

# The Crabtree Academy Trust

Crabtree Lane, Harpenden, Herts. AL5 5PU



Crabtree Infants' School  
Headteacher: Mrs Sally Patrick

Crabtree Junior School  
Headteacher Mr Ian Patrick

## Attendance Policy

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<b>Name/Title of responsible committee/individual:</b>	Headteachers, Chairs of Governing Bodies
<b>Date issued:</b>	April 2016
<b>Review frequency:</b>	Every three years
<b>Target audience:</b>	All stakeholders
<b>Date Ratified by Governors:</b>	

Review Date	Further Comments as Necessary
April 2019	

The Board of Directors shall conduct the Trust with a view to promoting high standards of learning, attainment and care.

Crabtree Academy Trust is committed to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations between different groups. These factors were considered in the formation and review of this policy and will be adhered to in its implementation and application across the whole school community.

The Crabtree Schools will promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and will actively challenge any member of the school community expressing opinions contrary to fundamental British Values, including 'extremist' views.

The above policy follows Hertfordshire model policy guidance.

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## 1. Purpose

Promoting regular school attendance is a key component in the Government's strategy to raise educational standards. The DfE's view is that unnecessary absence from school is unacceptable and must be prevented and tackled by schools.

The law requires that children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full-time education. Parents of children registered at The Crabtree Schools have a legal duty to make sure that their child attends regularly.

The schools are required to call attendance registers at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session and to record whether pupils are present, on an approved educational activity, absent, or unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

## 2. Guidance and links with other policies

This policy takes account of:

- HCC guidance for schools on creating an attendance policy;
- DfE advice on *School attendance* (October 2014),
- Statutory guidance for local authorities, school leaders, school staff, governing bodies and the police – *School attendance parental responsibility measures* (January 2015)

### 2.1 Links with other policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Trust's policies on:

- Child Protection
- Security
- Education of Children with Medical Needs
- Equality
- Home-School Agreement

## 3. Policy

The quality teaching and learning delivered at the Crabtree Schools does not benefit pupils if they are not present. The Trust believes that if children attend school regularly and punctually they will be best able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them and establish a commitment to work which will be carried forward into adulthood.

The Crabtree Academy Trust gives a high priority to good punctuality and attendance and there is an expectation that the whole community – directors, governors, staff, parents and pupils – will share this commitment to high standards of attendance and punctuality. The importance of school attendance will be emphasised to parents in the 'new joiner' information packs and reiterated during the school year.

### 3.1 Leave of absence

The Headteachers are only permitted to authorise leave of absence in *exceptional* circumstances and if a leave request is granted, it will be for the Headteacher to determine the length of time that the child can be away from school.

The taking of family holidays during term time is strongly discouraged and the Trust's policy is therefore that such absences will not generally be authorised unless there are exceptional and extenuating circumstances.

Where children are absent from school, School Office staff will follow up to:

- ascertain the reason;
- ensure the appropriate safeguarding action is taken; and
- identify whether the absence is approved or not.

### **3.2 Authorisation of absence**

Where a child is absent from school, a written communication (letter or Email) should be sent to the school *before* the event if possible using the 'Notification of Absence' form. It should be noted that a letter or message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence: only if the Headteacher is satisfied with the validity of the explanation offered by the letter/message will the absence be authorised.

Absence will be authorised if:

- the pupil is absent with permission previously granted by the school;
- the pupil is ill or is attending an unavoidable medical/dental appointment<sup>1</sup>;
- the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong;
- the pupil's home is not within walking distance of the school, and has no suitable travel arrangements have been identified by the Local Authority;
- there is a close family bereavement;
- the pupil is taking part in public performances or music examinations;
- the pupil is involved in an *exceptional* special occasion. (In authorising such absences, the individual circumstances of the particular case and the pupil's overall pattern of attendance will be considered.)
- the pupil is attending an approved off-site educational activity.

Any absence that does not comply with these criteria will not be authorised and will be marked as such on the class register.

## **4. Responsibilities of school, parents and pupils**

### **4.1 School**

School staff will set a good example in matters of attendance and punctuality.

The school will:

- ensure that records of attendance are maintained according to Government legislation;
- encourage good attendance and investigate all unexplained and unjustified absence;
- follow up all instances where attendance and punctuality give cause for concern;

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<sup>1</sup> Routine medical and dental appointments will be normally marked as unauthorised (with the exception of orthodontic appointments where it is accepted that parents are not usually able to choose their appointment times).

- support parents in ensuring the regular and punctual attendance of pupils and promptly respond to any issue which may lead to non-attendance;
- be sensitive to the needs of individual parents in the way in which attendance issues are addressed;
- inform parents of their children's attendance/punctuality record via the end of year school report;
- communicate this attendance policy and procedures to all parents, pupils and staff.

## 4.2 Parents

Parents are legally responsible for ensuring their child's regular and punctual attendance and should:

- ensure their children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and ready to learn;
- instil in their children an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly;
- take an active interest in their children's school career, praising and encouraging good work and behaviour and attending parents' evenings and other relevant meetings;
- work in partnership with the school to resolve issues which may lead to non-attendance;
- ensure they are aware of the Trust's attendance procedures (*see Appendix 1*) and notify the school if their children are absent;
- avoid arranging routine medical/dental appointments during school hours;
- avoid booking holidays during term time.

## 4.3 Pupils

Pupils are expected to attend punctually and be ready to learn; they must remember to hand any note giving reasons for absence to their class teacher.

## 5. Arrangements for monitoring and review

The Headteachers have overall responsibility for monitoring attendance at their school.

The marking of class registers must comply with the DfE Advice on School Attendance; it is the teachers' responsibility to ensure they are familiar with the requirements and that they adhere to them. The School Office will monitor and advise if incorrect markings are used.

If there has been any absence for which a written explanation has not been received, a form will be sent to the child's parents. If no response is received a reminder will be sent by email. In some circumstances, the absence of a written explanation may mean the absence is recorded as unauthorised.

Where children are persistently absent or late, the School Office staff will inform the Headteacher. On a monthly basis, a report showing children with attendance below 90% in the year to date, and a second report showing children who have been late on two or more occasions in the previous calendar month, will be prepared for the Headteacher, who will decide whether or not it is necessary to contact parents.

Absence figures for the year to date, differentiating between authorised and unauthorised absences, will be reported to governors in the termly Headteacher's Report.

Annual attendance statistics are provided in the School Prospectus which is published on the school's website.

#### **5.1 Policy review**

This policy will be reviewed every three years or earlier at the request of the Directors; the Policies Administrator shall inform the Board of any changes to statutory or non-statutory guidance relating to Attendance.

## Appendix 1: Absence procedures

### 1. The School Day

	Doors to the classrooms open at:	The school day formally begins at:	The class registers are closed at:
Reception	8.55am	9.00am	9.05 am
Years 1 and 2	8.50am	9.00am	9.00 am
Junior School	8.50am	8.55am	9.05 am

- 1.1 Pupils must not be on the school premises before 8.45am (unless attending Jousters Breakfast Club).

### 2. Late arrival

- 2.1 Any child arriving after the registers close must enter the school via the main entrance and be signed in by an accompanying adult.
- 2.2 Unless there is an acceptable/exceptional reason for the lateness, late arrivals count as unauthorised absence and School Office staff will insert the appropriate mark in the register. The Headteacher will be consulted if there is any doubt as to which mark should be applied.

### 3. Leaving the premises during the school day

Appointments should be made outside of school hours where possible. If children are required to leave the premises during the school day, the school should be notified in advance. Children must be collected by a known adult and signed out at the register in reception. On return to school, they must be signed back in using the same register.

### 4. Absence procedure

#### 4.1 First day of absence due to illness

Parents are asked to telephone/email on the first day of absence to inform the school why their child is not in school – preferably before the start of the school day. This information is passed to the class teacher.

In the case of Year 5 and 6 pupils (who may travel to school on their own), the school office will make every attempt to speak to the child's parents as soon as possible to ensure the child is safe and absent for a reason.

For other pupils, should no explanation for a child's absence be received by 9.30am, School Office staff will attempt to contact the parents to ascertain the reason for the absence.

#### 4.2 Procedure for continuation of absence due to illness

The Trust expects parents to maintain reasonable communication with the school during the absence of the child.

Should the absence become prolonged, the Trust would expect that a doctor or hospital would become involved. For any absence of over two weeks, unless the child has been hospitalised, the school will require a letter from the child's GP indicating the reason for the absence.

#### 4.3 Return to school

On return to school the parent/carer should send a letter indicating the reason for the child's absence (even where this has previously notified) and any information the school needs to support the pupil on their return.

The attendance registers are monitored weekly by School Office staff and a form sent to parents via pupil post if there has been any absence of three days or more for which an explanation has not been sent. If there is no response to this request, the School Office will give a copy of the form to the class teacher who will present it to the parents and ask them to fill it out in her presence. If this also proves unsuccessful, the Headteacher will be informed and will speak to the parent.

### 3.5 Medical appointments

For absence from school due to medical appointments, parents should send an email to the School Office or write a note addressed to the class teacher and it is sufficient to hand it in on the morning of the absence (although notice should be given where possible). However, it should be noted that it is expected that routine dental appointments and non-urgent medical appointments will normally be made outside school hours and unless the appointment is unavoidable, the absence will be marked as unauthorised in the class register.

### 3.6 Leave of absence

For all absences other than for illness or medical reasons, the parent should write to the Headteacher at least one week in advance (if possible), using either the Notification of Absence Form (*Appendix 2*) or sending in a letter explaining the circumstances. Leave of absence will only be granted for the categories of absence set out in Para 3.2 of the Trust's Attendance Policy or where the Headteacher considers there are exceptional circumstances. Absence due to holiday will be marked as **unauthorised** on the pupil's record.



**Appendix 2:**

**CRABTREE ACADEMY TRUST**

**NOTIFICATION OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL**

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, and Amendments 2013, outline the conditions under which leave of absence may be granted. Regulation 7 states that “leave of absence should only be granted due to the special circumstances relating to that application.”

Pupils attend school for a maximum of 190 days in each academic year. The Headteacher, Directors and Governors firmly believe that full attendance is vital for your child’s educational progress and the Local Authority expects all parents/carers to ensure their children attend school whenever possible.

Absence due to a holiday taken during term-time will hinder your child’s educational achievement and will be marked as unauthorised in the school register. Requests for absence due to other reasons will be considered by the Headteacher and only authorised **in exceptional circumstances**.

If you need to notify us of a leave of absence from school for your child(ren) please complete the information below and send to the school office a minimum of two weeks before the absence.

NB This form should be used only for notification of absence due to family holiday or for other exceptional reasons. Notification of absence due to medical reasons should be made by email/letter to the class teacher or school office.

<b>To be completed by the parent</b>			
Name of child:		Class:	
Name of child:		Class:	
Name of child:		Class:	
Dates of absence:	From:	To:	
Total number of days absent from school:			
Reason for the absence:			
Signature of parent/guardian:			Date:

<b>To be completed by the school</b>			
Attendance in current academic year	%	Unauthorised absence in current year	%
Previous applications for leave of absence:			
Dates:		No. of days’ absence:	
Dates:		No. of days’ absence:	
Dates:		No. of days’ absence:	

Authorised		Unauthorised		
Signature of Headteacher:			Date:	

