



Attendance Policy

October 2020

Principal: Mrs L Jones

Chair of Governors: Mrs A Gadsden

Review Date: October 2023

Cranberry Academy

Attendance Policy

At Cranberry Academy, we seek to encourage good attendance by providing a warm welcoming and stimulating environment, where we hope children will feel safe and happy. This policy aims to outline procedures regarding a child's absence from school. Any problems concerned with absences will be handled in an appropriate and professional manner, according to the guidance set out by the Local Education Authority.

Education is important. Missing school means missing out. Children should be at school, on time and ready to learn, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent that can result in legal action by the Local Authority. Please see further guidance on the Cheshire East website:

https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/schools/school-attendance/school_attendance.aspx

Why attendance at school and punctuality is important:

- 98% attendance means that your child has missed 4 days in the school year
- 95% attendance means that your child has missed 10 days in the school year
- 90% attendance means that your child has missed 19 days in the school year
- 80% attendance means that your child has missed 38 days in the school year
- 5 minutes late each day means three whole days lost each year
- 17 days missed from school each year equates to a whole GCSE grade
- Attendance affects learning, future earning, wellbeing and a sense of belonging

What the law says about school attendance:

The law requires all children between the ages of 5 and 16 to be in full time education. Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 it is the duty of the parent/carer of a child of compulsory school age to ensure that they attend school regularly.

- Education Supervision Order Children's Act 1989: The local authority can apply to the courts where attendance remains poor. A named education supervisor would be appointed to work with the family for up to 12 months to ensure that the young person receives full time education.
- School Attendance Order Education Act 1996: If this is issued; parents would be directed to register their child at a school named by the local authority.
- Penalty Notice: The Local Authority can issue a warning letter to the parents of a pupil who has had 10 or more unauthorised absences from school. Parents are given a period of 15 school days of monitoring their child's attendance at school. If at the end of this period there has not been an improvement or an improvement has been made but is not sustained, a Penalty Notice will be issued. Each parent/carer would have to pay £60.00 per child. If this is not paid within 21 days, the payment increases to £120.00 per child per parent. Payments will not be accepted after 28 days. If parents do not pay the Local Authority will prosecute in the Magistrates' Court. If convicted the parent will have a criminal record and may receive a fine of up to £1000.

- The Department for Education have a range of information available regarding attendance.

Recording School Attendance/Absence

Registers are kept in alphabetical order in class groups, (not boy/girl). Registers are called at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions. Registers open at 8.45am and any pupil arriving after 8.55am should be coded as L. Registers close at 9.10am. Pupils arriving after 9.10am should be coded as U. If a pupil is late or absent, parents/carers will be expected to contact the school either verbally or in writing. The school will contact the parents/carers on the first day of a child's absence. If there is no response, a door knock will be carried out where possible by a member of staff. This is recorded on a record sheet so that patterns can be monitored. The school will seek to establish reasons for persistent late-coming or regular absences. These will be monitored and referred to the Educational Welfare Service.

At Cranberry Academy, all pupils who have attendance below 90%, will receive a letter and are discussed with the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) as they are seen as 'Persistent Absentees'. Both the school and the 'Educational Welfare Service' will intervene with these pupils and contact with parents will be made.

Medical Appointments

If a pupil is to see a doctor or dentist, etc., school requires notification before the absence. Such appointments should be arranged outside school hours unless special circumstances. The school should be provided with evidence of the appointment.

Authorised/Unauthorised Absences

We can only authorise absences for medical reasons, or exceptional family circumstances, such as immediate family funeral attendances. We strongly discourage families from taking holidays during term time. Parents wishing to do so, need to explain the reasons to the Principal, by submitting an absence request form at least 4 weeks prior to the absence. It is at the Principal's discretion whether he/she authorises absences during term time, but these will only be authorised for exceptional circumstances. If a holiday is not authorised, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence, which could result in a fixed penalty fine from the local authority.

If school does not receive correspondence from parents regarding these reasons, the absence will be marked in registers as unauthorised. Unauthorised absences will be referred to the Educational Welfare Service. A parent's letter referring to illness is not necessarily a guarantee for authorisation of absence.

Enquiries may be made to establish authenticity of a medical absence and these could be referred to the EWO.

If a child has been absent for several days and is, therefore, behind in schoolwork, it is up to the discretion of the teacher as to whether and how the child should catch up.

Good attendance (100% attendance) will be an achievement in its own right and recognised as such by the school.

Leave of absence in exceptional circumstance:

The Principal may only grant leave of absence for exceptional circumstances.

Examples of any exceptional circumstances where leave may be granted during term time are as follows:

- If a parent is service personnel and is returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a close relative, only if the Principal is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional.
- Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement. Documentary evidence of this event will be required.
- Religious observance – The Education Act 1996 S444(3) (c), states "on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his/her parent belongs".
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a close relative if the Principal is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional; Leave should only be authorised for this purpose when the Principal is satisfied that there is a persuasive reason for holding the wedding during term time and there WILL be an onus on parents to show clear evidence that this absence is absolutely an exceptional circumstance. In difficult family situations the Principal may use his/her discretion in granting leave and each case should be addressed on its individual merits, taking into account the overall welfare of the child.

Penalties for unauthorised absences:

Penalties for unauthorised absence		
Timeline	One child	Two children
Paid within 21 days	£60 per parent	£60 per child = £120 per parent
After 21 days and before 28 days	£120 per parent	£120 per child = £240 per parent
After 28 days	The parents will receive a summons to appear before the Magistrates' Court on the grounds the parents have failed to secure their child's regular attendance	The parents will receive a summons to appear before the Magistrates' Court on the grounds the parents have failed to secure their children's regular attendance

The people responsible for attendance in this school are:

Attendance Officers: Miss N Cole and Mrs A Guy admin@cranberryacademy.co.uk

Principal: Mrs L Jones admin@cranberryacademy.co.uk

The School has a legal duty to promote good attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend regularly. School staff are committed to working closely with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible. Please work with us.