Attendance Policy

Whole School Policy, including Early Years Foundation Stage

Reviewed (JFe)	24 September 2026
Peer Review Completed	02 October 2026
Ratified by SLT	October 2026
Next Review Date	September 2027

The legal responsibility for ensuring that the Croft Preparatory School adheres to all relevant statutory regulations, as issued by the DfE, lies with the Proprietors. At their discretion, the Proprietors may delegate the monitoring of the efficacy with which the school discharges its statutory duties to the Facilities Manager and Governing Committee.

Notwithstanding the above delegation, the Proprietors retain ultimate responsibility for how the statutory functions are executed.

Introduction

At The Croft, we believe that children cannot learn if they are absent from school. Therefore, we aim to ensure that all our pupils take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them and to raise standards by promoting regular attendance and punctuality for all pupils in our care. We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our pupils and believe high attainment depends on excellent attendance.

We expect all staff to support and promote excellent school attendance by acting as role models and to work hard to provide a learning environment in which all pupils are eager to learn, feel valued and enjoy coming to school. We expect parents to share in this ethos.

Sometimes a pupil's absence or lateness may not be their fault and in these circumstances, it is our policy to be supportive of the child and not to make them feel guilty or inadequate. Also, at times we may have to give allowances for religious beliefs and individual family circumstances – this will be done on a 'case by case basis'. We believe it is essential to regularly remind parents of the importance of excellent attendance and its links to pupil attainment.

Contact Details for The Senior Attendance Champion

Mr James Ferris – Deputy Head – Designated Safeguarding Leader

Contact details: office@croftschool.co.uk

Aims & Objectives

- To ensure that all pupils attend school regularly and aspire to achieve an attendance of 95% and above
- Provide support for pupils whose attendance falls below 90% (where appropriate)
- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with The Croft Preparatory School including staff, pupils, parents, The Croft Governing Committee and The Board
- To develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities
- To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils
- To have a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance data
- To recognise the needs of individual pupils when planning support following significant periods of absence
- To implement statutory DfE guidance effectively - for example: *'Working Together to Improve School Attendance'* document, August 2024
- To outline the registration procedures and following up of absence across the school

Attendance Figures

Good Attendance	95% and above
Persistence Absence	Below 90%
Severe Absence	50% or less

Statutory Guidance (DfE)

Under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act, a pupil is required to attend regularly and punctually at the school where she/he is a registered pupil. In law, parents have the responsibility for ensuring that pupils attend school regularly. In law, attendance registers are required to be called twice each day. It must show whether a pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity or absent. Most recent guidance on the DfE Regulations and other associated factors can be found in the link below:

This policy has regard to the following guidance and advice:

- Working together to improve school attendance (DfE, applies from 19 August 2024)
- Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance (DfE, applies from 19 August 2024)
- Toolkit for schools: communicating with families to support attendance (DfE, September 2023)
- Guidance for parents on school attendance (Office of the Children's Commissioner, September 2023)
- 'Is my child too ill for school?' guidance (NHS, April 2024)

- Keeping children safe in education (DfE, September 2026)
- School behaviour and attendance: parental responsibility measures (DfE, May 2020)
- Children missing education (DfE, September 2016)
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school (DfE, August 2017)
- Behaviour in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff (DfE, February 2024)
- Mental health and behaviour in schools (DfE, November 2018)
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools (DfE, February 2023)
- Support for pupils where a mental health issue is affecting attendance (DfE, February 2023)
- SEND Code of practice: 0 to 25 years (DfE and Department of Health, May 2015)

Roles and Responsibilities

The Pupil

- Share any concerns that they may have in relation to their attendance and wellbeing with a member of staff in line with safeguarding procedures

The Parents/Carers

- Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies
- Notify the school as soon as possible, and before 8.50am, when their child is unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness)

  - Via 'Famly' (Early Years only)
  - Via the School App (Reach More Parents) or via Email or Phone
- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances from the Headmaster, providing as much notice as possible, ideally no less than 4 weeks
- Book any medical appointments outside of the school day where possible.
- Sign their child in/out at the school office if they are late arriving to school or need to be collected early

The Croft Preparatory School

- Have a clear school Attendance Policy on the school website which all staff, pupils and parents understand
- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance
- Accurately complete robust admission and attendance procedures
- Have a dedicated 'Senior Attendance Champion', Deputy Head, Pupil Welfare and Safeguarding, with overall responsibility for championing, improving and monitoring attendance

The Governors

- Ensure there is a Governor who monitors attendance – this is completed in line with the monitoring of Safeguarding

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos

The Office Team

- Notify the local authority of changes to admission status for all pupils in years from Reception to Year 6

- Monitor absence on a day-to-day basis and record reasons for absence on the school system (Engage). This includes monitoring emails from parents, taking calls from parents and checking for voice messages from parents.

- Check the whereabouts of a pupil who is marked absent from school with no reason for absence received from parents. (see further information in 'When a Child's Whereabouts is Unknown' section)

Attendance Procedures

Absences

Approved Absences

- Illness - Parents are requested to inform the school on the first day, and each subsequent day if applicable, if their child is ill

- Routine Medical and Dental Appointments - however these should be arranged during school holidays or out of school hours, where possible

- Religious Observance Absence - these can be authorised on a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which a student's parents belong

- Special Occasions - exceptional occasions may be sanctioned through authorised absence, requested in writing from the Headmaster. Such events might include a sibling's graduation or family wedding and must be requested at least four weeks in advance

- Attendance at Open Days or interviews/assessments for schools

Unauthorised Absences

- If a pupil has a repeated number of unauthorised absences (a total of 10 days), the parents/guardians will be contacted by The Senior Attendance Champion or a member of the Safeguarding Team. If the situation does not improve and the child continues to have rising levels of absence, then the matter is referred to the Headmaster. As well as this, the Local Authority will be notified.

Children at Risk of Missing Education (KCSIE) (2025)

Children at Risk of Missing Education in KCSIE (2025) highlights that children being absent from school repeatedly and/or for prolonged periods can be a warning sign for a range of safeguarding concerns, including sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or child criminal exploitation. Monitoring and early intervention is essential to help prevent the risks of an absent child becoming 'Missing from Education' in the future. Parents are asked to inform the school of any changes whenever they occur. The local authority has a duty to put in place arrangements for identifying (as far as it is possible) those children of compulsory school age in their area who are not school registered or receiving education otherwise than at a school.

The school will inform the relevant local authority when pupils:

- Have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system, e.g. home education
- Have ceased to attend school
- Have a medical condition certified that the pupil is unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school
- Have been permanently excluded. The Local Authority is notified when a pupil's name is added to/ removed from the admission register at non-standard transitions, i.e. where a compulsory school-aged child leaves a school before completing the school's final year or joins a school after the beginning of the school's first year
- In line with the statutory regulations outlined in the DfE document; *'Working Together to Improve School Attendance'*, The Croft is required to notify the Local Authority when absence reaches the following levels:
    - Ten school days where their absence has been recorded with one or more of the codes statistically classified as unauthorised (Codes: G, N, O, and/or U)
    - Where the school has reasonable grounds to believe a pupil will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness (Code: I)

When a Child's Whereabouts is Unknown

If, having received the registers and other details from the Class or Form Teacher, the Office Team is unable to establish the whereabouts of a pupil, the Office Team will carry out checks to verify whether the pupil is in school.

If it is established that the pupil is not in school and there is no known reason as to why, the Office Team should telephone the parents/guardians listed on Engage to check whether the pupil is with them.

If they are not contactable the Office Team will then call the emergency contact number.

The Office Team will leave contact messages on all numbers called.

If contact has not been made by 11.00am then The Senior Attendance Champion will decide what actions are to be taken based upon relevant pupil background information and circumstances.

Lateness

- Pupils who arrive at school after registration, which ends at 8.55am, will have been marked as 'not present (N)' by their Form Teacher

- After 8:55am, the Office Team will mark any pupils arriving at school as late using the appropriate code (L)

- Parents who persistently drop their child at school late will be contacted to discuss the matter with The Senior Attendance Champion and their lateness will be recorded on CPOMS if necessary, with next steps in line with Safeguarding procedures

Holidays in Term Time

Parents are strongly discouraged from taking family holidays during term-time. Where prior approval is sought, the Headmaster may, in exceptional circumstances, authorise holiday absence. Parents are requested to apply in writing to the Headmaster for permission to remove children from school for holidays at least 4 weeks in advance of any potential trip. Parents will be informed by The Headmaster if the absence is authorised or not.

Penalty Notices

There are currently no mechanisms in place to issue penalty notices for parents of children in the independent sector.

Inclement Weather

Every effort will be made to keep the School open during inclement weather (including snow). Pupils are, therefore, encouraged to attend if travel to or from the School is not deemed by parents to be too dangerous. If weather conditions deteriorate during the school day, parents may choose to collect their child earlier than normal. Parents experiencing difficulties in reaching the school to collect their child are asked to call the school to advise us of their position.

Bereavement

At The Croft, we pride ourselves on providing all members of our school community with support following bereavements. This will be overseen by The Deputy Head, Pupil Welfare and Safeguarding.

School Monitoring of Attendance

Monitoring of attendance is undertaken by the Senior Attendance Champion, whose responsibility it is to meet regularly with the Office Team to discuss absence patterns and any next steps. If the Senior Attendance Champion deems the situation to raise a Safeguarding concern, appropriate steps will be taken (See Safeguarding Policy). Attendance is also monitored by both the Board and Governors who receive attendance information at their meetings.

Supporting Families and Promoting Attendance Strategies

The following procedures may be adopted to promote excellent attendance:

- Communicating the importance of excellent attendance and the procedures in this policy to pupils, parents, staff and Governors where appropriate

- Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly which requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively in partnership with, not against families

- When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them

- Phased attendance plans created with parent/pupil input which may identify key trusted school staff, enjoyable aspects of school, strategies to address reasons for not attending, safe spaces and small targeted steps

- Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention: this could result in prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education

Reporting of Attendance to Parents

The school report attendance figures twice a year to parents. This is part of the Michaelmas and Summer Term report process. Parents can access their child's attendance through The Engage Portal at any time.

Specialised and Reduced Timetables

If pupils have a reduced timetable, this information is shared with the relevant Local Authority and recorded in school by the School SENDCO.

Evidence of Pupils who have moved school (in year and at the end of Year 6)

The school keeps a record of pupils who have moved to another school either during the academic year or at the end of Year 6, in line with Safeguarding procedures and the LEA is notified of all changes. If we are not aware of the receiving school, the LEA will treat the pupil as missing education and initiate their own investigation to determine the education status of the child.

Attendance Codes

See Appendix 1

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or at any time that Statutory Guidance necessitates a change.

Appendix 1 – School Attendance Codes

Present at School

/	Present in School during registration / = am \ = pm	
L	Late arrival before the register has closed – 8.55am / 2.25pm (Earlier for Pre-Prep	*Present*
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual Registration)	
	Attending any other approved educational activity (Details to be included)	*Present*
D	Dual Registered (pupil attending other establishment)	*N/A*
J	Interview (Year 11 only)	*N/A*
P	Approved Sporting Activity	*Present*
V	Educational visit or trip	*Present*
W	Work experience	*N/A*

Authorised Absence from School

C	Leave of absence authorised by the School –	
	including where a licence has been provided to take part in performance	*Absent*
C2	At discretion of Headmaster or Attendance Champion –	
	pupil of compulsory school age on agreed part-time timetable	*Absent*
E	Suspended of permanently Excluded (no alternative provision made)	*Absent*
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc appointments)	*Absent*
M	Medical/ Dental appointments	*Absent*
R	Religious observance	*Absent*
S	Study leave	*N/A*
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	*N/A*

Unauthorised Absence from School

G	Holiday (not authorised by the School or days in excess of the period agreed)	*Absent*
N	No reason yet provided for absence	*Absent*
O	Absent from School without authorisation	*Absent*
U	Arrived in School after registration closed – after 8.55am	*Absent*

Administrative Codes

X	**Un-timetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils**
Y	**Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances**
Z	**Pupil not on admission register**
#	**Planned whole or partial School closure**