THE CRYPT SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

Date of Policy: September 2022

Persons responsible: Deputy Head (Pastoral)

Approved by Full Governors: October 2022

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Contents :

1. Aims

At The Crypt School we want to ensure that every pupil achieves their full potential. In order to do this, it is imperative that every pupil attends school on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for absence is unavoidable.

Parents have a legal duty to ensure their children attend school regularly. Equally the school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures and its attendance policy to parents. School attendance data must also be made available to our Local Authority and the Department for Education.

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every student has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence.
- Promoting and supporting punctuality.

2. Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. This policy is drawn from the following legislation, setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- Gloucestershire local authority guidelines
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- Department for Education's guidance – Improving school attendance: support for schools and local authorities 2022

3. Procedures
3.1.   Attendance register

Our school day is from 8.35am until 3.15pm. Our morning register opens at 8.35 and closes at 9am.

Pupils are expected to arrive at school by 8.30am in order to be in their tutor groups ready for registration at 8.35am.

An attendance register is taken twice during the day. Morning registration is at 8.35am. Afternoon registration is at 2.10pm. Form tutors complete these registers. Each pupil is marked as either present (am /, pm \) or not present (N).

If a pupil arrives at their tutor room after 8.35am but before 8.45am they must explain why they are late and ask that their tutor amend the register from Not present (N) to Late (L).

If a pupil arrives at school after 8.45am they must sign in at reception.

Any arrivals after the register closes at 9am will then be marked as U. This is absence and affects attendance percentages. Please also see the Lateness and punctuality section.

3.2   Unplanned absence

Parents/carers must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence, and each subsequent day of absence, by 8.30am or as soon as is practically possible after this. The methods of notification are email (attendance@crypt.gloucs.sch.uk) or telephoning on (01452) 530291.

Please ensure you provide your child's full name and tutor group (Year group and either JC, WEH, JM, RR or DW).

Parents/carers are also expected to email or call the school every day that their child is unwell offering an update. This is to aid the successful transition of the pupil back into school after illness/absence.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

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 , appointment text confirmation or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for 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.

3.3   Medical or dental appointments

We strongly encourage parents/carers to make medical appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. This includes attending school before an appointment and returning punctually afterwards.

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as authorised absence providing advance notice has been given, alongside a completed form and copy of medical letter, appointment card or screen shot of electronic appointment confirmation.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

If a pupil arrives after 8.35 but arrives in their tutor room before 8.45am they can request their tutor amend the register to L. This is a late mark. It is the responsibility of the pupil to ensure they have made their presence known. A pupil who arrives after 8.45am will need to sign in at reception.

Pupils arriving late but before the register closes (9am) will be marked as late (L).

Pupils arriving late after the registers have closed (9am) will be marked as U (unless there are mitigating circumstances that are acceptable to the Attendance Officer- eg: private bus company traffic issue). This is unauthorised absence and will impact upon the pupils attendance percentage.

Lateness is monitored by the Attendance Officer in conjunction with the Pastoral Team, with ongoing issues addressed by Head of Year and tutors.

If a pupil is late 3 times within one term they will be given a detention. If 5 lates occur within one term, the Attendance Officer and Head of Year will contact the pupils, parents/carers to discuss the reasons behind the lateness and put a formal plan in place to address this. The exception to this rule is for pupils travelling on school buses. Persistent lateness of any bus should be taken up with the bus company.

3.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure the correct safeguarding action is taken where necessary and then identify if the absence is authorised or not, including recording the correct code to reflect this. When a pupil is absent with no known reason, a text message will be sent to parents. If no reason is then received the Attendance Officer will telephone parents to discuss the absence.

3.6 Reporting to parents

Parents/carers are provided with access to attendance data via cloudschool.

3.7 Queries regarding attendance

Any queries regarding attendance can be emailed to attendance@crypt.gloucs.sch.uk.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

The Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be truly "exceptional circumstances". A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion.

If parents wish to request leave, they are required to complete a "Leave of Absence Request" form (available online within Parents Hub, under Attendance) which should be sent to the Attendance Officer (attendance@crypt.gloucs.sch.uk). This will then be logged before being submitted to the Headteacher for his consideration as to whether the request meets exceptional circumstances criteria. Requests must be submitted with as much notice as possible, at least one month in advance of dates requested for holiday.

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

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness and medical or dental appointments that cannot be scheduled outside of school hours
- One off events which are unavoidable, examples include the death of a close relative, attendance at a funeral.
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong.
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes.
- Study leave

4.2   Unauthorised absence

Unauthorised absence is where The Crypt School is not satisfied with the reasons given for absence.

Examples of this include –

- Family holiday taken in term time without Headteacher approval. Retrospective approval cannot be given.
- Taking additional days prior to any agreed dates in the case of exceptional circumstances. Retrospective approval cannot be given.
- Not returning to school on the agreed date after permission has been granted due to exceptional circumstances. Retrospective approval cannot be given.
- No reason has been provided as to why a pupil is absent.

5.   Legal action to enforce school attendance

Local councils and schools can use various legal powers if your child is missing school without a good reason. They can issue:

- a Parenting Order
- an Education Supervision Order
- a School Attendance Order
- a fine (sometimes known as a 'penalty notice')

One or more of the above can be issued, but the council does not have to do this before proceeding with prosecution.

The local council can fine each parent £60 per child, which rises to £120 each if it is not paid within 21 days. If a fine remains unpaid after 28 days you may be prosecuted for your child's absence from school.

Prosecution

You could receive a fine of up to £2,500, a community order or a jail sentence of up to 3 months. The court may also issue you with a Parenting Order.

6.   Attendance monitoring

The vast majority of pupils and parents/carers at The Crypt School understand the benefits of attending school regularly. Where we have concerns about a pupil's attendance we will work closely with

parents/carers and the pupil concerned to understand any barriers to achieving high rates of attendance. Pupil absence will be reviewed and discussed using the staged approach in Appendix 1.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupils individual overall attendance rate is less than or equal to 90% the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need the absolute support from parents to tackle this. Persistent Absentees are tracked and monitored carefully through the pastoral system. Wider support services will be utilised to remove barriers to attendance and local authority involvement will occur if methods offered are not reducing absenteeism.

Absence data is 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. We compare our attendance data to the national average and share this with the Board of Governors.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

a. The Board of Governors
The Board of Governors is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school- on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

b. The Headteacher
The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to Governors.
The Headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual students and issues fixed-penalty notices where necessary.
The Deputy Head teacher (Pastoral) meets regularly with the Headteacher to discuss concerns.

c. The Attendance Officer
Monitors attendance data at school and individual pupil level.
Reports concerns about attendance to the Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral).
Provides Heads of Year with attendance data on a monthly basis.
Arranges calls and meetings with parents/carers to discuss attendance issues.

d. Form Tutors
Form tutors are responsible for the accurate and timely recording of the register twice a day.
Morning register is to be taken at 8.35 with pupils marked present or absent. Pupils arriving late can be amended to show L until 8.45am. Any pupil arriving after this must sign in at reception.
Afternoon registration must be taken at 2.10pm.

e. Class Teachers
Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance in every lesson. Registers must be taken within the first 15 minutes of each lesson.

8. Promoting good attendance
School will look to celebrate excellent attendance and improvements in attendance levels on a termly basis.

9.   Success Criteria

- We are meeting or exceeding our attendance targets
- Everybody is clear about what to do if a pupil is absent from school
- Our attendance is in line with, or exceeds that of local comparator schools
- We have positive feedback from outside agencies such as Ofsted.

Appendix 1: Five Stage Attendance Improvement Procedure

Pupils will move to the next stage if attendance does not improve.

Stage 1 – Initial Concern
- Attendance falls below 95%
- Letter to parents
- Review in 4 weeks – if no improvement escalate to stage 2

Stage 2 –

- Letter to parents
- A Pupil Attendance Agreement completed with pupil, Tutor and Head of Year.
- Review in 4 weeks - if no improvement escalate to stage 3

Stage 3 –

- Letter to parents
- Arrange a meeting in school including Head of Year and Attendance Officer
- Written attendance agreement completed at stage 2 now agreed with parents
- Medical evidence required to authorise any further absence due to illness
- Review in 4 weeks - if no improvement escalate to stage 4

Stage 4 –

- Letter to parents, warning of prosecution and invitation to attend a meeting
- Formal Attendance Improvement Meeting (AIM) to draw up Parenting Contract.
- Focus of the meeting should be on how to improve attendance and prevent legal proceedings being initiated. It is an opportunity for everyone to share views and ideas about what might help, including new strategies or interventions that may be worth trying.
- Review in 4 weeks

Stage 5 –

- Attendance Improvement Meeting Review – outcome either –
- Improvement but targets not met – continue and set review 2 date **or**
- Targets not met, request for legal action to the local authority in line with their procedures

Appendix 2 – Attendance codes

Code	Definition	Description
/	Present (am)	Student is present at morning registration
****	Present (pm)	Student is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Student arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Student is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Student is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Student has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Student is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Student is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Student is on a work experience placement
X	Not required to be in school	Student of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	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 student is in custody
Z	Student not on admission register	Register set up but student has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Code	Definition	Description

Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded (eg: externally suspended or permanently excluded)	Student has been externally suspended or permanently excluded from school but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Student has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a student will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Student is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Student is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 or 13 student is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Student from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Student is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Student 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)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for student's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Student arrived at school after the register closed