

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

Intention

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 issue Fixed Penalty Notices, where necessary in line with locality policies and EWO
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils

Assistant Headteacher for Inclusion responsible for attendance

- 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 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
- To liaise with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Build close and productive relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues

- Planning targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

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.
- Be aware of absences of each child or patterns in absence in their group and make sure the child is supported in catching up missed work
- Notify attendance lead/SLT if there is suggestion of term time holiday, reporting through CPOMS
- Morning registration must be completed by **9:15am**
- Afternoon registration must be completed by **1:30pm**

Office Staff

- 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
- If necessary, walk the child to the lesson/assembly etc. if this is a cause of anxiety
- Notify the DSL if there are any contextual safeguarding issues which might explain erratic or poor attendance

Parents and carers

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when the child is expected to return
- To ensure that the school has up-to-date contact details, with more than 1 emergency contact number
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day. Where not possible, inform the school of the child's absence in advance by emailing or phoning the school office.
- If their child's absence rates are increasing and are causing concern, an attendance contract may be used to support parents to make improvements. Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting headteacher, SENCO, Key Stage lead, class teacher who can be contacted via 01293 521009 office@stfrancisassisi.org.uk
- If late, children must be brought to the school by a parent/carer and signed in using the Inentry 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.

Pupils

- Attend school every day, on time.

Registration

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each day and once directly after lunch ends. It will be marked, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes for the School Attendance (Pupil Registration, England, Regulations 2024). See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

- 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 **9am** 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 (Appendix C). 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 9am, **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.

Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed (9:14am) will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed (9:15am) will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

- Parents/Carers of pupils who have patterns of lateness will be contacted to discuss the importance of punctuality and how this might be achieved:
- Parents/Carers will be invited to a meeting to discuss the cause of lateness with a member of SLT/Class teacher and support will be offered
- If a child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence due to lateness in any 10 week period, a penalty notice will be issued in accordance with West Sussex's Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices for non-attendance.

Parents/Carers must collect their child promptly at the end of the school day:

- Where late collection is persistent and/or after 3:30pm the school is obliged to take any uncollected pupil to The Ark (wrap around care provision), and the parent/carer will be charged in accordance with the fees.
- If a child is not collected by 6pm and a parent/carer cannot be contacted, the school will contact Children's Services as this is a safeguarding concern.

Following up unexplained 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 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 may complete a home visit, contact Children's Services or the police
- 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(s) for which the pupil was absent
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's social worker. Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with: issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention

Good Attendance

Crawley Schools provide 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. Good school attendance will be recognised; schools use reward systems e.g. children with 100% attendance at the end of the year may be awarded a special certificate in assembly.

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

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child.

To help us achieve this we will:

- Provide information on all matters related to attendance in our school newsletter and website
- Report to you how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to attainment

Weekly	½ termly	Termly	End of year	Ad Hoc	Punctuality
Attendance trophy awarded to the best KS2 and attendance bear to KS1/EYFS class	Certificates for children with 100% in this period	Best class from UKS2, LKS2 and EYFS/KS1 will win a special prize for that day	All children with attendance of 97% and above will be recognised	Everyday counts – Selected periods throughout the school year – child with 100% in this period awarded a badge/pencil	Pizza piece received for those classes with punctuality of 95% and above
Any class with attendance 97% and over receives a Mr Potato Head piece (See Appendix D)				Poster competitions	

Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

Pupils absent due to complex barrier to attendance

- Headteacher, parents, class teacher and SENCO will meet to identify the barriers to good school attendance. If appropriate, the child’s views will also be gathered. An attendance contract may be put in place to support progress towards improved attendance.
- School-based interventions may be offered: ELSA, a consultation with Fair Access, a time-limited part-time timetable so the child can build success, emotionally based School Avoidance resources.
- External Interventions may be offered: referrals to EWO, Child Development Centre, Educational Psychologist, CAMHS, Early Help/Family Support Services

Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

- Headteacher, parents, class teacher and SENCO will meet to identify the barriers to good school attendance. If appropriate, the child's views will also be gathered.
- If appropriate, the attendance policy will be implemented alongside the Children with Health Needs who cannot attend School and Children with Medical Conditions policies.
- Work with the learning mentor to engage with school avoidance resources, exploring the positive and negative influences on absenteeism and build resilience
- School-based interventions may be offered: ELSA, a consultation with Fair Access, a time-limited part-time timetable so the child can build success, emotionally based School Avoidance resources.
- External Interventions may be offered: referrals to EWO, Child Development Centre, Educational Psychologist, CAMHS, Early Help/Family Support Services

Where a pupil has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the pupil's needs, the school will inform the local authority

School Attendance Letters

The Safeguarding Team meet weekly to review attendance and punctuality – with the focus on children with attendance less than 97%.

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

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). Fines can also be considered for holiday's that are taken on an INSET week or bank holiday, 8/9 G codes can be processed.

- 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

<p>Education Supervision Order</p>	<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>
<p>School Attendance Orders</p>	<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>
<p>Parenting Orders</p>	<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>
<p>Anti-Social Behaviour Order</p>	<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>
<p>Prevention & FGM</p>	<p>Being aware of safeguarding issues including radicalization and FGM are of the utmost 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 September 2025

Next Review: September 2026

CS

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)

Continued over...

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:	<input type="text"/>	Previous sickness days:	<input type="text"/>
Number of days authorised:	<input type="text"/>	Number of days unauthorised:	<input type="text"/>

CRAWLEY PRIMARY SCHOOLS WITHDRAWAL FROM LEARNING

Child's Name: Dates requested as absence from learning:

Has been authorised Has not been authorised

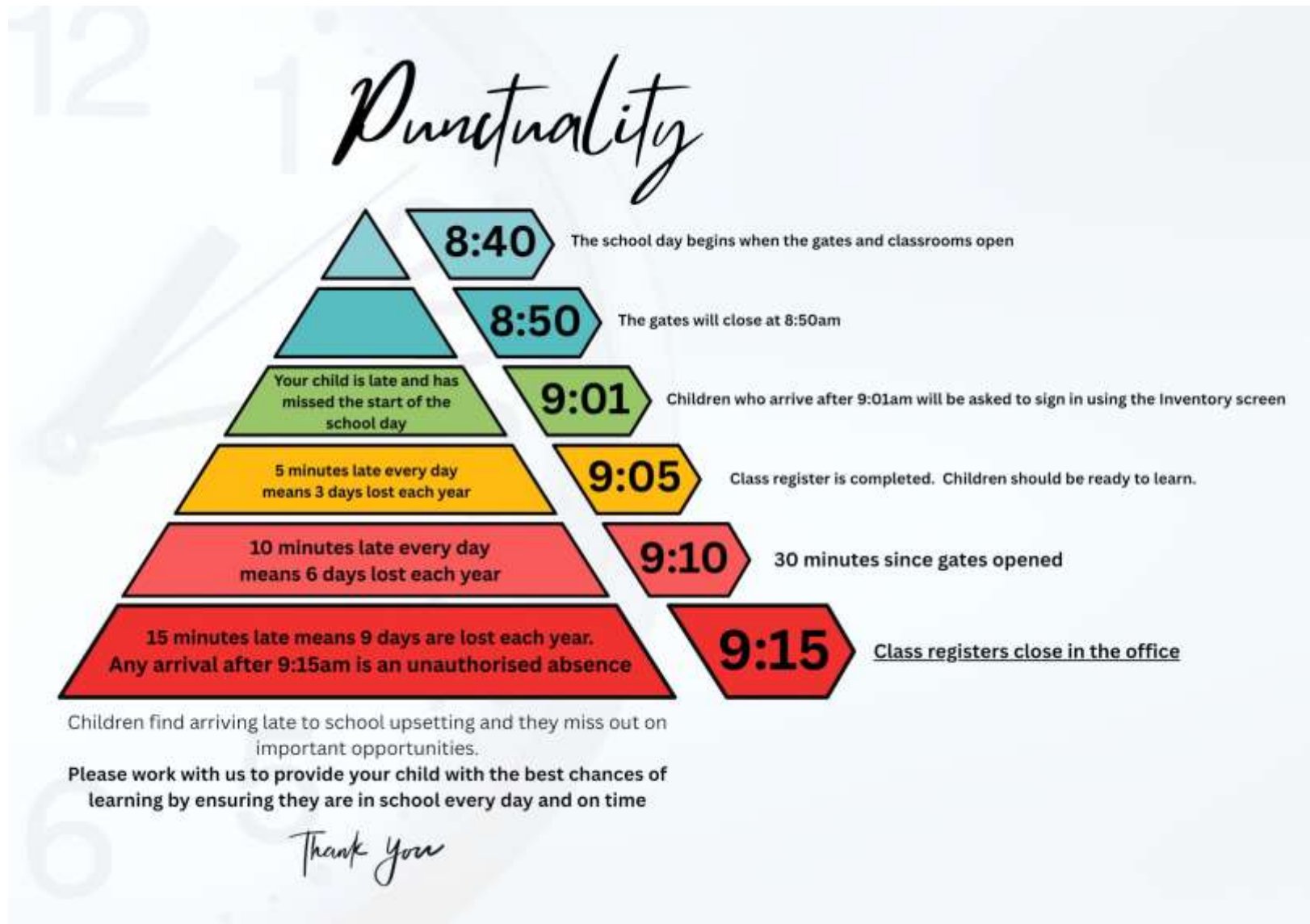
Reason for non-authorisation (to be highlighted):

- 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) for a full list please visit [Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#)

Code	Meaning
/ \	Present at the school / = morning session \ = afternoon session
L	Late arrival before the register is closed
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip
P	Participating in a sporting activity
W	Attending work experience
B	Attending any other approved educational activity
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance
M	Leave or absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
D	Dual registered at another school
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance
R	Religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
E	Suspended or permanently excluded
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
G	Holiday not granted by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	Arrived in school after registration closed



Mr Potato Head Attendance challenge



All classes start off with feet for their Mr Potato

**Each week if a class achieves 97% attendance or above, that class can
add a piece to their own Potato Head**

**When a class has added 3 pieces they will earn
An extra break or a lesson of their choice**

**When a class adds another 3 pieces (has a total of 6 pieces) they will
earn
A Non-uniform day**

**When a class completed their Potato Head, that class will earn
Movie with Popcorn and drink afternoon on the big screen**

ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY

100%
attendance



0 DAYS ABSENCE

BEST CHANCE OF SUCCESS

95%
attendance



10 DAYS ABSENCE

90%
attendance



19 DAYS ABSENCE

LESS CHANCE OF SUCCESS

85%
attendance



29 DAYS ABSENCE

175 NON-TERM DAYS FOR PERSONAL COMMITMENTS

80%
attendance



38 DAYS ABSENCE

SERIOUS IMPACT ON EDUCATION AND REDUCED LIFE CHANCES

75%
attendance



47 DAYS ABSENCE

95% attendance means 10 days absence and 50 lessons lost when there are 5 lessons a day.

90% attendance or less can reduce your chances of good outcomes by half.

MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

When possible, book these outside of school hours.

ILLNESS

Unless it's serious, bring your child into school and we will keep an eye on them throughout the day.

FAMILY HOLIDAYS

You have 175 days a year when you're not in school. A one-week holiday in term time means that the highest attendance you can achieve is **97%**.



Average learning time per day is 5 hours
15 minutes late each day and you would have missed 2 FULL WEEKS of school in one year!

