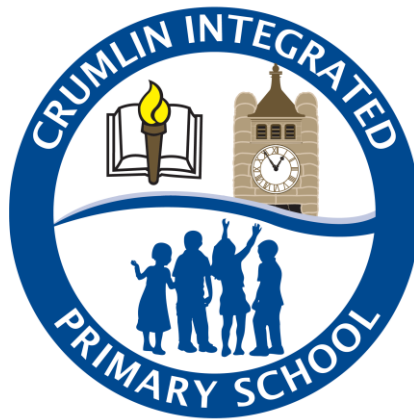


CRUMLIN INTEGRATED PRIMARY SCHOOL



ATTENDANCE POLICY

UNCRC article 28: you have the right to a good quality of education

October 2023

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Introduction

Regular attendance at school is essential to ensure uninterrupted progress and to enable children to extend their potential. The attendance pattern for all children is monitored monthly with the school seeking to work actively with parents to ensure a regular pattern is maintained. We expect all children on roll to attend every day when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so.

Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. We encourage children to attend, and put in place appropriate procedures to support this. We believe the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school and learning.

Poor attendance can seriously affect each child's:

- attainment in school;
- relationships with other children and their ability to form lasting friendships; and,
- confidence to attempt new work and to learn alongside others.

The Governors and Principal, in partnership with parents, have a duty to promote full attendance at school.

Role of Parent/Guardian

Parents/Guardians have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and arrives on time. Good attendance is essential to the all-round development of a child. Poor attendance undermines their education and sometimes puts children at risk. It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent. This is a safeguarding matter so that all parties know that your child is safe.

Pupils are expected to arrive between 8.50 am and 9.05 am when doors are open and children go to class.

The class register is taken at 9.05 am and at 1.00 pm. Pupils arriving after 9.05 will be marked as late before registration has closed (Code L). The register will close at 9.30 am. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (Code U). This code counts as an unauthorised absence. Frequent lateness is disruptive for learning, both for the child concerned and the class. This will be discussed with parents and may be referred to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

Illness and Medical Appointments

When a child is unwell, parents should contact the school on the first day of absence informing the school of the reason for absence.

- When a child is absent, the class teacher will record the absence in the register.

- Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours.
- If it is necessary for the child to be out of school for this reason, the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment.
- If your child is absent due to vomiting and or diarrhoea they should not return to school for the next 48 hours after the last bout of sickness. This is to reduce the risk of infection to other children and adults at school.
- For each period of absence, the school requires a written explanation of why the child was absent. The school office will request this if it is not produced.

The Role of the School Staff

The Principal has overall responsibility for attendance.

Class teachers complete a register at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. Teachers mark pupils present, absent or late. Pupils' attendance is monitored monthly to highlight and take action where the attendance of individual children is causing concern.

Action for Low Attendance

96%+	Excellent - Well done! This will help all aspects of your child's progress and life in school. This will give them a good start in life and supports a positive work ethic.
94 - 95%	Average - Strive to build on this. Work with parents to continue to promote full attendance to move to 96%+
85 - 93%	Poor - Absence is now affecting attainment and progress at school. School contact parent directly to seek ways of working together to improve attendance.
Below 85%	Unacceptable - Absence is causing serious concern. It is affecting attainment and progress and is disrupting the child's learning. Contact between home and school to share strategies for improvement will be made. A referral is made to the Attendance Service - Education Welfare Office (EWO).

Non-attendance is an important issue that is treated seriously. However, each case is different and the school acknowledges that no one standard response will be appropriate in every case. Consideration is given to all factors affecting attendance before deciding what intervention strategies to apply.

- (a) In every case, early intervention is essential to prevent the problem from worsening. It is essential that parents keep the school fully informed of any matters that may affect their child's attendance.
- (b) Prior to the engagement of the EWO, the school may issue letters to parents clearly defining the concerns within school regarding a pupils' absence. It is hoped that a quick response and change in levels of absence will prevent the need for EWO involvement.

Children Missing Education

If families move away from the area, or wish to transfer their child to another school, the Principal must be informed in writing. Children cannot be removed from the school roll until we have been notified by another school that a place has been offered and accepted. Children who stop attending and who cannot be traced cannot be removed from the school roll. They are reported to the Education Authority Education and Welfare Service. Where a child is missing from education, Education Authority guidance will be followed.

Family Holidays during Term-Time

Crumlin Integrated Primary School discourages family holidays during term time due to the negative impact they have on children's learning. Family holidays taken during term time will be categorised as **Unauthorised** absence.

Definitions

Every absence has to be classified by the school (not by the parents) as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required.

Authorised Absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.

Unauthorised Absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without a reason being provided.

Attendance and Lateness

For all children, the school monitors absence and lateness and has a stepped approach to taking action. It will not always be appropriate to progress through all of these steps or even to carry them out in the ordered listed. Responsible staff will use discretion and consider each case carefully.

- Where there has been no contact from parents, the Principal may contact the parents.
- Discussion with the Education and Welfare Service to identify pupils with attendance below 90%, monitoring trends in pupil attendance and lateness.
- Request from school for parent/carers to meet with school staff.
- Initiate the process, if appropriate, to access support from other agencies.
- Referral to the Education and Welfare Service.

Reasons for absence are recorded and retained by the school. When a referral to the Education and Welfare Service is made, copies of all letters sent to parents and minutes of any meetings may be requested.

Education Authority Action

Where there is less than 85% the Education Welfare service will consider the following:

- Home visits;
- Multi agency meetings;
- Sign posting to supportive agencies e.g. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, Social Services and Family Group Conference Service; and,
- Fast Track to Prosecution.

Rewards for Positive Attendance

The prime benefit derived from regular attendance is that continuity and progression in learning are ensured.

Individual incentives

Where intervention has been required, all staff in contact with the child must take extra care to welcome the child each morning, praise punctual attendance and acknowledge the effort the child has made. Individual sticker rewards are sometimes employed as an additional incentive where appropriate; these are designed according to the child's particular need.

It is also appropriate to recognise the effort the parent has made to secure the child's attendance.

This policy was agreed in **October 2023**

Signed:

Pastor B Clingen

Chairperson - Board of Governors

This policy will be reviewed in **2026**.