

Crook Primary School

Attendance Policy

1. Introduction

At Crook Primary school, we expect all children on our roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend.

We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school.

To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children.

We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

The whole school community – pupils, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors – has a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's part in this.

2. Roles and Responsibilities of governors and school staff regarding pupil registration and attendance.

The Governing Body is responsible for making sure that the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised. (*Education (pupil registration) Regulations 1995*) The governors are responsible for monitoring overall attendance and are also responsible for the attendance policy and for seeing that it is carried out.

The Headteacher will ensure that pupils and parents are regularly reminded about the importance of good school attendance. She will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

Class teachers are responsible for completing the attendance registers, monitoring attendance in their class and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's absence, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, they will report this to the Head Teacher, who will contact the parents/carers and/or the Education Welfare Officer.

Administrative staff will add the prescribed codes for absence, follow up unexplained absences initially, and have regular meetings with the Education Welfare Officer.

3. Roles and Responsibilities of Parents/Carers

It is the responsibility of the parents/carers to:

- Make sure that their child arrives at school before the bell goes at 8.55 a.m.
- Make sure that their child attends school each day provided that he/she is fit and healthy to do so.
- Contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of absence to provide an explanation.
- Make sure that the school has up to date information about addresses and telephone numbers.
- Make school staff aware of any difficulties regarding school attendance.

4. Understanding Classification of 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 every absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments, emergencies or other unavoidable cause. We ask that parents provide proof of medical/ dental appointments to the school office and ask that parents try not to arrange routine medical/ dental appointments during school time.

Unauthorised absences those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy
- Absences which have not been explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark.
- Shopping, looking after other children, or birthdays
- Day trips or holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

This type of absence can lead to Fixed Penalty Fines and/or the involvement of the Local Authority's School Attendance Improvement Team, which has the power to take legal action against parents.

5. Systems and strategies for managing and improving attendance

Attendance has a very high profile at Crook Primary School and is discussed in assemblies, parents' meetings and in governors meetings. Parents are regularly reminded in newsletters about the importance of good attendance and its links to attainment.

Unexplained absences

Crook Primary School has in place a system of first-day calling. This means that parents will be telephoned/texted on the first day a pupil is absent without explanation, to establish a reason for the absence. This helps to identify at an early stage pupils who do not have a good reason for absence, or who may be absent without their parents' knowledge. Where it is not possible to make contact with parents on the first day of absence, the school will send a letter to them. Advice is sought from the Education Welfare Officer when the matter cannot be resolved.

Meetings with parents

Where there is an emerging pattern to a pupil's absence, with or without explanation, the school will invite parents to a meeting to discuss the reasons for the absences. Plans are put in place with the parents and pupil to try to resolve any difficulties and improve the attendance

Persistent Absentees

A pupil becomes a "persistent absentee" (PA) when they miss 15% or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason. Absence at this level can have a serious effect on a child's educational achievement. Parents will be informed if their child has reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark and a support plan may be put in place with the aim of improving attendance.

Referral to the Education Welfare Officer

If there are concerns about a pupil's attendance (or if the pupil is failing to attend school at all), the school will make a referral to the Education Welfare Officer, because the school has a statutory responsibility to make the Local Authority aware of any pupil who is not attending regularly.

The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) from the Local Authority is part of the new One Point Service and visits the school on a regular basis to monitor attendance

The One Point EWO's role is a supportive one and she will contact the family and try to identify any problems that are getting in the way of good attendance. The EWO will work in partnership with parents, pupils, schools and other agencies to try to resolve the situation informally so that the parents are able to meet their legal responsibilities regarding the education of their children.

However, if there appears to be no justification for the absences and it appears that the parent is not willing to work with the school and the support services to address the situation, the EWO will make a referral to the Local Authority School Attendance Enforcement Team for the commencement of legal procedures.

6.Safeguarding

At Crook Primary School we recognise the clear links between attendance and safeguarding children.

All unexplained absences are followed up and referred to the Education Welfare Officer if necessary.

We also recognise that inappropriate authorisation of absence can potentially send a message to parents that any reason for non-school attendance is acceptable and can render children extremely vulnerable to harm. With this in mind, children who are frequently absent due to illness may also be referred to the Education Welfare Officer, and the school may also request medical evidence to validate the absences.

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance.

This policy is based on current Government and Local Authority guidance and statutory regulations. The school will ensure that all members of the school community know of the policy and have access to it.

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.

Date of Policy : June 2014

Review: