

Crieff High School



Attendance Strategy

Overview

Crieff High School is one of the eleven secondary schools administered by Perth and Kinross Council. It is a six-year comprehensive, non-denominational, comprehensive secondary school offering a full range of courses leading to national certification from the Scottish Qualifications Authority. The school roll as of August 2019 is 593.

Crieff High School promotes good attendance through our positive and welcoming ethos. Our school prides itself on being a happy school where each individual is valued and encouraged to do his or her best. The national policy landscape continues to increasingly emphasise the importance of wellbeing and relationships in shaping positive outcomes for young people. Improving wellbeing is key priority at Crieff High School. The ethos and culture of our school is such that it intrinsically supports positive attitudes towards attendance. The atmosphere is welcoming and relationships between staff and pupils are strong. Staff are committed to effective learning and teaching. All of this helps to maintain an environment where young people want to attend.

The Crieff High School Attendance Policy is derived from several sources:

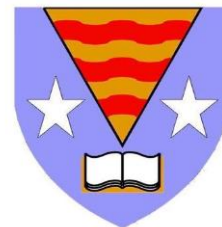
- [Crieff High School's whole-school improvement priorities](#)
- [Perth & Kinross Attendance Policy](#)
- [Scottish Government Policy](#)
- [Legislation](#).

A strategic priority for Crieff High School is improving attendance. Our School Improvement Plan states that average attendance for the 2019-20 session across all year groups will be greater than or equal to 91%. The plan also identifies target groups who will benefit from enhanced monitoring and interventions designed to improve the attendance of young people in these groups.

Strands of the Improving Attendance Strategy at Crieff High School

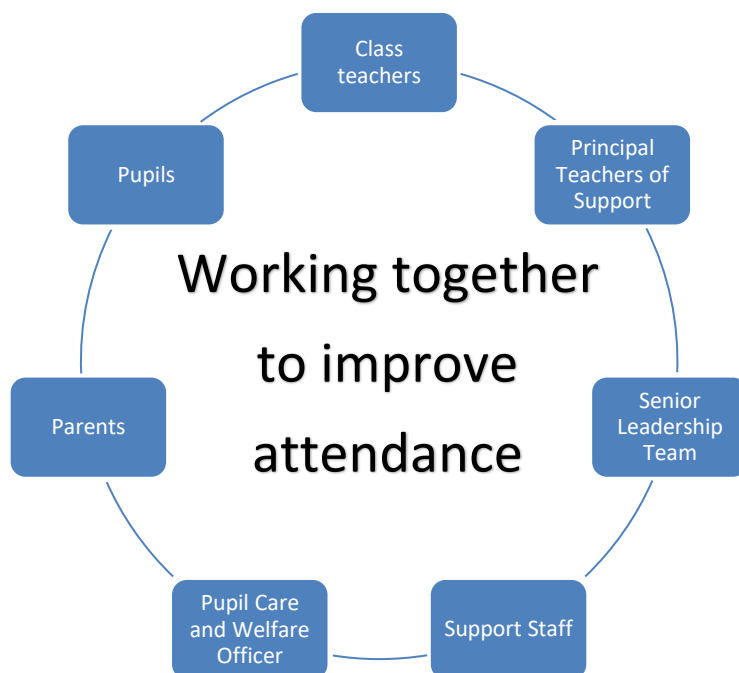
- Involving stakeholders
- Proactive measures to promote positive attendance
- Raising the importance of attendance and educating stakeholders about importance of attendance and impact of absence
- Responding quickly to issues which could possibly develop and impact on attendance
- Follow up on absence
- Support reintegration into learning on returning from absence.

Crieff High School



Stakeholders

Fundamental to the Attendance Strategy at Crieff High School is the principal of partnership working. All stakeholders have a role in working together to promote and achieve a regular pattern of attendance for the young people at Crieff High School.



Our approach to improving attendance is being developed in consultation with stakeholders and further reviews will be undertaken on an annual basis. The roles and responsibilities of every person involved in supporting a young person's attendance in school are clearly defined and shared with all stakeholders.

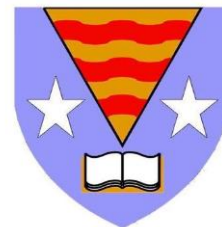
See APPENDIX 3.

Proactive Measures to Promote Positive Attendance

Crieff High School recognises that good attendance occurs when young people enjoy and are excited about coming to school. School staff are committed to creating an environment that is conducive to high levels of attendance. Measures include:

- A positive ethos and culture
- Ensuring pupils are included and engaged
- Reviewing and improving anti-bullying measures
- Using nurturing approaches
- Addressing barriers to learning and participation, taking into account the needs of all young people
- Good learning and teaching
- Promoting positive relationships among young people
- Celebration of pupil contributions and accomplishments.

Crieff High School



Raising the Profile of Attendance

School staff contribute towards raising awareness of the importance of attendance and the impact of absence by:

- Raising the profile of attendance and absence within school communities and in school documents such as the school handbook and through platforms such as the school website and social media platforms.
- Displays within the school environment.
- Recognising a positive pattern of attendance in an appropriate and sensitive manner, such as through communication with home.
- Recognising improvements in attendance.

See APPENDIX 4.

Communication Between School and Home

Crieff High School strives to communicate frequently with parents using a range of methods, such as Groupcall messaging, the school website and social media accounts, Twitter and Facebook. When parents wish to speak to a member of staff, about any aspect of their young person's education, including attendance, progress and engagement, this communication should usually go through their child's Head of House. Crieff High is a welcoming place and parents should feel encouraged to request a meeting with their young person's Head of House teacher should they wish.

- Head of Kelty House – Mr G Duncan
- Head of Barvick House – Mrs K Telford
- Head of Turret House – Miss K McEwan.

Parents have a key role to play in promoting and supporting regular attendance of their young person in school and Crieff High School staff are committed to working in partnership to ensure there is good communication about any issues relating to attendance. In the case of pupil absence from school, parents/carers are requested to contact the school by sending an email, text message or telephone call. Parents/carers are asked to provide a reason for this absence so that this can be accurately recorded.

If a young person does not attend school, the absence will be checked against details of contacts made by parents, including expected date of return to school. If a parent has not advised the school their young person will be absent, then it must be assumed that they are unaware of the absence and that the pupil is either missing or absent without parental awareness. This must be recorded as unauthorised absence until an explanation is received by the school.

If a young person returns to school, but a pattern of absence is noted, then school staff are committed to continuing to work alongside parents to resolve any issues, based on a positive and trusting relationships between the home and school.

Crieff High School



Absence Procedures

- It is important that information about pupils' attendance and absence is recorded and that information is used to inform interventions to support pupils.
- Parents will be contacted when a young person has not arrived in school. This is usually done by Groupcall message and sometimes parents will receive a phone call from the Pupil Care and Welfare Officer or another member of staff.
- If attempts to contact the parent are not successful, then emergency contact numbers, such as those of other family members, will be used.
- If the parent cannot be contacted to confirm the whereabouts of the young person, the record of absence should be passed to their Guidance Teacher to consider the information in the light of known attendance issues, support needs or current concerns about the young person. This member of staff will be responsible for determining what further action is required, taking into account the age of the pupil; the implications for additional support to resolve any difficulties; and, if necessary, contacting the school's child protection co-ordinator.
- In the case of a care experienced young person, when the young person does not attend school this should always be followed up immediately. In the case of young people who are looked after at home, then the social worker should also be contacted.

See APPENDIX 1.

Staged Intervention

Many issues relating to absence in school can be dealt with quickly and promptly by within school supports and by ensuring that there are positive relationships in place to support young people and their families. However, there may be occasions when absence from school becomes a more significant cause for concern. Staged intervention processes in Crieff High School include:

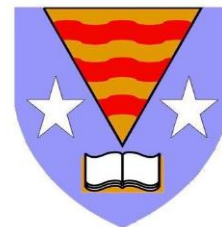
- High quality pastoral care systems for early response to absence and signs of difficulty
- Effective approaches for assessment and planning for additional support needs to address any barriers to learning that might be impacting on attendance
- Creating a Child's Plan which clearly outlines the supports and structures that require to be in place to support any wellbeing or additional support needs
- Flexible pathways and consideration of approaches to include and engage pupils in their learning
- Collaboration with a range of agencies through multi-agency planning groups
- Referral to the local authority attendance subcommittee
- Recourse to measures for compulsory compliance by parents of young people, through attendance orders or referral to the Children's Reporter.

See APPENDIX 2.

Authorised Absence

Schools are permitted to authorise absence when satisfied by the reason provided. Requests for authorised absence are usually made by the parent (via a note, email or phone call), are self-certified or sometimes may be provided by another service provider.

Crieff High School



Reasons for authorised absence can include:

- Illness where no learning provision is made (including ongoing mental health concerns)
- Medical and dental appointments to be recorded in separate category
- Meetings prior to, and during court appearances and other legal processes
- Attendance at, or connections with, a Children's Hearing or Care Review or appointment with another service provider, e.g. social worker
- Religious observance
- Bereavement
- Weddings or funerals or close friends and family
- Arranged in relation to young people in Gypsy/Traveller families
- Participation in non-school debates, sports, musical or drama activities, agreed by the school
- Lack of transport – including due to bad weather
- Family recovery from exceptional domestic circumstances or trauma
- Period of exclusion to be recorded in separate category
- Extended leave with parental consent including some young carer activities

Unauthorised Absence

Schools are required to record absence as unauthorised when it is perceived that there is no valid reason for the absence provided. Such absence can include:

- Absence with parental awareness in specific circumstances
- Family holiday during term time
- Occasional absence without parental awareness
- Long term absence – school related issues
- Longer term absence – home and wider community
- Absence relating to substance and alcohol misuse

Reintegration to Learning and Returning from Absence

- Pastoral Support and Support for Pupils staff maintain contact with young people and families affected by long term absence
- Child-centred planning
- Phased return, by following a gradually increasing timetable.

Review

This policy will be kept under review.