

**ATTENDANCE POLICY**  
**FOR**  
**CROCKHAM HILL C E PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**This policy comes into effect from September 2014.**

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**Last review 2012**

**This review Spring 2014**

**(in light of changes to regulations concerning leave of absence from September 2013.**

**Review every two years or as necessary**

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY FOR CROCKHAM HILL C E PRIMARY SCHOOL**

### **Statement of Intent**

- Crockham Hill C E Primary School is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all of our pupils. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and to benefit from the opportunities presented to them.
- One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. Our school actively promotes 100% attendance for all of our pupils and we use a variety of rewards to promote good attendance and punctuality.
- We recognise that parents/carers have a vital role, and a legal responsibility to ensure good attendance and we promise to identify, investigate and work in partnership with parents/carers, pupils and other agencies to resolve attendance problems.

### **Parental Responsibility**

The legal responsibility for ensuring children attend school regularly and punctually rests with parents/carers. To this end, it is essential that parents should be the first line of contact whenever the child is absent from school.

It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school whenever the child is absent and on the first day of absence. A dedicated voicemail service is available if no staff are available.

### **The Role of the Teacher**

Class Teachers or their Teaching Assistant should complete a register at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. Unexpected absences should be identified and brought to the attention of the School Secretary as soon as possible.

At our school pupils are expected to arrive for registration at 8.55 a.m. (the playground and doors are open from 8.40 a.m.). All pupils arriving after the playground entrance closes should report to the school office where the lateness will be recorded.

Any pupils arriving after 9.30 a.m. will be recorded as an unauthorised absence unless an authorised reason is known. Pupils who arrive after 9.30 a.m./ 1.30 p.m. will be recorded as absent for the full morning/afternoon session.

Frequent absence is also a cause for concern. The School Nurse Service is very helpful and their help can normally clarify whether ongoing absence is justified.

### **Authorised/Non Authorised Absence**

**It is the school who authorises absence, not the parent/carer.**

Unplanned or unexpected absence may be either authorised, for example, in the case of illness, or unauthorised, when there is no reason given for such absence or when it is considered that the explanation is unjustified or unreasonable.

Headteachers are unable to agree any leave of absence during term time, unless they are satisfied there are exceptional circumstances. If leave of absence is authorised, the headteacher can specify the number of days a pupil will be allowed to be absent from school.

Leave of absence covers all planned absences from school including family holiday and extended leave.

Where a leave of absence is not agreed and the pupil is out of school or is away longer than was agreed or an application has not been made in advance, the absence is recorded as unauthorised.

Following government regulation, the headteacher cannot give retrospective approval or authorisation.

- Monitoring of these records will take place regularly and letters will be sent by the school, including a referral to the Education Welfare Officer, where appropriate.
- If absence is a persistent problem a meeting will be arranged at school with the parent, Headteacher and Education Welfare Officer.

### **Lateness**

- Pupils are expected to be in school by 8.55 a.m. and any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as late.
- In the morning the register will officially close at 9.30 a.m., if a child arrives after this time they will be marked as arriving after the register has closed and this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence for the full morning session if no authorised reason is approved. The same is true for afternoon arrivals after 1.30p.m.
- Pupils arriving after the gates are closed should report to the school office.
- Children arriving late will be recorded in the class register along with any reason given for lateness.
- Monitoring of these records will take place regularly and letters will be sent by the school, including a referral to the Education Welfare Officer, where appropriate.
- If lateness is a persistent problem a meeting will be arranged at school with the parent, Headteacher and Education Welfare Officer.

### **Leave of absence**

All planned absence from school is to be treated in the same way. Changes to The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 have removed all reference to family holiday and extended leave, as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days.

Absence in term time will only be granted where the headteacher is satisfied that there are **exceptional circumstances**.

Although each request will be considered individually, we will never normally authorise leave of absence in term time under the following circumstances:

- Issues relating to the cost of a holiday
- At the beginning of the school year
- During examination periods (e.g. SATs)
- Where the child has a recorded absence level of less than 95% in the current school year (or in the previous school year if a request is made before Christmas.)

Parents/carers may be required to make an appointment to come into school to discuss any proposed leave of absence in term time with the Headteacher. Any proposed leave of absence will not be authorised if parents/carers do not attend this meeting. Leave of absence during term time is authorised, or not, by the school.

- Leave of absence taken without the Headteacher's permission, or failure to return on the agreed date, will mean that the absence is unauthorised (truancy).
- If a student fails to return within ten school days of the agreed return date, and there is not good reason for this absence, the school, in discussion with the Attendance and Behaviour Service, may remove the student's name from the school roll.

### **Penalty Notices\***

Section 23 of the Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003 empowers designated LA Officers, Headteachers and the Police to issue penalty notices in cases of unauthorised absence from school. The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2004 came into force on 27 February 2004.

From January 2005, Kent County Council will consider issuing Penalty Notices in the following circumstances:

- (a) overt truancy (including pupils caught on truancy sweeps)
- (b) parentally-condoned absences
- (c) unauthorised holidays in term time
- (d) excessive delayed return from extended holidays without prior school agreement
- (e) persistent late arrival at school (after the register has closed)

The Headteacher may request a penalty notice to be issued in any of the above circumstances.

Where leave of absence is taken for a holiday that has not been authorised, the headteacher may request the local authority, Kent County Council, to issue a Penalty Notice.

Penalty Notices are issued to each parents for each child who is absent without the agreement of the headteacher. Penalty Notices carry a fine of £60 per parent per child if paid within 21 days increasing to £120 per parent per child if paid between 22-28 days. Where Penalty Notices are unpaid, the local authority may consider taking legal action under Section 444(1) Education Act 1996 for failure to ensure a child's regular attendance at school. If this happens the case will take place before magistrates who could issue the maximum fine of £1000 per parent per child for this offence.

There is no right of appeal against the issuing of a Penalty Notice because the authorisation of absence is the sole responsibility of the headteacher.

### **Attendance Process**

#### **Unplanned absence:**

1. Parents contact the school with reasons for a pupil absence.
2. The school office enters details into the register.

- 3.** The class teacher or teaching enters an absence mark in the register for the duration of the absence.
- 4.** On receipt of a note or message from the parent, the school secretary enters the appropriate code in the register. The Headteacher will make the final decision about authorisation and coding of each absence.
- 5.** When appropriate, teachers will raise any concerns with the Headteacher.
- 6.** The Headteacher monitors attendance and takes appropriate action when absence is a concern and contacts the parents to discuss attendance issues.
- 7.** Referral is made to the Attendance and Behaviour Service if issues cannot be resolved.

Sample letters provided by KCC but the school will adapt these.

Attendance below 95%

**PARENTS/CARERS ADDRESS**

**SCHOOLS ADDRESS  
AND CONTACT  
DETAILS:**

Tel:  
Ask for:  
E-mail:  
Your ref:  
Our ref:  
Date:

Dear

RE: **(child's name)**

DOB:

ADDRESS:

The Education Welfare Officer visited our school on **(date of visit)**

As a school we are expected to achieve an average attendance of 95%. If an individual pupil's attendance falls below 95% they become subject for monitoring at the review meetings.

I need to inform you that **(child's name)** attendance is currently at **(current%)**. You may not have realised it was so low. **(His/Her)** attendance will be checked again on **(date of next visit from EWO)** at our next Attendance Review when we hope to see an improvement.

In the meantime, if you would like advice from the Education Welfare Officer or the School Nurse, please let me know.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

Fall in Attendance

**PARENTS/CARERS ADDRESS**

**SCHOOLS ADDRESS  
AND CONTACT  
DETAILS:**

Tel:  
Ask for:  
E-mail:  
Your ref:  
Our ref:  
Date:

Dear

RE: **(child's name)**

DOB:

ADDRESS:

Following this month's review on **(Date of review)** I regret to inform you that **(child's name)** attendance level has fallen again due to **her/his** recent absences. **(current%)** means that **she/he** has attended for only **(amount of time missed)** this academic year.

If you need the Education Welfare Officer or the School Nurse to give you any support please let me know. Meanwhile I think it would be helpful for us to meet and have arranged an appointment at (time) on (date). Please contact the school office to re-arrange if this is not convenient.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher



# Leave of Absence Request

Leave of Absence will only be granted in **EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES** (see over) and all Leave of Absence Requests must be approved by the Headteacher **before** the leave commences.

Parents/Carers – please complete this form and forward it to the Headteacher providing at least **two weeks'** notice except in an emergency or in unforeseen circumstances.

I wish my child/children:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_  
Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_  
Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

To be absent from school:

from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

I expect my child to return to school on \_\_\_\_\_

Reason (including any exceptional circumstances. Please continue on separate sheet if necessary) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent/Carer \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## For office use

Attendance to date \_\_\_\_\_ %

Absence previously authorised \_\_\_\_\_ days

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## Leave of Absence Request

Name/s of child/children \_\_\_\_\_

Absence from school approved from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Signed (Headteacher) \_\_\_\_\_

# Attendance Protocol



*The following information is a synopsis of the protocol relating to Leave of Absence, extracted from The Department for Education (The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended for September 2013. This information comes from KCC and applies to all Kent Schools. All absence requests will be dealt with in the same way.*

Leave of Absence in term time can only be granted in exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher will consider each request for absence individually but can only grant such requests in exceptional circumstances. There is no right of appeal as the authorisation of absence is the sole responsibility of the Headteacher. The Headteacher cannot give retrospective approval so requests should be made in advance.

## **Exceptional circumstances may include:**

- Families of Armed Forces personnel
- Where employer stipulates that holiday has to be taken during set period (letter from employer is required as evidence)
- Family trauma
- Travelling community where attending functions in line with culture
- Attending functions in line with culture and or religion.

Although each request will be considered individually, **we will never normally authorise leave of absence in term time under the following circumstances:**

- At the beginning of school terms
- During assessment periods
- Where the child is persistently absent, including because of ill health (25 days absence in the previous year or where there have already been 10 or more days absence in the current year)

All requests for leave will be considered individually and such factors as existing attendance record will be considered in making the decision whether to grant leave e.g. absence will not be authorised if it takes a pupil's absence record below 90%.

Leave of absence taken without the Headteacher's permission, or failure to return on the agreed date, will mean that the absence is unauthorised (truancy). The deliberate taking of leave in term time without or against school permission (where it can be clearly demonstrated that the parent/carer understood that permission had not or would not be given) may result in parents/carers being liable to a penalty notice. Penalty notices are issued to each parent of each and carry a fine per parent per child if paid within 21 days increasing per parent per child if paid between 21 and 28 days. Please see [www.kent.gov.uk](http://www.kent.gov.uk) for up to date charges.

Valerie Viret – Headteacher

**NB:** You can find the Leave of Absence Request together with a copy of the School's Attendance Policy on our Website and also on KLZ under General Letters and Useful Information. Alternatively ask in the School Office.

*Leave of Absence Request*  
**PARENTS/CARERS ADDRESS**

**SCHOOLS ADDRESS  
AND CONTACT  
DETAILS:**

Tel:  
Ask for:  
E-mail:  
Your ref:  
Our ref:  
Date:

Dear

**RE: Leave of absence request for (Child's name)**

:

Thank you for your application for leave of absence for **(Child's name)**.

I recognise your commitment to getting \_\_\_\_\_ into school regularly and thank you for your support in this. However, our attendance policy states that absence in term-time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. Thank you for sharing your reasons for your child's intended absence in term-time. Although we understand your reasons for making this request we can/cannot identify this as exceptional circumstances because \_\_\_\_\_

If unauthorised:

This means you are still free to take \_\_\_\_\_ out of school but the absence will be marked as unauthorised. If this absence meets the KCC criteria for requesting KCC to consider issuing a penalty notice this will be done. For full information on the current criteria for penalty notices please see the KCC website.

If authorised:

This means the dates above will be recorded as an authorised absence in term time. This still counts as absence from school although it is authorised.

If you wish to discuss the matter further, please do not hesitate to contact me via the school office.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

## ***Penalty notices***

School's address:

Tel:  
E-mail:  
Date:

Dear Parent/ Carer

### **RE: Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Absence.**

From April 2005, Kent Local Authority introduced Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence from school of at least 10 sessions (5 days) in a term.

The following circumstances will be considered as appropriate reasons for the issuing of Penalty Notices and, as a school we will ask KCC to issue a penalty notice in any of these circumstances:

- Truancy including truancy sweeps
- Parentally-condoned absences
- unauthorised holidays in term time
- Excessive delay in returning from extended holidays
- Persistent lateness after the register has closed at 9.30 a.m.

On receipt of the Notice, the penalty will be £60 if paid within 28 days, rising to £120 if paid after 28 days but within 42 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 42 day period may result in prosecution by Kent Local Authority.

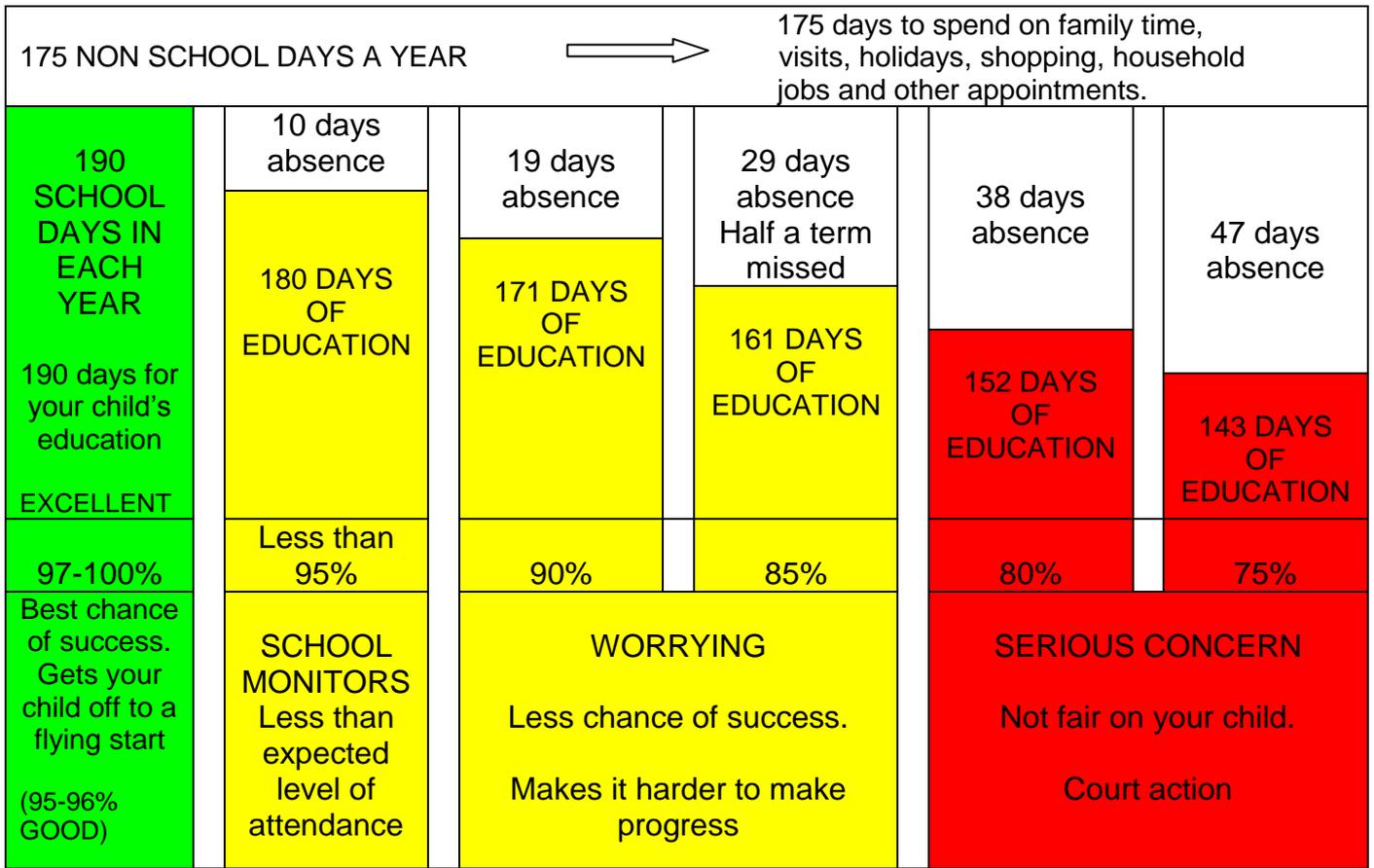
If you would like to see a copy of our attendance Policy, please ask at the school office and they will be happy to provide you with one.

Please ensure that your child attends school regularly and on time so that we can avoid having to consider such an action.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

Days off school add up to lost learning



Being late also adds up to a loss of learning

- If you are 5 minutes late every day that adds up to over 3 days lost over each year.
- 15 minutes late is the same as being absent for 2 weeks each year.

