

# Crown Meadow First School and Nursery



## Attendance and Punctuality Policy

### September 2023

This policy is reviewed at least annually by the governing body and SLT and was

Last reviewed on Date: October 2023

Next Review Date: October 2024

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# Attendance and Punctuality Policy

At Crown Meadow First School and Nursery we believe that regular attendance is crucial if children are to benefit from their education and achieve their potential.

In order for children to have good attendance, measures have been put in place to monitor and address concerns over attendance and absence.

Parents are notified about the school's policy on attendance through a general letter sent to all parents at the start of the academic year. This letter is also published on the school website for parents to access. Parents are updated to any changes regarding attendance procedures through school newsletters.

## Aims

- To ensure excellent levels of pupil attendance and punctuality, aiming for 100%.
- To establish an ethos of 'school attendance matters' through proactive strategies to promote good attendance and punctuality.
- To work closely with parents/carers to fulfil our obligations to the children by placing high priority on the regular attendance and punctuality of all pupils.
- To ensure procedures within the school identify and follow up all absences and patterns of absence at the earliest opportunity.
- To have a clear and consistently applied escalation process.
- To continuously develop the school's celebration of good attendance and punctuality.

## Target

We expect all pupils to attend school 100% of the time and arrive punctually ready for the bell to ring at 8.50 a.m. to start the school day promptly.

Whilst there is no longer a statutory requirement for schools to set whole school attendance targets it remains good practice for schools to have a target in line with national averages and Ofsted guidance. At Crown Meadow we aim for children to be in school every day.

## Roles and responsibilities

### Pupils

- Pupils should attend school every day and be on time.
- Pupils should have a clear understanding of the importance of attending school as well as acceptable and unacceptable reasons for absence.
- Pupils should tell their parents/carers or class teacher of any reason that prevents them attending/wanting to attend school.
- In instances of lateness, pupils should report to the school office upon arrival where they will need to sign in.

### Parents/ Carers

- Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school every day and arrives on time.

- Parents/carers should have a clear understanding of the importance of attending school, acceptable and unacceptable reasons for absence, and the fact that an absence will remain unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation has been given.
- Parents/carers should work closely with the school and inform the office on the first day of their child's absence and where necessary all other days thereafter.
- In circumstances where a parent is having difficulty getting the child to attend please seek the support of Crown Meadow as quickly as possible through your child's class teacher, Attendance Lead/ Deputy Head, Pastoral Team (Mrs Brookes and Mrs Reed) or member of the Senior Leadership Team.

## Registration

A register is taken at the start of each morning and afternoon session by the teacher responsible for the class for that teaching session.

The playground gates/ main entrance is open from **8:40am** and close at **8.50am** when the register opens. The teachers and support staff are in the classroom from that time to receive the children.

The register is taken at **8:50am** your child should be in class ready to start the day. If they are not in class for registration, then at **8.50am** they are classed as late before close of register and given an 'L' mark. *N.B. a child on site but not in class is still considered late.*

If your child is late you will need to report to the school office who record the time and will ask for a reason to be given, which is also recorded. A child who arrives after **9:10am** will be classed as 'late after close of register'. This will count as an unauthorised absence.

The register is on Arbor so it is saved directly to the central school data management system, ensuring that we can monitor the attendance of pupils quickly and address any missing marks for pupils.

National codes are used to record attendance and absence in a consistent way.

Staff enter the marks to show that pupils are present. Lateness is also recorded with two difference codes to indicate if the time of arrival was before or after the close of registers.

## Absence from school

- Parents/carers are asked to inform the school by telephone (0121 445 4540) if a pupil is absent on the first day of absence *no later than 9.10 a.m.* providing the reason and where necessary, on each subsequent day of absence.
- If school have **not** been contacted by the parents/carers the office will make contact by telephone. This will be recorded on the school register system with the reason for absence.
- After 2 days' absence, where there has been no contact from parents/cares the pupil's name will be referred to the attendance team who will try to make contact with the parents/carers or any of the named contacts. If no contact is made the attendance team may conduct a home visit with another member of staff.
- If no contact can be made a letter will be delivered by hand to the home address and the Police may be asked to do a 'welfare check.' This will be reported to Children's Services.
- Should there be frequent absence due to illness the EWO and/or Deputy Headteacher will ask to meet parents and may ask for medical evidence, such as prescription/prescribed medication /appointment letter/letter from GP or consultant. If these are not provided the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

- If a pupil is going to be absent from school for a long period of time due to illness or other authorised extenuating circumstances, school will liaise with other professionals (if appropriate) and support the pupil in providing work to complete.
- If any member of staff is concerned about a reason for absence, the Deputy Headteacher or member of the Senior Leadership Team should be informed.
- In line with Section 444 of the Education Act (1996) a child will receive an authorised mark for any absence on days set aside for religious observance. Parents are requested to complete a Leave of Absence Request form for this.
- In line with the Education Regulation Act (1996) if a child is absent from school for longer than 20 days with no authorised reason the child's name could be taken off roll.

### **Absences for Illness or Medical Appointments**

Parents have been advised to book medical appointments outside of school hours where possible. If this is not possible, parents are asked to notify school before the appointment so that the attendance register can be amended to show why the child is not in school. Parents know to contact school on the first day of absence through illness and then to contact at least every other day following this.

Messages that are taken via the school office relating to pupil absence are put onto the system as quickly as possible so that teachers can see why a pupil is absent.

If no reason has been given for absence, then this will show up as 'N' and these children can be identified quickly enabling follow up calls to be made.

If no reason is provided for the absence or there is not a legitimate reason provided, then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. If there are significant concerns about a child's attendance through persistent illness, then the school reserves the right to request medical evidence.

### **Leave of Absence:**

Occasionally, parents request leave of absence (LOA) during term time. DFE and WCC policy states that leave of absence cannot be granted by the Headteacher unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Requests should be made to the Headteacher at least 4 weeks in advance of the absence and each application will be considered individually before any leave is granted.

According to County policy, permission should be granted in accordance with arrangements made by the Governing Body of the school.

There is no automatic right to any leave or holiday in term time. The granting of leave of absence in school term is, by law, a matter of consideration and decision by the school. Leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher's discretion.

DFE guidance states that, as a general guide, any activity, holiday or event that can be arranged during the annual 13 week holiday should not be authorised.

When considering leave requests the school may liaise with other schools where siblings may attend. This allows for a consistent approach to authorising absence.

Parents will be notified in writing if the absence is authorised or not authorised. If leave is granted, then the letter will state the number of days a child is authorised to be absent from school. There are WCC

procedures that need to be followed if a child does not return to school by the date specified on the request.

In accordance with DFE policy, leave of absence due to religious observance will be authorised.

Parents will also be notified in writing if the absence is unauthorised and will be advised that, if the absence is taken, this may lead to a Penalty Notice being issued by the local authority.

### **Penalty Notices**

If the unauthorised absences take place then a referral may be made to Worcestershire's Education Investigation Service (EIS).

Parents may then be issued with a Penalty Notice – one per parent per child, payable at £60 within 21 days and increasing to £120 within 21 to 28 days. Failure to pay the £120 within this time period may lead to court proceedings. The fines are issued by the local authority and the money from the fine is not received by the school.

Where requests are received from only one parent the school reserves the right to contact the other parent to ensure that both parents are fully aware of the intended absence and the possible consequences of taking unauthorised leave during term time.

Referrals can also be made to EIS if there are significant concerns regarding attendance and unauthorised absence.

### **Monitoring of Attendance**

At Crown Meadow we aim to promote excellent attendance from your child's first day at school, regardless of their age. The attendance of children from Reception to Year 4 is monitored:

The following systems are in place for addressing attendance:

- At least every half term an attendance tracker is produced showing every child's percentage attendance.
- The Attendance Lead along with the Pastoral Team look at children's attendance under 95% with a particular focus on those under 90% (the figure classed as persistent absence).
- Parents may be contacted either by letter or phone informing them that their child's attendance and/or punctuality is low and a meeting may be requested.
- Minutes are taken from that meeting.
- The purpose of these meetings are to:
  - Make parents aware of their child's attendance and/or punctuality.
  - Ensure parents are aware that a referral to EIS may be necessary if there are a significant number of unauthorised absences.
  - Discuss reasons for absence.
  - Look at additional support that may be available, e.g. Family Support, School Nurse.
  - Look at strategies for promoting good attendance, e.g. Reward charts.
  - Raise awareness of the impact of good attendance on pupil outcomes.
  - Ensure that parents understand the impact and possible consequences of further absence.

If a child has not been at school and no contact has been made with parents, then a home visit by the Attendance Lead may be requested by the school, particularly if there are any additional safeguarding concerns.

If a child is absent from school for 10 days and cannot be located then the child may be reported to the local authority as CME – a child missing in education.

There is also a statutory obligation to report any child to the local authority if there has been an absence for 10 or more days unless agreed as a holiday.

### **Reporting on Attendance**

Each term a monitoring report is produced and shared with the school leadership team and the Governing Body. The report indicates whole school attendance as well persistent absence (under 90% attendance).

The report also identifies strategies that have been put into place to improve attendance and future actions required.

Governors will also be informed of the number of leave of absence requests that have been authorised and unauthorised.

### **Key abbreviations and acronyms**

L	Late-before close of register (after 8:50am)
U	After close of register (after 9:10am)
LOA	Leave of absence
DfE	Department for Education
WCC	Worcestershire County Council
EIS	Education Investigation Service
EWO	Education Welfare Officer
CME	Child Missing in Education

### **Supplementary policies to read alongside this policy**

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
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