

Crestwood Park Primary School

Attendance Policy



October 2023

OUR MISSION:

*To prioritise and obsess about our attendance, aiming ultimately for **all** of our children to be in school **all** of the time.*

Policy Rationale

At Crestwood Park we strongly believe that attendance and punctuality are vital for a child to maximise their potential and create a feeling of belonging in their class/school community. We know that the key factor for dealing with attendance is to understand the roots of the problem. Therefore, we are committed to building trusting relationships with our children and families to ensure we improve attendance and always aim for 100%.

In promoting the belief that attendance and punctuality are important values we will be helping to equip our children for life and potentially impacting upon their futures as employees and employers.

We believe that;

- Prolonged and consistent absence affects access to the curriculum ultimately impacting on progress.
- Repeated and consistent lateness is an unsettling start to the school day for both the child and school.
- It's the child's right to attend school, not the parent's right to keep them at home.
- No child should feel that they need to miss school to support their family.

Our school will use all the resources in its power to reduce absence from school.

The DfE documentation '*Reducing Absence – ensuring schools intervene earlier*' states that; "The poor attendance of a number of pupils can disrupt their own learning and that of other pupils. The children quickly begin to fall behind their peers and often never fully catch up with gaps in their skills or knowledge." There is a clear link between poor attendance at school and low levels of achievement.

The Government has stated that once a child's overall absence equates to 10% or more they are classed at *persistently absent*. In January 2022, the Children's Commissioner team conducted a survey of local authorities in England. Their findings concluded that in Autumn 2021, 1 in 4 children were persistently absent compared to 1 in 9 in 2018/19- that is more than double. As a school, we have also seen our levels of persistent absentees rise. This policy presents the ways in which we will ensure that every Crestwood Park pupil is supported to be in school every day and how we will take steps to know where they are and that they are safe.

Promoting good attendance

At Crestwood Park we have a culture of celebrating all kinds of achievement and progress, academic and non-academic. Attendance is included in this.

We promote good attendance and punctuality in the following ways;

- **Each week attendance is celebrated:**
 - ✓ In our Whole School Friday Assembly, the class who achieves the best attendance is awarded a trophy.
 - ✓ The school's attendance figures are also on the school Newsletter.
 - ✓ Individual children who have scored 100% for that week are also celebrated on our weekly newsletter.
 - ✓ 'On time' award given out to one child at random each week to celebrate children arriving to school on time that day.
- **Every half term:**
 - ✓ Attendance figures and our grading system are reported to all parents on an individual basis.
- **Each term we further acknowledge good attendance:**
 - ✓ Children who have achieved good attendance for the current term will receive a prize-such as a wristband.
- **At the end of the school year, we:**
 - ✓ Award badges to children with good attendance for the entire year.
- **Throughout the year we:**
 - ✓ Work in partnership with the Education Support Service (ESS) to communicate to parents their legal obligations and the consequences of (unauthorised) condoned absence.

How we 'grade' attendance

Attendance	Category (& colour coding for letters to parents)
100%	Outstanding (gold)
95.1% and above	Acceptable (white)
91%- 95%	Concerning (orange)
Below 91%	Persistent Absence (red)

Roles and Responsibilities

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY. Attendance is everyone's business.

Pupils

- To attend school regularly and punctually
- To arrive at school by 8:50am (or 1.00pm if they have been home for lunch)
- To attend registration promptly for both morning and afternoon registration.
- To engage in learning.

Parents/Carer

- To ensure their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly equipped and in a fit state to learn.
- To notify the school every day of absence by 9.30am.
- To only take family holidays in the school holiday period.
- To provide the school with **a minimum of three up to date contact details and telephone numbers for every adult with parental responsibility and including at least one set of contact details for a friend/ relative outside of the immediate family.** If contact details change then we must be informed of new details within 24 hours.

Teachers/TA's

- To keep an accurate attendance register.
- To take appropriate action when pupils are late.
- To monitor pupil absence and know who persistent absentees are
- To know who vulnerable¹ children are and check they are attending every day.
- To inform SLT/deputy when absence is impacting on achievement.

SLT

- To have a named member of SLT responsible for attendance.
- To update key staff with changes to vulnerable pupil list and information supporting each pupil.
- To set clear and challenging attendance targets as part of school self review.
- To intervene early when individual pupil absence gives cause for concern- see Appendix 3
- Develop a multi agency response to the attendance agenda.
- Utilise the support of available specialists in relation to the attendance agenda.

¹ Fostered, SEND, In receipt of Early Help, Child in Need or Child Protection Plan, In receipt of Pastoral Support, History of Sibling absence, Involvement of an External Agency, Concerning Home Circumstances.

- Ensure parents are informed of the child's attendance each half term as well (as) their attendance for the year at regular intervals

Office

- To monitor late entrants into school and adjust Integris (Registers) accordingly.
- To forward phone messages to class teachers regarding absences.
- To CPOMs absences of vulnerable children.
- To monitor register codes and alert staff of inconsistencies.
- To produce individual or class summary sheets upon request of the Education Support Service (ESS)
- To produce attendance figures for half termly reports/ certificates/newsletters to celebrate good attendance.

Lateness

At Crestwood Park we expect children to arrive at school **between 8.40 and 8:50am**. By 8:50am all children should be in their classes and the classroom doors will be closed. If Children arrive between 8.50 and 9.00am they will be let in through the classroom doors, after this they will need to go through the main office.

If children arrive between 8:50 and 9:10am they will be marked as 'L' on the register for authorised lateness. If they arrive late after 9:10am, they will be marked as a 'U' for unauthorised late.

Late children will also have to catch up and complete the morning registration task at the start of lunchtime. If a child reaches 5 'Lates' during a school year, we will not authorise any more and further lateness will be classed as unauthorised absence for a whole morning. At this point, parents will be contacted, in order to discuss actions/support needed to resolve lateness.

Illness and how we respond to an absence

If a child is poorly and not well enough to come into school, parents should inform us by 9:30am at the very latest. The absence will then be marked as 'I' for authorised absence due to illness. Parents are asked to inform school on each day of absence.

If we receive no reason for an absence, we will telephone parents. If we have no response we will send a notification via the sch.life app, reminding parents to call school. We will also try to contact the other contacts for the child as listed on our records. If we have no reason for an absence and this causes concern (for eg- if we feel there may be a safeguarding issue or the child is on our persistent absentee list), we will conduct a home visit so that we can see the child. See Appendix 2- Home Visit Note.

In response to any unknown absence, we will exhaust all avenues to establish that a child is safe and well.

Where there are concerns, or if a child reaches 20 sessions (10 days) of illness, we will ask parents for medical proof that the child needs to stay at home before we authorise any further absence. We encourage parents of children with serious and reoccurring health concerns to talk to us. In cases where we feel it is appropriate, we will seek the additional support of the School Nurse to liaise with family GPs or other medical professionals.

Long term sickness absence

If a child needs to be hospitalised for 3 days or more we can contact the Hospital Teaching Service so that they work with your child whilst they are not in school. This would be recorded as the 'B' code which means they are being educated off site and would not affect their overall attendance percentage.

Requests for Leave and Unauthorised Absence

Pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less. In Dudley, schools are supported by The Education Support Service (ESS). The ESS help us to PREVENT absence, PROTECT our children and PURSUE a fine or a prosecution where a parent has not acted following our support or responded to our concerns and warnings.

Parents must apply in writing if they want to take their child out of school. Forms are available in the school office and also on the school website to download. Family holidays cannot be authorised other than in exceptional circumstances, however, parents must still inform school.

Any authorisation is at the Headteacher's discretion (or her designate).

The Head teacher may authorise absence in term time, in exceptional circumstances.

It is up to the Headteacher to decide whether a child's absence needs to be referred to the ESS.

Unacceptable reasons for not sending a child to school

It is not acceptable for a parent to assume a child can have days out of school for the following events;

- a child in the family is sick and parent cannot get other child/children to school
- a parent is on holiday and child is staying with a relative, relative cannot bring child to school - it is expected that other arrangements are made with family members/neighbours/friends to bring your child to school

- a parent sick on a long-term basis and cannot get child to school – it is expected that other arrangements are made with family members/neighbours/friends to bring your child to school
- Inclement weather i.e. snow – if families live within a 3-mile radius of the school, unless there is a babe in arms in the household, or they live in a remote setting, parents are expected to get their child to school. If school is open this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

What we do when we become concerned about attendance

At least every half term (more regularly for vulnerable children) we take a reading of each child's attendance. All children, whose absence is 5% or greater, appear on our 'concerning absence' list. Immediately we will talk to both parents and children about what would help them improve attendance. Involvement from our Pastoral team is also always considered at this initial stage of concern.

All 'Lates' and absences for children are reported to the Office. If we have no reason for an absence by 9.30am, a telephone call to the parent or guardian will be made to seek a satisfactory explanation for keeping the child at home. If we cannot contact the parent/ guardian, we will contact other relatives. We will then consider conducting a home visit. If we cannot be assured that the child is safe and have reason to be concerned, we will contact the police. Please see APPENDIX 4.

Our mantra for dealing with our persistent absentees is: *'Listen, understand, empathise and support but do not tolerate.'*

If a child is absent for more than 5 days school and they are on our persistent absentee list, we will ask for medical proof of the absence. We will always invite the parent in for a meeting and offer a support plan.

Once children appear on the 'concerning absence' list, a record of intervention to support attendance is kept. (Concerning absence can include patterns of absence we notice- for e.g.- 'Missing Mondays') Evidence of conversations with parents and our actions to support a family are recorded on our CPOMS system. We will use a formal letter to explain each process so that they are clear that further unauthorised absence could lead to a referral to the Education Support Service. Where background information suggests that a family would benefit from an Early Help Assessment, this is attempted before any referral to ESS.

It is important to note here that our Attendance Policy works alongside our Safeguarding, Well-Being, SEND and SPARKS Good Behaviour policies.

**APPENDIX 1 – ATTENDANCE
CODES, DESCRIPTIONS AND
MEANINGS CODE**

DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)
\	Present (PM)
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)
H	Family holiday (agreed)
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)
J	Interview
L	Late (before registers closed)
M	Medical/Dental appointments
N	No reason yet provided for absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)
P	Approved sporting activity
R	Religious observance
S	Study leave
T	Traveller absence
U	Late (after registers closed)
V	Educational visit or trip
W	Work experience
X	Non-compulsory school age absence
Y	Enforced closure
Z	Pupil not yet on roll

#

School closed to pupils

Not counted in possible
attendances

APPENDIX 2



Date:

HOME VISIT

We called to see you today, as you did not advise school as to why

is not in school.

We were unable to contact you by phone and unfortunately, we didn't get a reply when we visited.

Our attendance policy states: "If we have no reason for an absence and this causes concern (for eg- if we feel there may be a safeguarding issue or the child is on our persistent absentee list), we will conduct a home visit so that we can see the child."

Would you kindly contact school on **01384 818315** as a matter of urgency.

We are at liberty to call the police to 'do a safe and well check', if we do not hear from you.

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter

Yours sincerely

APPENDIX 3

Attendance Concerns Actions for:

<u>Action:</u>	<u>Date of action:</u>	<u>Outcome:</u>
Review of attendance summary indicates percentage is below 92%		
Letter sent home/phone call- offer to meet with Attendance Officer (Deputy Headteacher)		
Meeting in school/home- talk to child and parent – establish barriers- what would help? Consider involvement of Pastoral Team.		
3-week review- check on attendance percentage		
If no improvement, support programme discussed and set up. Targets set		
3-week review		
If Targets not met- offer of Early Help		
Unauthorise further absences without evidence		
3-week review		
Attendance not improved		
Consult with ESS- view to refer.		

APPENDIX 4

Responding to an absence:

<u>Escalation process:</u>	<u>Action:</u>
Step 1	Office team to check on Integris and with staff to ascertain reason for absence.
Step 2	If no reason for absence received by 10.00am, a telephone call is made to contacts.
Step 3	Sch.life message and sch.life e-mail sent
Step 4	Home visit
Step 5	Request for safe and well check from Police