

Respectful, Kind, Curious and Ambitious



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Date policy last reviewed: _____

Signed by:

_____ Headteacher Date: _____

_____ Chair of governors Date: _____

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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.

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

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. The times after which a child is marked late or absent are given on the individual school website. The local authority recommends that, unless there is prior agreement or good reason, should a pupil arrive more than half an hour late after the registration closes, this should be 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.

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. 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.

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Absence Due to Sickness:

If your child is unable to attend school as they are unwell, we ask that parents / carers notify the school **by 9:30am** on the first day of absence and keep us updated on any subsequent days. The information we need to know is:

- what is preventing your child from attending school including symptoms
- whether they have been seen by a doctor
- how long will they be off school

You can contact us in the following ways:

- Call the office on 01293 886324
- Email us on: absence@maidenbowerinfant.w-sussex.sch.uk

In line with our Safeguarding policy we are required to make all reasonable attempts to understand the reasons for any unexpected absence. If we have not heard from you by 9:30am, we will try and contact you by phone, email and Class Dojo until midday. If we are unsuccessful, we will phone the other emergency contacts on our records. We may also establish whether siblings are in school and may contact other schools for information. If, after this, we still cannot make contact, a member of Senior Leadership Team will be informed and a staff member will visit your home address to see if everything is ok. If no contact can be made, and there are grounds for serious concern they may raise an alert that a child is missing from school, notify the Police and / or Integrated Front Door.

It is imperative that you keep us updated of any changes to your contact numbers and your address.

Absence Due to Exceptional Circumstances:

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. For example: Funeral, Religious Observance, Medical Procedures, Sporting Competitions etc.

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. 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.

Upon receipt of a completed Absence from Learning request form, the Head Teacher will decide if the absence is authorised or unauthorised, and the outcome of the request will be communicated to you in writing. If the absence is deemed to be unauthorised it is then up to the parent / carer to decide if they will proceed with the planned absence. If your child is off for the requested days then the absence will be recorded as per the confirmation letter.

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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.

In exceptional circumstances a pupil may be granted authorised leave. 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.

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.