

Crook Primary School

Attendance Policy

Crook Primary School seeks to ensure that all its pupils receive an education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her true potential. The school will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels wanted and secure.

We believe that all students benefit from the education we provide, and therefore from regular attendance. The aim of our attendance policy is to provide a consistent practice that encourages and facilitates the regular attendance of all pupils.

All school staff will work with pupils and their families to support parents in helping them to meet their legal duty; to ensure that their children attend school regularly and on time. A whole school attendance target of **96%** has been set for the **academic year 2019/20** and various measures will be put in place to help work towards this.

The school has established an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of pupils to improve their attendance and timekeeping and will challenge the behaviour of those pupils and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

For children to gain the greatest benefit from their education, it is vital that they attend school regularly. Children should be at school on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

The Law

You need to make sure your child attends school regularly and on time. Because parents are responsible for this duty in law, you will be **breaking the law** if you do not do this and there are no good reasons for missing school.

The School and Local Authority **want to help you if you have a problem**. If attendance does not get better or you do not accept help and support offered, the Council may issue you with a warning notice, Penalty Notice or ask you to attend an interview to ask you questions about whether you have broken the law.

If you go to court and are found guilty of an offence, you could be fined up to £1,000 for a less serious offence or up to £2,500 if the law breaking is more serious. **In very serious cases, the court may involve the probation service or consider up to 3 months in prison.**

Government Attendance Levels

The government's expected level of attendance for pupils in school in England is 96%.

98% attendance = less than 4 days absent from school

95% attendance = less than 10 days absent from school

90% attendance = less than 4 weeks absent from school

85% attendance = 5 ½ weeks absent from school

80% attendance = 7 ½ weeks absent from school

We ask Parents/Carers to help us maintain good attendance by:

Making sure your child arrives at school on time.

The school day begins at 8.55am when children line up in the school yard. It is so important for all children to be on time, as missing the first few minutes of any lesson can be disruptive and unsettling, both for the children and for the rest of the class. Any child who arrives after 9.05am will be marked as late (L) on the class register. All registers are closed at 9.15am. Children who are late after the register has closed may be recorded as (U) which is a late after registers close mark and this is classed as an unauthorised absence. A number of these marks can also contribute to a fixed penalty notice being issued.

If a child is late (after registers close) for school on a number of occasions;

A letter will be sent home from school to parents to say their child's punctuality is causing some concern. An appointment with the Head, Attendance Officer and Parents Support Advisor will be offered to discuss ways that the school can offer support in finding a way to improve this.

If lateness becomes persistent with no identifiable reason –

A letter will be sent home from school with a specific appointment given to meet with Head Teacher or deputy head for a 'planning meeting'. This will aim to address any issues which may be behind this pattern of poor punctuality.

If the school continues to have concerns about a child's punctuality;

Then a referral may be made to the Attendance Improvement Team to consider if enforcement action is required.

Leave of Absence in Term Time

Absence during term time means that pupils miss out on valuable learning time. Head teachers are no longer able to grant leave of absence during term time **unless there are exceptional circumstances. Taking family holidays are not considered to be exceptional circumstances.** The school will consider each request of absence individually; taking into account the circumstances, such as; the nature of the event for which leave is sought, the pupil's prior attendance and any important events taking place in school at that time e.g. termly tests.

An application for leave of absence must be made well in advance via a form which is available from the school website or in person from the school office. Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion. As stated in the most recent DFE guidance on attendance, if an application for leave of absence is not made prior to the time of the required absence then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised regardless of circumstances.

Please note that absence will not be authorised under any circumstances during any period of public examinations or internal assessments.

Reluctant to attend?

It is never a good idea to give in to pressure from your child or cover up their absence to excuse them from attending school. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes the situation worse. As soon as you realise there may be a problem, parents need to contact the Headteacher, PSA or attendance officer.

Promoting good attendance and punctuality

In order to promote attendance and punctuality the school will give extra break time for the class with the best weekly attendance. Class rewards are also given to children who have 100% attendance for the week. Further to this, any children who achieve 100% from the start of the academic year will receive half termly attendance gifts. The class with the best overall attendance at the end of the school year will have a class party to celebrate their fantastic achievement.

Children Missing from Education:

If you move from the area and your whereabouts are unknown, the school can legally remove your child from the roll after 20 school days of unauthorised absence. It is **vital that if you keep school informed of any change of details** and regularly update them if details change. Your child may be at risk of losing their school place if your whereabouts are not known.

It is also important that emergency contact information is kept up to date and that if you are leaving the area, you provide details of where and how you can be contacted. If you do not do this and the school is unable to trace your child, this would be treated as a **safeguarding matter**.

Roles and Responsibilities

Governing Body:

As part of our school approach to maintaining high attendance, the governing body will:

- Ensure that the importance of attendance is made clear by promoting the relevant school policies and guidance directed by parents and staff.
- Annually review the school's attendance policy and ensure that all provisions are in place to allow school staff, parents, and students to implement the policy effectively.
- Ensure regular meetings of the behaviour and attendance sub-committee take place and they will take the lead role in monitoring attendance and coordinating provision and policies for attendance. The governor's meetings will review and discuss attendance issues that have arisen in order to be fully aware and supportive of expected attendance targets for the year.
- Ensure that the school is implementing effective means of recording attendance and organising that data, including for children who are educated off site.

School Leadership Team:

As part of our school approach to maintaining high attendance, the leadership team will:

- Be active in their approach to promoting good attendance with students and their parents.
- Ensure the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that students are taught the value of high attendance for their own progression and achievement.
- Coordinate with the governing body to monitor the implementation of the policy and its effectiveness, with annual review of full policy.
- Ensure that all staff are up to date with the school's attendance policy and that staff are fully trained to recognise and deal with attendance issues.
- Ensure government legislation on attendance is complied with and that the leadership team are up to date with any legislation changes and how to implement them.
- Nominate or appoint a senior manager to take responsibility for overseeing and monitoring attendance provision and that this person has sufficient time and resources to give to the job.
- Report to the Behaviour and Attendance Governors Sub Committee meeting each term on attendance records, data and provision.
- Ensure that systems to record and report attendance data are in place and working effectively.

Teachers and support staff:

As part of our school approach to maintaining high attendance, the teachers and support staff will:

- Be active in their approach to promoting good attendance with students and their parents.
- Ensure the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that students are taught the value of high attendance for their own progression and achievement.
- Ensure the senior manager responsible for overseeing attendance and any other relevant personnel are kept fully aware of and up to date with any concerns relating to students that may impact on their attendance.
- Ensure compliance with regulation and guidance on attendance.
- Work professionally with parents, carers, students and relevant agencies to secure improvements in attendance via appropriate support or enforcement measures.
- Ensure understanding and are following the correct systems for recording attendance and that attendance is taken each lesson and session.

Parents / Carers:

As part of our school approach to maintaining high attendance, we expect that parents / carers will:

- Engage with their children's education – support their learning and take an interest in what they have been doing at school.
- Promote the value of good education and the importance of regular school attendance at home.
- Follow the procedures outlined in this policy regarding absences, ill health, medical or dental appointments, leave of absence in term time and punctuality.
- Do everything they can to prevent unnecessary school absences.
- Keep the school informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance and work with staff in resolving any issues that may be having an impact on their child.
- Enforce a regular routine at home in terms of homework, bedtime etc so that the child is used to consistency and the school becomes part of that routine. It is vital that the child receives the same messages at home as they do at school about the importance of attendance.

Attendance Procedures

a) On the first day off and any further absence

If a child is ill or is absent for any reason, parents or carers are asked to phone the School Office (01388 762400), complete the on-line absence form on our website or text (01388 207009), giving a reason for the child's absence. If the school does not receive a reason for absence, a text will be sent to priority 1 on the child's contacts. This is not only to establish a reason for absence but to alert the contact in case the child is absent without their knowledge.

Doctors and dentists appointments should be made outside of school time. If this is not possible, your child should miss the minimum amount of school time necessary. If they are well enough to come back to school following the appointment they need to. An appointment card or letter should be shown to the school office as evidence of the appointment.

Understanding the different types of absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parent) as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED.

Authorised absences are sessions absent from school for a good reason such as illness, medical/dental appointments, emergencies or other unavoidable cause and leave of absence in term time with the permission of the Headteacher.

Unauthorised absences are 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 (arriving after the register is closed)

Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays

Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed

b) Periods of extended absence

If the school receives no reason for any absence then an unauthorised absence will be recorded. Continued absenteeism and unauthorised absences could result in further action such as referral to the Attendance Improvement Team to consider enforcement action and possibly a fixed penalty notice (this includes unauthorised absences accrued through leave of absence taken during term time).

c) Help & Support:

If you need help with attendance, it is important that you talk to the school about the issues as soon as possible. You may need to attend a meeting in school to talk

about the problems and to put a plan in place to help. Sometimes, school may need to involve other services to help e.g. Parent Support Advisor.

d) Communication:

The school will always try to communicate with you regarding your child's attendance if it declines. This communication may involve explaining that attendance is a cause for concern by letter, making telephone calls to you, and inviting you to attend a meeting in school depending on the circumstances. The school will work with you to discuss ways that we can offer support in finding a way to improve the situation.

e) Enforcement Action:

If, following the school's attempts to intervene there is no significant improvement and no good reasons for absences (i.e. absences are not supported by relevant evidence), or you have not co-operated with the school's attempts to improve the situation the school are required to consider referring the matter to the Local Authority for enforcement action.

The High Court has confirmed that the school's Headteacher authorises absences. If your child misses school a lot because of illness, or if school do not know of any serious health issue that would mean your child could miss school a lot, the school may ask to you to provide medical evidence to authorise absences.

We are committed to supporting your child effectively, to ensure that they get the very best education possible and therefore have the best life chances. All challenges made concerning persistent absences, will be handled sensitively and in confidence.

If you have any concerns or queries regarding attendance, please contact the Headteacher.