

ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Mission Statement

At St Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary, God is at the heart of our school

We try, everyday, to follow Jesus' commandment 'Love one another as I have loved you'

We do this through love for our families, our friends, and our school

We respect our environment and recognise our responsibility for it

We encourage in each other a love of learning

We rejoice in each others' uniqueness

We place prayer and worship at the centre of everything we do

We are a community of love dedicated to God

Our school is somewhere **We** can grow together

To enable children to achieve all they are capable of, it is essential that they attend regularly and punctually.

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

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Working Together to Safeguard Children DfE
- Equality Policy

Roles and Responsibilities

Headteacher

- To be responsible for overall management and implementation of the policy
- To deal with parental requests for absence during school time in line with Local Authority policies and procedures
- To consider the use of Penalty Notices in line with locality policies and EWO

Assistant Headteacher for Inclusion

- To support the school attendance secretary to deliver the policy on a day-to-day basis
- Meet with attendance secretary to monitor systems and structures, ensuring they have an impact on pupil attendance and punctuality.
- To liaise with external agencies such as EWO and make referrals where necessary
- To ensure rewards and incentives for attendance and punctuality are being used
- Work with SLT and teachers to plan for the reintegration of pupils after a long term absence.
- To ensure that termly LA Returns are accurate
- To revise and amend policy with SLT
- To ensure staff are promoting good attendance
- To ensure staff are following this policy

Staff

- To keep accurate and up to date records through the pupil register
- To regularly remind children and parents about the importance of good attendance.

- Following up on pupil absence by ensuring reasons for absence are sought.
- To feed back to parents about attendance and punctuality regularly at Parents Evenings.

School Attendance Secretary

- To check the absence line and take messages from parents/carers about pupil absence.
- To record reasons for absence and update class registers
- To record the names and the reasons of pupils arriving late.
- To implement the daily checking of registers after the morning and afternoon registration sessions.
- To carry out and record the outcome of first day calls when a child doesn't arrive at School when no reason has been received.
- To contact parents/carers where attendance falls below 90% or where punctuality has become a concern.
- To maintain Attendance records in line with this policy.
- To liaise with and report to outside agencies such as the EWS.
- To report to the Local Authority as requested.
- To maintain clear communication with the SLT regarding attendance and punctuality

Parents and carers

- To ensure that their children receive suitable full-time education from the age of 5
- To be responsible for making sure their children attend school regularly
- To ensure that their children arrive on time for school every day
- To contact the school if their child is unable to attend
- To ensure that the school has up-to-date contact details
- To work in partnership with the school and external agencies to promote good attendance and punctuality
- If late, children must be brought to the school by a parent/carer and signed in using the Inventory system.

Good attendance and punctuality (above 97%) is regularly promoted and supported and remains a high priority across the school.

All schools are expected to achieve an overall rate of 95% attendance. It is the responsibility of all school staff to be welcoming to children and their parents, creating an atmosphere where they both feel able to raise concerns and share any information that could affect the children's attendance. Due regard will be given to the fact that a register is a legal document and, taking this into account, registers will be marked regularly and conscientiously at the beginning of both the morning and afternoon sessions.

Registration

- The times after which a child is marked late or absent are recorded. Children need to be in school by **8.50am**.
- If a child arrives after 8.55am they are marked as late.
- From 9.15am onwards the register will mark this as an unauthorised absence (U).

It is important that all children arrive at school punctually. If a child is late, s/he should report to the school office to be marked in and ensure that in case of emergency the school has an accurate head count. It is most important that parents discuss any problem with either the class teacher or the Headteacher so that appropriate help can be offered. Equally, if a child needs to leave school for a medical appointment during school hours s/he must be signed out, and in again on return, at the office. Parents/carers are asked to make every possible effort to make appointments out of school hours.

If a child is absent for the day, the school expects parents/carers to call the school or email the office before registration closes, **giving the reason** for the absence and the expected day of return. If no word is received from the parent/carer the school will contact the parent/carer on that day. The school follows up absences where no reasons are given. If the reasons for these absences remain unspecified they will be classed as unauthorised.

Good Attendance

St Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School provides a broad, balanced curriculum but for children to access the many opportunities that are provided, it is necessary for them to attend school regularly and punctually.

To support good attendance, we have a well-attended breakfast club that is open from 8am. This is run by school staff and ensures a positive start to the day.

Strategies for promoting attendance

- School newsletter
- Weekly attendance trophy (KS2) and attendance bear (KS1) and certificate for each class
- Early Bird - choose a random day each week and any child on time goes into the prize draw and their name can be picked at random to win a spot prize.
- Half termly: everyday matters - Individuals with perfect attendance gets a perfect attendance certificate and a brag tag – become a STAR (Studious, thoughtful, accountable and respectful)
- Termly: Everyday counts – choose a set period, e.g. Xmas, summer and during the period we choose any child with a 100% attendance gets a badge and pencil
- Annual medals and certificates for attendance of 96-100%
- Ad hoc incentives such as poster competitions, and punctuality incentives such as – first class to spell 'Perfect Punctuality' as every child in the class is on time wins a pizza party for their class.

School Attendance Letters

The Safeguarding Team meet weekly to review attendance and punctuality – with the focus on children with attendance less than 95%.

In line with the Local Authority, letters are sent out by the school to communicate to parents regarding attendance and punctuality when 90% attendance is reached.

It is the parents' legal responsibility to ensure their child's good school attendance and punctuality. If attendance or punctuality is persistently unsatisfactory, initially the school

will liaise with the parent verbally and/or by letter. At this stage there may be a meeting with the Attendance Officer in school or the EWO (Educational Welfare Officer).

Sanctions

If the situation does not improve i.e. the child's unauthorised absences build up to 10 days, the school will consider a referral to Pupil Entitlement: Investigation (PEI) of West Sussex County Council (WSCC). Should a child's attendance/punctuality still not improve, PEI will consider whether legal action should be instigated against the parent/carer under the Education Act 1996. Alternatively, PEI may seek an Education Supervision Order in the family proceedings court.

In line with Local Authority policy **leave for pupils during term time is not authorised.**

The school recognises that taking children out of school may constitute a safeguarding risk and will make necessary enquiries in order to check that the child is not at risk. The school may refer to other agencies.

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 and Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that headteachers may not grant **any** leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. If the leave is granted, they should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school.

A form obtained from the school office must be completed when withdrawal from learning is being requested (see Appendix A).

Parents/carers should be aware that Crawley Schools will follow the WSCC guidelines on issuing FPN and unauthorised absence, i.e. issue a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) if a child accrues 10 or more unauthorised absences in a 10-week period (each half day counts as one absence),

- by non-attendance at school
- by arriving persistently late at school (after registration has closed)
- by parents/carers taking their child on an unauthorised holiday during the school term.

The FPN is an alternative to prosecution and gives parents/carers an opportunity to discharge their criminal liability by paying a fine of £120, which must be paid within 28 days. If paid within 21 days, the fine is reduced to £60. After 28 days, the Pupil Entitlement: Investigation (PEI) will consider prosecuting for the original non-attendance, not for the non-payment of the FPN. Further information on legal action can be found on GOV.UK.

Exceptional Circumstances

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 make clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Only if Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional.

Exceptional circumstances may include:

- Bereavement or sudden illness of immediate family members
- Funeral of immediate family member

- Religious observance
- Transport was not provided by the LA when it should have been
- Children of service personnel about to go on deployment
- One day of absence can be authorised for a wedding of an immediate family member and evidence is provided
- One off sporting event/performing arts
- One day for immediate family member's graduation
- Medical (emergency appointment). Child is expected to be in school before and after appointment

If a request meets the above exceptional circumstances, but falls within the following times, the Headteacher must be convinced that absence from school may be the only option:

1. First half term of any academic year
2. Year 6 transition day
3. Year 6 SATs week

Examples of circumstances of not considered as exceptional:

- Holidays abroad for purposes of visiting a sick relative unless the relative is seriously ill. Medical evidence may be requested.
- Holidays taken in term time due to lower costs/parental work commitments.
- Birthdays
- Headlice
- Learning difficulties
- No school uniform
- Friendship issues
- Death of a pet
- School refusal
- Weddings abroad
- Family anniversaries
- Travel problems

Education Supervision Order	<p>A young person can be made the subject of an Education Supervision Order for persistent failure to attend school. This order empowers the supervising officer to make 'reasonable directions'. The Education Supervision Order will be superseded by a Criminal Supervision Order.</p> <p>In order for an Education Supervision Order to be made, the Education Welfare Service have to show that parents will co-operate with the conditions of the order.</p>
School Attendance Orders	<p>This order names the school, which the Local Authority requires the young person to attend, in cases where the parent has failed to secure a school place. If the parent does not comply with the order, a fine may be imposed in the Magistrates Court.</p>
Parenting Orders	<p>These orders may be made against parents or guardians to help them address the young person's offending behaviour or failure to attend school. Parents may be obliged to attend counselling or guidance sessions for up to 3 months, or to exercise particular controls over their children. Breach of the order is a criminal offence.</p>
Anti-Social Behaviour Order	<p>This order can be applied for by the Police or Local Authority against an individual, aged 10 or over, or several individuals (including a family), whose behaviour is anti-social; ie: causes alarm, distress or harassment to one or more people. The orders are preventative and incorporate the use of prohibitions to prevent further acts. Breaches carry a penalty of up to 5 years imprisonment. Schools, seeing a possible need for this order, should liaise with the Police.</p>
Prevention & FGM	<p>Being aware of safeguarding issues including radicalization and FGM are of the upmost importance and are always considered by staff when children are absent from School.</p>

If a child fails to attend school their school place may be lost if the child fails to attend school within 10 school days immediately following the expiry date on the leave of absence form. A 'Loss of School Place Letter' may be sent out requiring parents to come into school. Children Missing in Education Team at WSCC is immediately informed.

In exceptional circumstances a pupil may be granted authorised leave. Only the headteacher is able to form this judgement. However, regardless of whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised, if after ten days the pupil fails to return and no contact can be made with the parents/carers, the school will make a referral to PEI which will make reasonable enquiries and consult with the Child Missing Education Team (CME). If the school can make contact with the parents/carers, it will warn them, if possible in writing, that it will consider taking the pupil off roll if s/he does not return by an agreed date. If

the pupil does not return within 20 days and no reasonable explanation is given, the school will consult with CME and, in line with DfE guidance, consider taking the pupil off roll. If taken off roll, parents/carers would need to reapply for a place through West Sussex County Council Admissions (North) on their return. A place cannot be guaranteed at the current school.

Genuine illness will be authorised, although the school reserves the right to ask for medical clarification if a child's medical absences are above the amount expected for a usually healthy child. If it has been necessary for a child to have extended absence due to illness, the school will work with the child, parents/carers and any other involved agencies to instigate a re-integration programme for that child.

Date Implemented June: 2023

Next Review June 2024

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Appendix A

Crawley Schools PARENTAL REQUEST TO SCHOOL TO AUTHORISE AN ABSENCE IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES (Print back to back)

Child's Name	
Date of birth	
Year Group	
Class/form	
Name of person making request & relationship with child	
Address	
Phone Number	
Dates your child will be absent from school	

Absences will only be authorised if this request is made in advance of the dates your child will be absent from school AND if the circumstances of the absence are exceptional. There is no entitlement to take a child out of school for a family holiday.

The law states that parents must ensure their children regularly attend school to receive their education. The head teacher can only authorise absence in exceptional circumstances. Exceptional is likely to be rare, significant, unavoidable and short.

Whether the absence is exceptional is at the head teacher's discretion based on their assessment of the situation and can vary from school to school. A weeks' absence for holiday and a weeks' absence for illness would give an attendance figure below 95%. The government considers attendance unacceptable below 95%.

The head teacher will consider the reasons for your absence request. You may be asked to provide evidence to support your request. Please note that having already booked a holiday will not be considered as a good reason for term time absence. In relation to 'unavoidable' absence, the head teacher will consider whether the event could have reasonably been scheduled at another time. Issues of cost will not be considered as an exceptional reason.

If you wish for this absence to be authorised, you will need to fully explain (together with evidence) why the circumstances of this absence are exceptional.

Why is this absence exceptional? (continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

Declaration

I confirm that the information I have given on this form is true. I understand that if I do not fully complete this form, fully respond to requests for further information or that ultimately the absence is not authorised, my child's attendance will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. I understand that I must ensure my child attends school regularly and that failing to do so is a criminal offence which may result in legal proceedings being taken against me, either through a Penalty Notice or by prosecution in the Magistrates' Court.

Signed:.....

Date:

.....
(Parent/Carer)

Full Name:.....

Unless further information is required, a decision will be sent to you within 5 school days.

SCHOOL USE ONLY

Previous days authorised absence:

Previous sickness days:

Number of days authorised:

Number of days unauthorised:

CRAWLEY PRIMARY SCHOOLS WITHDRAWAL FROM LEARNING

Child's Name:

Dates requested as absence from learning:

Has been authorised

Has not been authorised

Reason for non-authorisation (to be highlighted):

- There is no legal entitlement to holidays during term time and this should be avoided if at all possible. They will automatically be classed as unauthorised absence.
- Previous/current attendance is less than 95%.
- The 'once in a lifetime' event could have reasonably been scheduled at another time.
- The period of absence requested exceeds that required for the 'unavoidable and exceptional event'.
- The reasons provided do not constitute 'exceptional circumstances'.
- Other:

SIGNED:

DATE:

Appendix B – Attendance Codes (DfE Guidance on School Attendance)

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school

Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day