



# **Crawley Schools Attendance & Punctuality Policy**

## **issued by the Governors of Milton Mount Primary School**



**Effective from: 1 March 2019**

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**Signed by: Lesley King**

**Next review date: March 2020**

The Crawley Schools Attendance & Punctuality Policy reflects the UN Convention on The Rights of the Child (CRC) by supporting these Articles:

**UNCRC Article 28: All children have the right to an education.**

### [Crawley Schools Attendance and Punctuality Policy](#)

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 97% 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 in the individual school prospectuses. At Milton Mount a pupil who arrives after 9:10am will be marked as 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.

If a child is absent for the day, the school expects parents/carers to make contact as early as possible, giving the reason for the absence and the expected day of return. If no word is received from the parent/carer the school will contact the parent/carer on that day. The school follows up absences where no reasons are given. If the reasons for these absences remain unspecified they will be classed as unauthorised. A letter will be sent to parents/carers.

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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## **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](http://GOV.UK).

If we have good reason to suggest that a child is on holiday, even if a parent has reported illness, we may class this as unauthorised absence and request evidence of illness from parents. If holiday is applied for and a child is absent due to illness on the dates around this, we will class this as unauthorised absence unless suitable documentation, e.g. Travel documents are provided.

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 will 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.

During the updating of this policy, Safeguarding was taken account of.

Approved by the Governing Body

Signed (Chair of Governors) \_\_\_\_\_

Date March 2019

Review Date March 2020



# Milton Mount Primary School

## PARENTAL REQUEST TO SCHOOL TO AUTHORISE AN ABSENCE IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Name of child/ren	
Date of birth	
Year group and class	
Name of person making request and relationship to child	
Address	
Phone Number	
Dates your child will be absent from school (including total number of school days)	

Absences will only be authorised if this request is made in advance of the dates your child will be absent from school AND if the circumstances of the absence are exceptional. There is no entitlement to take a child out of school for a family holiday.

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.

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. A weeks' absence for holiday and a weeks' absence for illness would give an attendance figure below 95%. The government considers attendance unacceptable below 97%.

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.

If you wish for this absence to be authorised, you will need to fully explain (together with evidence) why the circumstances of this absence are exceptional.

Why is this absence exceptional? (continue on a separate sheet if necessary)
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### Declaration

I confirm that the information I have given on this form is true. I understand that if I do not fully complete this form, fully respond to requests for further information or that ultimately the absence is not authorised, my child's attendance will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. I understand that I must ensure my child attends school regularly and that failing to do so is a criminal offence which may result in legal proceedings being taken against me, either through a Penalty Notice or by prosecution in the Magistrates' Court.

I hereby sign this parental request with full knowledge and understanding of the above information.

Signed:.....  
(Parent/Carer)

Date:

Full Name:.....

Unless further information is required, a decision will be sent to you within 5 school days.

Crawley Schools Leave of Absence Policy

Parents must state why they consider it essential for them to take their child out of school as absence from learning has been proven adversely to affect children's academic progress.

Schools cannot authorise absence except in unavoidable and exceptional circumstances. Examples of this would be:

- Funeral of an immediate relative.
- Religious observation on days officially set apart by the religious body to which the parents belong.
- Close family wedding.
- Medical appointments which cannot be arranged outside the school day.

Genuine illness will be authorised, although the school reserves the right to ask for confirmation from a medical professional if a child's absences are above the amount expected for a usually healthy child. Unacceptable reasons for absence will be classed as unauthorised. 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 the Pupil Entitlement: Investigation (PEI) of West Sussex County Council (WSSCC), 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. There is no legal entitlement to holidays during term time and this should be avoided if at all possible. It will automatically be classed as unauthorised absence and after 5 days, a fixed penalty notice and fine will be issued.

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**CRAWLEY PRIMARY SCHOOLS WITHDRAWAL FROM LEARNING**

**Child's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Dates requested:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Class:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Number of days:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Has been authorised**

**Has not been authorised**

**Reason for non-authorisation (to be highlighted):**

- **There is no legal entitlement to holidays during term time and this should be avoided if at all possible. They will automatically be classed as unauthorised absence.**
- **Previous/current attendance is less than 97%.**
- **The 'once in a lifetime' event could have reasonably been scheduled at another time.**
- **The period of absence requested exceeds that required for the 'unavoidable and exceptional event'.**
- **The reasons provided do not constitute 'exceptional circumstances'.**
- **Other:**

**SIGNED:**

**DATE:**

**Mrs A Holmes**