



CROFTON SCHOOL

Attendance and Registration Policy

Rationale

Regular school attendance is essential for students' academic progress and for their social, moral, spiritual, cultural and physical development. The achievement of regular attendance and consistent punctuality by students at school are important preparation for later life. There is a range of measures that schools can take to encourage high levels of attendance. This policy describes the measures that Crofton School has put in place.

Effective registration procedures are an essential part of our safeguarding arrangements. It is essential that we know where students are so that we can discharge our duty of care towards them.

Objectives

We aim:

- to achieve a high (>95%) level of attendance, overall
- to ensure that the curriculum and individual students' experience of being at school encourages them to attend regularly
- to maintain accurate records of students' attendance and absence, both authorised and unauthorised
- to monitor attendance and absence patterns for individual students and for groups and to act promptly when necessary
- to ensure that all relevant school policies and practices promote high levels of attendance
- to ensure that students and parents understand the importance of high levels of attendance and the procedures that we have in place

Strategies for implementation

Registration

It is absolutely essential that every student is registered whenever the school is in session.

Electronic registers are taken twice a day, at 0850 and 1325. Paper registers are available for use in the event of a computer failure.

The tutor group setting up chairs for assembly is provided with a paper register and this is returned to the Attendance Officer.

When used, paper registers must be returned to the attendance officer by 0900 and 1330.

Tutors mark students as 'Present' or 'Absent - no reason yet given' (N). Students must be physically present to be marked as such, except when:

- they are on a pre-notified holiday, in which case their absence will be pre-coded H by the attendance officer.
- they have been excluded, in which case their absence will be pre-coded E by the attendance officer
- they are on their 2-week block work experience, in which case their absence will be pre-coded by the attendance officer
- they are on study leave, in which case their absence will be pre-coded by the attendance officer

Students on school trips are marked as absent; trip forms AND trip attendance registers will have been sent to the attendance officer by 0900, who will code accordingly.

Attendance registers for trips must be communicated to the attendance officer by the trip leader either physically or by phone by 0900.

Students educated off-site (eg at Fareham College or at a diploma provider) are marked as absent. The attendance officer codes as 'B' on the basis of college registers.

In the case of absences for music lessons which run into registration periods, students are to sign in at the school office.

Students visiting Learning Support during registration periods will be electronically registered by Learning Support staff. Students in the Inclusion Room are registered electronically there.

Heads of Year and other staff members who are meeting with students during registration periods will telephone the Attendance Officer direct to register the student.

Registration during a fire alarm

In the event of a fire alarm, the Attendance Officer or another member of administration staff prints paper copies of the latest registration. These along with the student/staff signing in and out books are used to conduct a roll call at the fire assembly point. In the event of a power failure in the admin block, the above procedure will be carried out in another designated department of the school. An up to date, pre-printed school role is taken out with the Attendance Officer in the event of a full power loss along with a medical kit.

Late arrivals

Students must sign in - teaching staff MUST enquire of students who arrive late whether they have done so. If the student has not done so, they must return to reception immediately.

Students who arrive after 0850 are recorded as 'late - before register closed' (which counts as an attendance) until 0920, after which they are recorded as U 'late - after register closed' (which counts as an absence). Students who arrive after 0900 go to Reception to register by 'signing in'.

If such students provide evidence of a legitimate excuse (ie a parental note) then the absence is classified accordingly (ie as 'M', 'C' etc).

Following up absences

Tutors are expected to be assertive in asking students to bring in absence notes when they return from a period of absence. They are not expected to contact parents.

If, after 2 weeks, no explanatory note has been received, the Attendance Officer will contact the parent by letter and then by telephone. Absence notes received more than 2 weeks after the absence should be sent to the office so that correct coding can take place. Even if they speak to the parent, the admin support team will ask parents to send in a note.

Parents are regularly reminded, through the Headteacher's newsletter, of the importance of providing explanatory notes for absence.

Where parents repeatedly fail to produce a note explaining absence a referral should be made to the Locality Team.

Where students' attendance is a cause for concern or truancy is suspected, Heads of Year nominate them for 'First Response'. Such students are telephoned by the Attendance Officer on the first day of any absence to establish the reason for the absence.

Classifying absences

This is the responsibility of the tutor in the first instance and for the first fortnight after the absence occurs.

Each Friday, the Attendance Officer prints paper copies of the register for the preceding fortnight to help tutors classify absences. These are distributed for Monday morning to tutors and HoYs.

All absences are classified, following guidance issued by the Local Authority. Classification of absences is normally carried out by tutors on receipt of a note from the parent or a note from a colleague.

Absence notes are used by tutors to update registration records. After two weeks the responsibility to chase up all absences which have not been accounted for *passes to* the Attendance Officer. Absence notes are periodically removed from Registers by the Attendance Officer and transferred to student files by administration staff.

Information about pre-notified absences (EG for medical appointments) is retained by the tutor in the register. Holiday forms are passed to the Attendance Officer for coding in advance.

Unauthorised absences are classified as such by the Deputy Headteacher, Head of Year, linked SLT or Attendance Officer (code 'O'). An absence is deemed to be unauthorised if:

➤ no reason for the absence has been provided by the parent/carer in spite of repeated requests

OR

➤ a request for authorisation of absence has been made and refused by the school

OR

➤ the school has notified a parent that absences will not be authorised because of the involvement of the Locality Team.

Requests for authorised absence for family holidays

The school believes that parents should not take students on holiday during term time and actively discourages them from doing so. However, if there is no alternative, the school may authorise a maximum of 10 school days in any school year to enable a student to go on a family holiday. Parents are asked to make sure that such requests reach the school at least a week before the holiday starts.

The school will not authorise holiday absence:

- when the student is sitting a formal exam, or in the 2 weeks preceding the exam
- for students whose attendance is already causing concern

Parents are advised that it is not possible for work to be provided for students whose families take holidays in term time.

External Truancy (in which students fail to attend school without their parents'/carers' knowledge)

Patterns of attendance are regularly monitored by the Attendance Officer, tutors, Heads of Year and by the Locality Team. Truancy may be detected when explanations for absence are unconvincing (forged letters, suspicious telephone calls), when unusual patterns of absence are identified, when overall levels of absence are high, when friends are absent on the same days or by 'First Response' (see above).

Internal Truancy (in which students miss lessons having registered as present)

Teachers complete an electronic register each lesson. Anomalies in this register are identified on an ad hoc basis by the Attendance Officer and teaching staff and concerns raised with heads of year and tutors as appropriate.

Improving attendance

Attendance targets

The school publishes an overall attendance target and a target for each year group. These targets are used to identify individual students for whom intervention is necessary; they are also used in discussion with individual parents by school staff and by our Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

The 2009/10 target is <6.33% absence and <30 'persistently absent' (PA) students.

Monitoring patterns of attendance and statistics

Patterns of absence are monitored by tutors who should raise any concerns that they have with their HoY.

Patterns of absence are also monitored by HoYs and by the EWO. Heads of Year hold a monthly meeting to review attendance figures and to plan intervention. This meeting is usually attended by the EWO. It is their joint responsibility to identify students with an attendance problem (compared to school targets and national expectations).

The Attendance Officer monitors the provision of absence notes by parents. Parents who regularly fail to provide absence notes will be contacted by the HoY.

Levels of attendance are discussed monthly by HoYs and linked members of SLT. They are compared to County and National benchmarks and to the school's own targets. Feedback is provided to tutors when action is required.

Attendance incentives and sanctions

Attendance certificates are awarded termly to students who achieve 100% attendance. Students whose attendance improves are also rewarded (these are decided on a case-by-case basis within an intervention context). These awards are requested by the Head of Year and administered by the Attendance Officer.

In the event of continued poor attendance, an Education Welfare Officer may be referred to by the school, there are also sanctions for truancy and lateness. These would range from detentions up to internal exclusion; they would not include exclusion.

Liaison with linked schools

New students with histories of poor attendance are identified during visits to junior schools by the Head of Year 7. Heads of Year also inquire about the attendance histories of students who join from schools other than our local junior schools, or who join after the beginning of Year 7. This information is then used to plan support strategies, when necessary.

Our Parent Support Adviser is also involved in the transition process, making visits to junior schools and providing support to families as required.

Long term absentees

The Inclusion Officer is responsible for maintaining contact with long-term absentees and for organising the provision of work for them.

Students returning after extended absence

Students returning to school after a lengthy absence are welcomed back and interviewed by the HoY. A referral may be made to the SENCO who will co-ordinate support for the student while they settle back into school life and catch up on any work they may have missed.

Roles and responsibilities

The roles of the Deputy Headteacher (CSG), the tutor, the Head of Year, the Attendance Officer, the Parent Support Adviser and other support staff

The Deputy Headteacher (Care, support and Guidance):

- i) oversees and monitors whole school attendance

- ii) liaises with heads of year, the Locality Team, the Education Welfare Officer and the Parent Support Adviser
- iii) ensures that attendance and punctuality are agenda items at Year Team meetings
- iv) works with the local community and partner organisations to ensure excellent attendance and punctuality
- v) supports the Education Welfare officer in new strategies to reduce number of persistent absentees in school.

The tutor takes the register each day and classifies absences. They must not allow students to take the register. The HoY oversees the correct completion of registers.

The Attendance Officer maintains the registers on the school MIS, operates the 'First Response' system and also pursues unauthorised absences. The Attendance Officer undertakes fortnightly analysis of the attendance of each tutor group and termly analysis of the attendance of reportable groups of students. The Attendance Officer produces monthly reports for heads of year which include aggregate attendance data for every student.

Heads of Year (in consultation with the EWO) review attendance data once each month and maintain an attendance intervention log. They use this data to identify students with an attendance problem (attendance <90% over a half-term period or 5 consecutive days of unexplained absence) and to decide on intervention. Intervention may take the following forms:

1. The tutor is the first point of contact for parents and students. They may be asked by the HoY to discuss the attendance problem with parents and/or students in the first instance in order to establish which factors are affecting attendance.
2. The HoY may contact parents to discuss the problem and strategies to address *it (using Letter 1)*. These strategies may include close monitoring, individual targets, rewards and sanctions, modified timetables, use of mentors, a Pastoral Support Plan, referral to the SENCO or counselling. The HOY will send a letter home expressing concern about the amount of absence and ask the parents if any support from the school is needed to improve attendance.

The HoY may also request the involvement of the Parent Support Adviser, ELSA, Student Support Officer, or the CPLO via the fortnightly referral clinic or directly if necessary. They may also refer to outside agencies such as the Traveller Education Service, the Educational Psychology Service, Connexions, social services etc, this would be co-ordinated via the common assessment framework.

The HoY may also liaise with the Inclusion Officer to provide work for students who are not able to attend.

The PSA will offer support and guidance to parents. The PSA may generate referrals to the EWO when necessary, in consultation with the HoY.

The role of the LOCALITY TEAM

The attached EWO or Family Support Worker meets regularly with each Head of Year and with the CPLO to review registers and to identify potential problems. Protocols for EWO involvement are:

- a. Any student with attendance below 85% is considered for Locality Team intervention; any student who is absent for 10 or more school days in a row is also considered
- b. Initial contact is made by the head of year to express concern - this may be by phone call or by letter
- c. If there is no improvement, Letter 2 is sent (generated by the Attendance Officer)
- d. If there is no improvement, parents are invited to meet the head of year or their representative (Student Support Officer, PSA etc); at this meeting a CAF will be considered, using the pre-assessment checklist
- e. If attendance does not improve (attendance must generally reach 95% for the period under review), Letter 3 (advising parents of the involvement of the Locality Team) is sent and a formal referral made to the EWO; the Attendance Officer then codes absences as unauthorised
- f. The EWO will then contact parents and agree course of action with HoY (this may include formal warnings, Education Planning Meetings, Penalty Notices and other legal proceedings)

Any student with attendance below 80% must be referred to Locality Team.

The role of parents/carers

Parents are “responsible for making sure that their child receives efficient full-time education” (DfES, 2003). They have a vital and irreplaceable role in ensuring good attendance and the school sees them as partners.

Parents are regularly reminded of the importance of high levels of attendance via the Headteacher’s newsletter and other communications.

Monitoring, review and evaluation

Arrangements for monitoring attendance are described above.

This policy document was reviewed in December 2009 and will be reviewed and evaluated in January 2012.

Appendix 1

Model attendance intervention log

Student name	Tutor group	Date of concern first raised;	Date of 1 st review; outcome; action	Date of 2 nd review; outcome;	etc	Date case closed

Appendix 2

Attendance letter 1 (+ School Attendance leaflet)

Dear <parent/guardian>

As you know, we are keen that every student should attend school as regularly and as promptly as possible, so that their learning and relationships develop fully and continuously. Students who often miss school make less progress and sometimes find it difficult to catch up.

We monitor students' attendance and punctuality at school so that we can support their families when either becomes a problem.

I am writing because I am worried about <student>'s attendance, which is currently <attendance> %. This is substantially lower than we would expect. If there are new medical circumstances that we need to know about, please contact Mrs Pinder, our Welfare and Attendance Officer on 01329 666825 to update us.

We will continue to monitor <student>'s attendance in the hope of seeing an improvement over the next few weeks. Please contact me at school to discuss the situation and steps we can both take to improve it.

Yours sincerely

HoY

Attendance letter 2

Dear <parent/guardian>

As you know, we are keen that every student should attend school as regularly and as promptly as possible, so that their learning and relationships develop fully and continuously. Students who often miss school make less progress and sometimes find it difficult to catch up.

In conjunction with the Education Welfare Service, we monitor students' attendance and punctuality at school so that we can support their families when either becomes a problem.

I am writing because I am worried about <student>'s attendance, which is currently <attendance> %. This is substantially lower than we would expect. If there are new medical circumstances that we need to know about, please contact Mrs Pinder, our Welfare and Attendance Officer on 01329 666825 to update us.

I have discussed the situation with our designated Education Welfare Officer and we will continue to monitor <student>'s attendance in the hope of seeing an improvement over the next few weeks.

Please contact me as a matter of urgency so that we can discuss the steps that we can both take to improve the situation.

Yours sincerely

HoY

Attendance letter 3

Dear <parent/guardian>

I wrote to you a few weeks ago because we were concerned about <student>'s level of attendance at school. As you know, we monitor students' attendance and punctuality so that we can support them and their families when either becomes a problem. We are keen that every student should attend school as regularly and as promptly as possible, so that their learning and relationships develop fully and continuously. Students who often miss school make less progress and sometimes find it difficult to catch up.

I am writing because I remain worried about <student>'s attendance, which is currently <attendance> %. I have discussed the situation with our designated Education Welfare Officer and asked them to make contact with you.

The action that the Education Welfare Service can take is restricted if absences are authorised by the school. As such, they have advised us that, in the event of further absences due to illness, we should not authorise them unless you provide medical evidence such as a note from your GP.

We will continue to monitor <student>'s attendance in the hope of seeing an improvement over the next few weeks.

I need to remind you that parents have a legal duty to ensure their child's regular attendance at school.

It is essential that you contact me as a matter of urgency so that we can discuss the steps that we can both take to improve the situation.

Yours sincerely

HoY