

## Attendance Policy

### **Introduction**

Parents or carers of children of compulsory school age have a legal duty to ensure that their children receive efficient, full time education by attendance at school or otherwise. (Education Act 1996). If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly their parent commits an offence.

Under the provisions of the Education Act 1996 (s434) and the Student Registration Regulations 1995, the school must keep an attendance register.

The school is registered with the Information Commissioner under the Data Protection Act 1998.

### **Cranwell Aims**

It is recognised that:

- All pupils of statutory school age have an equal right to access an education in accordance with the National Curriculum regulations.
- No pupils should be deprived of their opportunities, by either their own non-attendance or that of other pupils, to receive an education that meets their needs and personal development.
- In the first instance, it is the responsibility of pupils and their parents to ensure attendance at school, as required by law.
- Many pupils and their parents may need to be supported at some stage in meeting their attendance obligations and responsibilities.
- Situations may exist beyond the control of pupils and/or parents, which schools need to address in partnership with external agencies.
- The vast majority of pupils want to attend school to learn, to socialise with their peer groups and prepare themselves fully to take their place in society as well-rounded and responsible citizens with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to contribute to the life and culture of their communities.

### **Expectations**

The School expects from our pupils:

- That they attend school regularly.
- That they will arrive on time and be appropriately prepared for the day.

The School expects from parents:

- That they encourage their children to attend school.
- That they ensure they contact the School as soon as is reasonably practical whenever their child is unable to attend.
- That they ensure their children arrive in school well prepared for the school day and to check that their children have done any homework set.
- That they contact the school in confidence whenever any problem occurs that may keep their children away from school.
- That they avoid holidays in term time whenever possible.

The School will provide:

- Information regarding procedures for notification of absence issued to parents annually.
- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance.

### **Recording of Attendance**

Registration will be undertaken by the Class Teacher twice daily. This will be done for morning sessions between 8:55am and 9:15am, and for afternoon sessions between 1:00pm and 1:15pm. Where children arrive at school more than fifteen minutes after the end of the registration periods, they will be counted as being late. In manual registration, full details of symbols used and supplementary reference letters may be found on the front page of the registers. Staff will ensure that 'End of Term' summary boxes are accurately completed on the last day of each term

After registration, the registers will be sent to the School Office. They are only to be removed for the following reasons:

- Checking purposes in the event of a fire alarm being sounded.

- Collection by the Head Teacher/Secretary for administrative purposes.
- In the event of a School Trip taking place, class lists or photocopies of the register must be taken on the visit, which clearly indicate the presence or absence of a child.
- Teachers should notify the Secretary/Midday Supervisory Assistant Leader of any child who is going home for lunch.

### **Encouraging Attendance**

As a School, we believe that attendance can be encouraged in the following ways:

- Accurate completion of the registers at the beginning of each session and within 20 minutes of the start of the session. □ Attendance checks at appropriate times.
- Recording of good attendance on annual reports to parents.
- A 'Gold Award', using the Lincolnshire County Council's Certificate, for 100% attendance achieved throughout the year. (Attendance is 100% if there have been no absences).
- Targeting and visiting pupils who have attendance problems as part of liaison between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3, and good secondary transfer practice.
- Sending parents termly/weekly absence figures as appropriate in the cases of intermittent attendance.
- Computerised systems provide easily accessible pupil attendance records which promote speedy evaluation and timely responses by the school.
- Revision of attendance by the Admin Team, Head Teacher and School Governors.

### **Responding to Non-attendance** (see Appendix 1)

- Where there is no response, a letter may be sent or a visit a member of the School Staff and/or the Local PSCO whichever is considered appropriate.
- The Head Teacher is to be informed of any absence which:
- Will require absence from school. There are occasions when absences are authorised, due to exceptional circumstances such as if Service Children's parents return from deployment.
- Appears irregular (below 90%).
- Shows regular patterns, e.g. repeated absence on the same day(s) of each week. □ Is unexplained, i.e. unauthorised.
- The Head teacher may have contact with the EWO and raise any issues causing concern. Staff will have advance notice of any such meetings and should alert the Head Teacher to any issues which may be concerning them.
- Following referral of any matter to the E.W.S., the School will take part fully in monitoring the situation and work fully with the relevant parties and agencies in the interest of the individual child. Such monitoring and co-operation may well concern matters other than those directly relating to attendance issues.

### **Reintegration**

When a child needs to be reintegrated due to an extended time out of education, there are a few things that the School carries out, including:

- Where appropriate, establishing a Pastoral Support Programme as detailed in the DfE Social Inclusion: Pupil Support Guidance.
- The appropriate Staff will be responsible for deciding on the programme for return and the management of that programme.
- All Staff need to be aware that this is a difficult process that will require careful handling and that any problems should be notified to the responsible Staff member as soon as possible.
- Programmes may need to be tailored to individual needs and may involve phased, part-time re-entry with support in lessons as appropriate. Support from the SEN Co-ordinator may be required.
- The success of the Pastoral Support Programme will require the involvement of appropriate School Staff, external agencies, the child and the parents. Programmes should be reviewed regularly and amended as necessary.
- Staff will be notified of the return of long-term absentees by the Head Teacher or via Staff Meetings.

### **School Organisation**

In order for any policy to be successful, every member of Staff must make attendance a high priority and convey to the pupils, by their behaviour, the importance of the education being provided. This means ensuring that all Staff arrive to lessons on time and well prepared. In addition to these, there may be specific responsibilities allocated to individual Staff groups such as the following:

- **Head Teacher**
  - To oversee the implementation of this Policy.
  - To report to the Governors regarding attendance.
- **Class Teacher**
  - To complete registers accurately and on time.
  - To follow-up immediately any unexplained non-attendance by contacting parent, either personally or through the School Secretary, SMT or Head Teacher.
  - To record all reasons for absence in the register, and retain all notes explaining absences, as well as the phone call record sheets.
  - To inform the Head Teacher of concerns.
- **Governors**
  - Governors may be given a specific role/interest in monitoring attendance and/or other policies.
  - To provide an annual attendance report to each annual Parent/Governors Meeting.
- **Parents**
  - To contact the school on the first day of absence or as soon as possible.
  - To provide additional absence notes if the absence is longer than initially indicated.
  - To provide support for general attendance.
- **Admin Team**
  - To produce updates from weekly registers, error sheets, absence code sheets, weekly % information and OMR sheets (if appropriate).
  - To place parent's letters and telephone absence slips in registers.
  - To be aware that the completion of DFES and County returns, e.g. Census, are greatly simplified by full and accurate register summaries.
  - To maintain a record of late arrivals.
  - To maintain a signed in/out book.
  - To inform the Head Teacher of any pupil leaving the school or removed from the school roll.

#### **Liaising with External Agencies**

Good relations and working practices are essential. The School recognises that agencies have difficult roles in that they endeavour to support both the School in meeting its legal obligations, as well as the home and pupil in ensuring that the latter's educational opportunities are maximised. Some parents need the support of these agencies so that they can fulfil their legal obligations to their children. The main roles and responsibilities of the external agencies are:

- **Educational Welfare Service ( if purchased in)**
  - The EWS has been described as the 'attendance enforcement arm' of most Local Authorities (DES 1991), which complements the role of the School.
  - The Lincolnshire EWS will endeavour to provide schools in Lincolnshire with a service that recognises the uniqueness of the School and the community it serves.
  - The Educational Welfare Officers may continue to work closely with teachers, pupils and their families, whilst the priority will relate to attendance matters, other activities may include behaviour problems, exclusions, Special Educational Needs, child protection, child employment, children in entertainment and any other problems that prevent a young person benefiting fully from the educational opportunities available to them.
  - The Education Welfare Service may support the school in the following ways:
    - Accepting referrals.
    - Home visiting to make an assessment of the problems.
    - Liaison or mediation between School and home.
    - Working with the family, the School and the young person to resolve the problems.
    - Where necessary, instigating legal proceedings on behalf of the LEA in the Magistrates' Court or the Family Court.
    - Offering professional advice, guidance and support about pupil welfare issues.
    - Working in partnership with schools to develop sensitive individual re-integration packages for long-term absentees.
    - Group work with pupils or parents.
    - Work on specific attendance projects.
    - Strategic support to schools, including advice on the collection and analysis of attendance data, audits of in-school procedures and subsequent action planning, together with targeted strategies to address specific issues.
    - Guidance concerning young people involved in entertainment/performing.

## □ **Other Agencies**

- Other agencies are to be used where appropriate in individual cases. Research has shown that schools in partnership with the following support services have a greater impact on school attendance than when they act alone or when the support services are uncoordinated or disjointed:
- Educational Behavioural and Support Services.
- Educational Psychologists.
- Special Educational Needs Service. □ Social Services.

## **Data Protection Act**

The Data Protection Act places obligations on all agencies that process, store and share information on any individual. It is important to have full regard for the requirements of the Act. Each school has a Data Protection Notification which details the circumstances under which data is managed.

## **Guidance for Class Teachers:**

Under of the Education Act's 1996, it is the legal responsibility of parents to see that their child/children receive(s) regular education suitable to their age, aptitude and abilities. Therefore the following advice is provided regarding all aspects of registration.

## **The Importance of Registration**

- An attendance register, electronic or manual, must be kept on which, at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session, pupils are marked present or absent. Registers should be collected from and returned to the School Office.
- Manuscript registers must be kept in ink and corrections must be made in such a way that the original entry and the correction are both clearly distinguishable.
- Authorised absences should be entered, with the symbol for categorising the absence in blue or black.
- Where electronic registers are used, a hard copy for each session must be kept to observe the spirit of the law and for Health and Safety reasons.
- Accurate marking of registers and appropriate maintenance of electronic and computerised systems can have a significant impact on overall school attendance and absence figures.

## **Categorising Absence**

- Only the school, in the context of the law, can approve absences and not parents. If a Class Teacher does not accept the explanation offered for absence as a valid reason, then the matter must be referred to the Head Teacher.
- Emerging patterns of authorised absence should be reported to the Head Teacher.
- Reasons for absence should be entered in the register by the appropriate code symbol.
- Class Teachers who experience difficulty in receiving a parental note should inform the Head Teacher.

## **Authorised or Unauthorised Absence**

- Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as a satisfactory reason for absence.
- All other absence must be regarded as unauthorised.
- The following may be reasons for authorising absences:
  - Illness.
  - Family bereavements
  - Family holiday
  - Medical and dental appointments where proof is available.
  - Days of religious observance.
  - Fixed term exclusion.
  - Permanent exclusion until removed from roll or re-instated.
- Absences should not be authorised under the following circumstances:
  - Shopping trips.
  - Minding the house or looking after siblings.
  - Lateness if registration is missed without explanation.
  - Medical appointments that cannot be verified.
  - No reason given.
  - Should School Staff feel a note is not genuine or not valid.

*Please note: Unusual circumstances may arise that lead to a young person being absent from school. It is for the Head Teacher to decide whether the explanation offered is reasonable. In such situations, the individual circumstances, previous attendance pattern and frequency of such incidents should be considered. Further advice is available in DfEE Circular No. 10/99.*

### **Holidays During Term Time**

- Head teachers should not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in advance and the head teacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion.
- If a school does not authorise a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday but the parents still take the child out of school, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.

### **Medical or Dental Appointments**

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence. Parents are encouraged to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, pupils should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.

### **Other Absences**

Pupils who are absent from School but taking part in an approved education activity should be marked in the usual way, but are counted as present for calculating performance table data. To avoid confusion in emergency situations, pupils who are off site should not be marked as present. The following activities fall within this category:

- Field trips and educational visits, both in this country and overseas.
- Pupils receiving approved education off site, e.g. those receiving specialist support or those in receipt of home tuition but remaining on the roll of the School.

### **Lateness**

- The school actively discourages late arrival by challenging young people who are persistently late or arrive late without reasonable explanation.
- The School has a policy of keeping registers open for 20 minutes from the beginning of the morning session and 15 minutes from the beginning of the afternoon session of registration. In the event of bad weather, this period can be extended.
- Where a pupil arrives during the period when the register is open, they may be marked present, but repeated lateness will be noted.
- Late pupils should enter via the main entrance and notify the School Secretary of their arrival.
- Where a pupil arrives after register closure without good reason, they should be marked with an unauthorised absence in red and the letter L in blue or black to indicate that they are on site.

### **Removal from the School Roll**

There are strict guidelines on the circumstances under which a pupil may be removed from the School Roll. These are detailed in Circulars 1099 and 111/99 and the Schools Administration Handbook (section A2). Removal from the School Roll under any other circumstances is illegal. The names of pupils may only be deleted from the Admission Register when:

- The School has been notified that the pupil has been registered as a pupil at another school.
- A pupil has ceased to attend the School and the parent(s) have satisfied the County Council that the pupil is receiving education otherwise than by attendance at school.
- The School has been notified by the School Medical Officer that the pupil is unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before becoming legally exempt from the obligation to attend.
- The pupil has been absent from School without reasonable cause for 2 academic weeks and the Head Teacher of the School has failed after reasonable enquiry to obtain information on the cause of absence.
- The Head Teacher has been notified that the pupil has died.
- A pupil has not returned to School within ten school days of the agreed return date after a family holiday in term time.
- The pupil will cease to be of compulsory school age before the School next meets, and has notified an intention to discontinue in attendance.
- The pupil has been permanently excluded and the Pupil Discipline Committee has confirmed this decision.

### **Ensuring Pupil Information is up to date**

Schools should ensure, as far as possible, that the information they hold on pupils and parents is accurate and up to date. This will help to ensure that contact with families is effective and that referrals to external agencies can be actioned effectively. Principle 4 of the Data Protection Act 1998 states: 'Personal Data shall be accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date'.

### **Guidance for Parents in ensuring regular pupil attendance**

- The School is committed to providing a complete education for all pupils. We believe that all pupils benefit from the education in our School and therefore from regular school attendance.
- The School will try to make sure that all pupils gain the maximum possible attendance and we will make sure that any problems which prevent full attendance, are identified and acted upon promptly.
- The School will make contact with parents where a pupil is absent without good reason.

### **How parents can help us**

- Ensure that their children attend School regularly and that they arrive on time.
- Contact the School whenever their child is absent, giving details of the reason for the absence and the length of time the child will be away.
- Help their child prepare for the school day by ensuring that homework, if set, has been done and the child has everything he/she needs for the day ahead.
- Attend Parents' Consultation Evenings to discuss progress or problems and talk to the Staff if there are problems or changes in family circumstances which may affect the child.
- Contact the School if problems arise which may keep their child away from school, so that the School can help.
- To avoid, whenever possible, taking family holidays in Term Time. Any Term Time absences will affect the progress of their child and, in particular, attendance of School around the SATs tests is crucial.

*Please note: This policy was made in consultation with guidance from Lincolnshire Education Authority.*

# Short Term Pupil Absenteeism Procedure



