

# Crosslee Community Primary School



## School Attendance Policy

## **Contents**

Introduction	3
Legal Framework	3
Arrival and registration	3
Lateness	3
Categorising Absence	4
Illness	4
Medical/Dental appointments	4
Other Authorised Circumstances	4
Lateness	4
Exclusion (No alternative provision made)	4
Family Holidays and Extended Leave	4
Religious Observance	5
Traveller Absence	5
Unauthorised Absence	6
Support Systems and Legal Interventions	6
Supporting Strategies	6
Parenting Contracts	6
Penalty Notices	7
Prosecution	7
Roles and Responsibilities	7
Using Attendance Data	8

## Introduction

Regular attendance at school is essential if children are to get the best possible start in life. It enables them to access, and engage in, appropriate educational opportunities that provide them with the knowledge and skills to achieve their full potential.

Crosslee Community Primary School believes that regular school attendance is key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them through enjoying and achieving; becoming healthy young people; being and feeling safe; whose emotional well-being is addressed; and who are able to make a positive contribution to their school and community.

The school values all pupils and staff and will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties.

Crosslee Community Primary School recognises that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy is supported by our policies on safeguarding, bullying, behaviour and inclusive learning. This policy also takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Race Relations Act 2000.

Attendance will be a regular item on the agenda of the Senior Leadership Team meetings where the progress of pupil's absence will be reported. The Head Teacher will report to the Governors half termly on attendance.

## Legal Framework

When a pupil of compulsory school age is on the schools register, parents are required by law (Section 7, 1996 Education Act) to ensure that their children attend school regularly and that they arrive on time. A child is of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

Absence from school should only occur when a child is unfit to attend due to illness; has a day of religious observance or leave of absence has been granted by the school.

If a pupil does not attend regularly the local authority has a statutory responsibility to enforce parent responsibility and may issue a penalty notice or take legal action if they fail to do so.

## Arrival and registration

The registers are taken twice a day at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions. Each school day counts as two attendances.

All children should be in the playground and ready to come into school at 8.50 am each day. The school gates are open from 8.30 am and this enables pupils to socialise with their friends and helps start the day calmly. Breakfast club is open from 8.00 am.

Morning registration is at 9.00 am. If a child arrives after registration they will be marked **late**. After 9.30 am they will become an **Unauthorised Absence**. Afternoon registration begins at 1.00 pm and ends at 1.10 pm (KS1) and 1.15 – 1.40 p.m. (KS2), after which a pupil will be marked late in the register. Children arriving after 1.30 pm (KS1) and 2.00 pm (KS2) will be marked as **Unauthorised Absence**.

## Lateness

When children arrive in school late, or if they have to leave school early, the parent or carer should call at the school office to sign them in/out. The signing in/out register is used as an appendix to the class register as part of the schools health and safety procedures.

## Categorising Absence

When a pupil is absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. Absence can only be authorised by the school and **cannot be authorised by parents**. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence has been received.

**Illness:** The school office should be informed before 9.30 am on the first day of a child's absence due to illness with an expected date of return. Parents should keep in regular contact with the school if the absence continues. Children should return to school as soon as they are well enough to attend. Parents should explain the reason for absence and may be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illness. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc. Alternative arrangements will be agreed with non-English speaking parents/carers.

**Medical appointments:** Parents should make every possible effort to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day so as not to disrupt their child's education. If it is absolutely necessary to make an appointment during school time pupils should attend school for part of the day. Parents should show the appointment card to school.

**Other Authorised Circumstances:** The school will consider authorising absence on occasions where there is absence due to exceptional circumstances, for example family bereavement, visiting a parent in prison or part time timetable agreed as part of a reintegration package.

**Lateness:** Late absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, attendance at a medical appointment. The absence will be recorded as **unauthorised** if the pupil has arrived late without justifiable cause, for example, if they woke up late or were waiting for their uniform to dry.

**Exclusion from school:** Exclusion is counted as an authorised absence. Parents are responsible for educating their child during the first 6 days of exclusion and the child's class teacher will make arrangement for work to be sent home.

**Family Holidays and Extended Leave:** Parents are strongly advised to avoid taking their children on holiday during term time. Parents **do not** have an automatic right to remove their child from school during term time for the purpose of a holiday. If your child is absent for 10 school days, they will miss 5% of their education during the academic year.

Leave of absence will only be granted in **exceptional circumstances** during school time. The Head Teacher has the discretion to authorise up to 10 school days leave in any one school year.

Parents wishing to take leave of absence during term time must submit a request form to the Headteacher at least two weeks before the leave. Parents are advised to make the request before any arrangements are made. Requests after the leave will not be considered and the absence will be unauthorised.

Each request will be considered individually and will take the following factors into account:-

- The age of the pupil;
- The pupils ability to catch up with the work missed;
- Any additional educational needs the pupil may have;
- The general welfare of the pupil;
- The purpose of the leave;
- Previous term-time leave taken, the school may only authorise a maximum of 20 days during a pupils primary education;
- The length of the proposed leave. Only in **exceptional circumstances** will absence of more than 10 school days be agreed. In such cases, consideration will also be given to cultural needs and family circumstances, such as minority ethnic children returning to their country of origin. In these cases granting leave for longer periods than normal may be

considered justified. In all cases though, parents will be required to justify why the leave needs to be taken during term time.

- The pupil's absence/attendance record. If the pupil's attendance is less than 95% the leave will not be authorised.
- Leave will not be authorised during any tests, SATs, public examinations, or the term before them.
- Circumstances of the request

All requests for leave of absence will be responded to in writing. If leave of absence is granted you must make sure that your child attends on the expected date of return. The parent must contact the school if there is an unavoidable delay.

If leave is authorised by the school, dates of travelling must be confirmed through approved documentation.

If a pupil fails to return and contact with the parents has not been made or received, the school may take the pupil off the school's roll in compliance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. This means that the child will lose their school place.

If the permission to take leave is not granted and the pupil still goes on leave, the absence will be **unauthorised**. In such cases the school may issue a Penalty Notice.

**Religious Observance:** The school acknowledges the multi faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends. The school will authorise absence on parental request for a day's absence or special leave for religious observance. Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent.

In the interest of fulfilling the academic requirements of the school and limiting the authorised absence rate of the school, it is identified as reasonable that no more than two days will be designated for any individual occasion of religious observance/festival and no more than three days in total in any academic year. Any further absence will be categorised as unauthorised.

**Traveller Absence:** The aim for the attendance of Traveller children, in common with all other children, is to attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible.

To protect Traveller parents from unreasonable prosecution for non-attendance, the Education Act 1944, section 86, states that a Traveller parent is safe from prosecution if their child accrues 200 attendances (i.e. 200 half days) in a year. This is only when the family are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending school as regularly as that trade permits.

It does not mean that part-time education for Traveller children is legally acceptable, nor does it relieve parents of their duties to ensure that their children are receiving suitable education when not in school.

When in or around Manchester, if a family can reasonably travel back to their Base School (see below) then the expectation is that their child will attend full time.

Crosslee Community Primary School will be regarded as the base school if it is the school where the child normally attends when they are not travelling. However, the pupil must have attended in the last 18 months. Traveller children can register at other schools temporarily while away from their base school, in such cases, the pupil's school place at Crosslee Community Primary School will be kept open for them whilst travelling. This is to protect them from unfairly losing their place at their school of usual attendance.

Crosslee Community Primary School can only effectively operate as the child's base school if it is engaged in on-going dialogue with Traveller families. This means that parents must:

- Advise of their forthcoming travelling patterns before they happen; and
- Inform the school regarding proposed return dates

Crosslee Community Primary School will authorise absence of Traveller children if we are satisfied that a family is travelling and has given indication that they intend to return.

Traveller children will be recorded as attending an approved educational activity when:

- The child is on roll and attending another visited school
- Undertaking supervised educational activity under the jurisdiction of another Local Authority's Traveller Education Service
- The child is undertaking computer based distance learning that is time evidenced

Where Traveller children are registered pupils at a school and are known to be present either at a site (official or otherwise) or in a house and are not attending school, the absence will be investigated in the same way as that for any pupil.

**Unauthorised absence:** Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and that it has been accepted as such by the school. Unsatisfactory explanations include: Shopping for uniforms; a pupil's or family members birthday; unauthorised holidays; closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes; "couldn't get up"; illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school; having their hair cut; looking after the house or a sick member of the family.

### **Support Systems and Legal Interventions**

Crosslee Community Primary School recognises that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home, in the community or in school. Parents should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

The school also recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those pupils with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee pupils and looked after children.

**Support strategies:** The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used may include:- discussion with parents and pupils; Attendance panels and meetings; Parenting contracts; Learning mentors; Pupil Voice Activities; Referrals to support agencies; PSHE; Time limited part time timetables; Family learning; Reward systems; Behaviour support; Additional learning support; Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) materials; Inclusion units.

**Parenting Contracts:** The school will request parents to agree to a parenting contract where it is considered that it will help support their child's attendance. A Parenting contract is a voluntary agreement between school and the parent. It can also be extended to include the child and any other agencies offering support to resolve any difficulties leading to improved attendance.

The contract will outline attendance targets and will detail agreed actions that will help to achieve the target. It will be child centred, planned in discussion with parents and agreed with both parents and the child. The contract will contain details of support offered to families and it will be reviewed regularly. The Parenting Contract will be used in accordance with Manchester City Council's Parenting Contract Protocol.

Where parents fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, the school will consider the use of legal sanctions. (Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003).

**Penalty Notices:** The School recognises the use of penalty notices (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003) as an early enforcement measure and will use them in accordance with Manchester City

Council's Penalty Notice Protocol. The school may request one in appropriate circumstances which include when:-

- A pupil is absent from school for the purpose of a holiday in term time and the absence has not been authorised by the school.
- A pupil has accumulated at least ten sessions of unauthorised absence and further unauthorised absence has occurred following written warning to improve.
- A pupil has been late (unauthorised absent) on 10 occasions.
- A Penalty Notice gives the parent the opportunity to discharge themselves of their legal responsibility if a £60 fine is paid within 21 days or £120 if paid within 28 days of the date the Notice was issued.
- Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

**Prosecution:** Where intervention fails to bring about an improvement in attendance, the Local Authority will be notified and legal action in the Magistrates' Court may be taken. The school will provide the Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and will appear as a prosecution witness if required by the court. This is to ensure that parents realise their own responsibilities in ensuring attendance at school and most importantly about returning children to education.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child if he/she is a registered pupil at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence.

Alternatives to Section 444 prosecution are Parenting Contracts, Penalty Notices or an Education Supervision Order.

### **Roles and Responsibilities:**

Crosslee Community Primary School believes that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, parents, pupils and the wider school community.

**The Governing Body**, in order to ensure that the school is complying with its statutory duties, will:

- Ensure the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to pupils and their parents;
- Annually review the school's Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy;
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with;
- Agree school attendance targets and submit these to the Local Authority within the agreed timescale each year and where appropriate link these to the Performance Management of Senior Leadership within the school;
- Monitor the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting at Governing Body Meetings;
- Ensure that attendance data is reported to the Local Authority or Department of Children, Schools and Families as required and on time;
- Ensure that there is a named senior member of staff to lead on attendance;
- Ensure that the school has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils including those who are educated off-site;
- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence.
- Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate effectiveness of interventions.
-

### **The Leadership Team will:**

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed annually
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and adequately trained to address attendance issues
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resource
- Return school attendance data to the Local Authority and the Department for Children, Schools and Families as required and on time
- Report the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting to the Governing Body
- Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site are implemented
- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions
- Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support pupils and their families
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated

**Parents** have a very important part to play in supporting their children's education. In order to make a valuable contribution to their attendance parents are requested to:

- Talk to their child about school and what goes on there. Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress;
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment;
- Encourage their child to look to the future and have aspirations;
- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return. Follow this up with a note to the school where possible;
- Try to avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make appointments for the Doctors, Dentists etc. outside of school hours;
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties;
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance;
- Support the school; take every opportunity to get involved in their child's education, form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home;
- Encourage good routines at home, for example, bed times, home work, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before;
- Not keep their child off school for inappropriate reasons such as to go shopping, to help at home or to look after other members of the family;
- Avoid taking their child on holiday during term time.

### **Using Attendance Data**

Crosslee Community Primary School will share attendance data with the DCSF and the local authority as required. All information shared will be done so in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. Pupil's attendance will be monitored and may be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if a pupil's attendance is a cause for concern.

Pupils will be banded into colour coded groups that reflects the schools level of concern over their attendance and this will trigger actions in the escalation of interventions. The groupings are:-

<b>Gold</b>	<b>Pupils with attendance between 100% and 98%</b>
<b>Green</b>	<b>Pupils with attendance between 97.9% and 96%</b>
<b>Amber</b>	<b>Pupils with attendance between 95.9% and 92%</b>
<b>Orange</b>	<b>Pupils with attendance between 91.9% and 87%</b>
<b>Red</b>	<b>Pupils with attendance below 87%</b>

Date .....

Dear Parent/Carers

Re: Request for Special Circumstances Leave in term time.

Good school attendance by all our pupils is very important. Children who miss even just a few days of school can easily fall behind and sometimes find it hard to settle back in. We want all our children to attend school regularly so that they make the most of their educational opportunities and achieve to their full potential.

Because of this we are writing to remind you of our policy for special leave in term time. Although we understand how important it is for families to spend time together, we strongly request that you plan any leave outside school term time.

There is no right to take leave in term time and it is only in special circumstances that a request for leave will be agreed. You need to discuss with the school and complete the request form for any leave in term time. Please make sure the leave is agreed before making any arrangements.

These are the things we consider before agreeing to special leave;

- The reason for the leave/special circumstances and why it could not be taken in the school holidays
- The number of days requested
- Previous requests for leave in term time
- Your child's attendance and punctuality record
- The time of the year, e.g. examination periods, the start of a new school year
- The impact of leave on your child's learning

You can ask for copies of the Manchester City Council Guidelines on Leave of Absence and our School Attendance Policy.

You need to be aware that if you decide to take your child out of school without agreement from the Headteacher.

- You can receive a Penalty Notice of £120 per child / per parent
- You can receive a court summons, which can lead to a criminal record and a fine up to £2,500
- Your child may be at risk of losing their school place
- You are allowing your child to miss out on important education

Failure to pay the penalty notice may result in legal proceedings being taken against you. Other statutory action may also be considered under the Education Act 1996, which may result in you being prosecuted in the Magistrates' Court. If you are found guilty, you will receive a criminal record and may receive a fine of up to £2,500 and/or three months imprisonment.

We appreciate your support in this matter.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

**Crosslee Community Primary School**

**Application for leave of absence from school due to Special Circumstances**

Regular school attendance is vital for your child's educational progress. We expect all parents/carers to ensure that their children attend school whenever possible. Absences due to holidays taken in term time are not acceptable.

If you wish to apply for your child to be absent from school, please complete this form and return it to school before any arrangements are made as early as possible. Requests for leave of absence will be considered in line with our policy and will only be approved in very special circumstances.

**If your child is absent from school because they are on holiday and this leave of absence has not been authorised or they do not return to school on the agreed due date, you may be issued with a penalty notice of £120 per child per parent. Your child may also be at risk of losing their school place.**

**PARENT'S SECTION**

Date of application .....

Surname of child ..... First Name .....

Date of Birth ..... Year Group .....

Surname of parent/carer ..... First Name .....

Relationship to child .....

Home address .....

Home telephone ..... Parent's mobile .....

Reason for request .....

.....

.....

.....

Length of absence (number of school days) ..... Destination .....

Date of departure ..... Date due back in school .....

Emergency telephone contact in Manchester .....

Parent/carer's signature .....

**SCHOOL SECTION**

Date of meeting with parent(s) ..... Leave approved? Yes / No

Number of days approved ..... Headteacher's signature .....

Number of date(s) of previous applications granted .....

Dates ..... Duration of absence .....

Reason for refusal/authorisation (delete as appropriate): .....

.....

.....

.....

Date .....

Dear .....

Refusal for exceptional leave in term time

I have considered your request for leave in term time and on this occasion I will not be authorising your child's absence.

This is because (insert reason) \*

You are requested to take leave during school holidays.

If your child does not attend school during the dates you requested, the absences will be recorded as unauthorised and a request to issue you with a Penalty Notice will be made.

A Penalty Notice of £120 will be payable. The Local Authority will take legal action if Penalty Notices are not paid within 28 days of date of issue. Legal action may result in a fine of up to £2500 and a criminal record and /or three months imprisonment for each parent.

A copy of this letter will be placed on your child(ren)'s school file.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

\* (Consider the following)

- The age of the child – the child has just started reception, moved to a new class, just moved to the school or is in Year 6
- The time of year proposed for the trip – the first week of term, exam/SATs week in school, time of school residential
- The nature of the trip and parental wishes – why they want to go on leave, where they are going
- The overall attendance pattern of your child – children/young people with attendance below 95% have already missed a considerable amount of school
- Your child's stage of education and progress – if he/she is already showing indications of poor progress

Date .....

Dear .....

Request for exceptional leave in term time

I have considered your request for leave in term time and I have agreed to grant permission on this occasion for the following reasons:

.....  
.....  
.....

Your child(ren) ..... will be marked as absent from  
..... to .....

He/she/they are expected to return to school on .....

If your child does not return to school on this date, further absences will not be authorised. This means that you may be issued with a Penalty Notice. A Penalty Notice of £120 will be payable. The Local Authority will take legal action if Penalty Notices are not paid within 28 days of issue. Legal action may result in a fine of up to £2500 and a criminal record and /or three months imprisonment for each parent.

Your child may lose their school place if they do not return to school after the agreed date. You will then be required to reapply for your child(ren)'s school place(s). We cannot guarantee that a place will be available for your child(ren) or that your child(ren) will be able to return to the same class.

Although your child(ren)'s absence will be authorised on this occasion, you are requested to take future leave during school holidays. Future requests for further leave in term time may not be authorised.

A copy of this letter will be placed on your child(ren)'s school file.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher