
- Report to parents/ carers on the child's attendance in the end of year.
- Share with parent/carers at parents/ carers' evening the children's attendance rates in Autumn and Spring, if they are causing concern.
- Reward good or improving attendance through letters home, and stickers and certificates in celebration assembly.
- Liaise with the Education Welfare Officer, and other agencies, when necessary to promote good attendance.

### **Registration**

We have a legal duty to register all pupils in the attendance register in the morning and afternoon using the electronic register at 9.00 am and after lunchtime. Registers show whether any absence is authorised or unauthorised using the codes provided in SIMS (schools information management system) The school office staff will follow up any missing marks in the electronic register as soon as this has closed to ensure parental awareness and the child's safety.

### **Authorised absence**

An authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for absence (adhering to DoE Guidelines). This includes children being educated off site. Absences can only be authorised by the Executive Headteacher. Parents/ carers are asked to telephone the school before 8.40am on the first day of absence. If we do not receive a telephone call, the office will telephone or text to establish the reason. It is anticipated that by making these first day calls, and following up on all absences, parents/ carers will get into the habit of calling the school to notify of any absences.

### **Unauthorised absence**

All other absences will be treated as unauthorised, for example, shopping trips, holidays in term time, occasions where the school feels a child is being kept home without good reason or where a child is late a long time after registration has finished and the parent/carer fails to provide an acceptable explanation. In the event of no message being received on the first day of absence and after reasonable attempts by the school no explanation for an absence is received, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

If absence due to illness moves above a level higher than expected or to an unexpected frequency, it may be difficult to authorise further absence due to illness unless there is information from the GP or School Nurse, or the absences have been discussed at a School Attendance Meeting (SAM.) If a medical consent form is agreed and signed by the parents/ carers then this does not remove the parents/ carers' responsibility to inform the school of the reasons for a child's absence.

### **Late arrival**

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 pupils also disrupt lessons and this can be embarrassing for the child. Good time keeping is a vital life skill, which will help our children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

### **How we manage lateness:**

The school day starts at **8.45 am in the Juniors and 8.50am in the Infants**. Registers close at **9.00 am**. A record is kept for both late arrivals and early departures in case of an emergency. This will

include the time of arrival/ departure and the reason for being late/ leaving early. If a child is late they **must** arrive at school via the main door, so that their arrival is recorded.

If your child arrives for school after **9:30 am**, in accordance with the Regulations, they will have an unauthorised absence for that morning session because they are arriving more than 30 minutes after the register has closed.

- If a child arrives late but within the registration period (8.50 - 9.00am), they should be marked as late but counted as present for that session using the code L.
- If a child misses registration and but no acceptable explanation is provided, they should be marked as late but counted as an unauthorised absence for that session using the code U.
- If a child leaves before midday or 3.30pm then he/she and his/her parents/ carers/carers will report to the office where the office staff will record that the child is out of school.

The parents or carers of pupils who arrive persistently late will be contacted by either the Deputy Headteacher or Executive Headteacher.

### **Attendance Monitoring**

At the end of each term certificates are presented to all children with 100% attendance for that term in an assembly. As the year progresses certificates are given for one term of full attendance (bronze), two terms (silver) and all year (gold). Children with 96% or better attendance are also congratulated in these assemblies.

The school monitors the attendance of all pupils on a weekly basis. Where the school has identified that a child's attendance has fallen below the level of **90%** after nearly two half terms and/or have had 4+ broken weeks in one half term, the school will contact the family either in person or by letter. This will make them aware of our concerns and the importance of consistent and regular attendance at school. If there is no subsequent improvement in the child's attendance after a period of one month a request will be made for a School Attendance Meeting (SAM) with the parents/ carers and, where necessary, the Education Welfare Officer. The purpose of this meeting will be to discuss expectations and try to ensure that their child's attendance improves. Support and advice will be offered where necessary. If a child's attendance continues to cause concern and where there are some unauthorised absences a letter of referral will be sent to the Education Welfare Service. The school will endeavour to work with and support all children and families wherever possible. Children who have attendance of less than **90%** are considered as persistent absentees by the Department of Education and the Local Authority.

### **Leave of Absence (including holidays) in Term Time**

Holidays in term time have had a significant part on school attendance figures. This is an issue for all schools in South Gloucestershire.

Adaptations were made in September 2013 to the Attendance Regulations (2006). A key change was the removal of a school's option to authorise holiday. Therefore there is **no** automatic entitlement in law for leave of absence during term time. Authorisation for leave of absence can only be authorised in 'exceptional circumstances'. Please note the following points:

- All requests for 'exceptional circumstances' leave of absence must be made in advance in writing to the Executive Headteacher.
- Absence **will** be authorised for religious observance to a body which parents/ carers and the child belong.
- Requests will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. The nature of an exceptional circumstance will be at the Executive Headteacher's discretion.
- South Gloucestershire council has stated that any **unauthorised** leave of more than 5 days recorded in 7 school weeks **can** result in the school requesting the Local Authority issue a penalty notice.

- The notice is a fine of £60 per parent per child if paid within 28 days of receipt of the notice; but rising to £120 if paid after 28 days but within 42 days.
- The payment must be made in full – part payments will not be accepted – details of how to pay are printed on the Penalty Notice.
- If the fine remains unpaid after 42 days, the local authority will prosecute the parent for the non-attendance of the child at school.

### **Removal from Roll**

There are strict grounds as to when schools may remove pupils from their admissions register. These are outlined in Regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006. Regulation 12(6) states that when a school has decided to delete a pupil's name from their admission roll they must notify their Local Authority as soon as the ground for removal is met and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is removed from the register.

If the pupil has left the school without explanation and there are concerns about the pupil's welfare we will contact the local Access and Response Team immediately.

If there are concerns that a pupil may be at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) or radicalisation we will contact the Access and Response Team immediately.

If we are told that a pupil is leaving to attend another school, our staff will establish the pupil's new address, the name and address of the new school and the date the pupil will start there. Once the school has confirmation that the child has started at the new school they will update SIMs. Whenever a pupil leaves our school a Common Transfer File (CTF) must be completed.

If we are concerned about any aspect of a transfer or if a pupil has "disappeared" the matter will be drawn without delay to the attention of the Access and Response Team. Please see further information in Children Missing Education Policy <http://www.southglos.gov.uk/education-and-learning/schools-and-education/behaviour-and-attendance/children-missing-education/>

### **Part-time time-tables**

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a part time timetable to meet an individual pupil's needs; this decision is made by the Executive Head Teacher in consultation with external agencies. A part time timetable is time limited, must not be treated as a long-term solution and can only be made with parental agreement. This will be reviewed regularly within the time limited period. The school will mark the sessions where the pupil is not expected to attend as authorised absence. (Code C).

### **Conclusion**

During the school year we wish to encourage the highest possible individual attendance rate and view this policy as central to achieving this. The whole school policy will be consistently implemented and other professionals will be consulted when appropriate.

Class teachers and the School Leadership Teams are available to discuss any problems in relation to school attendance. If there any concerns regarding attendance, please contact the Executive Headteacher. If a parent/carer is unhappy about a decision they are able to use the complaints policy to communicate their grievance.

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