



Crich Junior School

Attendance Policy

September 2023

Version:	
Policy Approved At Governors Meeting Date: 25.10.23	Review Date: September 2024
Signed (Chair of Governors): J Twelves	
Signed (Headteacher): C Orridge	

Attendance Policy

Statutory Duties:

School policy takes account of:

- The Education Act 1996 - sections 434(1)(3)(4)&(6) and 458(4)&(5)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- Social Inclusion: Student Support, DfES Circular 10/99.

DfE Guidance:

[Improving School Attendance: support for schools and colleges 2022](#)

[Securing good attendance and tackling persistent absence 2022](#)

[Working together to improve school attendance](#)

The Department for Education expects schools and local authorities to promote good attendance and reduce absences, including persistence absence. This is because we know that missing out on education leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children and young people with poor attendance achieve less in both Primary and Secondary schools.

As a school, we work hard to support all children and their families so as to ensure that all children have good attendance.

Responsibilities.(all children)

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality.

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers.
- Informing the Headteacher where there are concerns and acting upon them.

- Providing background information to support referrals.
- Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns.
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation which should be noted on the register (RM Integris).
- Discussing attendance issues at consultation evenings.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Having a clear school attendance policy on the school website, which all staff, pupils and parents understand.
- Developing and maintaining a whole-school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance.
- Accurately completing admission and attendance registers.
- Ensuring robust daily processes are in place to follow up absence.
- Overall monitoring of school attendance and being responsible for improving attendance.
- Identifying and addressing trends in authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues.
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised.
- Making referrals to the EWO service.
- Providing reports and background information to inform discussion with the school's EWO, Early Help or Social Care.
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.
 - Notifying the classteachers of any attendance concerns as they evolve.
 - Inform parents of attendance concerns, how to overcome barriers to attending school and understand the DfE/NHS guidance on attendance and illnesses.

Staff in the School Office are responsible for:

- Checking, collating and recording registration and attendance information.
- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence.
- Contacting parents of absent children where no contact has been made.
- Recording details of children who arrive late or go home.
- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers and reporting concerns to the Headteacher. The DfE attendance reports are used on a three weekly basis to help analyse attendance concerns/ possible concerns at an early stage.
- Sending out standard letters regarding attendance.
- Updating the school website attendance data on a weekly basis.

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring their child attends school, punctually, every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.
- Notifying the school as soon possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness), before 9.00am.
- Only requesting leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and in advance.
- Booking any medical appointments around the school day, where possible. If this is not possible, parents are responsible for informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time.
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

The Governing Body is responsible for:

- Taking an active role in attendance improvement, support the school to prioritise attendance and work together with leaders to set whole-school cultures.
- Ensuring school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Ensuring school staff receive training on attendance.

The Local Authority is responsible for:

- Having a strategic approach to improving attendance for the whole area and make it a key focus of all frontline council services.
- Having a School Attendance Support Team that works with all schools in their area to remove area-wide barriers to attendance.
- Providing each school with a named point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team who can support with queries and advice.
- Offering opportunities for all schools in the area to share effective practice.

Responsibilities (Pupils at Risk of Becoming Persistently Absent- 92% and below)

Parents are expected to:

- Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.
- Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.

The School is expected to:

- Proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance.
- Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance.
- Where out of school barriers are identified, signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance.
- If the issue persists, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners. Act as the lead practitioner where all partners agree that the school is the best placed lead service. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the local authority and partners.

The Governing Body is expected to:

- Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it. Attendance is a standard item on the headteacher's report at all Governors meetings.

The Local Authority is expected to:

- Hold a termly conversation with every school to identify, discuss and signpost or provide access to services for pupils who are persistently or severely absent or at risk of becoming so.
- Where there are out of school barriers, provide each identified and their family with access to services they need in the first instance.
- If the issue persists, facilitate a voluntary early help assessment where appropriate. Take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the school and others partners. Provide the lead practitioner where all partners agree that a local authority service is best placed to lead. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the local authority, continue to work with the school and partners.

Responsibilities (Persistently Absent Pupils-90% and below)

The Headteacher will notify the parents of persistent absence via letter, phone or both and will enter this as a concern on the schools safeguarding system, 'My Concern.'

Parents are expected to:

- Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.
- Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.

The School is expected to:

- Provide continued support (as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent), and:
 - Where absence becomes persistent, put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers. Where necessary, this includes work with partners.
 - Where there is a lack of engagement, hold more formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future.
 - Where support is not working, being engages with or appropriate, work with the local authority on legal intervention.

- Where there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through statutory children’s social care.
- Work with other schools in the local area, such as schools previously attended and the schools of any siblings.

The Governing Body is expected to:

- Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.

The Local Authority is expected to:

- Provide continued support (as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent), and:
 - Work jointly with the school to provide formal support options including parenting contracts and education supervision orders.
 - Where there are safeguarding concerns, ensure joint working between the school, children’s social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners.
 - Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, enforce attendance through legal intervention (including prosecution as a last resort).

Responsibilities (Severely Absent Pupils)

Parents are expected to:

- Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child’s barriers to attendance.
- Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.

The School is expected to:

- Provide continued support as for persistently absent pupils.
- Agree a joint approach for all severely absent pupils with the local authority.

The Governing Body is expected to:

- Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.

The Local Authority is expected to:

- Provide continued support (as for persistently absent pupils), and:

– All services should make this group a top priority for support. This may include a whole family plan, consideration for an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), or alternative form of educational provision.

– Be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues, ensuring joint working between the school, children’s social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners. Where appropriate, this could include conducting a full children’s social care assessment and building attendance into children in need and child protection plans.

Support for Cohorts of Pupils with Lower Attendance than Their Peers:

The School is expected to:

- Proactively use data to identify cohorts with, or at risk of, low attendance and develop strategies to support them.
- Work with other schools in the local area and the local authority to share effective practice where there are common barriers to attendance.

The Governing Body is expected to:

- Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.

The Local Authority is expected to:

- Track local attendance data to prioritise support and unblock area wide attendance barriers where they impact numerous schools.

Support for Pupils with Medical Conditions or SEND with Poor Attendance:

Parents are expected to:

- Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child’s barriers to attendance.
- Proactively engage with the support offered.

The School is expected to:

- Maintain the same ambition for attendance and work with pupils and parents to maximise attendance.
- Ensure join up with pastoral support and where required, put in place additional support and adjustments, such as Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP) and, if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil’s Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) is accessed.

- Consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals.
- Regularly monitor data for such groups, including at governing body meetings and with local authorities.

The Governing Body is expected to:

- Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.

The Local Authority is expected to:

- Work closely with relevant services and partners, for example special educational needs, education psychologists and mental health services, to ensure joined up support for families.
- Ensure suitable education, such as alternative provision, is arranged for children of compulsory school age who – because of health reasons – would not otherwise receive a suitable education.

Support for Pupils with a Social Worker:

Parents are expected to:

- Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.
- Proactively engage with the support offered.

The School is expected to:

- Inform the pupil's social worker if there are any unexplained absences and if their name is to be deleted from the register.

The Governing Body is expected to:

- Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.

The Local Authority is expected to:

- Regularly monitor the attendance of children with a social worker in their area.
- Put in place Personal Education Plans (PEP) for looked-after children.
- Secure regular attendance of looked-after children as their corporate parent and provide advice and guidance about the importance of attendance to those services supporting pupils previously looked after.

Registration

Each class teacher has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance. Any pupil who is absent must be recorded at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session via RM Integriss. The attendance register must be completed by the class teacher by 9.00am and by 1.20pm.

(Attendance code / and \ for pupils who are present). These registers are then electronically sent to the school office.

All attendance records are documented using RM Integriss software, which is supported by the Local Authority. Attendance registers are legal documents and these must be kept secure and preserved for a period of three years after the date they were last used.

Lateness

Once the children have come in to school at 8:45, all late children have to enter via the main door and will be marked as late in the attendance record. If they arrive after 9:00 they will be put in as 'late after the register has closed', and this is marked as an unauthorised absence on the school register.

Records are kept of those pupils who are late and late after the register has closed; this is documented on the electronic register for each pupil (attendance code L and U respectively).

All late or absence codes will be inputted by the SBOs.

Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness, parents/carers will be notified at consultation meetings, or more immediately, advising them of the concerns and the school will provide opportunities for parents/carers to seek support and advice to address these issues.

Absences

Parents/carers should contact the school on the first day of their child's absence. When parents/carers notify us of their child's absence it is important that they provide us with details of the reason for their absence.

All absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised absences on the computer. It is important that we receive accurate information from parents with

reasons for the child's absence. This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. The Headteacher has the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.

Where we have not received reasons for a child's absence, then we send a letter requesting these details to parents/carers to complete. If this letter is not completed and returned by the specified date, then the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (attendance Code U).

First Day Contact

Where a child is absent from school, and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, then we initiate a first day contact process. Office staff check all of the registers from 9.00am to 9.30am on a daily basis, to identify those pupils who are absent. There are occasions when we are unaware why the child is absent and we will contact the parent to check the reasons for the child's absence. It is important that if teaching staff receive notification directly from the absent child's parent that this is entered onto RM Integris notes to avoid parents being contacted again. Staff will not accept explanations of a child's absent from another child or another child's parents. It must come from the absent child's parent.

Illness

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school long-term, the school will:

Do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work (this will either be in paper form or via Seesaw). If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services to see if arrangements can be made for the child to be given some home tuition outside school (OOST).

Where, over the course of an academic year, a child has repeated periods of illness, the school will write/ phone call to parents to ask them to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness-related absence. This evidence could be a Doctor's note, appointment card or copy of a prescription. We may seek written permission from parents for the school to make their own enquiries.

Parental Request for Absence from School for Holiday

Regulations that came into force in 1st September 2016 state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence for holidays during the term-time unless there are exceptional circumstances; in these cases, it is the Headteacher who determines the number of days a child can be away from school, if the leave is granted.

As a consequence of the changes, requests will not be approved for leave of absence reasons that are not considered to be special or exceptional such as:

- Availability of cheap holidays and cheap travel arrangements
- Days overlapping with the beginning or end of term

Parents needing leave of absence for exceptional circumstances should complete a request form at least two weeks before the anticipated start date. The reason for the request should be given in details. Applications should be made before the leave is arranged as absences will not be granted retrospectively.

Parents who take their children on leave without prior permission will incur unauthorised absences for their child and these remain on the child's record and will be monitored for further action by the Education Welfare Service. These will be recorded on My Concern. Parents will be notified of this process via newsletter every Autumn term. Parents may be issued with a fixed penalty notice and/or court action. The Highfields cluster of Primary Schools has a consistent approach towards requests for leave of absence. The contents of this policy mirror that consistent approach throughout Matlock's Primary Schools.

We will continue to consider any absence requests in accordance with regulations and only approve leave in 'exceptional circumstances'. Any requests for absence should be on the official school absence request form and handed into the school office for consideration prior to any leave/holiday arrangements being made.

In accordance with the regulations, Parents/Carers may be issued with a Penalty Notice should leave be taken which is not authorised. There is now no set level of prior attendance which will be used by the local authority when deciding whether to issue a penalty notice.

Leave of Absence-exceptional circumstances.

Only exceptional circumstances warrant a leave of absence. The headteacher will consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the headteacher to determine the length of the time the

pupil can be away from school. As head teachers should only grant leaves of absence in exceptional circumstances it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

Exceptional circumstances are one off events which are unavoidable, examples may include the death of a close relative, attendance at a funeral, respite care of a looked after child, a housing crisis which prevents attendance.

In addition, where a parent/carer, due to the nature of their work, cannot possibly take time off during the regular school holidays, e.g. parents in the armed forces or emergency services, then this may also constitute exceptional circumstance.

Monitoring Attendance

The Headteacher scrutinises attendance three weekly, using the DfE monitoring system and the schools own systems (whole class attendance initially). If a class's weekly attendance is below 96%, a more detailed scrutiny is undertaken to look at individual absence patterns.

The Headteacher is informed if an individual has more than two day's absence (including over weekends / holidays).

A formal attendance scrutiny is carried out every three weeks using the latest data from the DfE. This may include individuals, classes, whole school and cohorts (e.g. Pupil Premium, Children with a Social Worker, SEND, etc.).

If any patterns of absence are identified, parents are contacted via a standard (though personalised) letter, inviting the parent to talk to the school regarding their child's attendance.

If an attendance problem continues, an attendance meeting with the parents/carers will discuss strategies put in place to overcome barriers to attendance, If this still continues the school will seek advice from external agencies at the local authority. (Early Help)

Strategies Used in School to Celebrate and Encourage Good Attendance:

Attendance awards (for children achieving 100% attendance) are given out six times per year (at the end of each halfterm). The children receive these in whole school Good work assemblies.

Children achieving 100% for the whole year receive an 'Outstanding Achievement' certificate at the final Good work assembly of the year.

Attendance and lateness are reported to parents at every parents evening and /or via a letter home in their school diary.

In line with statutory reporting, school reports contain attendance data. Additional comments are added regarding how a child's attendance compares to national averages and how this may affect a child's education (if below school/national averages) and also contains comments about frequent late marks.

All attendance letter correspondence/ attendance meetings and outcomes will be recorded on My concern. Parents will be informed about this via newsletter in the Autumn term.

Attendance legal intervention.

As absence is so often a symptom of wider issues a family is facing, we always try to work together with parents /carers, as well as other local partners to understand the barriers to attendance and provide support. Where that is not successful, or is not engaged with, the law protects pupils' right to an education and provides a range of legal interventions to formalise attendance improvement efforts, and where all other avenues have been exhausted, enforce it through prosecuting parents. Attendance legal intervention decisions should be made on an individual case by case basis.

Our school and the local authority are expected to work together and make use of the full range of legal interventions rather than relying solely on fixed penalty notices or prosecution. It is for our individual school and local authority to decide whether to use them in an individual case after considering the individual circumstances of a family.

These are:

- Parenting contracts
- Education supervision orders
- Attendance prosecution
- Parenting orders
- Fixed penalty notices

These legal interventions will be following guidance from Working Together to improve school attendance and DCC policies/guidance.

(Where they are used, it should be clear that it will change parental behaviour and in making the decision to use an intervention, headteachers and local authority officers will have regard to their safeguarding duties as set out in the statutory guidance on Keeping Children Safe in Education.)

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September 2023

Review Date: September 2024