



## Attendance Policy

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Together We

*Dream... Believe... Achieve...*

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## Introduction

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. Cromwell Academy fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure pupils are in school and on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours.

Our policy applies to all children registered at our school and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of pupils via our school website.

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the staff and Governors at our school work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age-related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.

We are keen to identify barriers to attendance that families face and welcome opportunities to help overcome these barriers.

## Aims and Objectives

This attendance policy ensures that all staff and governors in our schools are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

**We expect attendance at school to be 100%, unless there are exceptional or unavoidable reasons for absence.**

### Through this Policy we aim to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school community.
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the Education Welfare Service so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance.

### We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and pupils.
- Ensuring that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development.
- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, pupils, staff and governors on school attendance matters.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.

## Definitions

### Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences reported by parents will be classified as authorised.

### Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school.
- The absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent

## Procedures

Our schools will undertake the following procedures to support good attendance:

- To maintain appropriate registration processes.
- To maintain appropriate attendance data.
- To communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, governors, parents and pupils.
- To have consistent and systematic daily records which give detail of any absence and lateness.
- To follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school.
- To inform parents/carers what constitutes authorized and unauthorized absence.

- To strongly discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time. A Penalty Notice may be applied for by the school and issued by the local authority in this event.
- To work with parents to improve individual pupils attendance and punctuality.
- To refer to the Educational Welfare Service any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives.
- To report attendance statistics to the DfE, Trust and Governors where requested.

## Responsibilities

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

### Class teacher

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers.
- Informing the Senior Leadership team where there are concerns and acting upon them.
- Providing background information to support referrals.
- Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns.
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness.
- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation which should be noted inside the register.
- Discussing attendance issues at consultation evenings where necessary.

### Headteacher and/or Attendance lead

The Headteacher and/or Attendance Lead is responsible for:

- Overall monitoring of school attendance.
- Trends in authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues.
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised.
- Making referrals to the Local Authority Attendance Service.
- Sending out standard letters regarding attendance.
- Providing reports and background information to inform discussion with the school's Local Authority Attendance Service.
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.

### Administration staff

Staff in the School Office are responsible for:

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information.
- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence.

- Ensuring the Absence comment is completed.
- Contacting parents of absent children where no contact has been made.
- Informing the Designated Safeguarding Lead if contact cannot be made.
- Recording details of children who arrive late or go home.
- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers and reporting concerns to senior leaders.

## Parents

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment.
- Contacting the school office each day of absence.
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we do require evidence from the doctor or dentist.  
(Appointment card/letter, copy of prescription or medication packaging with child's name)
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and support offered.

## Registration

Each class teacher has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance. Any pupil who is absent must be recorded at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session. The electronic attendance register must be completed by the class teacher (or cover person taking the class).

All attendance records are documented using Arbor software. Attendance registers are legal documents and these must be kept secure and preserved for a period of three years after the date they were last used.

## Lateness

	<b>Cromwell Academy</b>
<b>Arrival at School</b>	08.40 am
<b>Registration Close (use of 'L' code starts)</b>	08.50am

<b>'U' code starts</b>	09.10am
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A record is also kept of the amount of minutes a pupil is late, this is documented on Arbor. On entry to the school, it is the responsibility of the parent to sign the child in using the school sign-in system at the front desk, giving a reason for the child arriving late to school.

Children who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning, often the most important aspect, as the beginning of the day is where the teacher explains the learning and what each child is expected to achieve.

Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness parents/carers will receive a letter advising them of the concerns and the school will provide opportunities for parents/carers to seek support and advice to address these issues.

## Absences

Parents/carers should contact the school on the first (and each subsequent) day of their child's absence. When parents/carers notify us of their child's absence it is important that they provide us with details of the reason for their absence.

All absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised electronically using ARBOR software. It is important that we receive accurate information from parents with reasons for the child's absence. This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. The Headteacher has the authority to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.

Where we have not received reasons for a child's absence, we will seek an explanation from parents/carers. If an explanation is not forthcoming then the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (Attendance Code O).

## First Day Contact

Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, then we initiate a first day contact process. Office staff check all of the registers from 9.00am to 9.30am on a daily basis, to identify those pupils who are absent. There are occasions when we are unaware why the child is absent and we will contact the parent to check the reasons for the child's absence. This is to ensure school knows where the child is and that they are safe.

## Illness

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services for advice.

Where over the course of an academic year, a child has repeated periods of illness, the school will write to parents to ask them to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness-related

absence. This evidence could be a Doctor's note, appointment card or copy of a prescription. We may seek written permission from you for the school to make their own enquiries.

## Parental Request for Absence from School during term time

With effect from September 2013 the government abolished the rights of headteachers to authorise absence of up to 10 days per year if special circumstances exist. Instead, headteachers will only be allowed to grant leave of absence for any reason if they are satisfied exceptional and unavoidable circumstances exist. Parents must complete an application for 'leave of absence form- exceptional circumstances' if their child is to be absent from school for any other reason than illness. Please refer to this form for further information. We have copies available on our website and from the school office.

## Penalty Notice Due To Term Time Leave

If you allow your child to miss school in term time for an avoidable reason without obtaining the prior approval of the school you may be issued with a Penalty Notice or made the subject of court proceedings under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. Penalty Notices may only be served in accordance with the County Council's code of conduct.

The amount of a Penalty Notice will be £80 per parent per child if paid within 21 days, increasing to £160 per parent per child if paid after 21 days and before 28 days. Should a parent or carer on whom a notice is served fail to pay the fine in full within the specified time he/she will be liable to prosecution in a Magistrates court where on conviction a sentence of a fine up to £2,500 or up to three months in prison may be imposed.

In the case of repeated fines, if a parent receives a second fine for the same child within any three-year period, this will be charged at the higher rate of £160. Fines per parent will be capped to two fines within any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action like a parenting order or prosecution will be considered. If you are prosecuted and attend court because your child hasn't been attending school, you could get a fine of up to £2,500.

## Addressing Attendance Concerns

**Cromwell Academy expects attendance at school to be 100%, unless there are exceptional or unavoidable reasons for absence.**

It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their primary school career. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and the governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. In primary school we rely upon parents to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually and therefore where there are concerns regarding attendance parents are always informed of our concerns. Initially concerns about attendance are raised with parents via letters which are sent home. There will be opportunities for the parent/carer to discuss reasons for absence and support to be given by the school with the aim

to improve attendance. We would seek to overcome any barriers to school attendance and may involve our own Family Welfare Advisor or targeted support.

Where a child's attendance record does not improve over a period of time, and the school have offered support, then the school has a responsibility to make a referral to the Educational Welfare Service.

The Education Welfare Service has the power to issue penalty notices to parents where there has been a referral to The Local Authority Attendance Service from the school as part of the school's processes to address poor attendance patterns. The local authority can issue fines of up to £80 per parent per child. This can raise to £160 if not paid within 21 days.

In addition, education-related parenting orders are available by direct application by a school or LA to the Magistrates' Court as an ancillary order following a successful prosecution by the LA for irregular attendance or breach of a school attendance order.

At Cromwell Academy we work with our Trust's Attendance Advisor in conjunction with the Education Welfare Service.

## Monitoring Attendance

Our office staff have the responsibility for ensuring that all of the attendance data is accurately recorded on the Arbor attendance software. Regular meetings are held with the Headteacher and Attendance Lead to discuss all attendance concerns and appropriate actions are taken following these meetings such as letters sent to parents or meetings arranged to discuss attendance concerns with parents.

### Absence Letters - informing parents of a child's poor attendance.

**Monitoring letter** - *To remind parents of our duty to monitor attendance and that their child's attendance is being monitored to ensure it is on track.*

**Attendance Letter 1** – *will be sent to the parents/ carers of any child who has recorded an absence rate of less than 95%*

**Attendance Letter 2** – *will be sent when attendance has not improved satisfactorily in the six weeks after letter 1.*



**Invitation to an attendance contract meeting** – parents will be invited into school for a meeting with the Attendance Lead and set targets. This is a meeting to identify how support may be offered. If attendance does not reach 90% or more over an 8-week period, the school may make a referral to the Local Authority which may lead to a fixed penalty notice or prosecution.

**Follow up from attendance meeting** – a letter either ending the period of monitoring due to achievement of targets or addressing non-engagement/ barriers and advising on next steps.

**Notice to improve** – This is a letter sent by the local authority regarding attendance concerns and their next steps.

**Late Letter** – lateness will be monitored alongside attendance and where a child is deemed to be missing a significant amount of learning time due to lateness, a late letter will be issued to parents/carers. If lateness is not addressed parents/ carers may be invited to a meeting to discuss barriers to punctuality.

**Non-statutory Age Letter** – Attendance letter for 4 years olds.

**Unauthorised Term Time Absence Letter** – If you take your child on an unauthorised break during term time, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised term-time leave and we are obliged to inform you that **it can result in the serving of a Penalty Notice by the Local Authority or possible legal proceedings.**

**The below legal reminder will be present on letters from Attendance Letter 1.**

*“The Local Authority could issue a Penalty Notice Fine, or initiate legal proceedings through the Magistrates court for failing to ensure regular school attendance of your child under Section 444 Education Act 1996. This may result in a fine of up to £2500 and/or 3 months in prison.”*