

Attendance



Normand Croft Community School

An International Family of Learners

Agreed and aaadopted by:	Curriculum and Acheivement
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1. Introduction

Parents have a legal duty to ensure the regular and full time attendance at school of registered pupils (Education Act 1996).

This policy is based on best practice guidance from the Local Authority and DfE guidance.

As a school we aim to:

- a. maintain an attendance rate of a **minimum** of 96%
- b. maintain parents' and children's awareness of the importance of regular attendance
- c. ensure parents/carers take responsibility for children's attendance at, and absence from, school.

2. Good attendance is important because:

- a. statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and poor attendance
- b. regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- c. regular attenders find school routines and school work easier to cope with
- d. regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- e. regular attenders have an easier transfer to secondary school

3. As a parent you can help us by:

- a. ringing on the first morning of all absences with the reason and saying when the child will return
- b. arranging dental and doctor's appointments out of school hours or during school holidays
- c. sending in a note explaining the reason for absence on your child's return to school after an illness
- d. keeping us updated by telephone or letter if your child has an extended period of absence due to illness

We will:

- a. take the register promptly at the beginning of the morning session (9:00 a.m.) at the beginning of the afternoon session 12:15 pm 1:00 pm and 1:30pm for Nursery, Reception & KS1 and KS2 respectively.
- b. record registration directly onto SIMS using the present or absent codes; the admin team will allocate the correct code, liaising with the Family Support Officer/SLT where necessary.
- c. follow up unexplained absences by phone calls, text message and letters as soon as possible

- d. remind parents of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in school newsletter, in the Home-School agreement and on the website
- e. publish our attendance rate weekly in the school newsletter
- f. acknowledge and reward good attendance through weekly special mentions assembly, certificates, photo display board etc.
- g. let parents know their child's attendance rate regularly and if we have concerns regarding a child's attendance; letters will be sent out fortnightly
- h. meet with parents to discuss attendance and punctuality concerns and explore ways of ensuring attendance and punctuality improves
- i. make a referral to the allocated Education Welfare Advisor for the school, who visits the school regularly to review and support attendance matters, if we continue to have concerns

6. Our 'First Day Contact' Strategy

- a. It is the view of the school that 'first day contact' works by:
 - i. raising awareness of the importance of full attendance and addressing problems before they become serious
 - ii. improving home-school liaison through sending a clear message to parents/carers and children that if a child is absent s/he will be missed
 - iii. alerting parents/carers who may be unaware that their child is truanting or missing and therefore may be at risk
 - iv. requiring, and promoting, a high level of communication within the school staff working as a team
 - v. reducing the number of children who have short-term absence, thus reducing the overall absence rate
 - vi. assisting parents/carers and children in developing habits that reduce casual absence and encouraging early contact from parents/carers
- b. parents/carers should contact the school office early on the first day of absence (certainly by 9.00 am)
- c. if the parent has not contacted the school by 9.30 am then they should expect to be contacted by the school office.
- d. the school office will contact parents if they fail to inform the school of the reasons for absence.
- e. if no contact is achieved with the parent/carer of an absent child on the first day of absence, ongoing efforts will be made to make contact, and a formal letter will be sent on the third day of absence. Any unexplained absences of one week or longer may be reported to the Local Authority and further action taken.
- f. if the reasons given for absence are unacceptable this will be taken up by the office in the first instance and possibly the Head teacher and/or the Education Welfare Advisor [EWA].

- g. if no contact is achieved with the parent/carer of an absent child on the first day of absence, ongoing efforts will be made to make contact, and a formal letter will be sent on the third day of absence.
- h. any unexplained absences of one week or longer may be reported to the Local Authority and further action taken.

7. Authorised Absence

Following Local Authority guidance, the school considers attendance percentages as follows:

98% or above = excellent attendance

96% to 98% = good attendance

92% to 95% = cause for concern and requires improvement

90% to 92% = unsatisfactory

Below 90% = persistent absentee

- a. some absences are allowed by law and are known as **authorised** absences e.g. if a child is ill, a family bereavement, or religious observance
- b. we realise that there are **rare** occasions when there might be a particular problem that causes a child to be absent. Parents should let us know as soon as possible if there is an issue, and we shall try to deal with it sympathetically
- c. the school office (with the support of the Inclusion Team) will be responsible for authorising absence. A written note, verbal message or phone call does not in itself, oblige the school to authorise absence, if the school does not accept the explanation offered as a valid reason
- d. all reasons for absence must be recorded on SIMS.
- e. absence may be authorised for school visits / attending interviews, for religious reasons, for exclusions, or for other circumstances that are unavoidable e.g. serious emergency, bereavement, domestic violence, or moving house
- f. if the teacher or clerical staff are concerned that absence may not be due to illness as the reason given, then they should inform the Family Support Officer in the first instance who may discuss the matter with the parent / carer
- g. the parent / carer may be informed that only absences covered by medical evidence will be authorised
- h. a late arrival after the close of register will be marked as authorised or unauthorised following the procedures given above.
- i. all absence is monitored on a daily basis and when possible, parents and carers will be contacted by phone by the office if the school has not been provided with an explanation as to the cause of absence.
- j. pupils who are absent are highlighted on a daily basis.
- k. parents / carers of children who are persistently absent are contacted by individual letter and are invited to the school to discuss the matter. If necessary, home visits will be made by two members of staff.

- l. the school's decision on whether to authorise any absence or not is final.

8. Unauthorised Absence

- a. there are times when children are absent for reasons which are **not** permitted by law. these are known as **unauthorised** absences.
- b. unauthorised absences have to be recorded and reported to the Local Authority and can trigger a penalty notice or legal action being taken against parents for the absences. **(see website for more information about penalty notices).**

9. Punctuality: We take the view there are no late children, only late parents.

- a. it is important for children to be on time as the first few minutes of the day are often used to give out news or perhaps organise the rest of the day. If a child misses this vital session, their whole day may be affected. Late arrivals are disruptive to everyone and potentially stressful for a child
- b. morning registration is at 9.00 for Reception, Nursery Primary classes.
- c. it is a parent's responsibility to ensure that children arrive in the school at least 5 minutes before the start time - we advise 8.50am as the target time
- d. children up to Y4 should be accompanied by a named adult
- e. the school offers an Early Morning Club for families where children can be dropped off from 8.00 and be supervised by a member of the Support Staff Team; there is a small charge for this service
- f. arrival after the close of registration may be marked as **unauthorised** absence in line with the DfE guidance.

10. Term Time Leave of Absence

- a. we are always concerned about the amount of school time children miss either as a result of family holidays or other visits abroad.; **there is no entitlement to time off in term time**
- b. it is our policy that we do **not allow** leave of absence for holidays in term time
- c. if parents take a child on holiday or otherwise cause them to miss school during term time [e.g. through a visit abroad on compassionate grounds], the absence will be unauthorised and you risk *your* child being taken off the school roll
- d. please remember that the more time your child misses from school, the more difficult it is for them to catch up with their learning; a *secure* understanding of the work can only take place when the pupil is in the classroom

11. Leavers

- a. If a child is leaving school other than at the end of Year 6 to go on to secondary school, parents are asked to:
 - i. give the school full information about their plans including date of move, new address or at least the town being moved to, new school name and address and start date when known, and reasons for moving
 - ii. confirm that the school has a current mobile phone number
 - iii. take a school compliments slip so that the new 'receiving' school can easily contact us and records be transferred
 - iv. confirm when they are to move

12. Children Missing Education

- a. when children leave without parents providing the above information listed under point 10, the child will be considered to be a **Child Missing Education**; this means that the Local Authority has a legal duty to carry out investigations, which will include liaising with Children's Services, the Police and other agencies, to try to track and locate the child
- b. by providing the information, unnecessary investigations can be avoided.
- c. we are aware of the links between CME and Safeguarding/Child Protection issues such as Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CME) and expect all staff to be vigilant and to report any concerns swiftly to the DSL

13. Monitoring and Reporting Attendance

- a. overall attendance of each year group and the attendance of a variety of pupil groups including those children eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) Looked after Children (LAC) and pupils with Special Educational Needs and/or Disability (SEND) is monitored regularly and reported to governors at least termly
- b. This policy is based on best practice guidance from the Local Authority and DfE guidance:

LBHF ACE Manual (ACE stands for the attendance (statutory), child employment & entertainment, elective home education and children missing education team)

<https://www.lbhf.gov.uk/children-and-young-people/education-support-services/ace/ace-reference-manual>

Keeping children safe in education

Statutory guidance for schools and colleges on safeguarding children and safer recruitment.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

School attendance parental responsibility measures. Statutory guidance for local authorities, school leaders, school staff, governing bodies and the police updated January 2017

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/581539/School_attendance_parental_responsibility_measures_statutory_guidance.pdf

School Attendance; Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities published September 2018

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance>

A guide to school absence statistics last updated March 2018

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/absence-statistics-guide>

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