

# CRADLEY C OF E VA PRIMARY SCHOOL

## ATTENDANCE POLICY 2023/2024

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<u>Dates</u>					
Written	Summer 23				
Reviewed					
Amended					
Next Review					

Vision Statement: At Cradley CE Primary School we are on a journey, where we play, grow and learn together using our Christian Values to support each other to do the amazing things God created us to do.

“God created us to do amazing things.” Ephesians 2 v10

TRUST RESPECT EMPATHY KOINONIA

At Cradley CE Primary School children TREK along this path and being at school every day possible is key to being successful. This policy outlines the importance of good attendance and how we will support all our children to be the best that they can be.

“God deals out joy in the present, the now’ (Ecclesiastes 5:19, MSG). Learn to enjoy this wonderful gift of life in the present. If you do not, life will pass you by and you will never enjoy where you are right now.”

## **CRADLEY C of E VA PRIMARY SCHOOL**

### **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

#### **1 Statutory Duty of Schools**

The Education Act 1996 requires parents or guardians to ensure their children receive efficient, full-time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. Schools are responsible for recording pupil attendance twice a day: once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. An entry must be made in the attendance register for all pupils of compulsory school age who are on the school’s admission roll.

#### **2 Aims**

2.1 This is a successful primary school and your child plays their part in making it so. As a Church of England school we aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of our school community to reach out for excellence. For our pupils to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Every child should attend every day that they are required to attend. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance. Our Christian values of responsibility, perseverance, compassion and trust support our aims. We work with individuals and families on a 1:1 basis to overcome all barriers.

2.2 It is very important, therefore, that you make sure that your child attends regularly and, on every occasion, when he/she is required to attend. This policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

- 2.3 The Government expects schools and local authorities to:
- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence
  - Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
  - Act early to address patterns of absence
  - Parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly
  - All pupils to be punctual to their lessons

### **3 Objectives**

- To encourage full attendance and excellent punctuality
- To record and monitor attendance and absenteeism and apply appropriate strategies
- To minimise the occurrence of poor attendance and absenteeism
- To acknowledge and reward a successful record of attendance
- To ensure a consistent approach throughout the school

### **4 Why Regular Attendance is Important**

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

### **5 Promoting Regular Attendance**

5.1 Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

5.2 To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give you details on attendance in our regular newsletter;
- Report to you at least termly on your child's attendance and punctuality rate is;
- Celebrate good attendance by awarding certificates termly.

### **6 The Registration System**

6.1 The School will use a computerised system (Scholarpack) for keeping the school attendance records. The national codes are used to record attendance information. Registers by law must be kept for at least 3 years. Electronic back-ups will be made. These also need preserving for at least three years.

6.2 Registers are taken at the beginning of the morning session (8.45am) and the beginning of the afternoon session (1.00pm). Any child who is absent from

school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity [attendance out of school]. Only the Headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

6.3 Unauthorised absences are those that the school does not consider exceptional and for which no “leave” has been given. These include:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily.
- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Absences which have never been properly explained.
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark.
- Unauthorised leave during term time

## 7 Lateness

7.1 The school day starts at **8.45am** and we expect your child to be in class at that time. The gates are locked promptly at 8.45 am. Your child can arrive anytime from 8:30am and go straight into class. Registers are marked by **8.50am** and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time. The L Code will be used. After 9:00 the U code will be used. . If your child is not in by this time they and you need to report to the office to be registered and provide an explanation for the late arrival.

7.2 At **9.00am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence and will be recorded as a U code. This may mean that you could face the possibility of legal action if the problem persists. A parent or carer should accompany their child to the office to explain the reason for the late arrival and to sign them in.

7.3 If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Headteacher to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time. This may also result in support from a School Attendance Advisor.

## 8 Absence

If a pupil is unfit for school, parents are asked to contact the school on each day of absence as early as possible and **before 8.45 am**. If a pupil is absent at morning registration and the school has not received an explanation by the close of registration the office staff will contact the parent/carers as a matter of concern. It is however the parents' responsibility to contact school and provide a reason for absence with a full description of the reason and you may be asked to provide medical evidence to support the absences. In line with our safeguarding procedures if we are not contacted we may visit your family home to establish that our pupils are safe and well.

## 8.1 Absence Notes

Communication (tapestry or email) received from parents explaining absence should be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil, that may require further investigation, then the notes may need to be retained for a longer period.

## 8.2 Ten Day's Absence

Any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days will be notified to the Local Authority, by submitting a CME referral to Herefordshire Council and the School Attendance Advisor will be informed.

## 8.3 Planned and Unplanned Absences

There is overwhelming evidence that a high level of consistent school attendance is essential if children are to reach their full educational potential and achieve their targets. Cradley CE Primary aims for all children to be in attendance for all of the 190 school days in the year. It is expected nationally that primary school age children will have an attendance of at least 97.5%, after allowing for illness, (this equals to 185 school days) and as a school we aspire to achieve or better this. Children whose attendance drops below the 97% level fall into the 'worrying' category and are less likely to achieve their full educational potential. We have rigorous procedures for monitoring attendance and poor attendance is never ignored.

## 8.4 Absence Procedures

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence before 9:15am, either by telephone, email or in person;
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even if you have already telephoned us;
- Provide a full description of the reason for absence.
- Provide medical evidence to support the absences, if requested.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you **although notifying the school is your responsibility**;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with the Headteacher if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the Headteacher if attendance moves below 97.5%.
- In line with our safeguarding procedures if we are not contacted we may visit your family home to establish that our pupils are safe and well.

If we are unable to contact you and have no letter explaining your child's absence, it will be recorded as UNAUTHORISED.

Medical evidence and / or consent to contact your GP may be requested if a pupil has high levels of absence through illness.

## 8.5 For Out of School Dental and Medical Treatment

Please let the school office know in writing, in advance of the date and time of the appointment and when your child will be collected from and/or returned to school. We would encourage parents that, where possible, appointments are made out of school hours or during school holidays. Children should only be absent from school for the duration of the medical appointment. Only 1 session (half a day) of absence will be authorised for medical appointments unless there are exceptional circumstances.

## 8.6 Planned Absence

In line with Government and Herefordshire Local Authority policy, planned absences for leave during term time are actively discouraged by Cradley CE Primary School. Cradley Primary School follows DFE guidance and holidays will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

All applications for leave must be made at least 6 weeks in advance (in writing) of the planned leave. In making a decision the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave in term time and evidence that supports the application. Leave will not be granted retrospectively and remains a discretionary power of the Headteacher to authorise absence of leave.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions which may lead to legal proceedings by Herefordshire Council. Leave can be granted only if the proper procedures have been followed.

There is no right of appeal against the Headteacher's decision. However, if parents feel strongly that the decision has been reached unfairly they can make a complaint. Requests will not be unreasonably refused if the Headteacher is convinced that there are sufficiently strong or compelling reasons that are genuine and unavoidable.

**If a leave of absence is taken after the school has refused authorisation the absence will be recorded as unauthorised (code G). After 5 days (10 unauthorised sessions) Herefordshire Council may be notified and a fixed penalty notice may be issued or other legal sanctions imposed (see Appendix 1 penalty notice leaflet).**

## 8.7 Shorter Period of Notice

In circumstances where a shorter period of notice is unavoidable, the parents should contact the Headteacher at the earliest opportunity to discuss the nature of the event requiring absence. They will also need to write to the Headteacher indicating clearly reasons why the short notice for the Planned Absence was unavoidable. If the Headteacher is convinced that the reasons are compelling and justifiable, the request will be considered, as appropriate.

## 8.8 Compassionate Leave

We understand that there may, on rare occasions, be unavoidable cause for absence, e.g. illness of a close relative. Although it is important that children's education suffers as little as possible, such requests will be viewed with compassion. Parents should talk directly with the Headteacher.

## 8.9 Unplanned Leave

When a child is absent from school and no request for leave has been received or if no reason has been given for the absence, the absence will be recorded by the school as 'unauthorised'. In instances where the child's absence is more than 5 days (10 sessions) school will inform Herefordshire Council who has the power to issue penalty notices or consider legal proceedings.

Absences can only be authorised when the Planned Absence Request procedure has been followed. It cannot be granted retrospectively, even if the reasons for absence are good.

## 9 Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. The DFE have recognised this and are now asking schools to report figures for pupils whose attendance is 90% and below.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment. PA pupils and their parents may be subject to an attendance action plan and the plan may include: allocation of additional support through a Mentor, use of circle time, individual incentive programmes and participation in group activities around raising attendance. Cases of PA may be made known to the School Attendance Advisor.

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem with the parents/ carers. If this is unsuccessful the school will refer to the School Nurse if the problem appears to be a medical one or may be referred to a School Attendance Advisor for support.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, please contact Mrs Jones or Miss Guy to discuss these concerns and

enable us to work together to support your child. It is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending.

## **10 Unauthorised Absence**

Each week attendance records are checked and an email is sent to each child recording an unauthorised absence asking for a reason for the absence. Where there is no satisfactory explanation for an absence the school will record this as unauthorised absence. If unauthorised absence persists the school will issue a warning. Where there are further 10 unauthorised absences, following a warning, the school will inform Herefordshire Council who has the power to issue penalty notices or consider legal proceedings.

## **11 School Targets and Special Incentives**

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets. We know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe our pupils can be amongst the best in Herefordshire. Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided in our school newsletter and we ask for full parental support.

The school will set attendance targets each year. A system for analysing performance towards the targets will be established and the Headteacher will be responsible for overseeing this work.

## **12 Monitoring**

Each term children's attendance rates are examined. If there is a problem with a child's attendance, either falling below acceptable rates or showing a regular pattern of absence or punctuality, then parents are informed of the school's concerns through telephone calls, letters, meetings and home visits, as appropriate. Referrals may be made to the School Attendance Advisor and/or Herefordshire Council.

## **13 A Welcome Back**

At Cradley CE Primary School we promote positive staff attitudes to pupils returning after absence. It is important that on return from an absence that all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other pupils.

## **14 People who Deal with Attendance in our School are:**

Mrs Jones, (Head Teacher) - Overall responsibility  
head@cradley.hereford.sch.uk



Mrs Morgan (School Office) - First point of contact on first day of absence.  
Please keep her updated regularly throughout your child's absence.  
admin@cradley.hereford.sch.uk

Class Teachers - Contact via Tapestry

Miss Guy (Deputy Head) - Pastoral support/concerns  
vguy@cradley.hereford.sch.uk

## **15 Summary**

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a legal duty to make sure that their children attend. All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

## Appendix 1

### PENALTY NOTICES

#### For absences and holidays taken in term time:

Any absence from school disrupts a child's learning. Whilst a holiday may be considered educational, children will still miss out on the teaching that others receive. In addition, children returning from a term time holiday generally require additional time from teachers to catch up on the teaching they have missed. This can have an impact on the education of other pupils in their class.

#### Why have I received a penalty notice?

A holiday/absence has been taken during term-time of 5 consecutive days, or more, and was unauthorised by the head teacher. Herefordshire Council was therefore instructed to issue a Penalty Notice.

#### Why was the holiday unauthorised?

By law, only a head teacher can make the decision whether to authorise an absence from school, not the Local Education Authority or a parent. A holiday is only authorised if the head teacher considers that the circumstances are "exceptional".

#### Who receives a penalty notice?

Where there is more than one person liable, a separate notice may be issued to each person ie. parent.

Each parent\* receives a Penalty Notice for each child. For example:

1 parent/1 child = 1 penalty notice

2 parents/1 child = 2 penalty notices

1 parent/2 children = 2 penalty notices 2 parents/2 children = 4 penalty notices

*\*parent includes a step-parent or other carer and can include an absent parent.*

#### Definition of a Parent

Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 defines 'parent' as

- all natural parents, whether they are married or not
- any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person
- any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person (having care of a child or young person means that a person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child, is considered to be a parent in education law).

## **How can I pay?**

Full details are set out on Page 2 of the Penalty Notice – this can be paid by cheque, over the phone by debit/credit card or in person by cash, debit or credit card.

## **What happens if I do not pay?**

If payment is not received within 21 days, the fine will increase from £60 to £120. If payment is not received after 28 days, Herefordshire Council will instigate legal proceedings.

## **Can a penalty notice be withdrawn?**

Legislation only allows for a Penalty Notice to be withdrawn if it ought not to have been issued to the person named, or if it contains material errors.

If a holiday has been unauthorised by the head teacher, the local authority cannot override their decision. If you have any queries in relation to why your holiday was unauthorised you must refer these to the head teacher, not the issuing authority.

## **Who receives the monies paid?**

Monies received cover the cost of the administration process in issuing and enforcing the Penalty Notices and the costs of any subsequent legal action against recipients who do not pay.

## **Legislation**

On 27th February 2004 Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act came into force. This introduced powers to Local Education Authorities to issue Penalty Notices. Herefordshire Council issue Penalty Notices in accordance with The Code of Conduct. This was last revised in September 2012.

## **What if I have received and paid a penalty and take another holiday?**

If a penalty notice and fine has been issued and paid for an unauthorised holiday, Herefordshire Council may not issue another Penalty Notice and may decide to take legal proceedings.

## REPLY SLIP – ATTENDANCE POLICY

**2022-23**

This is a successful primary school and your child plays their part in making it so. We all aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of our school community to reach out for excellence. For our pupils to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly; I have read and understood the terms and conditions of the attendance policy at Cradley Primary School and support the school's aims.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_