



**Cranborne Middle School**

**Attendance Policy 2023 – 2024**

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Review Date	Reviewed by (CMS Staff)	Reviewed & Approved by FGB (Date)	Next Review Due
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## 1. Aims

Regular school attendance is essential if students are to achieve their full potential. Cranborne Middle School believes that regular school attendance is the key to enabling students to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community. This is done through:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, bullying, behaviour and SEN.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#).

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

### 3.1 The governing body

The governing body is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance procedures
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

### 3.2 The Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

The senior leadership team is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school and offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Implementation of this policy
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Having an oversight of data analysis

### **3.3 The Pastoral Leadership Group (PLG)**

The phase leaders are responsible for:

- Monitoring their year groups attendance data on a weekly basis, focusing on those that fall into certain groups (PP, SEND, LAC, <90%)
- To meet weekly with the attendance officer to discuss action with regards to pupils classed as persistent absentees (<90%) and severe absentees (<50%)
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

### **3.4 The Admin Officer responsible for attendance**

The admin officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7) to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports and reporting concerns about attendance to phase leaders
- Ensuring letters are sent home regularly where there are attendance concerns and logged on sims
- Working with phase leaders to tackle persistent absence
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices (authorised by the headteacher) and informing the phase leaders.
- Raising the profile of good attendance by displaying weekly tutor group attendance figures and tracking / implementing rewards

The admin officer with responsibility for attendance is Mrs Sam Ainley and can be contacted via 01725 517348

### **3.6 Office staff**

Office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Assist the attendance officer in tracking and monitoring the punctuality of pupils

### **3.7 Parents/carers**

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day and on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8:00am on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Attend attendance meetings if invited to do so by letter, contacting the school if you are unable to attend

### 3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day **on time**
- Attend every timetabled session **on time**

## 4. Recording attendance

### 4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day (morning registration) and once during the second session (afternoon tutor time). It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:20 AM on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:25 AM and will be kept open until 8:40 AM. The register for the second session will be taken at 1:10 PM and will be kept open until 1:30 PM.

### 4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school absence line: (see also section 7)

Phone number: 01725 517348 (option 1)

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless:

- a) the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness
- b) the pupil has an attendance of below 90% and we are not aware of any extraordinary circumstances
- c) the pupil / parent has had an attendance meeting which then requires all absences within the monitoring period (3 weeks) to be supported by medical evidence in order to be authorised.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

### 4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

The school office should be informed of any medical / dental / hospital appointments at least 48 hours in advance of the appointment by phone or email.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

## 4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

## 4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach a parent/carer, we will attempt to contact the pupil's other emergency contacts.
- Consult with Phase Leaders to determine whether the school may need to contact the Police to carry out a welfare check.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

## 4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via termly Progress Checks which are issued to all pupils. Letters will also be sent home to any pupil whose attendance falls below 95% without the school being aware of any mitigating circumstances.

# 5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

## 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

**Exceptional circumstances may include:**

- When a family needs to spend time together because of an immediate family members bereavement, crisis or serious illness
- Funeral of immediate family member
- Religious observance

- Transport was not provided by the LA when it should have been
- Children of service personnel about to go on deployment (permission would be considered as long as the request is accompanied by a letter from the Commanding Officer)
- One off sporting events/performing arts competitions, if the child is participating and is at county standard or above and a letter has been provided from the performing arts/sports regional governing body as evidence
- One day of absence could be authorised for an immediate family members graduation ceremony/passing out parade

Absence will not be authorised for the reasons stated below:

- To care for other family members
- Birthdays
- To interpret for other family members
- No school uniform/shoes
- Bullying
- Friendship problems
- Head lice
- Learning difficulties
- Family holiday
- Weddings abroad – regardless of whether it is for immediate family members
- Family Anniversaries
- Death of a pet
- Travel problems
- School refusal

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least two weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school website. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

## 5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

## 6. Strategies for promoting attendance

The school will promote good attendance by using the following methods or strategies:

- Communicating to parents and carers via termly letters sent out via Parentmail
- Updating parents and carers on current school attendance figures in our weekly Friday Round Up
- Tutors will have weekly attendance data for their tutor group and will discuss with a variety of their tutor group members reasons for absence and lateness
- Half termly celebration assemblies for excellent attendance and most improved attendance
- Implementing the CMS attendance reward scheme and rewarding individual pupils each half term (Appendix 2 – CMS Attendance Reward Scheme)
- Updating the attendance display board weekly
- Whole school and phase assemblies that highlight the importance of good attendance

## 7. Attendance monitoring

### 7.1 Monitoring attendance

Cranborne Middle School will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data weekly during PLG meetings, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

### 7.2 Analysing attendance

Cranborne Middle School will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

### 7.3 Using data to improve attendance

Cranborne Middle School will:

- Provide weekly attendance reports to tutors and phase leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

### 7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Send the relevant letters out to parents as a graduated response to absence (Appendix 3 – Graduated CMS Response), ensuring close monitoring during the 2-3 weeks following the letter being sent.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Hold Inclusion Panel meetings with the East Dorset Inclusion Lead to address attendance concerns.

- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

## 8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the Assistant Head. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

## 9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

## Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

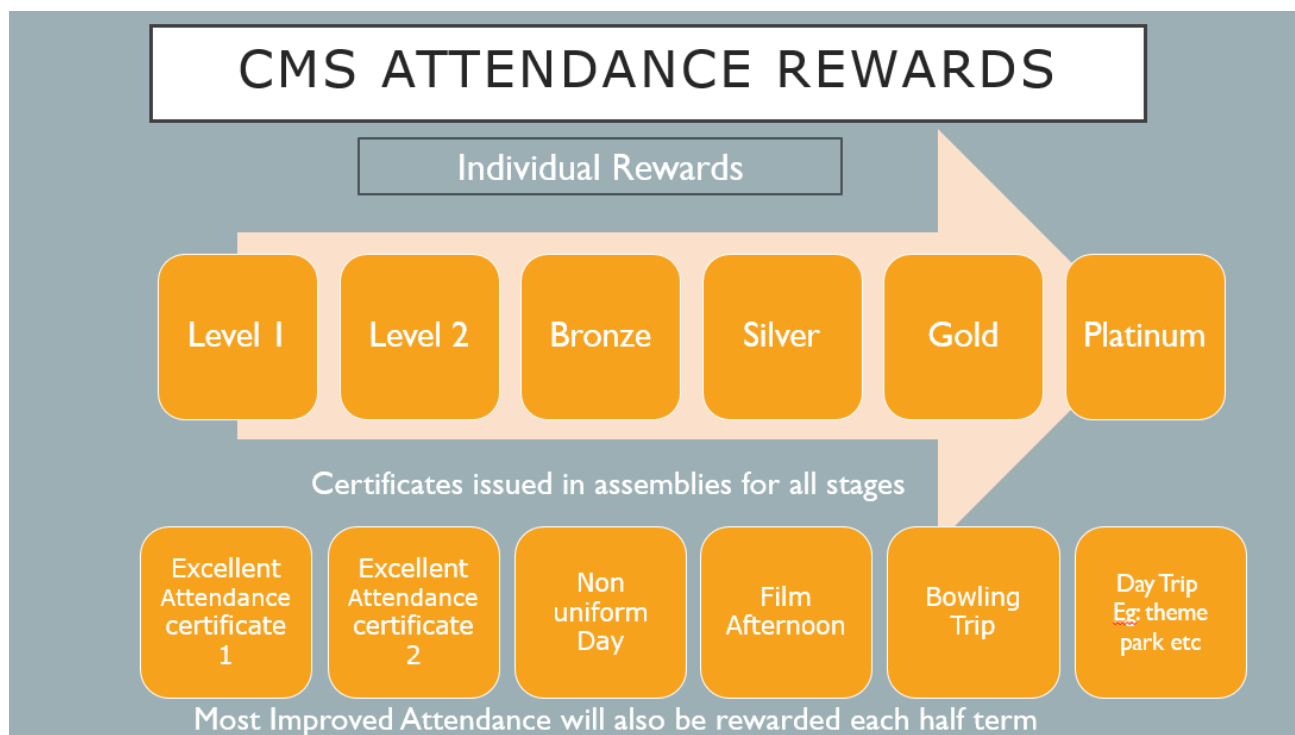
Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
<b>C</b>	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>E</b>	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
<b>H</b>	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
<b>I</b>	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)

<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

## Appendix 2: CMS Attendance Reward Scheme



## CMS ATTENDANCE REWARDS

- Each stage represents a half-term
- It is an accumulative system
- Eg) You can't move on to Stage 2 until you have achieved Stage 1
- It doesn't have to be consecutive half-terms
- Pupils will need to acquire 98-100% attendance per half-term to gain the award
- Most Improved attendance will also be rewarded at the discretion of the Phase Leaders

## CMS ATTENDANCE REWARDS

### Other Rewards

- **Football Fridays:** The two year groups with the highest attendance that week get the football playground on Friday break / lunchtime.
- **Travelling Trophy:** Trophy for the tutor group with the best half-termly attendance
- **Pizza Party:** A selection of pizza etc for the tutor group with the best attendance at the end of the year.

### Appendix 3: CMS Attendance – Graduated Response

