



Joint Attendance Policy

This attendance policy has been written and agreed by the following schools, working in collaboration:

Cherbourg Primary, Crescent Primary, Crestwood Community, Nightingale Primary, Norwood Primary and Pre-School, Shakespeare Infants, Shakespeare Juniors

We have worked together to develop this policy to ensure a consistent approach to attendance between our schools, providing parents with reassurance that our schools are working together in the best interests of their children. Attendance officers from each school will meet half termly to review good practice and consistency.

Whilst being a joint policy, there is an element of personalisation to reflect the uniqueness of each school.

Section 1: Rationale/statement of intent

For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential.

We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our pupils/students and endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome. Parents and pupils play a part in making our school so successful. Every child has a right to access the education to which he/she is entitled. Parents, carers, staff and governors share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all.

It is our duty to consistently strive to achieve a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.



For our children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered it is vital your child is at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. The routines children develop around attendance and punctuality at school are the same as the expectations of any future employer in the world of work. High attainment, confidence with peers and staff, and future aspirations depend on good attendance.

Good attendance is important because:

- statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%
- regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with
- regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school, and higher education, employment or training.

This attendance policy should be read alongside our safeguarding policy, our teaching and learning policy and our inclusion/SEND policy.

Section 2: Operating the policy

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child. The Home School Agreement/Letter of Understanding 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 regular/weekly home school bulletin/newsletter/website
- 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
- celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements
- reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates and outings/ events/individual basis
- set targets for the school and for classes for attendance and display these in the school
- run events when parents, pupils and staff can work together on raising attendance levels across the school.

Roles and responsibilities

Responsibilities of the school's attendance leader

A member of the senior leadership team 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. (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 parents/carers the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage and support 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 **school**.

Responsibilities of classroom staff

- 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.

Responsibilities of 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.

Responsibilities of parents/carers

- inform the school on the first day of absence and every day afterwards
- 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.

If you have chosen to register your child at you are legally responsible for ensuring they attend school regularly and punctually (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.

Section 3

3.1 Recording attendance

Legally the register must be marked twice daily. This is once at the start of the school day, 9.00am, and again for the afternoon session at 1pm. Missing school for a whole day equates to two sessions or absences.

3.2 Lateness/punctuality

It is important to be on time at the start of the morning and afternoon school sessions and to lessons. The start of school/lessons is used to give out instructions or organise work. If your child is late they can miss work time with their class teacher getting vital information, cause disruption to the lesson for others, and it can cause issues, such as embarrassment, that can lead to possible further absence.

- All lateness is recorded daily. This information will be required by the courts, should a prosecution for non-attendance or lateness be necessary.

- Arrival after the close of registration will be marked as unauthorised absence and coded U in line with Hampshire County Council and Department of Education guidance. This mark shows them to be on site but is legally recorded as an absence.
- Arrival during registration will be marked as late
- If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence, coded M. Please be advised that, where possible, doctors' and dentists' appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays.

Department for Education guidance suggests all official registers should be closed a maximum of 30 minutes after the start of school – but schools can choose to use a shorter period.

For further advice and guidance refer to: Hampshire County Council's guidance, promoting pupil attendance recording absence, available at: <http://documents.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/HIAS/Promotingpupilattendanceandrecordingabsence-maindocument.pdf>

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

Parents, guardians 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, guardians or carers will be invited to attend the school 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 school or Hampshire County Council will be required to issue parents with a Penalty Notice in accordance with Hampshire County Council's Code of conduct: issuing Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence from schools (See Section 6 of this policy for further detail).

3.3 What to do if my child is absent?

This section should set out the school's expectations of parents in reporting any absence and set out the school's internal procedures for responding to a child's absence.

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 your child is absent you must:

- contact us as soon as possible in the morning on the first day of absence or you can call into school and report the absence to the Admin team
- send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even if you have already telephoned us

If your child is absent, we will telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you by 9.30am – this is because we have a duty to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance. We need to have at least two active contact numbers.

Third day absence

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 record all contact attempts on a **Child Missing in Education tracking form** as set down by Hampshire County Council guidance whilst still continuing to attempt to make contact. We will make all reasonable enquiries to establish contact with parents/carers and the child, including making enquiries to known friends and wider family. If appropriate, two members of staff may try to make a personal visit to any known addresses. The CME form will be submitted to cme@hants.gov.uk if at 20 school days contact still hasn't been made.

Ten days' absence

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named 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.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days, the pupil can be removed from the admission register when the school and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to establish the whereabouts of the child. This only applies if the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause.

We are required to notify the local authority within five days of adding a pupil's name to the admission register at a non-standard transition point. The notification must include all the details contained in the admission register for the new pupil. This duty does not apply when a pupil's name is entered in the admission register at a standard transition point – at the start of the first year of education normally provided by that school – unless the local authority requests that such returns are to be made.

Please help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up-to-date contact number. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year to ensure that the school has all up to date contact/information details.

Continued or ongoing absence

If your child misses 10% (three weeks/ 30 sessions) or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason, they are defined as **persistent absentees**. 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 attendance falls to 95%, or 90% or below we will:

- invite you in to discuss the situation with our attendance officer and/or pastoral leaders/ head teacher if absences persist

- refer the matter to the Hampshire County Council's Attendance Legal Panels if absence is unauthorised and falls below 90% - you may be subject to a penalty warning notification and a fine
- persistent absentee pupils and their parents are subject to an Attendance Plan or home school contract
- we may contact the Eastleigh Early Help Hub for further advice and support

See further guidance in Hampshire County Council's Guidance for children on roll but absent and at risk of missing in education: <http://documents.hants.gov.uk/education/Guidanceforchildrenatriskofmissingineducation-revisedSept2014.pdf>.

A welcome back

We will ensure that on return from **any absence** all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date with any information that has been passed to the other pupils. It is vital that children enjoy coming to school, and whilst they will be encouraged to attend well and on time, they will not carry blame and be made to feel unhappy if there are family issues that result in attendance being compromised.

Collecting your Child

Please collect your child promptly at the end of the school day. If you are going to be late, please phone the school office to update us so we can reassure your child(ren). Where late collection is persistent and/or significantly late (5.30pm or beyond), the school is obliged to take any uncollected pupil to a place of safety and share concerns, as necessary, with other agencies. If one is available, the school will place a child into the after-school club and provide the parent/carer with the bill.

Section 4

Request for leave of absence

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. Leave of absence forms need to be collected by a parent from the school office, or parents need to call the office to request a form before one is sent home with a pupil.

When a leave of absence form is received by the school, we shall liaise with other schools who have siblings/relatives who would also be impacted by the absence request. It is your

responsibility to indicate the schools that other siblings attend. All schools will respond within 3 school days after consultation with each other.

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.

For national guidance refer to:

- School attendance, 2014, located at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance
- National Association of Headteachers' guidance document on Authorised absence, 2014: www.naht.org.uk/welcome/news-and-media/key-topics/parents-and-pupils/naht-issues-newguidance-on-authorised-absence/.

For Hampshire County Council advice and guidance refer to:

- Guidance on recording absence: <http://documents.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/HIAS/Promotingpupilattendanceandrecordingabsence-maindocument.pdf>
- Guidance on approval of Extended leave of absence: www.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/lba-resources-for-schools/atten-guidance/attendance-guidance-for-schools.

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 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 of absence from school after a parent's request. This includes:
 - a. parents giving their children permission to be off school unnecessarily, such as for shopping, birthdays, to look after siblings
 - b. truancy before or during the school day
 - c. 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. Any changes will be communicated to parents/carers either in writing, by telephone or during a meeting.

Section 6

Penalty Notices for non-attendance and other legal measures

In 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. Penalty Notices are intended to be used in tackling parentally condoned absence, where it is reasonable to expect that the parent can ensure the child's regular attendance, but s/he is not willing to take responsibility for doing so, e.g. where a parent is not co-operating with advice or support offered to help improve his or her child's attendance.

Legal measures for tackling persistent absence or lateness

Hampshire schools and Hampshire County Council will use the full range of legal measures to support and 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.

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 following 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: www.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/attendance-guidance-forparents/possible-penalties.

The Code of conduct states that schools or Hampshire County Council will issue a Penalty Notice for any unauthorised absence where a pupil of compulsory school age 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 - these do not need to be consecutive
- persistently late before the close of the register (coded L), for 10 more school sessions 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

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:

- 10 sessions of unauthorised absence or lateness in any 10 week school period
- 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. If, after a warning letter has been issued, there is sufficient irregular attendance to merit a Penalty Notice, it must be issued within 7 days of the period of absence, unless there are exceptional reasons against taking this action.

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: www.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/attendance-guidance-forparents/possible-penalties.

Hampshire's Attendance Legal Panels

School must complete an attendance legal panel referral form if the threshold for legal action is met and if prosecution is appropriate. The panel considers if it is appropriate to pursue legal action on cases presented by the school and to ensure that the evidence provided is robust and unambiguous enough to be presented in court.

Section 7

7.1 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.

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

Make sure your child gets a suitable breakfast, 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, chat to them about the things they have learnt, their friends and even what they had for lunch.

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.

EBSA

Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) is a broad umbrella term used to describe a group of children and young people who have severe difficulty in attending school due to emotional factors, often resulting in prolonged absences from school. A clear distinction is made between those that are absent from school due to truancy and those that are absent from school due to the specific emotional distress that they experience around attending school.

School play a very important role in identifying factors associated with pupil vulnerability and the potential triggers leading to EBSA. See EBSA documentation from Hampshire January 2021 -

<https://documents.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/EBSA-good-practice-guidance.pdf>

7.2 Leavers

If your child is leaving our school other than when transferring to the junior school/secondary school or leaving at the end of Year 11 parents are asked to:

- Give the attendance officer comprehensive information about their 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.
- Inform the school, in writing, if you are choosing to electively home educate your child.
- 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.

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

For example:

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.

7.4 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.

7.5 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 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.

Section 8 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.

Agreed by Gobs and reviewed Sept 25