



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Date of last review:	Autumn 2015
Date approved by Governing Body:	4th December 2015
Date of next review:	Spring 2018
Committee responsible for implementation and review:	Standards, Achievement & Inclusion

The aim of this policy is to help ensure that when children are fit and healthy they attend school in order to help maintain an attendance rate of at least 96%

National guidance

School attendance is subject to various education laws and this federation attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education and Hampshire County Council. This Attendance policy is also consistent with the following federation policies:

- admissions
- anti-bullying
- child protection
- safeguarding
- special educational needs and disability
- teaching & learning
- behaviour

Section 2:

2.1 Promoting Good Attendance & Punctuality

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the federation, parents and the child. The Home/School agreement will contain details of how we will work with parents and our expectations of what parents will need to do to ensure their child achieves good attendance.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Provide regular updates on attendance by various means, such as the newsletter and on notice boards.
- Report to you on your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments;

Signed Date
Chair of Governors

- Celebrate good and improved attendance by rewarding children with; certificates, stickers and prizes.

2.2 Roles and Responsibilities:

Responsibilities of the Federation's Attendance Officer

A member of the Senior Leadership Team will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the federation's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the federation. This person will also ensure that attendance is both recorded accurately and analysed. (S)He will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties. If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, staff will discuss with parent/carers the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the federation.

Responsibilities of Classroom Staff:

- Ensure that all students are registered accurately
- Promote & reward good attendance at all appropriate opportunities.
- Liaise with the Attendance Leader on matters of attendance and punctuality and Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence.

Responsibilities of Pupils:

- Attend every day unless they are ill or have an authorised absence.
- Arrive in school on time.

Responsibilities of Parents and Carers:

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carers legal responsibility (part 1, section 7 of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the federation creates an offence in law.

Parents will:

- Inform the federation on the first day of absence.
- Discuss with the school office/class teacher any planned absences well in advance.
- Support the federation with their child in aiming for 100% attendance each year.
- Make sure that any absence is clearly accounted for by phone or text on the first and subsequent days of absence, or by letter if a phone is unavailable.
- Avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments.
- Only request for leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance.

Section 3

3.1 Recording Attendance

Legally the register must be taken twice daily. This is done at the start of the school day 8.55am Infants and 8.45am Juniors and again for the afternoon session at 1.00pm Infants and 1.10pm Juniors.

3.2 Lateness and Punctuality

It is important to be on time at the start of the morning. The start of lessons are used to give out instructions or organise work. If a child is late they can miss work, time with their class teacher getting vital information, cause disruption to the lesson for others, and can be embarrassing leading to possible further absence.

- The school day begins at 8.55am and the register closes at 9.25am in the Infants and at 8.45am with the register closing at 9.15am in the Juniors.
- All lateness is recorded daily 'L'. This information will be required by the courts, should a prosecution for non-attendance or lateness be necessary.
- If a child is persistently late before registers close and the federation is not prepared to accept the reasons for lateness the code 'O' is used and a note made on SIMS stating "the child was late but not authorised" and the time of arrival recorded.
- Arrival after the close of registration will be marked as unauthorised absence code 'U' in line with county and Department for Education (DfE) guidance. This mark shows them to be on site, but is legally recorded as absence.
- If a pupil is late due to medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence code 'M'. Please be advised that where possible doctors and dentist appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays.

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other pupils. On-going and repeated lateness is considered as **unauthorised absence and will be subject to legal action** (see section 6 for further detail).

Parents or carers of pupils who have patterns of lateness will be contacted to discuss the importance of good time keeping and how this might be achieved. If lateness persists, parents or carers will be invited to attend the federation and discuss the problem and support offered. If support is not appropriate or is declined and a child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence due to lateness recorded in any 10 week period the federation or the Hampshire County Council will be required to issue parents with a penalty notice in accordance with Hampshire's Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices for non-attendance (See section 6 of this policy for further detail).

Children should be collected promptly at the end of the school day. Where late collection is persistent and/or significantly late, the federation is obliged to take any uncollected pupil to a place of safety and share concerns as necessary with other agencies.

3.3 If a child is absent

First Day Absence

A child not attending school is considered a **safeguarding** matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

If a child is absent, parents must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence;
- Send a note in on the first day the child returns with an explanation of the absence – even if parents telephoned us;

Or, parents can call into school and report to reception.

If a child is absent and we haven't had any contact from the parent/carer we will:

- Telephone or text parents/carers on the first day of absence. *This is because we have a duty to ensure a child's safety as well as their regular school attendance*
- Invite parents/carers in to discuss the situation with our Parent Support Adviser or Headteacher if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the Hampshire's Attendance Legal Panels if absence is unauthorised and falls below 90%

Third Day Absence

Please Note: If a child is not seen and contact has not been established with parents/carers after three days of absence the federation is required to start a child missing in education procedures as set down by Hampshire County Council Guidance. We will make all reasonable enquires to establish contact with parents and the child including making enquires to known friends or wider family. A home visit may be made by the Parent Support Adviser and/or Headteacher.

Ten Day's Absence

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupils who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with parent/carer then the Local Authority is notified that the child is 'at risk of missing'. Children's Services Staff will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child.

Continued or Ongoing Absence

If a child misses 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason they are defined as a **persistent absentee**. Where this absence is authorised the school will invite the parents/carers into school for a meeting with the Headteacher and/or parent support adviser.

Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in his or her learning. Research shows these gaps affect attainment when attendance falls below 95%. As such we monitor all absence thoroughly and all attendance data is shared with the Local Authority and the Department for Education. If a child's attendance level is falling towards 90% we will contact you and depending on the reasons for the absence will write an attendance plan.

Children at this federation are dependent on their parents/carers, who are responsible for their level of attendance and punctuality. It is vital that children enjoy coming to school, and whilst being encouraged to attend well and on time, will not carry blame and be made to feel unhappy if their parents are not supportive or effective in these areas.

Section 4

Request for Leave of Absence:

Amendments to school attendance regulations were updated and enforced from September 2013: **(Pupil registration) (England) regulations state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.** It is important to note that Headteachers can determine the length of the authorised absence as well as whether absence is authorised at all. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, or unavoidable which means the event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. **Exceptional circumstances** are considered individually and are at the discretion of the Headteacher. There is however, no legal entitlement for time off in school time to go on holiday **and in the majority of cases holiday will not be authorised.**

Parents/Carers wishing to apply for leave of absence need to fill in an application form available from the school office in advance and before making any travel arrangements.

If term time leave is taken without prior permission from the school, the absence will **be unauthorised** and if the number of sessions absent hits the thresholds set down in Hampshire's Code of Conduct parent/carers will be issued with a fixed-penalty fine, or other legal action in accordance with the code (see section 6 for detail).

Taking holidays in term time will affect a child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children out during school time.

Section 5

Understanding types of absence:

Pupils are expected to attend school every day for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an **exceptional reason** for the absence. There are two main categories of absences:

Authorised Absence: is when the federation has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence, or given approval in advance for such an absence. If no explanation is received, absences cannot be authorised.

Unauthorised Absence: is when the federation has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's leave absence from school after a parent's request. This includes:

- parents giving their children permission to be off school unnecessarily such as for shopping, birthdays, to look after siblings
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have not been explained

A school can, if needed, change an authorised absence to an unauthorised absence and vice versa if new information is presented. Any changes will be communicated to parents/carers. An example of this would be where a parent states a child is unwell but on return to school there is evidence they have been on holiday.

Section 6

Legal Measures for tackling persistent absence or lateness

Hampshire Schools and Hampshire County Council will use the full range of legal measures to secure good attendance. Legal measures will only be considered through a referral to Hampshire's Attendance Legal Panels where:

1. **The child or family do not require the support from any agency to improve the attendance**
2. **The child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence in a 100 session period and parents are complicit in the child's absence.**

The following legal measures are for pupils of compulsory school age who are registered at a school:

- Parenting contracts set at Education Planning Meetings
- Parenting orders
- Penalty notices
- Education Supervision Orders
- Prosecution

Legal Measures for absence taken when the Headteacher has declined parent/carers request for leave of absence

Where a pupil has unauthorised absence due to either:

1. non approval of a parent/carer's request for leave of absence or
2. a holiday that has been taken without permission and the unauthorised absence is for 10 or more sessions (5 days) in any 100 possible school sessions then a penalty notice for non-attendance will be issued

Where a child has **unauthorised absence** the federation must enforce Hampshire's Code of Conduct for issuing Penalty Notices or follow its guidance on other Legal Measures for Non-Attendance. The Code of Conduct is a statutory document that ensures that powers for legal sanctions are applied consistently and fairly across all schools and their families within the authority.

The code of conduct states that:

Schools or Hampshire Local Authority will issue a Penalty Notice for any unauthorised absence where the pupil has been:

- absent for 10 or more half-day sessions (five school days) of unauthorised absence during any 100 possible school sessions – these do not need to be consecutive
- persistently late (coded *U*) for up to 10 sessions (five days) after the register has closed
- persistently late before the close of the register (coded *L*), but the school has met with parents and has clearly communicated that they will categorise as unauthorised any further lateness (code *O*), and where the threshold of 10 sessions (five days) has been met
- absent for any public examinations of which dates are published in advance

- absent for any formal school assessments, tests or examinations where the dates have been published in advance unless the issuing of a Penalty Notice would conflict with other intervention strategies in place or other sanctions already being processed.

If a child's unauthorised absence meets any of the above criteria and the family or child do not require any agency support to improve the attendance then a single Penalty Notice is issued for either:

- 1. 10 sessions of unauthorised absence or lateness in any 10 week school period**
- 2. 1 or more sessions of unauthorised absence during a public exam, formal school assessment or testing where dates are published in advance.**

Parents and Carers will be warned of the likelihood of a penalty notice being issued for unauthorised absence either via a letter, through the leave of absence request form, or through the federation's attendance policy and website. The penalty notice is a fine that is issued to each parent/carer who condoned (or was responsible for the child) during the period of unauthorised absence for which the fine has been issued.

For each case of unauthorised absence the federation or Hampshire County Council will decide whether a Penalty Notice is issued **to one or more parent/carers** for each child. **N.B** This could mean four penalty notices for a family with two siblings both with unauthorised absence for holiday i.e. one PN for each child to each parent.

Each penalty notice carries a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days of the penalty notice being posted. If the fine is not paid within 21 days the Penalty is automatically increased to £120 if paid within 28 days. If the fine remains unpaid the Hampshire County Council will consider prosecution for the non-attendance. Payment methods are detailed on the Penalty Notices themselves. Penalties are to be paid to Hampshire County Council and revenue resulting from payment of Penalties is used by the County Council to help cover the costs of issuing Penalty Notices and/or the cost of prosecuting recipients who do not pay.

For further information parents/carers can request a leaflet from their school and should visit Hampshire County Councils website at:

<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/attendance-guidancefor-parents/possible-penalties.htm>

Section 7

7.1 Absence through child participation in Public performances, including theatre, film or TV work and Modelling

Parents of a child performer can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a performance. They must contact the Headteacher to discuss the nature and frequency of the work, whether the child has a valid performance licence and whether education will be provided by the employer during and future leave of absence. Any absence recorded as part of participation in public performance is recorded C and authorised absence.

7.2 Absence through competing at regional, county or national level for Sport

Parents of able sportsmen and women can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in regional, county, national and international events and competitions. It is however, down to the Headteacher's discretion whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Permission for your child to leave early or arrive late to attend coaching and training sessions are also at the discretion of the Headteacher and are not likely to be approved if it is a regular event, unless the sports club or association are providing an education tutor as part of their coaching.

7.3 Gypsy Roma Traveller Showman and Showman Families

Absence of a child from a traveller family that has left the area may be authorised if the absence is for **work purposes only** and it is believed that the family intends to return. Pupils must have attended 200 sessions in a rolling 12 month period to be able to request leave for work purposes. To ensure continuity for travellers children, dual registration is allowed. That means that a school cannot remove a traveller child from the school roll while they are travelling. When the traveller is away the home school holds the place open and records the absence as authorised through the T code. Distance Learning packs for Traveller children are not an alternative to attendance at school.

Section 8

Record Preservation

School registers are legal documents. We will ensure compliance with attendance regulations by keeping attendance records for at least 3 years. Computer registers will be preserved as electronic back- ups.

National Guidance Reference:

1. 'School attendance' 2015 located at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance>
2. National Association of Headteachers guidance document on '**Authorised Absence**' 2014
<http://www.naht.org.uk/welcome/news-and-media/key-topics/parents-andpupils/naht-issues-new-guidance-on-authorised-absence/>
3. '**Parental responsibility measures for behaviour and attendance**' which covers legal measures for non-attendance
'<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-responsibility-measures-forbehaviour-and-attendance>
4. Child Performance
<https://www.gov.uk/child-performance-licence-england-scotland-wales>

For county advice and guidance refer to:

1. Guidance on recording absence <http://documents.hants.gov.uk/childrenservices/HIAS/Promotingpupilattendanceandrecordingabsence-maindocument.pdf>
2. Guidance on approval of '**Extended leave of absence**' see county guidance <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/lbaresources->

[for-schools/atten-guidance/attendance-guidance-for-schools.htm](http://www3.hants.gov.uk/education/attendance-guidance-for-schools.htm)

3. Hampshire County Guidance 'Children on roll but at risk of Missing in Education'

<http://documents.hants.gov.uk/education/Guidanceforchildrenatriskofmissingineducation-revisedSept2014.pdf>

4. For county guidance refer to: 'Guidance for Schools on available support and procedures for pursuing legal action for non-attendance at school' May 2015

<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/lbaresources-for-schools/atten-guidance/attendance-guidance-for-schools.htm>

5. Penalty notices

<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/attendance-guidance-for-parents/possible-penalties.htm>

6. Children and young people employment

<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/childrenandyoungpeople/childemployment.htm>