

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Published: Summer 2016
Review Date: Summer 2019
Committee Responsible: L&A

For distribution to: All school staff, governors, parents/carers, pupils and education welfare officers

Statement of Intent

Cranmere Primary School is committed to developing and implementing a consistent and transparent set of joint standards and approaches that improve and maintain attendance in local schools.

Cranmere is committed to developing and implementing policies and practice that supports improved attendance, in partnership with parents/carers, pupils and governors, with relevant departments within Surrey County Council and Elmbridge Borough Council, and with other organisations who have an interest or are affected by school attendance.

Cranmere Primary School along with Surrey County Council, firmly believe that all pupils benefit from regular school attendance. Full and regular attendance at school is crucial for a child's future life chances and establishes a positive work ethic early in life. To this end we will do all we can to encourage parents/carers to ensure their children achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly. Pupils will be expected to achieve 100% attendance but when absence is unavoidable, parents/carers will be required to inform the school at the earliest opportunity.

Parents/carers, whose children are of compulsory school age (the next full term after the child's 5th birthday to 16) and are registered at a school, are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly. If they do not do so may be committing an offence under the Education Act 1996 and could be liable to prosecution or to be served with a penalty notice.

In line with the Education Regulations (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 and amendments in 2013, all unexplained absences of 10 days or more are required to be reported to the Local Authority. Schools are therefore required to report all absence figures to the local authority and the DfE and to ensure they are recorded on a child's annual report. Rates of absence are also taken into account by Ofsted as part of a school's inspection.

Expectations

We expect that all pupils will:

- attend school regularly
- attend school punctually
- attend school appropriately prepared for the day
- discuss with their class teacher or senior leaders any problems preventing them from attending school.

We expect that all parents/carers and persons who have day to day responsibility for the children will:

- encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities.
- ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at school punctually, prepared for the school day and have completed any homework they have been given
- contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child away from school.
- Notify the school immediately of any change to contact details
- Notify the school of any home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child.
- Contact the school office when a child is absent by 9.30. We have an answering machine so parents can leave a message if the office is not open. The school office can also be emailed on info@cranmere.surrey.sch.uk . If you do leave a message please include the child's name , the reason for absence and how long you expect the absence to last.

We expect that school staff will:

- keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils, as required by current legislation
- monitor every pupil's attendance
- contact parents/carers as soon as possible when a pupil fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence
- encourage good attendance and punctuality
- provide a welcoming atmosphere and a safe learning environment for children
- provide a sympathetic response to any pupil's concerns
- make initial enquiries to parents/carers of pupils who are attending irregularly, expressing the school's concerns and clarifying the school and the local authority's expectations regarding regular school attendance
- The home school link worker working with the attached Education Welfare Officer, may follow up concerns about attendance by contacting or visiting parents/carers at home
- refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the attached EWO
- fulfil, where possible, the requirements of the UN Convention – The Rights of the Child - by ensuring that children are consulted in all decisions that relate to them

Categorisation of Absence

Any student who is on roll but not present in school must be recorded within one of these categories:

1. Unauthorised absence

This is for students where no reason has been provided or whose absence is deemed to be without a valid reason. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays

- Excessive illness without medical evidence

2. Authorised absence

This is for those students who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996 .

3. Approved Educational Activity

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval; of the school. This would include:

- Field trips and educational visits
 - Sporting activities
 - Link courses or approved education off site activities
- Most types of dual registration

Requests for leave of absence during term time

No parent/carer can demand leave of absence during term-time for their child as a right and authorisation cannot be given retrospectively. Permission for absence during term time is at the school's discretion and will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, for example for compassionate reasons.

If a family needs to request absence in term-time then an **Application for Leave of Absence in Exceptional Circumstances Form** must, wherever possible, be completed at least two weeks prior to the leave date. This form can be obtained from the school office. The headteacher, who may consult with the Chair of Governors, will then decide whether or not to authorise the absence requested. Each request will be considered separately and a decision made based on the reasons for each request.

In reaching a decision the following factors may be taken into account:

- the child's record of attendance for the current academic year is not below 97%
- That the Application for Leave of Absence does not exceed a maximum of ten school days in any one year (apart from in very exceptional circumstances in which case the request would be notified to the Governing Body for their consideration)
- The timing of the leave of absence, ensuring that it would not prevent the child from missing any assessments, examinations or school events

Please note:

- Any requests for children in Years 2 or 6 during the SATs period will not be authorised
- An Application for Leave of Absence in Exceptional Circumstances will not be considered if a request has already been authorised in that academic year (even if the authorised request was only for 1 day)

Family holidays - The school holiday dates are published a year in advance and are available from the school office and on the school's website. We expect that parents/carers will book their family holidays within the school holiday dates. Cranmere Primary will not authorise holidays during term time.

Dental and medical treatments – Whilst the school will grant requests for absence for dental and medical treatments, parents/carers are encouraged, whenever possible, to book medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. When appointments during school hours are unavoidable, the school office should be notified in advance in writing, of the date and time of the appointment and when the child will be collected and/or returned to school, a form for this purpose can be collected from the school office. Evidence of the appointment may be requested.

Encouraging Attendance

Cranmere Primary School encourages regular attendance in the following ways,

- by providing a caring and welcoming learning environment
- by responding promptly to a child or parent's concerns about the school or other pupils
- by accurate and punctual completion of registers during morning and afternoon registration (see Lateness).
- by publishing attendance statistics
- by celebrating good attendance
- certificates are awarded to celebrate good and improved attendance
- SAM the bear is presented to the class with the best overall attendance each week
- The Deputy is responsible for monitoring attendance. He will liaise closely with the SLT, the school senior admin assistant, the school attendance governor, the EWO and where appropriate the Schools Home/school worker.
- by informing parents/carers in writing of irregular attendance, including lateness
- by if necessary arranging meetings with parents/carers
- by referring the families to the attached Education Welfare Officer if the irregular attendance continues

Punctuality and Lateness –

Registers open at 8:50am and close at 9:20am. Afternoon registers open at 1:15pm and close 1:30pm.

Please note that, if pupils arrive at school after 9am a late mark will be recorded and if a child arrives after 9.20 it will be recorded 'as late after close of register' and counted as an unauthorised absence for that session.

Please note that, if pupils arrive at school after the close of the register, without a valid explanation, the lateness will be recorded in the class register as an unauthorised absence and the pupil's name recorded in the late book in case of a fire drill.)

Register and attendance data is presented in sessions. One session equals half a day i.e. there is an am and pm session.

Responding To Non-Attendance

When a pupil does not attend school we will respond in the following manner:

- On the first day of absence, if no note or telephone call is received from the parent/carer by Cranmere , the school will endeavour to contact them that day by phone.
- If there is no response, the school will continue to try to contact the parent/carer.
- If, by the end of the second day (third day if waiting for a response to a letter), there has still been no contact made, the school will send a letter of concern to parents/carers and invite them into school to discuss their concerns and the reasons for the absence.
- Parents will be informed that if the absence persists a referral will be made to the attached EWO
- Failure to comply with the expectations set by the EWO may result in further action, an application for an Education Supervision Order, or court prosecution
- Any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days will be notified to the Local Authority, by submitting a referral to the Educational Welfare Service. This is a legal requirement. The school will include details of the action that they have taken.

Penalty Notices

A Penalty Notice can be issued in cases of **unauthorised** absence resulting in poor attendance and consideration should be given as to whether issue is likely to secure an improvement in attendance.

Additionally, penalty notices will be issued for one off instances of absence taken in term time without school permission in accordance with The Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013.

Use of Penalty Notices will be restricted to **three per pupil per academic year**.

The issuing of a Penalty Notice for poor attendance may be considered appropriate in the following circumstances:

Pupils, identified by Police and Education Welfare Officers engaged on Truancy Patrols, who have incurred unauthorised absence. The liable parent/carer will receive a written warning from the Education Welfare Service of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued and given a maximum of 15 school days to effect an improvement. During this period the pupil is not expected to incur any further unauthorised absence. Where a formal warning letter has been issued to parents, the Local Authority will monitor the attendance for a maximum of 15 school days and issue a Penalty Notice by first class post if the Local Authority determine that an acceptable level of attendance has not been achieved

When an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours within the first 5 school days of an exclusion without justifiable reason. No written warning will be given where it can be shown that the parent/carer had previously been warned of their liability to receive a Penalty Notice

Unauthorised term time holidays and unauthorised special leave of absence: the school will refer cases where a child has ten or more unauthorised days holiday in half a school year (190 sessions) or where it equates to a 10% unauthorised absence. In such cases where the holiday/leave of absence constitutes a 10% unauthorised absence the parents will be liable to receive a penalty notice

When between 5 and 9 days of unauthorised leave of absence or holiday has been taken, and in addition to this, there are other unauthorised absences during the previous 6 week period which would take the unauthorised absence to 10% or more, the school will refer and Surrey will issue a penalty notice warning letter. If there are 3 or more sessions of unauthorised absence during the following 15 school days, after the warning letter has been sent, a penalty notice will be issued. This is in line with Surrey County Council's Code of Conduct governing the issue of penalty notices.

The individual amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice. For example: a family with two parents and two children participating in an unauthorised holiday/absence will be liable for a fine of £240 i.e. £60 x2 parents, x 2 children.

The individual rate rises from £60 to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 42 days, the local authority is then obliged to prosecute for failing to ensure regular school attendance

Non-Payment of Penalty Notices

Where a Penalty Notice has not been paid, in accordance with The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 and Department for Education guidance, the Local Authority is required to investigate the reasons for the absence and decide whether a prosecution is appropriate or withdraw the original Penalty Notice.

Unless withdrawn, non-payment of a Penalty Notice will trigger the prosecution process under the provisions of Section 444 Education Act 1996.

The parent is not prosecuted for the non-payment of the Penalty Notice but for the offence to which the Penalty Notice relates

The period of the offence will be defined as:

- (a) In the case of unauthorised leave of absence: (see section 3.7) **the time the pupil was absent from school without authorisation.**
- (b) In the case of poor attendance: **up to 6 months prior to the issue of the summons.**
- (c) In the case of a child being identified on a truancy patrol: **up to 6 months prior to the issue of the summons.**

In the case of exclusion: **for any occasion when the child was seen in a public place without justification during school hours.**

Changing School

It is important that if families decide to send the child in their care to a different school that they inform the Headteacher as soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from the school roll until the following information has been received,

- the dates the pupil will be leaving this school and starting the next
- the address of the new school
- the new home address, if it is known

School staff will then confirm with the parents the leaving date for their child. Following this date the pupil's school records will be sent on to the new school as soon as possible and within ten days of the child leaving. The Pupil Tracking Office at County Hall will also be sent appropriate information within ten days of anyone leaving or joining the school. If no notification is received from a new school then the child's name will not be removed from the school roll until after an investigation by the Educational Welfare Service.

School Organisation

In order for the school's Attendance Policy to be successful, every member of staff must make attendance a high priority and convey this to pupils at all times. Parents/carers should also need to support these views in the home to ensure that children are receiving corresponding messages about the value of education.

In addition to this, the School has the following responsibilities:

Head Teacher, Governors and to the School Attendance Lead:

- adopt the whole policy
- ensure that the registration procedures are carried out efficiently in line with current legislation and that appropriate resources are provided
- ensure that all absences are coded correctly in line with DfE guidance
- initiate a scheme for contacting parents/carers on the first day of absence

- initiate contact with parents/carers in cases of unexplained absence and lateness before referring to the EWS (unless there is a justifiable cause for concern when contact is required speedily, in which case immediate referral to the EWS may be necessary)
- ensure that key office staff have dedicated and protected time for liaison and follow up work with the attached EWO
- consult and liaise closely with the attached EWO on a regular basis and take responsibility for ensuring appropriate pupils are identified and referred without delay
- to work in close collaboration with the attached EWO during their termly/half termly register analysis ensuring agreed action is carried out
- to set whole school attendance targets.
- monitor and evaluate attendance with the attached EWO

Support Staff:

- to oversee the registration process and ensure that registers are completed accurately and punctually
- to consult and liaise closely with the attached Education Welfare Officer regularly
- to share any concerns expressed about attendance or disaffection that might lead to non attendance with the Headteacher and attached Education Welfare Officer

Teaching Staff

- to complete registers accurately and punctually at least twice daily
- to follow up any unexplained non-attendance or lateness with the headteacher
- to record all reasons for absences and lateness in the register
- to inform the Headteacher of concerns
- to be alert to signs of disaffection that may lead to non attendance and report them to the office staff or Headteacher
- to ensure children complete personal attendance records and receive rewards as appropriate