



Attendance Policy

Policy approved and adopted: November 2023

Review date: November 2025

The Education Act 1996 requires that all parents secure full time education for any child of compulsory school age (between 5 and 16 years).

The latest Department for Education Guidance can be found in [‘Working together to improve school attendance’](#).

For a child to reach their full potential, they need to come to school.

We are committed to providing the highest quality education for all our pupils and strive to provide a place where pupils feel valued and welcome. Parents and pupils are vital in making our school successful. Every child has a right to access the education that they are legally entitled to. Parents and school staff share the responsibility for ensuring excellent school attendance and punctuality. **The basis for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child.**

The routines children have around attendance and punctuality at school are the same as any future employer in the world of work.

Good attendance is important because:

- Regular attenders (above 95%) make better academic progress.
- Regular attenders (above 95%) find school routines easier to manage.
- Regular attenders (above 95%) find friendships easier to manage.
- Regular attenders (above 95%) find learning more satisfying.
- Regular attenders (above 95%) are more successful in moving between primary school, secondary school, higher education and employment.

90% attendance is the same as missing half a day of school every week.

Parents are breaking the law if they do not make sure that their child comes to school regularly.

Our staff are aware that low attendance can be a sign of more complex, safeguarding concerns. They are aware of what to do if they have these concerns.

To help us achieve this, we will:

- Provide information.
- Let parents know how their child is doing in school.
- Let parents know what their child’s attendance and punctuality is, and how this is affecting their attainment.
- Celebrate good attendance or improving attendance.
- Meet with parents to discuss how home and school can work together to increase attendance.

Roles and Responsibilities

The **Headteacher (Mrs Tracey Hickie)** is the 'authorised person', so any decisions will ultimately be made by them.

Responsibilities of the School's Attendance Officer (Mr Warren Gargan): Will make sure that attendance is recorded accurately and analysed. They will ensure that issues are identified so that support can be put in place. If absence is a concern, staff will talk to parents/carers and look for ways to reduce absences.

The day to day administration and recording of attendance, is carried out by the **Attendance Admin Officer (Mrs Jayne Yung)**.

The Governing Body is responsible for monitoring of the implementation of this policy.

Responsibilities of Classroom Staff:

- Ensure that all pupils are registered accurately and promptly.
- Promote good attendance.
- Raise any concerns over attendance and punctuality, and any possible underlying problems.
- Support pupils, who have been absent, with their learning, once they are back in school.

Responsibilities of Students:

- Talk to staff and parents when something is bothering them.
- Come to school every day unless they are ill or have an authorised absence.
- Arrive in school on time and go to class.
- Make sure they go to Reception if they are late.

Responsibilities of Parents and Carers:

- Make sure that their child's attendance is as high as possible.
- Be honest about why they are absent.
- Not allow absences that are not authorised such as birthdays.
- Talk to school staff when there is a problem and support us to improve attendance.
- Report absence as quickly as possible.
- Discuss any planned absences well in advance with school.
- Make sure that any absence is clearly explained.
- Avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments.

A note or explanation from a parent does not mean an absence is approved. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence always rests with the Headteacher.

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

If a child is reluctant to come to school, please do not try to cover it up or to give in to pressure to let them stay at home. This often make things worse.

Contact your child's class teacher and talk about the worries. Your child could be avoiding school for lots of reasons – difficulties with school work, anxiety, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason that they do not want to come to school so that it can be tackled together.

Make sure your child has a set bedtime routine, gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning.

Make sure that they leave home on time, in the correct clothes and with the right equipment.

Show your child that school is important by talking about it - find out what their topics are and take an interest in the things that they enjoy.

We take mental health conditions seriously and will work together with families to ensure that pupils are supported.

Understanding Types of Absence:

Authorised Absence: is when the school has accepted the reason for the absence. If no reason is given, absences cannot be authorised.

Unauthorised Absence: is when the school has not received a reason or has not accepted that reason, for example being off for shopping, birthdays or to look after their brothers and sisters.

School can change an authorised absence to an unauthorised absence, or the other way, if we have new information. **For example, if a parent tells us that their child is unwell but we find out they have been on holiday.**

Recording and Reporting

Legally, the register is taken twice a day. Once at 8.55am and then again at 1:15pm. School registers are legal documents so records are kept for at least three years.

Leaving Early

If you need to collect your child early, please let us know in advance so that we can make sure your child is ready. **Due to the number of pupils being collected early, school is now asking parents to share appointment cards, emails or texts so that we can authorise these absences.**

Lateness /Punctuality

It is important to be on time. The start of the day is often used to give out instructions, correct misunderstandings, and prepare pupils for new learning. If a child is late, they can miss learning and it can be embarrassing for them.

08:35 – Gates are unlocked

08:50 – Gates are locked and pupils who arrive after this time need to come through Reception

08:55 - Register are taken

From 8:55 to 09:10 - Pupils will be marked as Late (L code)

After 09:10 – Pupils will be marked Late (U code, which counts as an absence)

Children stay on the school site during lunchtime. If a child is arriving for the afternoon, they need to be in class by 1.15pm.

If a pupil is late because of a medical appointment, they will be marked as 'M' which is an authorised absence. Please collect your child as close to the time of the appointment as possible and return them as quickly as possible afterwards.

Pupils who are often late are disrupting their own education and that of other pupils. Repeated lateness can lead to **legal action.**

If there are patterns of lateness, parents will be contacted to talk about it and agree how it can be improved.

If this support is not appropriate or is turned down, and a child is late for 10 or more sessions (in any 10-week period) school may take further action. This could include, a Penalty Notice Fine or a referral being made to the Legal Intervention Team.

Parents need to collect children promptly at the end of the school day. If you are late, staff will take children to Reception. If staff are worried about this, school may share concerns with other agencies. **If a parent is more than 20 minutes late, the child will go to Runway Club, and the parent is likely to be charged.**

If your child is absent, you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence. Ideally you should phone and speak with a member of staff. However, you can also:
 - leave a message on the answer machine
 - put a message on StudyBugs
 - email us at office@cove-jun.hants.sch.uk.
- Please keep us up-to-date about the absence and when your child is likely to be back.

If your child is absent we will:

- Phone you, if we have not heard from you, so that we can make sure your child is safe.
- Invite you in to talk about any worries that we have.
- Refer to the Legal Intervention Team if there are no improvements.

If you are not sure, bring them in school. If we are worried, we can always give you a call.

If a pupil has not been seen, and we have not been able to contact parents, school will take other steps such as contacting known friends or wider family, and visit the home. If this has not changed within **10 days, then the local authority is informed** that the child is *at risk of being missing*. Children's Services staff will visit the last known address and alert key services such as the police.

Continued or Ongoing Absence

Good attendance is above 95%. If your child's attendance drops below 90% they are defined as a **persistent absentee**.

If a child is often away for medical reasons, school will arrange to meet the parents to understand what is happening to tackle the ill-health.

Together, we could decide to:

- Make an Early Help Hub referral
- Write a Parent Agreement/Contract
- Insist on medical evidence before the absence can be authorised
- Refer to the Legal Intervention Team
- Speak directly with medical professionals.

The school does not have to authorise absences for medical reasons. If your child's attendance is lower than 90%, you will have to provide medical evidence such as appointment cards. Without this evidence, school will not authorise the absence.

Request for Leave of Absence:

There is no legal right for time off in school time to go on holiday. In most cases, holidays are not authorised. However, each family's situation is different.

Parents/carers asking for time away must fill in an application form (available from the school website or the school office) **before making travel arrangements**.

Without agreement, absences will **be unauthorised**. If this reaches 10 sessions in 100, **one or both parent/carer can be issued a fixed-penalty fine for each child**. School may also decide to take other legal action.

Legal Measures:

A *parent* includes:

- All natural parents (whether they are married or not)
- Anybody who has parental responsibility for a child
- Anybody who, even if they are not a natural parent, has care of a child (Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 and the Children Act 1989).

Penalty Notices are aimed to tackle absences that the parent has agreed to.

Before issuing of a Penalty Notice, school will check that:

- This will help the pupil return to school and/or ensure future regular attendance.
- It is reasonable to expect that the parent is able to ensure that the pupil is in school regularly.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-responsibility-measures-for-behaviour-and-attendance>

How will Penalty Notices be issued?

Where absences reach 10 missed sessions within 100 sessions, the Headteacher may issue a Penalty Notice.

If it is the first time, the Headteacher could write to the parent or meet with them, to explain:

- Details of the absence.
- Possible advice and support.
- Legal responsibilities of the parent.
- Possible consequences that further unauthorised absences could lead to a Penalty Notice or prosecution.

Within 15 school days of the letter or meeting, attendance should have significantly improved and this improvement must be continued. If this does not happen the headteacher will decide on further action, which could include issuing a Penalty Notice.

If a child is 'looked after', the headteacher **must** also send a copy of the letter to the child's social worker as well as to the Director of Children's Services for the Local Authority who is responsible for 'looked after' children.

The headteacher has the option whether or not to issue one or more parent with a Penalty Notice. This allows them to consider specific circumstances.

These steps may not be appropriate, for example in connection to a holiday during term time.

There is no right to appeal a Penalty Notice. Once it has been issued, it can only be withdrawn if it is found that it should not have been issued in the first place. Where the headteacher withdraws a Penalty Notice, they must notify Children's Services explaining why it is being withdrawn.

Where a child has **unauthorised absence**, school must follow Hampshire County Council's *Code of Conduct: Issuing Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence from schools* or its guidance on other legal matters. This ensures that sanctions are consistent and fair. A copy is available from:

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

The Penalty Notice is a fine that is given to each parent/carer who allowed the unauthorised absence. This could mean 4 Penalty Notices for a family with two siblings, 1 fine for each child for each parent.

- 1) Each Penalty Notice carries a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days of the Penalty Notice being posted.
- 2) If the fine is not paid within 21 days, the penalty is automatically increased to £120.
- 3) If the fine remains unpaid after 28 days, Hampshire County Council will consider prosecution for the non-attendance.

Fines are paid to Hampshire County Council and not to the school.

If a Penalty Notice Fine has been issued, and there are more unauthorised absences, further legal steps can be taken. For example, if a family go on holiday the following year. This can include;

- **A Second Holiday Prosecution (up to £2500 fine, a community order/jail sentence)**
- **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>

Other Circumstances

Leavers

If a child is leaving (other than when they go secondary school), parents must give school information about their plans **in writing**, including:

- Date of a move
- The new address and telephone numbers
- The child's new school
- The start date when known.

If pupils leave and we do not have this information, then your child is considered to be a 'Absent from Education'. Schools and Local Authorities have to try and locate your child, which may involve Children's Services, the Police and other agencies.

Public Performances, including theatre, film or TV work & Modelling.

Parents/carers of a child performer must contact the headteacher to discuss;

- The sort of work involved
- When the work will take place
- If the child has a valid performance licence
- If education is being given whilst the pupil is away from school

The headteacher must decide to authorise this or not. Any absence recorded as part of a child's participation in a public performance is recorded as C, an authorised absence.

Competitive sport.

We want to support pupils who are talented in sport and may be taking part in regional, county, national and international events and competitions. The headteacher must decide to authorise this or not. Permission for your child to leave early or arrive late to go to coaching and training sessions can also be given by the headteacher.

Gypsy, Roma, Traveller, Showman, Boater and their families

Pupils must have at least 90% attendance to be able to ask for time off for work purposes.

- If a child has left the area **for work reasons**, school can authorise the absence if we believe that the family plans on returning.
- To reduce missed school, a child can be dual registered.
- School cannot remove a child from our register while they are travelling.
- School must know that your child is Gypsy, Roma, Traveller, Showman or Boater.
- The absence can be authorised through the T code.

For further advice and guidance contact Hampshire County Council's EMTAS team.

Double Click the following audio links for more information:



Good
Attendance.m4a



Registration and
Lateness.m4a



Ill Health and
Medical Appointments.m4a



Holiday
Requests.m4a



Request to authorise absence from school due to exceptional circumstances

Schools are only able to authorise absence from school in exceptional circumstances. In making a request for an authorised absence from school you will need to explain why the circumstances are exceptional. **Please note:** There is no general right to authorise absence for a family holiday. If you take your child out of school without permission the absence will be unauthorised and we will consider legal action.

You are advised not to make any arrangements until your request has been considered.

Section A – to the headteacher, I wish to apply for

Child's name: _____ Class: _____

To be authorised as absent from school (please include dates and time):

from _____ to _____ (inclusive dates)

If your child has siblings that are also applying for a leave of absence please enter their name and school below:

Child's name(s): _____ School(s): _____

Section B Please explain why you are applying for an authorised absence and the **circumstances** which make your **application exceptional**; and therefore the leave cannot be taken within the normal 13 weeks holiday your child has from school. If you are requesting authorisation to attend a specific event please confirm the date of the event and explain your travel arrangements. If you require additional space please continue on the other side of the page.

Section C I am the parent/carer with whom the pupil normally resides. The information I have given on this form is correct.

Signature (parent/carer): _____ Date: _____

PTO

Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 have been amended (as of 1 September 2013) to prohibit the proprietor (headteacher) of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

Section D – for school use only.

Tick as appropriate.

Request approved for ____ number of days from the dates and times _____

A personal discussion with you is requested. Please contact: _____

Request not approved as the circumstances are not considered to constitute an exceptional reason and/or the impact of this absence will affect your child's educational progress.

PLEASE NOTE: This leave of absence form serves as a Penalty Notice Warning letter to parent/carers. Any unauthorised absence during this period of time may be subject to a penalty notice for non attendance being issued.

Headteacher: _____ Date: _____

Current attendance rate: _____

Continuation of section B (if required):

How do I pay?

Details of payment arrangements are included in the Penalty Notice. You must ensure that you include your Penalty Notice reference number on any payment method so the payment can be tracked. Failure to do so may result in the Penalty Notice being recorded as unpaid. Full payment is required within prescribed timescales - see '*What Happens If I Do Not Pay?*' below . Payment in part or by instalments is not possible. Late payments will not under any circumstances discharge criminal liability for the offence and you may be liable for prosecution. Any late payments received will be refunded.

What happens if I do not pay?

From the date of posting you have up to 21 days to pay £60 or failing that a further 7 days to pay £120. If you fail to make any payment with the 28 days provided the local authority will consider commencing proceedings in the Magistrates' Court for the original offence of failing to ensure regular attendance under s444 Education Act 1996. If convicted there are a number of possible sentences, including a fine of up to £1,000 (in the case of a prosecution under section 444(1)) or a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a period of up to three months' imprisonment (in the case of a prosecution under section 444(1A)).

Can I get help if my child is not attending school?

Yes. The school is available to provide advice and support and signpost you to other support agencies in the locality.

SERVICES FOR SCHOOLS

Information on Penalty Notices for non-attendance at school

Education Act 1996, section 444A

Advice for parents and carers

Applied from February 2019



Penalty Notices and the Education Act 1996

Section 444A of the Act gives powers to the local authority, and headteachers to issue Penalty Notices in circumstances where it is believed that a person has committed an offence under Section 444(1); that is, where a child fails to attend regularly at their registered school.

What is a Penalty Notice?

A Penalty Notice is a fine which may be issued as an alternative to prosecution. If it is paid it does not require a court appearance and does not result in a criminal record.

Who can be issued with a Penalty Notice?

Where absence warrants the issuing of a Penalty Notice, anyone with Parental Responsibility, or having day to day care of the child can be issued with one Penalty Notice for each of the children with unauthorised absence. If two parents have two children this may result in four Penalty Notices, 2 Penalty Notices per parent.

What if my child has further unauthorised absence from school?

If you pay the Penalty Notice and your child has further unauthorised absences additional legal action may 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 may result in further legal action for you, such as prosecution or an Education Supervision Order.

How is a Penalty Notice issued and how much is the fine?

Penalty Notices are either posted to your home or delivered to you by hand. Each Penalty Notice fine is £60 if paid within 21 days of the date of posting and £120 if paid after this but within 28 days of the date of posting.

When are they issued?

As set down by the Department for Education, Penalty Notices can be issued for unauthorised absence. In Hampshire, Penalty Notices are issued when a pupil has had 10 or more half-day sessions (equivalent

to five school days) of unauthorised absence, in the last 10 school week period.

Unauthorised absence is absence not approved by the school and will be coded on your child's attendance record as one of the following:

- O – unauthorised absence
- U – late after close of registration
- G – non-approved leave of absence (holiday).

Persistent Lateness (L) code which reaches the threshold may result in the issuing of a Penalty Notice.

Is a warning given?

If your child has an ongoing pattern of unauthorised absence then you will normally receive a written warning of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued. This warning will advise you about the extent of your child's absence and warn you that if your child's attendance does not show a significant improvement and if this improvement is not maintained thereafter, a Penalty Notice may be issued without further warning.

Further support, advice and guidance is available from:

The Department for Education

- www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence/overview
- www.gov.uk

Hampshire County Council

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

Is there an appeal process?

There is no statutory right of appeal. Once a Penalty Notice has been issued, it can only be withdrawn if it can be shown that it was issued in error.