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# Croughton All Saints CE Primary School

## Attendance & Punctuality Policy

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January 2024



***Be Ready, Be Respectful, Be Safe – To believe, achieve, succeed together’.***

*This is firmly rooted in Christian values. We look to Jesus as our guiding light. He inspires us to live out our Christian values and strive for excellence in all we do; celebrating life in all its fullness. Jesus said 'I have come that you may have life in all its fullness' (John 10:10). He calls us to a full life in mind, body, heart and spirit.*

Reviewed by	Approved by	Date Approved	Next Review Date
S. Smith Headteacher	FGB	January 2024	January 2026

At Croughton All Saints C of E Primary School we believe our pupils deserve the best possible education. We believe that positive behaviour, regular school attendance and punctuality are central to raising standards and pupil attainment. The school curriculum is very full and any time missed cannot be replaced. We take attendance seriously and have put a lot of time and energy into getting our procedures as efficient and effective as possible. We trust that all parents will work in partnership with us to ensure that all our pupils receive full time education which maximises opportunities for each child to achieve the best they can.

### **Legislation and guidance**

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures.

The most recent DfE Document is [Working together to improve school attendance](#)

These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

It also refers to:

- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

### **Aims of the Policy**

- To raise achievement by ensuring the highest standards of attendance and punctuality
- To work in partnership with parents, carers, pupils, school and the wider community to support maximum attendance and punctuality
- To promote a consistent whole school approach to all matters relating to attendance and punctuality
- To continue to develop positive and consistent communication between home and school to achieve high standards of attendance and punctuality
- To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data in order to identify patterns and trends
- To develop parents, carers and pupil's knowledge and understanding of the legal position regarding attendance and punctuality.

The government expects schools and local authorities to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled; and act early to address patterns of absence.
- Parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.
- All pupils to be punctual to their lessons.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **The Governing Body - The governing board is responsible for:**

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

### **The Headteacher - The Headteacher is responsible for:**

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers

### **Teacher - The Teacher is responsible for:**

- Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

### **Office/School Business Manager The office/SBM are responsible for:**

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Arrange phone calls and meetings between headteacher and parents to discuss any attendance issues
- Provide regular attendance reports to school staff and report concerns about attendance to the headteacher

### **Parents/carers - Parents/carers are expected to**

- It is the legal responsibility of every parent/carer to ensure his/her child attends school regularly and punctually
- Contact the school without delay to report any absence (by 9.15am)
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Adhere to the policy with regard to absence
- Ensure children have a good attitude to learning and attendance
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

## **Procedures**

Setting good attendance patterns from an early age is essential. Regular attendance is dependent on good relationships between home and school. At Croughton All Saints we expect all our parents and pupils to have the proper respect for education and those who

deliver it. We expect parents to work in partnership with our school to ensure that pupils do not miss their full entitlement and jeopardise their learning.

Whilst absences are not encouraged there will be occasion when a request is needed to be made. Additional factors will be considered as to whether the absence will be granted as authorised. This includes current attendance figures, reason for absence, one off occasions and personal circumstance of the request. Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. This helps if the appointment letter card is shared and an email sent in to the office and class teacher. However, we do however encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

For requests other than medical or dental, formal letters and or emails are expected to be sent to the headteacher which request the time off with reasons for the request. All of these requests will be responded to with a formal letter response which details reasons why or why not the absence has been authorised/unauthorised. This must be made in a timely fashion.

### **Authorised absence**

The Department for Education state that absences may only be authorised at the Headteacher's discretion for the following reasons:

- A child is ill or receiving medical attention
- Days of religious observance (notified in advance)
- Absence due to family circumstances (e.g. bereavement, serious illness)

### **Unauthorised absence**

Unauthorised absences are those where:

- No letter or acceptable explanation is provided by parents/carers
- The reason for the absence does not fall into one of the categories of authorised absence as above
- Absence of a pupil where concerns have already been aired and patterns and overall attendance rates are unacceptable

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

The normal pattern of absence for sickness would be for consecutive days in a week rather than odd days in different weeks. The aim would be for pupils to achieve a record of attendance with unbroken weeks (i.e., those where the pupil is marked present on all ten sessions); Regular, broken weeks are a cause for concern and will be followed up by the school.

The Department for Education guidelines state that the following activities would classify as unauthorised:

- A birthday or family celebration
- Family holiday

### **Holidays**

Croughton All Saints CE Primary School policy about term time holidays is in accordance with Government guidelines. Children are at school for 190 days in the year. That leaves 175 days including statutory holidays. If the Headteacher has not authorised the leave, and your child is out of school for over five days (10 sessions) in any six week period, absence will be referred to the Local Authority. When no reason is given, or a reason is considered unsatisfactory the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Please see Appendix 1 for details on Penalty Notices.

### **Registration**

Registers are taken twice a day, at 8:55am every morning and at 1:00pm every afternoon. A day equates to two sessions.

### **Late Arrivals / Punctuality**

At Croughton All Saints we believe being on time is also vital. All children arriving after the school gates are closed at 8.55am should report directly to the school office to ensure accurate absent and late records are kept. KS1 children are then accompanied by the Business Manager to their classroom. Being punctual for school means making sure children are at school and ready to learn. There are many ways to ensure children are on time for school, from making sure their school bags are packed the night before to making sure they get up with plenty of time to eat and get ready. Lost minutes mean lost learning. Being late doesn't only affect the child, it disrupts other children in the class as well as the teachers trying to teach a lesson.

If a child persistently arrives late, the headteacher will address the issue with parents by means of letters and meetings. The Headteacher, in line with expectations, will report repeated lateness to the Local Authority for investigation.

### **Non-Collection of Children**

In the event a child is not collected at the end of the school day and no prior explanation has been given by the parent, the KS1 pupils will be escorted and KS2 pupils will be sent to the school office and parents will be contacted by the office staff. In the event of repeated lateness to collect their child/ren, a communication in writing will be sent from the Headteacher reminding of the school's safeguarding procedures.

### **Illness**

Parents are expected to notify the school before 9.15am if a child is absent through illness, on the first day of absence. This may be by logging the absence on Studybugs, by email, telephone call or in person. A clear reason needs to be given to explain the absence. Where an explanation has not been received, an attempt will be made to ascertain the whereabouts of the child using the contact numbers held at school.

### **Medical and Dental Appointments**

Parents are expected to make every effort for appointments to take place out of school time. When this is unavoidable, parents must seek prior permission from the Headteacher in writing. Absences can only be authorised by the Headteacher. Parents are expected to restrict this time to a minimum, and we expect the child to be returned to school as soon as possible that day.

### **Following up absence**

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. (If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school will follow the procedure outlined in the Missing in Education section – Appendix 1 )
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary.
- If absence continues, the school will consider involving the local authority school's attendance officer.

### **Reporting to parents**

Parents whose child's attendance is below 90%, or who displays a pattern of absence/lateness over a term will be contacted - this is procedure to ensure data is being monitored and all stakeholders are aware of the current figure as it stands. It may be that legitimate and authorised reasons are the cause but it is important the impact is noted. Support will be offered to improve the data if needed. The SASO may also be contacted for additional guidance.

The end of year written report also records the year-to-date attendance figure.



## **Appendix 1** **Missing in Education**

If a pupil is absent, all schools have a responsibility to contact the parent or carer on the first day of absence and continue to make every effort to locate the pupil.  
When identified that the child is not in school, we will follow the procedures below:

### **Day 1** - Phone call

A staff member trained to do so, telephones the child's home to seek reasons for the absence and reassurance from a parent or carer that the child is safe at home.

#### *No response from parent*

There is no answer at the home or on mobile numbers  
Next step from school: Call back. Risk assess after 2 hours

#### *The parent/carer answered the call, the child is safe with them*

Next step from school: Ask for reason for absence and record on your school's attendance management system

#### *The person answering is not the parent/carer and the school is not reassured that the child is at home or safe*

Next step from school: The school's designated lead for child protection should be consulted on a risk assessment and the degree of vulnerability of the child

#### *The parent/carer answered the call, the child is not with them or safe and the parent is concerned*

Next step from school: School to advise the parent to:

- Contact the local police station to inform them that the child is missing
- Contact all people and places the child is known to talk to and visit to tell them that the child is missing and ask if they can help to find the child, by providing information which may shed light on the child's whereabouts or actively searching for the child
- Contact the family GP and Accident and Emergency Centres near where the child lives and goes to school, in case he/she has sustained an injury and been taken in for medical treatment
- Report back to school if the child is found or remains missing

### **Day 2** - Follow up phone call

A subsequent telephone call must be made either from the school landline or a mobile phone.

### **Day 3** – Write/email parents

Write to or email the parent in plain English, asking for contact to be made with the school immediately. Please give the parents/carers 3 working days to make contact and if you are aware that English may not be the parent's first language, copy the letter into a language that may be more accessible.

### **Day 5/6** - Home visit

Arrange a visit to the home address ensuring that risk assessments are in place

Once the school have completed these checks (or within 10 days, whichever is earlier), if the child has not been seen and the parents or carers have not been in contact either, schools must report the child as missing from education.

<https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/attendance-and-behaviour-support-schools/tracking-children-and-their-families-who-have-gone-missing>

## **Appendix 2** **Legal Sanctions**

The school or local authority can fine parents/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent/carer must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a Headteacher, Local Authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

### **Penalty notices for non-school attendance**

**You have to get permission from the headteacher if you want to take your child out of school during term time. You can be fined for taking your child on holiday during term time without permission from the headteacher of the school.**

You can only take your child out of school in term time if:

- you make an application to the headteacher in advance (as a parent the child normally lives with)
- there are exceptional circumstances

It is up to the headteacher how many days your child can be away from school if leave is granted.

What happens if I receive a penalty notice?

An initial fixed penalty notice of £60 is issued to each parent for each child (so a two-parent family with two children would be fined £240).

Penalty notice costs

<b>When you pay</b>	<b>Amount to pay</b>
Payment within 21 days	£60
Payment within 22 – 28 days	£120



## **Educational Inclusion and Partnership Team - A Brief Guide to Penalty Notices (PN)**

Sections 444 Education Act 1996

Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 Crime and Disorder Act 1998

*This is a brief summary about the Penalty Notice (PN) scheme and what it could mean to you.*

### *What is a Penalty Notice?*

*A penalty notice (PN) is an alternative to prosecution and requires the parent(s) to pay a fixed amount as a fine for their child's irregular attendance at school.*

*It is issued per parent, per child. Please note **only** a head teacher can authorise absence from school.*

### *Who issues them?*

*In West Northamptonshire Council the relevant Local Authority issues them through the Educational Inclusion and Partnerships team following notification from the school.*

### *When are they used?*

*When a pupil has a minimum of 10 school sessions recorded as unauthorised in a 6 school week period; (a school day is two sessions - morning and afternoon) or when a pupil has a series of unauthorised absences leading to irregular attendance*

### *This includes:*

- *Any absence marked in the register as unauthorised.*
- *Persistent late arrival at school after the register has been taken and is recorded as an unauthorised absence.*
- *An absence in term time which has not been authorised by the head teacher. The Government has directed that head teachers may only grant leave in exceptional circumstances.*
- *PNs can also be used during the first 5 days of exclusion. Parents are made aware of the consequences by letter when a child is excluded from school.*

*Please note: If the school refers a period of absence that is longer than 15 consecutive school days, the Educational and Inclusion Partnership team may consider that a PN is not appropriate. In these instances, the matter may proceed to a prosecution. If a parent knows that their child is failing to attend school regularly and there is reasonable justification for not ensuring that their child attends then it is for the parent or carers to prove that reasonable justification.*

### *How much is the PN?*

*The PN is issued with an invoice for £120 and 28 days are given for you to settle the Penalty.*

*If the PN is paid within the first 21 days the amount payable is reduced to £60.*

### *How do I pay?*

*The information on how to pay is included on the PN. Payment cannot be made in part or by instalments.*

### *What happens if I don't pay?*

*If you don't pay within the 28 days the Local Authority will consider instigating a prosecution in the Magistrates Court for the offence of irregular school attendance. If proven this could result in a criminal conviction, fine of up to £1000 per parent per child and/or a parenting order or a community service order and also costs.*

### *Can I appeal?*

*There is no statutory right of appeal once a PN has been issued.*

### *Can I be prosecuted if I pay the Penalty Notice?*

*You cannot be prosecuted for the period of absence identified in the Penalty Notice. You may subsequently be prosecuted for further periods of unauthorised absence from school. Each case is considered on an individual basis.*

*School staff would much rather work with parents and carers to resolve irregular attendance than resort to enforcement actions like Penalty Notices or Court.*