



1. Aims

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

As a parent/carer you want the best for your children. Your attitude has a key influence on your child's school attendance and parents/carers can do much to encourage even reluctant pupils to attend school every day.

"MISSES AN EQUIVALENT OF TWO YEARS OF THEIR SCHOOL LIFE"

Attending school on a regular basis is the key to your child doing well at school and will set them up with good habits for later life and the working world.

- *Make lots of friends and feel included and that they belong*
- *Learn new things and develop new skills, be successful*
- *Increase their confidence and self-esteem*
- *Enjoy their education*



2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 2002](#) places a duty on Governing Bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.
- Department for Education guidance School attendance (2014) Schools should:
 - Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence
 - Ensure every child has access to full-time education
 - Act early to address patterns of absence. Parents must perform their legal duty by ensuring children of compulsory school age who are registered to a school attend regularly. All pupils must be punctual to their lessons.

School attendance is subject to various education laws and this school 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 school policies:

- admissions
- anti-bullying
- child protection
- exclusion
- safeguarding
- special educational needs
- teaching and learning
- behaviour and rewards.

The level of attendance and punctuality expected from all our pupils is included in our school's Home School Agreement, which parents must sign following their child's admission to a school (statutory). It is very important, therefore, that you make sure your child attends regularly and this policy sets out how together we will achieve this. This policy will be annually publicised in writing for all staff, parents and pupils via our website.

3. Promoting Good Attendance

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, 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 information on all matters related to attendance in our weekly newsletter
- report to you on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments
- set targets for the school and for classes for attendance and display these in the school

4. School procedures

4.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

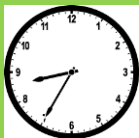
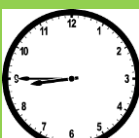


- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

	Pupils can arrive at school from 8.35am .
	They must be in class by 8.45am for registration. The registers are sent electronically to the office by 9.00am.
	Children arriving after 8.55am will be marked as 'late' (L) in the register.
	Children arriving after 9.15am will be marked as 'Unauthorised absence' (U) in the register.
The register for the second session will be taken at 1.00pm and will be kept open until 1.20pm	

School finishes at **3.15pm** each day. Please collect your child promptly at the end of the school day. Where late collection is persistent and/or significantly late, the school is obliged to take any uncollected pupil to a place of safety and share concerns, as necessary, with other agencies. If space is available, the school will place a child into the after-school club and provide the parent/carer with the bill.

4.2 Unplanned absence

A child not attending school is considered a **safeguarding** matter. Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by **8.50am** or as soon as practically possible.

Please inform the school office in person or by leaving an answer phone message. Parents can also inform the class teacher if they wish however it is vital that they inform the school office.

Absence due to illness will be 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 parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the absence, it will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this. If attendance falls below 90% for unauthorised absence, the school may refer the matter to Hampshire County Council's Attendance Legal Panel.

4.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code. A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

4.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

If your child is absent and it is unplanned and we have not heard from you by 9.30am then we will call your first contact on your contact information. If we still have not heard from you by 10.00am then we will try your first contact and continue with the other named contacts on your list until we can establish that your child is safe. The school may visit the child's home to establish contact if all other contacts have failed. This procedure is important as it ascertains the whereabouts of your child and confirms that they are being looked after.

If your child is not seen and contact has not been established with any of the named parents/carers, after three days of absence the school is required to start ***child missing in education*** procedures as set down by Hampshire County Council guidance.

4.6 Reporting to parents

Parents are given updates on their child/rens attendance in parent consultation meetings and in the end of year annual report. Our expectations for attendance are shared with parents and they know that 95% or above is 'good', 90-94.9% is a concern and anything below 90% is considered highly concerning. Parents are given the opportunity to come in and chat about any concerns or issues they may be having with their child and attendance or punctuality. Attendance data is also available throughout the year via the Parent Portal in Arbor.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Amendments to school attendance regulations were updated and enforced from September 2013: The Education (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. There are no rules on this as circumstances vary from school to school and family to family. There is, however, no legal entitlement for time off in school term 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 County Council's Code of conduct, parents/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 your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children out during school time.

5.2 The law relating to request for leave of absence and procedures for how parents can make a request can be found at:

For national guidance refer to:

1. School attendance, 2014, located at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance
2. National Association of Headteachers' guidance document on Authorised absence, 2014:

For Hampshire County Council advice and guidance refer to:

1. Guidance on recording absence: <https://www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/behaviour-attendance-parents>
2. Guidance on approval of Extended leave of absence: <https://documents.hants.gov.uk/guidance-for-schools-requests-for-extended-leave-of-absence-final.pdf>

5.3 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 school 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 school 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.

6. Penalty Notices for non-attendance and other legal measures

6.1 In education law, parents/carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular attendance of their child of compulsory school age at the school at which the child is registered, unless the absence has been authorised by the school.

Legal measures for tackling persistent absence or lateness

6.2 Hampshire schools and Hampshire County Council will use the full range of legal measures to secure good attendance. Legal measures will only be considered when there is unauthorised absence and :

- the child or family do not require the support from any agency to improve the attendance
- the child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence and parents are complicit in the child's absence.

6.3 The following legal measures will be used 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

Where a child has unauthorised absence the school must enforce Hampshire County Council's ***Code of conduct: issuing Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence from schools*** 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. A copy is available from:

The **Code of conduct** states that schools or Hampshire County Council 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 Penalty Notice is issued for either:

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

This includes where a pupil has unauthorised absence due to either:

- non-approval of a parent/carer's request for leave of absence, or
- a holiday that has been taken without permission.

Parents and carers will be warned of the likelihood of a Penalty Notice being issued for unauthorised absence via a letter, through the leave of absence request form, or through the school'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 school or Hampshire County Council will decide whether a Penalty Notice is issued to **one or more parents/carers** for each child. NB: This could mean four Penalty Notices for a family with two siblings, both with unauthorised absence for holiday, ie one Penalty Notice 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 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.

Please note: If you pay the Penalty Notice and your child has further unauthorised absences additional legal action will be taken. For example, in the event that a Penalty Notice has previously been served to you due to unauthorised holiday, should your child have any future unauthorised

leave this will result in further legal action for you, such as prosecution or an Education Supervision Order. For further information parents/carers can request a leaflet from their school and should visit Hampshire County Council's website at:

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/behaviour-attendance-parents>

7. Roles and Responsibilities

7.1 The Governing Board

The governing board 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.

7.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the attendance policy is consistently applied throughout the school. This person will also ensure that attendance is both recorded accurately and analysed. She 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 parents/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 to authorise absence will always rest with the school.

7.3 Class Teachers

Class teachers will:

- Ensure that all students are registered accurately.
- Promote and reward good attendance with students at all appropriate opportunities.
- Liaise with the attendance leader on matters of attendance and punctuality.
- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence.
- Support pupils with absence to engage with their learning once they are back in school.

7.4 Students

It is the responsibility of students, and parents to ensure that students:

- Attend every day unless they are ill or have an authorised absence.
- Arrive in school on time.
- Go to all their registrations and lessons on time.
- Take responsibility for registering at the reception desk if they are late or are leaving the school site during school hours.

7.5 Parents

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.

Parents will:

- inform the school on the first day of absence
- discuss with the tutor/class teacher any planned absences well in advance
- support the school with their child in aiming for 100% attendance each year
- make sure that any absence is clearly accounted for by telephone 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 leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance.

8. Encouraging good attendance

8.1 My child is trying to avoid coming to school. What should I do?

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse. Contact your child's class teacher immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with school work, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem. In some cases you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with another professional.

8.2 What can I do to encourage my child to attend school?

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that he/she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his/her education.

For many parents, your child attending school may be your first experience of being separated from them. This can seem daunting at first for both of you, but consistency and a caring, supportive home and school life will make the transition a quick and easy experience for you both.

Your child will bring home a school diary each evening. Please ensure you look at it with your child and sign it ready for the next day. Be interested in what your child is doing in school, chat to them about the things they have learnt, what friends they have made and even what they had for lunch!

8.3 Leavers

If your child is leaving our school (other than when transferring to secondary school) parents are asked to:

1. Give the school office comprehensive information about your plans, including any date of a move and your new address and telephone numbers, your child's new school and the start date when known. This should be submitted to our school in writing
2. If pupils leave and we do not have the above information, then your child is considered to be a child missing in education. This requires schools and local authorities to then carry out investigations to try and locate your child, which includes liaising with Children's Services, the Police and other agencies. By giving us the above information, these investigations can be avoided.

8.4 Absence through child participation in public performances, including theatre, film or television work and modelling

The regulations related to children participating in public performances are separate to those around authorising leave of absence. Headteachers can authorise this absence.

For further advice and guidance on child employment and performance licenses visit Hantsweb at:

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/childrenandfamilies/safeguardingchildren/childemployment> For national advice see: <http://www.gov.uk/child-performance-licence-england-scotland-wales>

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 any future leave of absence. It is, however, down to the headteacher's discretion as to 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. Any absence recorded as part of a child's participation in a public performance is recorded as C, an authorised absence.

8.5 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 as to 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 is also at the discretion of the headteacher and is not likely to be approved if it is a regular event, unless the sports club or association is providing an education tutor as part of their coaching.

8.6 Gypsy, Roma, Traveller or Showman families

For further advice and guidance on attendance and Gypsy, Roma, Traveller and Showman families, see Hampshire County Council guidance at:

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/emtas/travellers>

Please note pupils must have attended 200 sessions in a rolling 12-month period to be able to request leave for work purposes.

Further support and guidance is available from Hampshire County Council's Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service (EMTAS).

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. To ensure the continuity of learning for Traveller 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.

9. Record Preservation

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

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment

R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil 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 pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil 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 pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day