



Policy and Procedure

Cross Gates Primary School

Attendance Policy

Written by: James Garden

Ratified by Governors: Jan 2023

Review Date: Jan 2025

At Cross Gates Primary School we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of all children, and expects our staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Rationale

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Children need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. Cross Gates Primary School and Nursery fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure pupils are in school and on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours.

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Head teacher and Governors at our school work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations.

The following table identifies how much learning is missed as result of being persistently absent from school each year.

Descriptor	Threshold Attendance	Actual Attendance	Whole Days of Absence	Learning Hours Lost
Excellent	100%	190 days	0	0
	99%	188 days	2	10
Good	98%	186 days	4	20
	97%	184 days	6	30
	96%	182.5 days	7.5	37.5
Cause for Concern	95%	180.5 days	9.5	47.5
	94%	179 days	11	55
	93%	177 days	13	65
	92%	175 days	15	75
	91%	173 days	17	85
Unsatisfactory	90%	171 days	19	95
	89%	169 days	21	105
	88%	167 days	23	115
	87%	165 days	25	125
Serious Cause for Concern	86%	163 days	27	135
Critical	85%	161.5 days	28.5	142.5
	84%	159.5 days	30.5	152.5
	83%	158 days	32	160
	82%	156 days	34	170
	81%	154 days	36	180
	80%	152 days	38	190

The table below identifies the impact and learning time persistent absence has on 13 years of schooling.

If your child misses...	That equals...	Which is...	And over 13 year of school that's...
1 day per fortnight	20 days per year	4 week per year	Nearly 1 ½ years
1 day per week	40 days per year	8 weeks per year	Over 2 ½ years
2 days per week	80 days per year	16 weeks per year	Over 5 years
3 days per week	120 days per year	24 week per year	Nearly 8 years

Children missing education (CME) are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life. Where there is concern for a child's welfare, this will be referred to Local Authority children's social care. If there is reason to suspect a crime has been committed, the police will also be involved. Where there is a concern that a child's safety or well-being is at risk, school will take action without delay.

Parents have a duty to ensure that their children of compulsory school age are receiving suitable full-time education. Some parents may elect to educate their children at home and may withdraw them from school at any time to do so, written confirmation of this must be provided to the Headteacher. Where a pupil has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days, the pupil can be removed from the admission register when the school and the Local Authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to establish the whereabouts of the child. This only applies if the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause.

Aims and Objectives

This attendance policy ensures that all staff and governors in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this Policy we aim to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a minimum of 96% attendance for all children, apart from those with chronic health issues.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Ensure that our policy applies to Nursery and Reception aged children in order to promote good habits at an early age.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents and staff so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance.

We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and pupils.
- Ensuring that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development.
- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, pupils, staff and governors on school attendance matters.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.

Definitions

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 telephones the school or uses ParentMail to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school.
- Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.
- Persistent absence will be unauthorised.

Procedures

Our school will undertake to follow the following procedures to support good attendance:

- To maintain appropriate registration processes.
- To maintain appropriate attendance data.
- To communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, governors, parents and pupils.
- To have consistent and systematic daily records which give detail of any absence and lateness.
- To follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school.
- To inform parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
- To strongly discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time.
- To work with parents to improve individual pupils attendance and punctuality
- To refer to external agencies any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve.
- To report attendance statistics to Leeds LA and the DfE where requested.
- All staff should be aware that they must raise any attendance or punctuality concerns to the staff with responsibility for monitoring attendance.

Responsibilities

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

Class teacher

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers
- Informing the head teacher where there are concerns and acting upon them
- Providing background information to support referrals
- Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness
- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation which should be noted inside the register
- Discussing attendance issues at consultation evenings where necessary

Head teacher

The Head teacher is responsible for:

- Overall monitoring of school attendance
- Trends in authorised and unauthorised absence
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised
- Making referrals to external support agencies
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.

Administration staff

Staff in the School Office are responsible for:

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information.
- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence
- Ensuring late arrivals are marked as present on SIMS.
- Contacting parents of absent children where no contact has been made.
- Recording details of children who arrive late or go home
- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers and reporting concerns to the Headteacher
- Sending out standard letters regarding attendance

Parents

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment.
- Contacting the school office on the first morning of absence.
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we do require evidence from the doctor or dentist. (Appointment card/letter)

- Making requests for authorised absence in term time, only if absolutely necessary as these are not automatically authorised.
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

Registration

All the school doors open at 8.45am and close at 8.55am.

Each class teacher has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance. Any pupil who is absent must be recorded at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session. Registers close at 9.15am.

All attendance records are documented using SIMs software, which is supported by the Local Authority. Attendance registers are legal documents and these must be kept secure and preserved for a period of three years after the date they were last used.

Lateness

Once the doors are closed at 8.55am, the only way to get into school is via the school office. Children arriving between 8.55am and 9.15am will be registered as late, this is documented on the electronic register for each pupil (Attendance code L). Any child who arrives for school after the 'late' period ends at 9.15am will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning. (Attendance code U).

Children who have attended a dentist, hospital or doctor's appointment and therefore come to school later than 9.15am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M). An appointment card must be shown to validate this. We encourage all dentist and doctor appointments to be taken outside of the school day where possible.

Children who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning, often the most important aspect, as the beginning of the day is where the teacher explains the learning and what each child is expected to achieve.

Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness parents/carers will receive a letter advising them of the concerns and the school will provide opportunities for parents/carers to seek support and advice to address these issues.

The following table identifies the impact on being persistently late has on lost learning time.

If missing just...	That equals...	Which is...	And over 13 year of school that's...
10 minutes per day	50 minutes per week	Nearly 1 ½ weeks per year	Nearly ½ a year
20 minutes per day	1 hour 40 minutes per week	Over 2 ½ weeks per year	Nearly 1 year
30 minutes per day	Half a day per week	4 weeks per year	Nearly 1 ½ years
1 hour per day	1 day per week	8 week per year	Over 2 ½ years

Absences

Parents/carers should contact the school on the first day of their child's absence. When parents/carers notify us of their child's absence it is important that they provide us with details of the reason for their absence.

All absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised absences on the computer. It is important that we receive accurate information from parents with reasons for the child's absence. This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. The Head teacher has the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.

Where we have not received reasons for a child's absence then we send a letter requesting these details to parents/carers to complete. If this letter is not completed and returned by the specified date then the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (Attendance Code O).

First Day Contact

Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, then we initiate a first day contact process. Office staff check all of the registers on a daily basis, to identify those pupils who are absent. There are occasions when we are unaware why the child is absent and we will contact the parent to check the reasons for the child's absence. In Appendix One you will see an overview of the same day procedures followed when there has been no reason for absence.

Illness

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school long term, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services to see if arrangements can be made for the child to be given some home tuition outside school.

It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their primary school career. It is the responsibility of the Head teacher and the governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. In primary school we rely upon parents to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually and therefore where there are concerns regarding attendance parents are always informed of our concerns. Initially concerns about attendance are raised with parents via letters which are sent home. There will be opportunities for the parent/carer to discuss reasons for absence and support to be given by the school with the aim to improve attendance.

The Local Authority will issue penalty notices to parents where there has been a referral from the school as part of the school's processes to address poor attendance patterns.

If all support from school and any other support agency fails to improve a child's attendance without good reason, the case may be referred to the Local Authority who may take legal proceedings against the parents/carers.

Parental Request for Absence from School for Holiday

With effect from September 2013 the government abolished the right of head teachers to authorise absence specifically for holidays of up to 10 days per year if special circumstances exist. Instead, head teachers will only be allowed to grant leave of absence for any reason if they are satisfied exceptional circumstances exist. Only the Head Teacher has the discretion to authorise in exceptional circumstances.

Monitoring Attendance

Our office staff, has the responsibility for ensuring that all of the attendance data is accurately recorded on the SIMs attendance software. Regular meetings are held with the Head teacher to discuss all attendance concerns and appropriate actions are taken following these meetings such as letters sent to parents or meetings arranged to discuss attendance concerns with parents. In Appendix Two you will see an overview of the procedures used to monitor attendance.

Attendance Incentives

Attendance is promoted through our Monopoly style board game, Classopoly. Classopoly is an initiative that encourages good attendance. Each class has their own monopoly piece which moves around the board. During Friday Celebration Assembly classes who have reached the target of 96% or more earn a roll of the dice. A child who has had 100% attendance for the week is chosen to roll the dice and win a prize for their class. There are many rewards up for grabs, such as, extra playtime, class party games, class singalong and decorating a biscuit to name a few.

Throughout the year we have 100% months. This is an initiative that encourages children and families to attend every day for a whole month. Children are then entered into a raffle at the end of a month for a chance to win a prize.

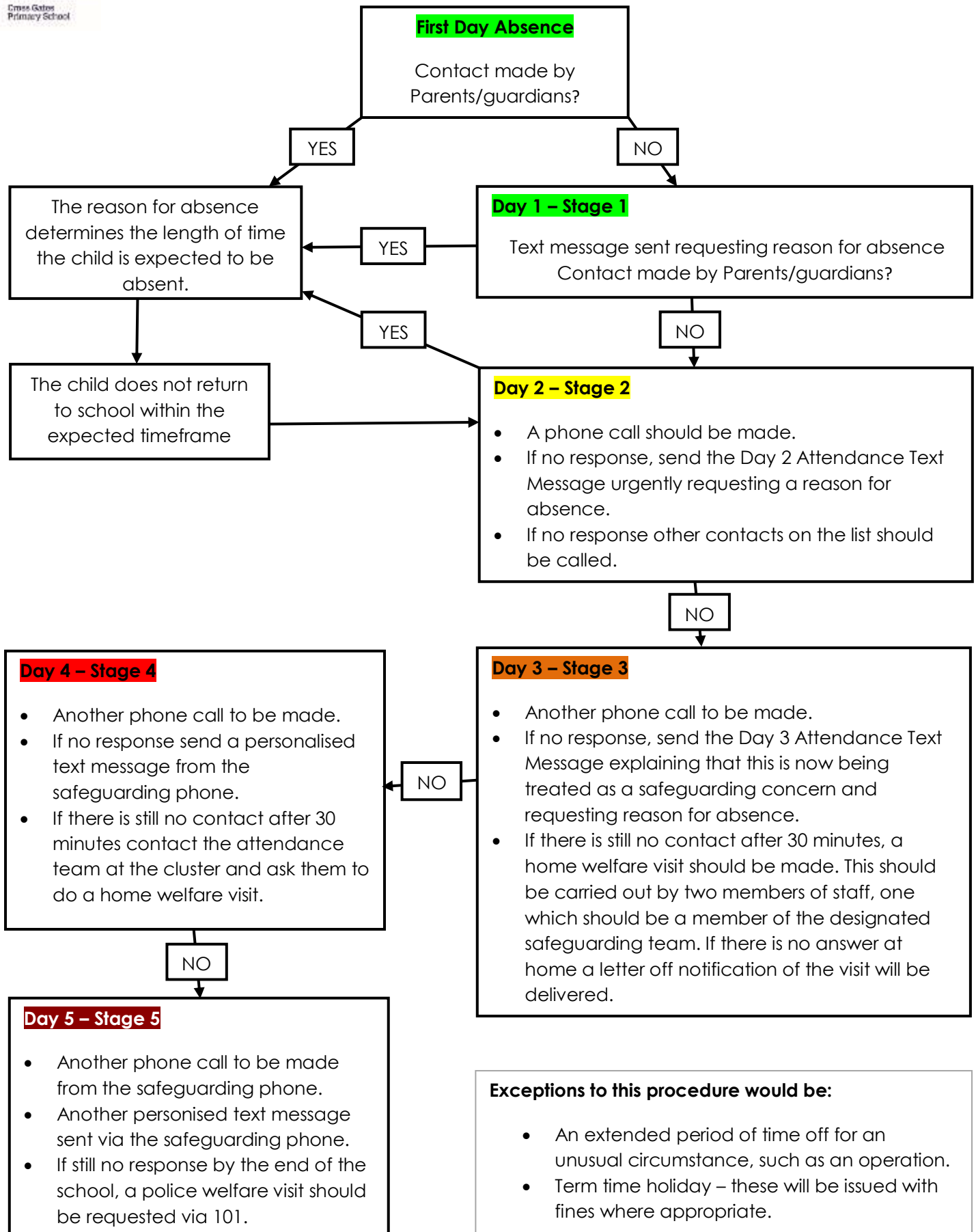
Alongside this there are rewards and certificates on offer for children who have 100% attendance at the end of every term and academic year.

Our Whole School Attendance Target is 96%

"Aspire, Learn, Succeed"

Appendix One

Daily Absence Procedure



***Persistently absent children will skip stage 1 start on stage 2**

****** On occasions where a child has returned to school and we have not received a reason for their absence, a letter is sent requesting these details to parents/carers to complete.

Appendix Two

Monitoring Procedure

