



ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Following Jesus' teachings about peace and love, we strive to develop our school family into people who will serve the community they live and work in with respect and compassion. We encourage everyone to develop their unique talents, achieve their full academic potential and take pride in all they do.

Chair of Governors	Mr I Bailey
Head Teacher	Mrs S Smith
Adopted by the Local Governing Body on	23 rd September 2021
Date of next review:	November 2022

1. Introduction

Christopher Rawlins CE Primary School (CRPS) is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils to ensure that they reach their full potential. We strive to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome and which embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all. This policy conforms to the applicable Education laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education (DfE) and contains the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

A DfE study (Sep 2018) found that children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school. Because missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind we will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Consequently, every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

2. Attendance Targets

Each year the school will examine its attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets which will reflect both national and Oxfordshire targets.

A system for analysing performance towards the targets, set out in the next paragraph, will be established and a member of the Senior Leadership Team will be responsible for overseeing this work.

Through the implementation of this policy, the following will be achieved:

- A minimum 96.5% attendance rate.
- A positive partnership between parents and school, working for the benefit of the children's learning.
- Clear and transparent procedures and expectations understood by all stakeholders.

3. Monitoring and Evaluating Effectiveness

At the end of each of the six terms, the Headteacher will present analysed attendance data to identify issues and trends and will discuss specific concerns with the nominated governor as appropriate.

The Local Governing Body will review attendance as part of its terms of reference and the school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

In February each year, the school will assess progress towards attaining the target and act, if required, implement measures to remedy any under-performance.

At the end of the school year, the school will evaluate the success of the procedures by measuring the annual % attendance against the target, as the basis for establishing procedures to enhance performance in the next year.

4. Promoting Attendance

The school will use opportunities as they arise (including e.g. newsletters and end of term reports) to remind parents/carers that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education.

The Home/School agreement may also be used in this way.

5. Attendance Awards

Children with 100% attendance will be rewarded at the end of the Autumn, Spring and Summer terms. They will also be praised within our celebration assembly on the last Friday of the Christmas, Spring and Summer terms. Children who have 100% attendance for the whole year will also be presented with a special certificate.

6. Expectations of parents/carers

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states: "The parent is responsible for making sure their child receives full-time education."

It is therefore the parent's/carer's responsibility to ensure that their children arrive at school on time, suitably attired, well prepared and equipped to undertake the day's curriculum activities.

Consequently, we expect that parents/carers will:

- Ensure their child/ren attend school, aiming for a 100% attendance rate.
- Will contact school daily (by 9am) whenever their child is unable to attend.
- Contact school on subsequent days if their child is still unable to attend.
- Inform the school if the child/ren is unavoidably late in the morning.
- Contact the school, in confidence, whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school.
- Refrain from taking the child out of school for holidays, or occasional days, unless there are significant exceptional circumstances which have been approved by the Headteacher.
- Inform the school in writing if their child/ren has to have a medical or dental appointment during school time. Dates, times and collection arrangements for the child/ren should be passed to the class teacher/school office prior to the absence. (Wherever possible, we encourage parents to try to arrange these appointments out of school hours or during school breaks.)

7. Expectations of school

It is expected that CRPS will:

- Ensure regular, efficient and accurate recording of presence /absence.
- Make 1st day absence contact with parents when a child fails to attend.
- Refer to appropriate support agencies as required.
- Communicate to all stakeholders clear expectations of what constitutes good attendance and why it is important.
- Give clear guidance as to how good attendance is promoted.

8. Expectations of governors

It is expected that Governors will:

- Monitor the effectiveness of the policy through Headteacher reports.
- Support the school in encouraging good attendance through role modelling.
- Communicate with parents and other agencies as appropriate.

9. The School Day

The school day starts at 8.55 a.m. for all children.

All children finish at 3.10pm

Children should not arrive on site before 8.40a.m. as we cannot accept responsibility for them before this time.

Parents should inform the school at the earliest opportunity if they are unable to collect their child/ren on time.

10. Registration

The Register is taken on Arbor, our online system, between 8.50 a.m. and 9.00a.m. and again at the start of the afternoon session.

Registers are marked by 9.00a.m. and your child will receive a late mark if he/she is not present in class by that time.

Registration closes at 9.15a.m. In accordance with regulations, unless there are exceptional circumstances, if your child arrives after that time he/she will receive a mark to show that he/she is on site, but this will be recorded as an Unauthorised Absence.

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised (/ \), unauthorised (O) or as an approved educational activity (V) (attendance out of school).

If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

11. Register and Admission Roll-keeping.

CRPS complies with the legal requirements of The Education [Pupil Registration] (England) Regulations 2006 regarding register and admission roll-keeping:

- The Attendance is recorded electronically. Copies are printed out at least once a month, bound into annual volumes (Phoenix report AO2) and held securely in the school safe.
- All corrections are visible (no correcting fluid).
- Attendance registers are retained for at least 3 years.

12. Lateness

Any child who arrives at school after 9.00a.m. will need to enter school by the main office door.

Any pupil arriving after these times will be marked as having an unauthorised absence (U) unless there is an acceptable explanation -e.g. school transport was delayed.

In cases, for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate absence code will be entered.

Pupils arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be treated for statistical purposes, as present, but will be coded as late (L) before registers close.

13. Persistent Lateness

If a child arrives after the register has closed, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, unless there are exceptional circumstances. If the lateness is persistent and parents/carers

fail to work with school to address the issues, the matter will be referred to the Home School Community Link Worker and/or the Early Intervention Hub, who will offer support. If there is no improvement, a Fixed Penalty Fine could be issued.

We are required to record all absences on our Data Collection returns and submit these to the Local Authority (LA) and DfE. This includes details of all Unauthorised Absences.

14. Absence from School

Only the Headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. The Headteacher will not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. (See the paragraph "Leave of Absence" - below.)

If a child must be absent for medical/dental appointments, every effort must be made to arrange them outside school hours but we acknowledge that this is not always possible. Parents must provide an appointment card or other written confirmation of Medical/Dental appointments.

Parents/Carers must inform the school if their child is going to be absent on or before the first day. Parents should also contact the school on subsequent days if the absence is extended. If no reason is given within 2 weeks the absence will become unauthorised.

The aim is for pupils to achieve a record of attendance with unbroken weeks (i.e. those where the pupil is marked present on all ten sessions); pupils should not have more than one or two broken weeks in the course of an academic year.

The normal pattern of absence for sickness would be for consecutive days in a week rather than odd days in different weeks. Regular, broken weeks are a cause for concern and will be followed up by the school.

15. Categorisation of Absence

Any pupil who is on roll but not present in the school at the time of registration will be recorded within one of these categories:

- Unauthorised Absence.
- Authorised Absence.
- Approved Educational Activity.

Unauthorised Absence.

An absence is classified as 'unauthorised' when a child is away from school without the permission of the school without a good reason, even with the support of a parent.

Examples of unauthorised absence are:

- Family holidays/day visits.
- Shopping.
- Keeping a hairdressing appointment.
- A birthday treat.

Authorised Absence

An absence is classified as 'authorised' under the Education Act 1996 when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a

parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.

Only the school can make an absence authorised; parents do not have this authority. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

Examples of 'authorised' absences are:

- When a child is ill or receiving medical attention (appointment cards should be available).
- When a close family member has died
- When prior consent has been obtained from the Headteacher, for example for a music examination.

Approved Educational Activity

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school, for example:

- Field trips and educational visits.
- Sporting activities.
- Link courses or approved education off site.
- Most types of dual registration. (Pupils recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.)

16. Leave of Absence

Examples of what might be considered exceptional circumstances justifying absence are:

- Where it is company/organisational policy for an employee to take leave at a specified time in the year and there is no opportunity for a family holiday in school holidays. This must be supported by documentary evidence from the organisation.
- Service personnel returning from/scheduled to embark upon a tour of duty abroad.
- Where a holiday is recommended as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue. Evidence must be provided, from qualified professionals, such as a doctor.
- Where it may be a unique/last opportunity to spend time with a relative or leave for bereavement of a family member or attending a funeral.

Where there are other factors which the Headteacher may consider to be exceptional circumstances, this may be referred to the Local Authority or ODST for advice.

Parents/Carers should seek permission from the Headteacher prior to the leave of absence period in question. This request must be received by the Headteacher at least 14 days before the absence (except in the case of bereavement).

Parents must use the Exceptional Circumstances Application Form for Leave of Absence (See Appendix 1; forms also available from the school office on request); supplying additional written evidence if available when requesting absence leave for their child.

The Headteacher's decision will be made based on this information provided and will specify the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Parents/carers who remove their children from school without authorisation or do not return their child to school on the agreed date following an authorised period of leave of absence,

may face a Penalty Notice Warning which could lead to a fine/prosecution (see Penalty Notices and Legal Action below).

17. First Day Absence

Parents should phone the school before 9.10a.m. on the first day of absence.

If a message has not been received, office staff will phone the parent by 9.30a.m. and if no contact is made by phone, then contact will be attempted by text or email.

Any letters from parents regarding absences will be dated on receipt and put in the relevant registers.

If there is no initial reason given for the absence, or letter of explanation on the child's return, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

18. Response to Non-attendance

The school has a safeguarding duty, under section 175 Education Act 2002, to investigate any unexplained absences.

If a child is absent, and contact is not received from the parents, the school will try to contact parents as described in the preceding paragraph. If no contact can be made, either through work or mobile numbers, the school will use the contacts list provided by parents. Where there has been no response, or explanation, the school will email the parents/carers requesting information regarding the absence.

Where there continues to be no response to the school intervention, and the absence has persisted without explanation, the school will refer the issue to the Early Intervention Hub, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and/or Children Missing in Education depending on the length of absence.

If a child's attendance falls below 85% over a school term the school will initially write to parents/carers expressing concerns about levels of attendance and offering support if required. If the situation does not improve, there is a staged level of response in which the Head Teacher will invite the parents in to discuss the issue and may request the support of the Early Intervention Hub and/ or the Home School Community Link Worker if there is no improvement.

19. Ten Day Absence

Any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days will be referred to Oxfordshire County Council, which is a legal requirement. The school will include details of the action they have taken.

20. Absence Notes

Notes received from parents explaining absence will be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil, that may require further investigation, the notes may be retained for a longer period.

21. Frequent Absence

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to be aware of and bring to the attention of parents, governors or the Local Authority, as appropriate, any emerging attendance concerns.

On a regular basis, the Headteacher monitors current rates of attendance to identify the frequency of, and reasons for, absence. Rates of attendance from previous academic years may also be referred to within this process.

Where monitoring reveals incidents of poor attendance (a current percentage rate of less than 90%) and/or lateness, parents/carers will be notified in writing that this is a cause for concern. In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve any concerns with parent/s. If the situation does not improve, the school will invite parents/carers in to discuss causes and ways forward.

A further letter is sent home if further absences take place which lead to the rate of absence rising? At this point, school may request a note from a doctor before authorising any further absences due to illness.

The Headteacher will liaise with the Attendance and Engagement Officer/Team to ensure necessary action is taken when incidents of poor attendance and/or punctuality are identified. They may then work with a family to support improvements in attendance.

22. Persistent Absence

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

The school monitors all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents will be informed of this immediately and a parenting contract meeting will be offered between parent, pupil and school to try and help resolve any issues.

In cases of persistent absenteeism, the school reserves the right to issue a Penalty Notice Warning which could result in a referral to The County Attendance Team who have a range of legal powers open to them to enforce attendance including parenting orders, face a fine of up to £2,500 per parent and/or 3 months' imprisonment. (Details are given in the next paragraph.)

23. Penalty Notices and Legal Action

The Education Act 1996 applies to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school.

Part 1, Section 7 states:

- The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient fulltime education suitable to:
 - To his/her age, ability and aptitude.
 - To any special needs he/she may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

(For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.)

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

A Penalty Notice is a fine that the County Attendance Team may decide to issue instead of taking legal action through the Magistrates' Court system.

A Parent/Carer can be issued with a penalty notice if:

- They fail to ensure that their child attends school, or other education provision regularly, usually defined as six or more unauthorised absence sessions over a six week period.
- They allow their child to take leave of absence during term time without the school's authorisation.
- They fail to return their child to school on the agreed date after a period of authorised leave of absence.
- Their child persistently arrives late for school after registration is closed.

24. A Welcome Back

On return from an absence every pupil will be made to feel welcome. This will include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to other pupils.

25. Key Contact Details:

School Telephone Number: 01295 810497

School Email Address: office.3453@christopher-rawlins.oxon.sch.uk

Oxfordshire Local Authority Attendance and Engagement Officer: Telephone Number: 01865 323513

Appendix 1

APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE FOR A SCHOOL PUPIL IN TERM TIME IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES ONLY

This form MUST be completed by the resident parent(s) carer(s) before requests will be considered.

Please read the following notes before completing the form overleaf.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 only allow Head Teacher to authorise leave of absence (for any purpose) in exceptional circumstances (See paragraph 16 of our Attendance Policy this policy for examples.) Parents do not have any legal entitlement to take their child on holiday during term time, including for holidays.

Requests for Leave of Absence must be made 14 days in advance of the requested absence, by the parent with whom the child normally resides (except in the case of bereavement) and before any arrangements are confirmed or money committed. Please complete a Leave of Absence form for each child. Failure to make a request for a Leave of Absence in advance will result in the absence being recorded as unauthorised. (Please see paragraph 23 of our Attendance Policy relating to penalties for unauthorised absences, published on the school website. Alternatively, a copy can be requested from the school office.)

If the exceptional circumstances are agreed, the Head Teacher will determine the length of the absence authorised. Then, please contact school to discuss measures to minimise the impact of the absence on your child's academic progress.

We have a shared responsibility to ensure that the law is upheld and that your child achieves to his/her full potential. We look forward to your co-operation.

APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE FOR A SCHOOL PUPIL IN TERM TIME IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES ONLY

I wish to apply for Leave of Absence from school to be granted to:

Name of Child: _____

Year Group: _____

First Date of Proposed Absence: _____

Last Date of Proposed Absence: _____

Expected date of return to school: _____

Reason for Proposed Absence –

(Please provide reasons to support the application - they can only be exceptional circumstances – including any supporting information. (Please refer to policy before completing.))

Total number of school days requested on this occasion:

Signature of Parent/Carer: _____

Print Name: _____

Date: _____

FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY:

Name of child: _____

Date received by school: _____

First date of absence requested: _____ Last date of absence requested: _____

Absence Authorised: Yes / No

If absence authorised, expected date of return to school: _____

The reasons for this decision are:

_____ .

Leave Of Absence record sheet to be completed by school and submitted where verbal requests made/for other relevant information .

Head Teacher/Attendance Lead: _____

Date: _____

Copy of this completed section to be sent back to the parent with appropriate letter.