



Whole School Attendance Policy and Procedures (Including EYFS)

Please also refer to the **‘Whole School Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy’**, **‘Whole School Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures’**, **‘Whole School Admissions Policy and Procedures’**, **‘Whole School Missing Pupil Policy and Procedures’** and **‘Whole School Preventing Radicalisation Policy (Including EYFS)’**.

This policy has been written with reference to the non-statutory DfE guidance **Children Missing in Education (2016)** and **Working Together to Improve School Attendance Statutory Guidance (August 2024)**. It has also been written with reference to **The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024** and **KCSIE (2025)**.

Introduction

At Cranford School we see education as a partnership between the family and the School. We are committed to providing the highest quality of education for all pupils and we look to parents to help support this objective. Fostering a strong relationship with parents and families is pivotal to ensuring each pupil achieves their best. Working together enables the school to build the links between attendance, attainment, and wider wellbeing.

Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education’s (DfE’s) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#), through our whole-school culture, aims and ethos that place high value in the importance of good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- As stated above, working in partnership with families, building strong relationships with them to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Cranford School's Senior Attendance Champion is Mrs Kath Heard (Deputy Head, DSL – kheard@cranfordschool.co.uk)

Expectations

Pupils are expected to be onsite for the start of their school day, and must remain onsite for the duration of the school day. Across the school, many pupils remain later to take part in extra-curricular activities under the supervision of a member of staff. Pupils are expected to leave by 5.30 pm at the latest.

With the exception of Sixth Form students, pupils are not allowed to leave the site during the school day, unless accompanied by a member of staff for a trip or a visit or a sporting fixture, the dates of which will have been notified to parents in advance. Sixth Form students are permitted to leave the school site during the day if they have a free period and must sign out and sign in at the front office. Sixth Form students are expected to be in school every day but may leave after 2:20 pm if they don't have lessons in the afternoon. They must ensure they sign out if they elect to do this.

Requests for absence must be made in writing and reach the school at least three days in advance (except in an emergency, such as when a child is ill, when parents are asked to contact the school before 8.45 am and follow up in an email or letter if the initial contact was made by telephone.) Requests for exceptional absences (i.e. absence for days other than Religious Festivals, medical or dental appointments or illness) should be sent to the School Office for the attention of the Headmaster at least two weeks in advance for approval.

If a child is ill, parents are requested to email or telephone the School before 8:45 am on each day of absence. Parents are asked to write to the School Office advising of the reason for the pupil's absence via email or letter. (office@cranfordschool.co.uk). The Office staff update the electronic register accordingly, file the email and will inform the Form Tutor by email (assuming they are not copied into the original email from the parent). Form Tutors receiving emails from parents, advising that their child is ill, should forward the email immediately to the office. In situations where we have not heard from parents, we will telephone home on each day of an unexplained absence in order to ascertain the nature of the absence.

We always send parents the term dates over a year in advance in order that holidays can be arranged without disrupting a child's education. It is the Governors' policy usually not to allow holiday to be taken during term.

Procedures

For all pupils of compulsory school age, the attendance register must be completed at the start of each morning session and once during each afternoon session. In accordance with statutory guidance, our electronic registers show whether a pupil is:

- present;
- absent;
- attending an approved educational activity outside school (approved by the Headmaster and supervised by a person approved by the Headmaster. Including work experience or sporting activity;

- unable to attend through exceptional circumstances (unavoidable closure of the School site, or part of it, unavailability of transport provided by the School or Local Authority, where the home is not within walking distance). Where a pupil is attending another school at which he/she is a registered pupil he/she must be marked in the attendance register as attending an approved educational activity;
- taking authorised absence (granted leave of absence by the Headmaster); unable to attend by reason of sickness or unavoidable cause, observing a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs;
- taking unauthorised absence (if no reason is established when the register is taken; the entry must be corrected later. It will be updated within 5 days and appropriate additional follow-up will be taken to establish the reason for absence. In the event that a reason for absence is not established, the absence will be amended to record a code 'O'). All holidays taken during term time are marked as unauthorised absence.

Any child who is absent from School for the morning or afternoon register must have their absence recorded as being 'authorised', 'unauthorised', or as an approved educational or sporting activity. Only the Headmaster, or a member of staff acting on their behalf, can authorise absence. Where the reason for absence is not initially known, the register is marked with an 'N' (reason for absence unknown). Following this upon investigation, this reason will be updated on the attendance register to reflect the reason for the absence. If, however, the reason for absence is never established, this absence will be shown as unauthorised.

If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, the absence must be recorded in the first instance as 'unknown' (i.e. 'N') and the Office staff will investigate.

As the attendance register is kept by means of a computer, an additional back-up copy is kept and remains accessible in SIMS, the Management Information System used by the School. The backed-up copies of the attendance register and the Admissions Register (see '**Whole School Admissions Policy and Procedures**' for more details) are retained for six years after the data was entered.

Pre-School children have the same registration period as the rest of EYFS (8.50am to 9.10am). Alongside this, a paper record of pupils' attendance is kept to ensure pupils are signed in and out of the different sessions during the day. All old paper registers are saved and archived. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, the absence must be recorded in the first instance as 'unknown' (i.e. 'N') and the Office staff will investigate.

The School will review each pupil, year group and whole school attendance weekly and will share data with the DfE as requested. Currently, Independent Schools are not required to share daily data. We will benchmark our attendance data against national data. Should a pupil's attendance fall below 92% (or the nominated percentage), the School will send a letter highlighting the importance of high attendance and the impact that absence can have on achievement and wellbeing. The letter will be sent on a case by case basis ensuring that each individual pupil and family's circumstances are taken into account.

Special Educational Needs (SEN)

The school recognises that pupils with **Special Educational Needs (SEN)** or additional needs may face unique challenges that affect attendance. Our approach is guided by the principles of **inclusive education** and statutory duties under the **Children and Families Act 2014**, the **SEND Code of Practice (2015)**, and **DfE Attendance Guidance**.

Recording Attendance for EYFS and Juniors

- In EYFS and Juniors morning registration is completed by 9:10 am.
- In EYFS and Key Stage 1 registers will be open for 20 minutes i.e. 8.50-9.10 am and 1.15-1.35pm.
- In Key Stage 2, registers will be open for 25 minutes i.e. 8.45-9.10 am and 1.15-1.40pm
- Children can arrive on-site from 7.30am but must be prebooked into the Breakfast Club. All other pupils can arrive from 8.00am, when there is supervision.
- Form teachers will enter a present mark (/) in SIMs for each pupil present and an absent mark (N) for any pupil that is absent.
- The Office Staff checks for any missing marks, or unaccounted absences. Concerns are raised with the Head of Pre-Prep and Junior School Deputy Heads.
- If any pupil has to leave school before the end of the day, he or she must sign out at the School Office.
- Afternoon registration follows a similar pattern occurring at 1.15pm, with any follow up carried out as per the required procedures.
- If pupils arrive after the teacher has taken the register, but before the end of the registration session, this is changed to an 'L.' After the registration period has closed, the Office Staff review the attendance summary from SIMS and identify any pupils still marked as 'N.' The Office Staff then begin the process of contacting home to check the reason for absence. This remains as an 'N' on the system for up to 5 days.

Recording Attendance for Seniors and Sixth Formers

- Registration (statutory) takes place twice a day, each morning at 8.35am and each afternoon at 2.15pm.
- Pupils can arrive on-site from 7.30am and go to the Library or a pre-booked club. They must be in their form rooms from 8.30am ready for registration.
- Registers will remain open for 25 minutes i.e. 8.35-9.00am and 2.15-2.40pm.
- Form teachers will enter a present mark (/) in SIMs for each pupil present and an absent mark (N) for any pupil that is absent.
- Teachers are required to take a register at the start of the lesson and within the first 10 minutes of the lesson starting. They do so electronically using SIMs. If staff are concerned that a pupil hasn't arrived at their lesson, then they should inform the School Office immediately. The School Office checks for any missing marks after 10 minutes of the lesson starting. Absences from lessons are followed up with the Head of Year, Assistant Head Pastoral or Deputy Heads.
- If any pupil has to leave school before the end of the day, they must sign out in the School Office.
- If any Sixth Form pupil leaves the school site during the day but intends to return e.g. during a free period, they must sign in and out at the School Office.
- If pupils arrive after the teacher has taken the register, but before the end of the registration session, this is changed to an 'L.' After the registration period has closed in either session, the Office Staff review the attendance summary from SIMS and identify any pupils still marked as 'N.' The Office Staff then begin the process of

contacting home to check the reason for absence. This remains as an 'N' on the system for up to 5 days.

Registration Timings		
EYFS, Key Stage 1	8.50 - 9.10 am	1.15 - 1.35 pm
Key Stage 2	8.45 - 9.10 am	1.15 - 1.40 pm
Senior School	8.35 - 9.00 am	2.15 - 2.40 pm

Absences

Parents/carers must inform the School if their child is going to be absent on or before the first day, by calling 01491 651 218. This must be followed up in writing (email or letter) to explain the reason for the absence to the school office (office@cranfordschool.co.uk). The School Office staff will ensure that written notification is received if the parent telephones to report an absence. If no reason is given within five school days, the absence becomes 'unauthorised'. The School Office Staff monitor the electronic register to ensure that all absences have a written confirmation indicating the reason for the absence. Absence Reports at the end of an academic year should indicate valid reasons for any absence with written confirmation from parents in each instance.

When making medical appointments, every effort must be made to ensure appointments are outside School hours but we acknowledge that this is not always possible. Medical appointments must be accompanied by an appointment card or other written confirmation and the School should be notified in advance where possible. If pupils are collected during the School day they must sign out in the School Office and sign back in if they return after their appointment.

First Day Absence

Parents are asked to contact the School on the first and every day of absence thereafter, unless detailed in the initial communication. Parents can telephone but must follow up in writing to the School Office. The School Office administrators will ensure this information is transferred onto the electronic registers, the email or letter confirmation filed and an email sent to the Form Tutor. See above regarding written confirmation of an absence.

Continuing Absence

Any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days (or 15 consecutive days in the case of sickness) will be notified to the Local Authority, through communication with our LCSS designated Social Worker.

Continued absence due to sickness

Where the school has reasonable grounds to believe that a pupil will be absent for 15 school days or more, whether consecutively or cumulatively, due to sickness, the following actions are required:

- The absence must be recorded using Code I (Illness) in the attendance register.
- The school must submit a sickness return to the local authority.
- Medical evidence may be requested.

The School will include details of the action they have taken. In the event a prolonged absence is due to illness, the School may ask the parents to sign to give permission to talk to the pupil's GP or request that the GP supplies a sick note.

Where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, the school will work with the family to put additional targeted support in place to help remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage the pupil. We will sensitively consider the reasons for absence and ensure to help ensure that school is a place of safety and support for pupils who might be facing difficulties.

If the pupil's absence is greater than 50%, the following will occur:
the School will arrange a meeting with the parents;

- a parents' contract will be put in place;
- a 20-day review will be conducted;
- The Attendance and Engagement Officer will be contacted and a meeting arranged with the parents, pupil and staff.

Cranford School also has a legal duty to report the failure of a pupil to attend regularly to the Local Authority and will not delete a child from the School register until confirmation of the next school the child is attending is received.

Failure to receive confirmation will result in the School contacting the Local Authority in which the pupil resides to report the circumstances as soon as possible. A 'Return to School' interview will always take place with a pupil who has been absent for any length of time upon their return. This may be conducted by the Head of Key Stage/Head of Year.

Children Absent From Education

Please also refer to the '**Whole School Admissions Policy and Procedures**' for more details.

Cranford School recognises that children being absent from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect including sexual exploitation, and takes guidance from the DfE information: 'Children Missing Education' September 2016 and 'School Attendance' August 2024.

Cranford School also recognise that being absent, as well as missing, from education can be a warning sign of a range of safeguarding concerns, including sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or child criminal exploitation

Cranford School recognise the need to offer support for children absent from education for periods of time and the potential impact of mental health on attendance. The School will give special consideration to pupils who are missing or absent from education for prolonged periods and/or repeat occasions.

Staff receive initial training and regular refresher training on Safeguarding pupils and are alert to signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns such as travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage. See the '**Whole School Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**' and '**Whole School Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures**' for more details.

In accordance with ISSR Standard 15, Regulation 8 '*The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations*' 2006, and the current version of KCSIE (2025), Cranford School will inform the

local authority (in which a child resides) if a pupil is to be deleted from the Admissions Register under **any** of the grounds set out in 'The *Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations*' 2006. Among these are the following:

- When a child has been taken out of the School by his/her parents to be educated outside the school system (e.g. home education);
- When a child has ceased to attend the School and no longer live within reasonable distance of the School;
- When a child has been certified as medically unfit to attend before ceasing to be of compulsory school age;
- When a child is in custody for more than four months due to a final court order and the Headmaster does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the School at the end of that period; or
- When a child has been permanently excluded.

The school also ensures that a return is made to the local authority within five days of entry of any new pupil joining the school.

Knowing where children are during school hours is an extremely important aspect of Safeguarding. Children absent from school can be an indicator of abuse and neglect and may also raise concerns about others safeguarding issues, including the criminal exploitation of children.

We monitor attendance carefully and address poor or irregular attendance without delay. We will always follow up with parents/carers when pupils are not at school. This means we need to have a least two up to date contacts numbers for parents/carers. Parents should remember to update the school as soon as possible if the numbers change.

In response to the guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025) the school has:

1. Staff who understand what to do when children do not attend regularly
2. Appropriate policies, procedures and responses for pupils who go missing from education (especially on repeat occasions).
3. Staff who know the signs and triggers for travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.
4. Procedures to inform the local authority when we plan to take pupils off-roll when they:
 - a) leave school to be home educated
 - b) move away from the school's location
 - c) remain medically unfit beyond compulsory school age
 - d) are in custody for four months or more (and will not return to school afterwards); or
 - e) are permanently excluded

We will ensure that pupils who are expected to attend the school but fail to take up the place will be referred to the local authority.

When a pupil leaves the school, we will record the name of the pupil's new school and their expected start date.

The duty to inform the Local Authority arises as soon as the grounds for deletion from the Attendance Register.

Schools are duty-bound to comply with this regulation so that the Local Authority can identify any children of compulsory school age who are missing education and follow up with

any child who might be in danger of not receiving an education and who might be at risk of abuse. The DSL ensures that regular communication is maintained between the School and the Pupil Tracking Officer for Oxfordshire County Council (which is the local authority in which the majority of pupils attending the School reside) and returns are emailed as an agreed protocol to highlight admissions and deletions from the School Admissions Register as necessary.

Reviewed: November 2025: Headmaster, Deputy Heads, DSL and Governors
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