



ATTENDANCE POLICY

2018 – 2019

Review date – July 2019

Crofton Academy is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment



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Pupils need to attend school regularly and punctually to benefit from their education.

Good attendance and punctuality are central to raising standards and ensuring all pupils can fulfill their potential. Missing out on lessons and learning leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. **(DfE – Oct 2014)**

The school will strive to provide a welcoming and caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels wanted and secure.

All school staff will work with pupils and their families to ensure each pupil attends school regularly and punctually.

Every day counts at Crofton Academy. The governing body holds firm the belief that children who miss school miss out. Lost learning through absence equates to lost progress through school.

The 1996 Education Act states, *'If a child is registered at a school, parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring that their child attends regularly'*. We therefore ask that children attend school regularly and punctually.

While some absences are inevitable, the school is committed to reducing absence down to the lowest possible levels. This can be achieved through a balance of rewarding good attendance and supporting families where attendance and punctuality is problematic. The school will be proactive in addressing poor attendance and will work collaboratively with the Education Welfare Service to sanction families where support systems have failed to make significant improvements.

AT CROFTON ACADEMY WE AIM TO HAVE AN ATTENDANCE FIGURE THAT IS ABOVE NATIONAL SECONDARY FIGURES FOR ALL GROUPS AND COHORTS.

QUALITY ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

Education can only take place if the pupil attends school regularly. Crofton Academy aims to create an ethos of good attendance and punctuality in all its pupils, and we ask for parental co-operation in doing their best to ensure that pupils present themselves on time and prepared for the day ahead. **In the event of an absence we require that parents telephone school on each day of absence, and follow this with a note in the school planner to be presented to the pupil's group tutor on their return to school, with the relevant information.** The school is proactive in following up absent pupils and as a parent/carer you may be contacted either via text message or by email/parent mail, to ascertain the reason. It should be noted that only the school can authorise pupil absence, and should the authenticity of the absence be in doubt, Crofton Academy can request evidence from parents/carers to support this.

THE LEGAL POWERS AND DUTIES THAT GOVERN SCHOOL ATTENDANCE ARE CONTAINED IN:

- The Education Act 1996 – sections 434 (1)(3)(4) & (6) and 458 (4) & (5)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act states that if a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly, the parent/carer is guilty of an offence. Parents therefore have a legal responsibility to ensure their child's school attendance. Failure can lead to legal action being taken by the Local Authority in the Magistrate's Court, or the need to issue Fixed Penalty Notices. Since March 2001, there has been a further offence, Section 444 (1A), where a parent **knowingly** allows their child to be absent from school. This offence can carry a custodial sentence.

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 also allow the Local Authority to issue Fixed Penalty Notices on behalf of schools and Academies for unauthorised pupil absence from school for children of compulsory school age.

COMPULSORY SCHOOL AGE

Compulsory school age is set out in section 8 of the Education Act 1996 and The Education (Start of Compulsory School Age) Order 1998. A child reaches compulsory school age on the prescribed day following his/her fifth birthday (or on his/her fifth birthday if it falls on a prescribed day). The prescribed days are 31 December, 31 March and 31 August. The term 'summer born' is used to refer to children born from 1 April to 31 August. These children are not required to start school until a full school year after the point at which they could first have been admitted.

School admission authorities are required to provide for the admission of all children in the September following their fourth birthday, but flexibilities exist for children whose parents do not feel they are ready to begin school before they reach compulsory school age.

THE SCHOOL DAY

The law states that children should arrive in school on time, every day. The following information describes the school day so that everyone is clear what is expected.

8:15 – 8:50	Breakfast will be available.
8:50 – 9.05	School begins – registration with your Group Tutor
9:05 – 10:05	Period 1
10:05 – 11:05	Period 2
11:05 – 11:20	Break

Pupils must remain on site during school time including break – PUPILS MUST NOT GO ACROSS TO THE VILLAGE SHOPS

11:20 – 12:20	Period 3
12:20 – 13:00	Lunch (warning bell at 12.55)
13:00 – 14:05	Period 4 (including afternoon register)
14:05 – 15:05	Period 5
15:05	End of school day

Arrivals after 8.55am until 9.10am

Pupils are expected to be on time to the start of registration at 8.50am. The register is taken by Group Tutors at 8.55am. Pupils arriving after 8.55 but before 9.10am will be recorded at the front of school and issued with a 20 minute detention. Exceptions to this include the late arrival of the school special buses.

Arrivals after 9.10am enter through the reception door and report to the receptionist. Pupils are required to record the time of arrival and the reason for lateness. Pupils arriving after 9.10am will be marked in the register as Late (**L**). This is recorded on our system and may qualify as unauthorised absence. If lateness continues, a warning letter will be issued. This is notification that a Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued if persistent lateness, after the close of registration continues.

Punctuality Matters

Missed minutes = missed learning = missed opportunities

As a school, we are aware lateness can severely affect achievement. We monitor punctuality closely and recognise that we need to be able to differentiate between pupils who are late and pupils who attend after the register closes at 9.30am.

Registration begins at 8.50am and all pupils are expected to be in their form room at this time. Pupils arriving after 8.55am will be marked present but arriving late (L). The registers close at 9.30am and on arrival after this, pupils must immediately report to the school reception to sign in to ensure we can be responsible for their health and safety whilst they are in school.

Pupils arriving after 9.30am will be marked in the register with a U code. This registration code reflects the pupil arriving after 9.30am and is classed as unauthorised absence.

In circumstances such as bad weather or public transport difficulties, school may keep the register open for a longer period. However, if a pupil arrives late (after the registers have closed) for any other reason, the code U will be used.

If a pupil arrives late (after registers have been closed) due to a medical appointment, the code M would be used.

Pupil's non-attendance at school, when no reason has been reported by parents, is a safeguarding matter. School will follow up all unexplained absences by texting parents/carers (where correct numbers are held on our system) by 10.30am each day. Parents/carers will be asked to provide written clarification for the absence. If concerns arise, then the Headteacher or other designated safeguarding professional in school, may refer matters to the Education Welfare Officer or Social Care Direct.

The school register is a legal document and, as such, is checked regularly by the Education Welfare Officer. Checks ensure registers are being maintained accurately and assess the reasons and incidence of absence.

DEFINITION OF ATTENDANCE

Attendance	Impact on Learning	Who is involved
Outstanding Attendance 98% - 100%	The best chance of success	Group Tutor
Good Attendance 95% - 97.9%		Group Tutor / Learning Mentor
Worrying Attendance 90% - 94.9%	Less chance of success because of periods of lost learning. Makes it harder to progress well. Falling behind peers	Group Tutor / Learning Mentor / Year Group Manager
Serious Concern Attendance (Persistent Absence) Below 90%	Significant lost learning time. Will have missed important learning milestones to aid progression	Group Tutor / Learning Mentor / Year Group Manager Educational Welfare Officer

ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

Any absence from school is detrimental to a child's education; it disrupts learning routines and progress and should be avoided wherever possible.

Responsibilities

When a child is not going to be attending school, parents/carers have to:

- Inform school before **9.00 am** by telephone that their child will not be attending, stating the reason for the absence and when they are expected to return.
- **Repeat this** each day the child is absent from school.

When the child returns to school, parents/carers are required to:

- Provide written confirmation of the absence showing dates and the reason for non-attendance. These letters will be retained with the school register and may be requested by the Education Welfare Officer.

The school will:

- Follow up unexplained absences by contacting parents/carers by telephone.
- Write to parents/carers where contact is not possible by the second day of absence.
- Refer to the Education Welfare Service.

- After 20 days' absence without contact, report the child as *Child Missing from Education* (CME) to the Local Authority.

The school may also:

- Ask for evidence to support any absence due to illness if the authenticity of the illness is in doubt.
- Write to parents/carers stating the concerns regarding attendance/punctuality.
- Ask parents/carers to meet with the Deputy Headteacher, or Education Welfare Officer, to discuss attendance issues if there is a cause for concern.
- Refer the pupil to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) where there is a regular problem with attendance/punctuality.
- Conduct home visits
- Contact the Police and ask them to carry out a welfare check on an absent pupil at any point during an absence if there are any safeguarding concerns for the pupil

AUTHORISED ABSENCE

Some absence is unavoidable, usually due to illness, bereavement or difficult family circumstances, and these can be classed as an Authorised absence. The decision as to whether an absence is authorised or not lies with the Headteacher.

- **Illness**

Children who are reported as absent through illness are marked with an 'I' code.

- **Medical appointments**

Wherever possible, we request that dental and medical appointments are made at the end of the school day or during the school holidays. Where this is not possible, parents are required to verify the appointments at the school office with an appointment card/letter. If verification is not provided, the absence will not be authorised. Children should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time for the appointment. Children who are reported as absent because they are attending a medical appointment are marked with an 'M' code.

- **Religious Observance**

Absence due to religious observance is authorised absence. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the

parents belong. Children who are reported as absent due to religious observance are marked with an 'R' code.

REWARDS

Pupils will be rewarded in the following ways:

- Yearly certificates for students in the good and outstanding attendance categories
- Yearly certificate for students with 100% attendance – awarded at the family presentation evening
- Raffle drawn every 4 weeks for students with 100% attendance (per year group) – voucher £10
- ½ Termly Breakfast Golden Ticket
 - For the tutor group with the highest attendance per year group
- Breakfast Golden Ticket (week before rollover)
 - For all 100% attenders during the year
- 95%+ attendance linked to end of year BfL reward trip
- Class Chart point added weekly by Group Tutors for students in the good and outstanding attendance category &/or no lates

UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

Unauthorised absence is that which is not permissible in Law, e.g. birthdays, shopping trips, days out, term time holidays, and absences where no explanation has been received. The School will monitor and discuss unauthorised absence with the Education Welfare Officer and further action may be agreed.

If parents/carers wish their child to be absent for other reasons, such as compassionate leave, special family events, or to participate in sporting or musical competitions etc., application should be made in writing in advance, where possible, to the Head of Year.

HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME

A child's attendance at school is one of, if not the most important factor in achieving success both academically and socially. To maintain continuity in their studies not only develops understanding but maximises progress within subjects and ensures that pupils achieve their potential. The curriculum moves at a rapid pace, and children do miss out on new learning when absent from school.

In line with the Government's amendments to the Education Regulations 2006, the Headteacher will not grant leave of absence for family holidays in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Over the past few years we have tried to work in partnership with parents/carers to strike a balance between holidays in term time and academic progress. However, more recently we are finding an increasing number of pupils are being taken out of school.

The DfE strongly advise schools NOT to authorise holidays during term time, especially in the following circumstances;

- Availability of cheap holidays;
- Availability of the desired accommodation;
- Poor weather experienced in school holiday periods; and
- Overlap with beginning or end of term

Crofton Academy Governors wish to stress that any request for holiday absence will be considered very carefully. Applications for a holiday should be made to the Headteacher **not less than six weeks** before that absence is due to start. The application can only be made by the parent/carer that the child normally resides with.

A response will be sent within 14 days of the receipt of the request. If your request is refused but you still take your child on holiday, this absence will be recorded as unauthorised and this absence will be taken into account should your child's attendance drop below 90%.

Please consider this matter very carefully before making a request for absence during term time.

Holidays will not be authorised under any circumstances at exam time.

(Department for Children, School and Families (DCSF) Keeping Pupil Registers June 2008)

PERSISTENT ABSENCE

Persistent absence is when a pupil misses 10% or more of school **for any reason** and has an attendance of below 90%. The school works with the Education Welfare Officer to ensure all pupil attendance data is monitored regularly and action taken to reduce persistent absence. Where a child's absence is due to known illness or exceptional circumstances, it will be monitored.

If absence is not for one of the reasons, a written warning will be issued. Parents/carers will be required to show improvement within the next four school weeks. If there is no improvement, then a second letter will be issued requesting the parent/carer to make an appointment with the Deputy Headteacher and/or the Education Welfare Officer. At this stage, support will be offered and targets set for improvement.

If there is still no improvement within the next two school weeks, parents/carers will be notified that the matter has been referred to the Education Welfare Officer who will then follow up the case; this leaves parents/carers at risk of legal action and/or a Penalty Notice.

Penalties under Section 444 Education Act 1996 for failing to ensure a child attends school regularly are as follows:-

A person found guilty of an offence under this section is liable, on summary conviction, to:

- A Fine not exceeding Level 3 on the Standard Scale (£1,000).

However, if in the circumstances mentioned in subsection (1) above, the parent knows that his/her child is failing to attend regularly at the school and fails without reasonable justification to cause him/her to do so, he/she is guilty of an offence. A person guilty of an offence under subsection 1A is liable on summary conviction to:

- A fine not exceeding Level 4 on the Standard Scale (£2,500)
- Imprisonment for a term not exceeding three months.
- Both of the above

Penalty Notice

Penalty Notices can be issued to address unauthorized absence, which may include term time holidays and poor punctuality. On 7 June 2018 Crofton Academy Governing Body agreed to the issuing of penalty notices by the Local Authority from 1 September 2018. A Penalty Notice will be issued by the Local Authority at the point which 10 sessions (half day is one session) are recorded as unauthorized absence within a school term. The cost of the penalty notice is £60 per child, per parent, if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice. This rises to £120 per child, per parent between 22 and 28 days. Failure to pay the penalty within 28 days will result in the matter being brought before the Magistrates Court and could result in a criminal conviction.

Evaluation and Review

The school will review this policy annually and update accordingly to include changes in the law and guidance on good practice. The policy will be promoted throughout the school community and shared with outside agencies and partners as required.

Policy reviewed July 2019

Date

Dear Parent/Carer,

I am writing to inform you of our new Attendance Policy, which has been agreed by the governing body.

At Crofton Academy, we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of our children. Irregular attendance and poor punctuality undermines the learning process and can lead to educational and social disadvantage. We believe that if students are to benefit from education, good attendance is crucial.

Included in the Attendance Policy are amendments to the procedures for late arrival at school and holidays in term time. A summary of two important changes are given below and the new Attendance Policy can be found on the school website.

Arrivals after the register has closed

As a school, we are aware lateness can severely affect achievement. We monitor punctuality closely and recognise that we need to be able to differentiate between pupils who are late and pupils who attend after the register closes at 9.30am. Registration begins at 8.50am and all pupils are expected to be in their form room at this time. Pupils arriving after 8.55am will be marked present but arriving late (L). The registers close at 9.30am and on arrival after this, pupils must immediately report to the school reception to sign in to ensure we can be responsible for their health and safety whilst they are in school. Pupils arriving after 9.30am will be marked in the register with a U code. This registration code reflects the pupil arriving after 9.30am and is classed as unauthorised absence. In circumstances such as bad weather or public transport difficulties, school may keep the register open for a longer period. However, if a pupil arrives late (after the registers have closed) for any other reason, the code U will be used. If a pupil arrives late (after registers have been closed) due to a medical appointment, the code M would be used.

Term time holidays

Our drive to improve attendance and to support neighbouring schools and primary feeder schools will mean that there is a change in how we will respond to term time holidays. From Monday 3rd September 2018, term time holidays will not be authorised and a penalty notice may be issued by Wakefield Council for any incidences of 10 or more unauthorised absence (half day is one absence). This will bring us in line with government guidance. If you have already booked a term time holiday prior to the date of this letter, you will not be issued with a penalty notice. If you believe you may be in this position, please bring evidence of your holiday, which shows the date on which you booked the holiday so that the school can record this and ensure you are treated fairly.

Our reasons for promoting this policy are based solely on the evidence that good attendance, good progress and improved life opportunities are irrefutably linked. We do not receive any financial benefit from this policy. Penalties are processed by Wakefield Council through the courts and any monies paid are retained by the council.

Thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely

Mr L Hardcastle

Deputy Headteacher