



Cluster Attendance Policy

Introduction

This is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Why Regular Attendance is So Important

Learning: - Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Safeguarding: - Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses: -

- Attendance
- Behaviour Management
- Health and Safety
- Access to the Curriculum
- Anti- bullying

Failing to attend this school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility- parents, children and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Report to you at least termly on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments;
- Celebrate and reward good or improving attendance

The law relating to attendance

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that *'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/ her to receive efficient full time education suitable: -*

- (a) To age, ability and aptitude and*
 - (b) To any special education needs he/ she may have*
- Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'*

The law relating to safeguarding

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and student under the age of 18.

Understand Types of Absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required formally.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/ dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the local authority/ the school using sanctions and/ or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/ carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your 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 usually makes things worse.

Persistent Absenteeism

A child becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or at risk of moving towards this mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

PA children are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

All our PA children and their parents are subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include: allocation of additional support, individual incentive programmes and participation in group activities around raising attendance.

All PA cases are also automatically made known to the local authority.

Absence Procedures

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence; preferably before 09:00. This can either be via a telephone call, sending us an email or reporting to the school office.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Record and monitor any absence.
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with us if the absence is below 90%.
- Refer the matter to the local authority if attendance consistently moves near to 85%

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the local authority, Legal Intervention Panel for Attendance. He/ she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court under Section 444, Education Act 1996 can be used. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the local authority.

Telephone Numbers

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have you contact numbers at all times. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number- if we don't then something important may be missed.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss important learning. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

How we manage lateness:

Children are welcome into the classrooms for “**Early Bird**” from **8:40am** at the junior site and **8:45am** at infant site. The school day officially starts at **9am** at the infant site and **8:55am** at the junior site and children must be in school at that time.

Registers are marked by **9:10am** at the infant site and **9:05am** at the junior site. Your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At **9:15am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with us to resolve the problem but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Leave of Absence in Term Time

We expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time.

There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

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* is 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 will need to fill in an application form in advance before making any travel arrangements.

If term-time leave is taken without prior permissions from the school, the absence will be unauthorised and if the number of sessions hits the thresholds set down in Hampshire County Councils *Code of conduct*, all parents/carers will be issued with a fixed-penalty fine or other legal action in accordance with the code.

Each school checks the attendance of siblings with our cluster schools and if one member of the family has attendance causing concern or is affected by one of the important date, leave of absence will not be authorised for any child.

Absence through Child Participation in Public Performances, Including Theatre, Film or Television 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 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.

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.

Gypsy, Roma, Traveller 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 if 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.

School Targets, Projects and Special

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

The minimum level of attendance for this school is **95%** attendance and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares. Our target is to achieve better than this however, because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe our children can be amongst the best in the country.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

Summary:

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. All school staff are committed to working with parents and children in the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible and that every child's welfare and life opportunities are promoted.