



CREECH ST. MICHAEL CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Hyde Lane, Creech St Michael, Taunton, Somerset, TA3 5QQ

Tel: 01823 442898 Email: office@csmprimary.co.uk Website: www.creechstmichaelprimary.co.uk

Together we love and learn today for a brighter tomorrow

24 September 2025

Dear Parents/Carers

This is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and so all children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Regular attendance leads to children making good progress and having high outcomes. New changes have been implemented by Education Safeguarding Services (ESS) for Somerset and I would like to make you aware of their latest guidance.

Following School attendance Guidance [Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#) (August 2024) and other statutory regulations. 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; and,
- 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.

We are writing this special letter to you about attendance to provide you with a clear outline about absence procedures and the School and Local Authority responses to poor pupil attendance. The Governors have made it clear that they will support the Headteacher and Education Safeguarding Service in promoting high levels of attendance and taking action where there are unsatisfactory reasons for absence. Our School attendance will be considered when we are inspected by OFSTED and considered in the schools overall judgement as part of the new framework.

Why Regular Attendance is so Important:

Unbroken attendance at school is important for learning. Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning.

The table below indicates how what might seem like just a few days absence can result in children missing a significant number of lessons.

Attendance during school year	Days lost in a year	Which is approximately	Approximate number of lessons missed
95%	9.5 Days	2 Weeks	50 Lessons
90%	19 Days	4 Weeks	100 Lessons



Headteacher: Mrs C Holt

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Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parents legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution. However, there will be times when absence is unavoidable and acceptable. This letter explains the approach we are following to manage attendance.

Types of Absence

Each absence is classed as authorised or unauthorised. Absences are coded as authorised where reasons are considered valid and unauthorised where no explanation or unacceptable reasons are given.

Unauthorised absences

This is when **no** explanation or reasonable contact has been made to obtain as to why a child has missed sessions at school. It is the parents responsibility to inform the school and this can be achieved by calling the school office on [01823 442898](tel:01823442898). If you fail to inform the school of the whereabouts of your child they will be marked as unauthorised. Unauthorised sessions will be monitored and when necessary a letter will be sent from the Head teacher to arrange a formal meeting to discuss the absences. If attendance does not improve and/or further unauthorised absences occur in a 12 week period and a formal meeting has already taken place with the Headteacher then this will be referred to Team around the school and Education safeguarding service.

Illness and First Day Call

If your child is unable to attend school through illness you should inform us by telephone on the first day of absence before 9.05am. You can leave a message on the school absence line. Alternatively, you can use the School Gateway app to contact the office.

It is useful to know the expected day of return. If you do not supply us with this information we have a duty to contact you so that we may be sure of the child's whereabouts as this is a safeguarding measure.

Where the child is absent through illness or medical appointments this will normally be counted as authorised. Where we have concerns over excessive absence patterns through illness we will need to discuss this with parents in order to gain a better understanding of the problems and to offer support – for example by involving the School Health Service to put a plan of support in place.

Medical/Dental Appointments

It is generally better if these can be arranged outside school hours, but we know this is not always possible. Where children need to attend such appointments during the school day it is important that parents come first to the Office before collecting children. Please bring your child to the office on returning from the appointment. Please indicate in advance whether s/he will be returning for the midday meal. Medical and dental appointments count as authorised absences. Proof will need to be provided for medical or dental appointments either a letter or medical appointment card.



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Emergency Occasions

There are some occasions e.g. bereavements, family problems, etc where it may be inappropriate for children to attend school; we will be sympathetic to such needs.

Lateness

The table below indicates how frequent lateness can add up to a considerable amount of learning being lost. This can seriously disadvantage children and disrupt the learning of others.

Minutes late per Day	Equates to Days of Teaching Lost in one Year	Which means this number of lessons missed
5 mins	3 Days	15 Lessons
10 mins	6 Days	30 Lessons
15 mins	9 Days	45 Lessons

Please try to ensure that your child arrives at school promptly so that they are present for registration; this is done at 8.55 am each day. If your child arrives after 9.00am and before 9.05 am this will be counted as late and a late mark will be given. If your child arrives after 9.05am with no reasonable explanation (e.g. medical appointment/ GP visit) this will be marked as arrived after school registration closed and will count as one unauthorised missed session. Lateness will be monitored in the same way as unauthorised absences and a meeting will be arranged with the Headteacher.

Term-Time Leave

Arranging holidays or planned absence during term time causes issues for many reasons:

- the pupil's education suffers; lessons and extra-curricular activities are missed
- there is no opportunity for teachers to set additional work or to assist a child in catching up on their return from holiday
- parents may be in breach of their legal obligation to send their child to school.

The Government issued **new** regulations that placed greater restrictions on families and schools in relation to planned term-time leave.

The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 state:

Head teachers shall not grant any Leave of Absence during term time unless they consider there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.



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Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are exceptional circumstances, and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.

Requests for term-time leave will be considered on a case-by-case.

Term-time leave should be requested at least 4 weeks in advance. Term time leave forms should be completed. These can be collected from the main office.

The Head Teacher will determine how many sessions may be authorised in cases where term-time leave is agreed.

The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent (the parent with whom the child normally resides).

Applications for term-time leave must be made in advance and in writing. Failure to do so will result in the absence the resulting absences being unauthorised.

When an application for term-time leave is declined, any resulting absences will be unauthorised.

Unauthorised absence relating to term-time leave being taken will be sent to the Local Authority for consideration of a Penalty Notice when 10 or more sessions (5 days) are unauthorised. This is a statutory measure and we have to follow as a school.

Unauthorised absences resulting from term-time leave being taken is likely to result in the Local Authority issuing each parent with a Penalty Notice for each child absent from school.

The Education Safeguarding Service issues penalty notices on behalf of the Local Authority in line with the Somerset Penalty Notice Code of Conduct, which is available at www.somerset.gov.uk.

If a Penalty Notice is issued and not paid, the Local Authority will consider prosecuting parents in line with Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996. This can result in a fine of up to £1,000 for each offence.

In exceptional cases, the Local Authority may seek to prosecute parents in line with Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 without issuing a Penalty Notice.



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Attendance Support and Intervention

Creech St Michael School monitors the attendance of all pupils regularly and will put in place varying levels of support and intervention, as outlined below.

The strategies, support and interventions put in place and offered will vary depending on each pupil's attendance and the circumstances resulting in their absences.

Through regular attendance monitoring and scrutiny, Creech St Michael School is able to identify pupils that require support in relation to their attendance at the earliest possible stage.

Attendance Stage	Strategies, Support and Interventions
Stage 1 96% to 100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance monitored by class or form teacher Absences may be discussed upon return to school
Stage 2 90% to 95%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letter 1 sent where appropriate In-school support considered and offered Penalty Notice Warning for unauthorised absences Medical evidence requested, where appropriate
Stage 3 50% to 90% Persistent Absence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letter 2 sent Support requests made to other services Parenting contract discussed and offered Penalty Notice Warning for unauthorised absences Medical evidence requested, where appropriate Request for support at Team Around the School Attendance support request submitted to the ESS Attendance Improvement Plan Attendance Casework from the ESS Possible legal interventions for unauthorised absences
Stage 5 Below 50% Severe Absence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stage 3 letter sent Support and interventions and laid out in Stage 3 Continued statutory intervention High risk of legal intervention for unauthorised absence

The process outlined above is for guidance purposes only. The strategies used to support attendance will vary depending on a child's circumstances, the reasons for their absence and their needs.



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Early intervention and support is the most effective approach to improving attendance. Parents are strongly encouraged to engage with any support offered, as this may improve attendance quickly and prevent the need for requests for support from statutory services.

While the use of statutory and legal interventions is always a last resort, they may be put in place by the Education Safeguarding Service on behalf of the Local Authority.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter.

Yours sincerely

Mr Mark Anderson

Deputy Headteacher and Attendance Lead



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