ELSON JUNIOR SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY 2026-2027

ADAPTABILITY ASPIRATION COMPASSION CREATIVITY INTEGRITY

Elson Junior School

ATTENDANCE POLICY

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Introduction

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the statutory guidance on Working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE). We aim to achieve this through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, which includes:

Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils

Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance

Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence

Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled

Acting early to address patterns of absence

Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Good attendance is extremely important for all pupils. It is essential to enable pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances.

Additionally, it is a legal requirement. 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.

'The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school. Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.'

Working together to improve school attendance, DfE, July 2026

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 the 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.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. At Elson Junior School we are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our learners 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 they are entitled. Parents and teachers 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 the school target for 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:

- 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.

Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%. The pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 (KS2) and key stage 4 (KS4) have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment.

For example, at KS2, pupils not meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths had an overall absence rate of 4.7%, compared to 3.5% among those meeting the expected standard. Moreover, the overall absence rate of pupils not meeting the expected standard was higher than among those meeting the higher standard (4.7% compared to 2.7%). (Working together to improve school attendance, DfE, July 2026)

This policy, therefore, aims to treat the root causes of absence and remove barriers to attendance in order to secure the best outcomes for the children that attend Elson Junior School. To this end, the school will work with all partners to:

Expect - Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

Monitor - Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

Listen and understand - When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

Facilitate support - Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

Formalise support - Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance contract or education supervision order.

Enforce - Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention: a penalty notice in line with the National Framework or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the DfE's statutory guidance on Working together to improve school attendance and School attendance parental responsibility measures. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

Part 6 of the Education Act 1996

Maintained schools: Part 3 of the Education Act 2002

Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006

- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

The Equality Act 2010

It also refers to:

School census guidance

Keeping Children Safe in Education

- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools
- Ofsted's 2025 framework toolkit

This Attendance policy is also consistent with the following school policies:

- Admissions
- Anti-bullying
- Child protection
- Safeguarding
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions

Roles and responsibilities

The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents/carers

Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations, statutory duties and comply with the law on school attendance, including:

- Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
- Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos

Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources

Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs

Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most

Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge

Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils' needs

Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance

Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:

- The importance of good attendance
- That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
- The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
- The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data

Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

The implementation of this policy at the school

Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors

Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils

Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies

Issuing penalty notices, where necessary, and/or authorising the Assistant Headteacher to be able to do so

Working with the parents/carers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers

Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs

Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents/carers through all available channels

Sharing information from the school register with the local authority

Notifying the local authority from the school admission register outside of standard transition times and within 5 days

Providing the LA with the names and addresses of pupils who fail to attend school regularly or have been absent for a continuous period of 10 school days with unauthorised codes (G, N, O, and/or U), submitted at least once a calendar month.

Notifying the LA when a pupil is recorded with code I (illness) and the school has reasonable grounds to believe they will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness in a school year

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader (also known as the 'senior attendance champion') is responsible for:

Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school

Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance

Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes

Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis

Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance

Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff

Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed

Building close and productive relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues

Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers

Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Catherine Paradine and can be contacted via 02392 583754 or adminoffice@elson-jun.hants.sch.uk.

The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 9)

Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement

Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the headteacher

Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

Advising the headteacher/assistant headteacher (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Rachel Blackwell and can be contacted via 02392 583754 or adminoffice@elson-jun.hants.sch.uk

Class teachers

- Ensure that all students are registered accurately for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the school procedure, in a timely manner. School registers must be completed by 9am and 1:15pm each day.
- 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.

School admin staff

School admin staff will:

Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system

Match calls from parents/carers to the daily registers and annotate reasons for absence

Contact parents/carers in line with the school absence procedures if a pupil is absent and the school has not been informed.

Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

All natural parents, whether they are married or not

All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person

Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents are expected to:

Make sure their child attends every day on time

Call the school to report their child's absence before 8:30am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence unless otherwise notified, and advise when they are expected to return

Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child, in addition to the contact details of the child's parents/carers

Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority

Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the school for advice and support

Responsibilities of parents and carers

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 by 9.00 am,
- make sure that any absence is clearly accounted for by telephone, email or text on the first **and subsequent days of absence**,
- discuss with the class teacher any planned absences well in advance,
- support their child in aiming for the school attendance target of 96%,
- 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. Generally, in line with the DfE guidance, requests for term-time holidays and absence due to recreation and leisure are not considered to be exceptional circumstances and therefore will not be approved by the school.
- Provide the school with 3 emergency contact details
- Keep to any attendance plans or contracts that are agreed with the school and/or local authority

- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting Beki Hull, Home Link Worker/Mental Health Lead who can be contact via 02392 583754 or r.hull@elson-jun.hants.sch.uk

Parent and carers are able to access and monitor a record of their child's attendance via the school's Arbor app.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend every day unless they are ill or have an authorised absence.
- Arrive in school on time. The school doors open at 8:35 and the school day starts at 8:45.
- Take responsibility for registering at the reception desk if they are late or are leaving the school site during school hours.

Recording attendance

Attendance register

We will keep an electronic attendance register, and place all pupils on this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of each morning session of each school day and once during each afternoon session. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:

Present

Attending a place other than school

Absent

Absent – unable to attend due to unavoidable causes

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.

We will also record:

Whether the absence is authorised or not

The nature of the activity, where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity

The nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The school day starts at [8:45am] and ends at [3:15pm].

Pupils must arrive in school by [8:45am] on each school day. The school doors open at 8:35am in order for children to arrive early and get settled ready to start learning. Learning starts at 8:45am and all children are expected to be in school at this time.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:45am and will be kept open until [time – not longer than 30 minutes after the session begins, or the length of the form time or first lesson in which registration takes place].

The register for the second session will be taken at [time] and will be kept open until [time – it should be open for the same length of time as the morning session and no longer than 30 minutes, according to page 19 of Working together to improve school attendance].

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.

If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence, coded *M*. However, please be advised that, where possible, doctors and dentists appointments should be made outside of school hours or during school holidays.

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

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 below for further detail).

Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9:00am, or as soon as practically possible, by calling the school admin staff, who can be contacted via 02392 583754 or adminoffice@elson-jun.hants.sch.uk.

If your child is absent and we have not heard from you we will telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you – this is because we have a duty to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance

If we are unable to make contact with parents/carers we:

- Will contact with 2nd, 3rd and emergency contact numbers if we cannot reach primary parents/carers
- may conduct a home visit, submit an Inter-Agency Referral Form to Children's Services or phone the police

We will then:

Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the pupil was absent

Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary

Where a child has a social worker or youth offending team worker, attendance concerns and unexplained absences will be shared appropriately.

If the absences persist, we will

Identify whether the absence is approved or not

invite you in to discuss the situation with a member of our attendance team if absences persist

- refer the matter to the Hampshire County Council's Legal Intervention Team if absence is unauthorised and falls below 90%.
- offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance

Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals

Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention as appropriate (see below for further details)

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for 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 illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

Three days' absence

Please note: If your child is not seen and contact has not been established with any of the named Parents or 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. We will make all reasonable enquiries to establish contact with parents/carers and the child, including making enquiries to known friends, wider family or visiting the home address.

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. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up-to-date contact number and responding to requests to update contact details throughout the school year.

Continued or ongoing absence

If your child's attendance falls below 90% 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 as does the local authority and the Department for Education. If your child has been absent and their attendance level is falling we will contact you to discuss this. Additionally, you may be invited to come into school to talk to a member of the attendance team to identify barriers to good attendance and agree actions that could support your child's attendance to improve. You may be asked to agree and sign an attendance contract. This would set out attendance expectations and actions that would be taken if they are not adhered to.

If absence remains a concern, we would refer to external agencies such as the Attendance Legal Panel or the local authority. You may incur a penalty notice or other legal measures (see 'Legal Measures and Penalty Notices' below for further details).

Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Where possible, the pupil should:

Be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary, and attend school before/after their appointment

Wear school uniform to their appointment, to make it easier to return to school afterwards

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours or in holidays where possible.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. See below to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code

After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

See below for more information about the school's processes for repeated lateness.

Reporting to parents

You can access your child's attendance and punctuality records via the school's Arbor app.

Authorised 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: 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: 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, for example:

- 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.

Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 school attendance regulations. These circumstances are:

Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad

Attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution

Study leave

A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable

Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for. The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

The fundamental principles for defining *exceptional* are rare, significant, or unavoidable, which means the event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time and are unlikely to reoccur. There are no rules on this as circumstances vary from school to school and family to family.

Examples might include

- medical emergencies or family emergencies (e.g. death/serious illness of a close relative).
- Death or funeral of immediate family (ie parent, grandparent or sibling)
- Transport was not provided by the LA when it should have been
- Children of service personnel about to go on or returning from deployment
- Time for children where parents are in the emergency services and leave cannot be taken at any other time
- Time for children where parents are in the armed forces and parental leave cannot be taken at any other time
- Absence could be authorised for a wedding of an immediate family member and the invitation has been provided as evidence.
- One-off sporting events/performing arts competitions
- One day of absence could be authorised for an immediate family member's graduation ceremony/passing-out parade.
- Operations which require recovery time

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

Other reasons for authorised absence

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments

Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart for religious observance. Pupils should attend school on the days surrounding those set apart for religious observance

- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – a pupil is a mobile child if their parent is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. In these circumstances a pupil will be considered as a mobile child, provided they are of compulsory school age and have no fixed abode and whose parent is in a trade or business that requires them to travel from place to place. This covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Absences from the school site (which are not classified as absences)

The headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings. These are not classified as absences. Reasons include (but are not limited to):

Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school

Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)

Attending provision arranged by the local authority

Attending work experience

If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

Other Absence

Term-time holidays

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday. There is no legal entitlement for time off in school term time to go on holiday and in the vast majority of cases holiday will not be authorised. Taking

holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to work with us to support their child's learning by not taking children out during school time.

Sporting/other competitions

The school encourages children to take part in sporting and other activities outside of school. These activities can sometimes involve attending competitions/grading/other events during term time and the school day.

Parents of able sportsmen and women can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in regional, county, national and international events and competitions. It is, however, down to the Headteacher's discretion whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs.

The child must have good attendance at all other times of the school year (e.g.above the school's target of 96%) and no absence will be authorised during statutory assessment dates.

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.

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

Parents/carers 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.

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. For information from Hampshire County Council about this, see Supporting Traveller pupils in school | Education and learning | Hampshire County Council

How to apply for leave of absence

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via our website and the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence. Parents/carers wishing to apply for leave of absence must apply in advance and do so 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.

Pupils who are leaving school

If your child is leaving our school (other than when transferring to a secondary school) parents are asked to share 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 via the school office.

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.

Record keeping and management

School registers are legal documents. We will ensure compliance with attendance regulations by keeping attendance records for at least 6 years. Computer registers will be preserved as electronic back-ups.

Strategies for promoting attendance

We want our pupils to succeed and develop their skills. To do this, pupils need to avoid missing lessons and days of school as much as possible. As a school, we want to reward high attendance and not just penalise pupils for poor attendance.

Good attendance (ie attendance above 96%) will be celebrated in school (eg in celebration assemblies) and those children with improved attendance will also have their progress recognised.

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 matters related to attendance via school letters, our social media platforms and school website and ensure that parents/carers, pupils and staff will work together on raising attendance levels.

Supporting pupils with poor attendance

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 best 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. Appendix 2 provides parents and other adults with scripts they can use to help children who are sometimes reluctant to attend school.

If your child is reluctant to attend school, you can contact your child's class teacher ~~immediately~~ and they will be able to discuss your worries. Your child could be reluctant to attend for a number of reasons, e.g. 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 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.
- 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!
- 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.

Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance, mental or physical ill health or SEND

In these circumstances, we would encourage you to contact your child's class teacher, our Home Link Worker/Mental Health Worker (Mrs Beki Hull) or SENDCo (Mrs Helen Adams) as appropriate so that an individual plan or support approach can be agreed to define strategies to remove barriers in-school, identify reasonable adjustments that can be made or additional support from other agencies that may be of benefit.

Where a pupil has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the pupil's needs, the school will inform the local authority.

The school recognises that young carers may face additional barriers to attendance and will work jointly with families, the local authority and relevant agencies to secure appropriate support.

See Appendix 3 for an overview of Elson Junior School's approach to improving and managing attendance.

Legal Measures and Penalty Notices

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.

Our school will make use of the full range of support and potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

See Appendix 4 for an overview of how Elson Junior School will provide support before attendance legal intervention and what might happen if formal or legal support is needed.

Legal measures for tackling persistent absence or lateness

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

- The child or family do not require or accept the support from any agency to improve 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:

attendance contracts set at Education Planning Meetings

parenting orders

Penalty Notices

Education Supervision Orders

prosecution

Attendance contract

We use attendance contracts as a form of attendance support.

An attendance contract is a formal written agreement between a parent and the school to address irregular attendance at school. An attendance contract is not legally binding, but it provides a more formal route where previous support has not worked or would not have been appropriate.

Parents cannot be compelled to enter an attendance contract, and the school cannot agree an attendance contract in a parent's absence.

Where an attendance contract would be an appropriate form of support, the school will arrange a meeting with the parent (and pupil if they are old enough to understand) to discuss how we can work in partnership to improve the pupil's attendance.

Where parents fail to comply with an agreed attendance contract, the school may seek an alternative course of action. In the first instance, this will include discussions with the parents to seek explanations and determine whether the attendance contract remains useful. Where there is further non-compliance following these discussions, the school may take further action.

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local authority Code of Conduct for Hampshire.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with

- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

Education supervision order

In cases where voluntary early help plans and attendance contracts have been unsuccessful, we may work with the local authority to issue an education supervision order. If an education supervision order is considered, the local authority will inform the parent(s) in writing and will set up a meeting.

An education supervision order is a formal intervention but **not** criminal prosecution.

An education supervision order initially lasts for 1 year, but it can be extended within the last 3 months for a period of up to 3 years at a time.

In cases where parents persistently fail to meet the directions given under the education supervision order, they may be liable to a fine of up to £1,000 upon conviction.

Penalty notices

Where a child has unauthorised absence, school must enforce Hampshire County Council's Code of conduct by issuing Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence from school or follow its guidance on other legal measures for non-attendance.

The Code of Conduct is a statutory document that ensures powers for legal sanctions are applied consistently and fairly across all schools and their families within the authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by the Headteacher, Assistant Headteacher, local authority or the police.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process. In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

Penalty Notices for non-attendance – Hampshire's Code of conduct

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 (codes G, U or O on the register)
- 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.

Legal measures for absence taken when the Headteacher has declined parents/ carers' request for leave of absence

A Penalty Notice for non-attendance will be issued where a pupil has unauthorised absence due to either:

- non-approval of a parent/carer's request for leave of absence
- a holiday that has been taken without permission and the unauthorised absence (coded G) is for 10 or more sessions (five days) in any 100 possible school sessions/10 week period

If a child has other types of unauthorised absence (coded O and U) and the family or child do not require any agency support to improve the attendance then a single Penalty Notice is issued for either:

- 10 sessions (five days) of unauthorised absence or lateness in any 100 possible school sessions/10 week school period
- one or more sessions of unauthorised absence during a public exam, formal school assessment of testing where dates are published in advance.

Parents and carers will be warned of the likelihood of a Penalty Notice being issued for unauthorised absence via a letter.

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. For example: £240 or £480 if not paid within 21 days.

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.

A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period; alternative legal measures (such as prosecution) must be pursued.

Hampshire County Council Guidance about school attendance, penalty notices, the Code of Conduct and other legal measures can be found here:

Attendance guidance for parents/carers | Education and learning | Hampshire County Council

PenaltyNotices-for-non-attendance-guidance-parents-carers.pdf

codeofconduct-IssuingPenaltyNoticesforunauthorisedabsencesfromschools.pdf

Legal measures for unauthorised absence | Education and learning | Hampshire County Council

Attendance monitoring

Monitoring attendance

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level.

Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request.

The school has granted the DfE access to its management information system so the data can be accessed regularly and securely.

Data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics.

The school will benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the governing board.

Analysing attendance

The school will:

Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and

Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence

Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends

Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis

Provide targeted support to the pupils we have identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severed absence, and their families (see below)

Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers/form tutors, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads)

Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence

Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education

Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:

- Discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
- Explain the help that is available
- Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
- Review any existing actions or interventions

Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant

Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence

Implement sanctions, where necessary (see above)

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

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
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Approved educational activity	Pupil is attending an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		

C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school

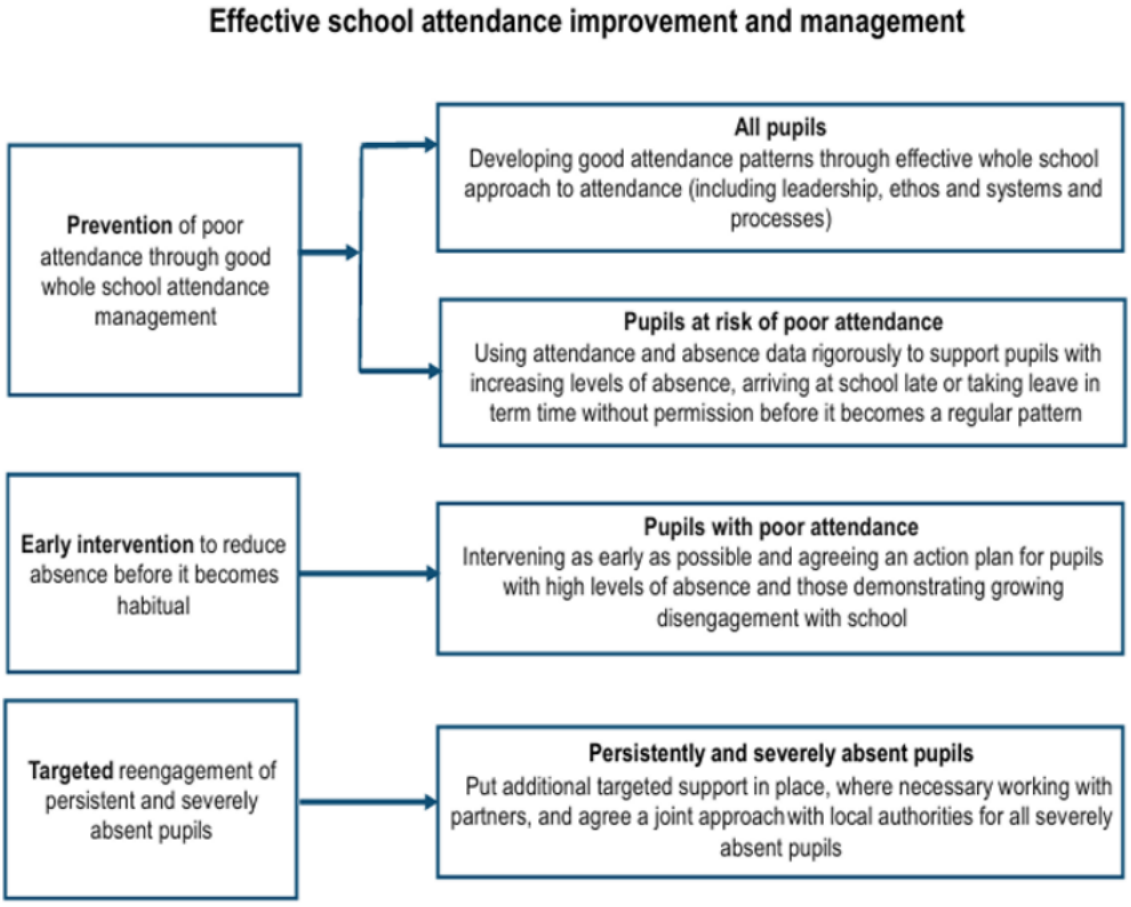
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are in police detention or youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session

Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

Appendix 2: Suggested scripts to help parents and other adults when children are sometimes reluctant to attend school

Situation	Student Might Say	Try These Scripts	Why It Helps
Refuses to get ready in the morning	"I don't want to go to school."	• "I hear you. Mornings can feel really hard." • "Let's focus on the next small step." • "You don't have to solve the whole day right now."	Validates distress and reduces overwhelm.
Says they feel sick to avoid school	"My stomach hurts."	• "Your body may be telling us you feel anxious." • "Let's slow down and make a plan that helps you feel safe." • "We'll check in again after the next step."	Acknowledges anxiety without shaming the child.
Feels anxious about separation	"I don't want to leave you."	• "I love you, and I will come back." • "You are safe, and the adults at school will help you." • "Let's choose one comfort item or goodbye routine."	Builds safety and predictability.
Worries about friends or bullying	"No one likes me there."	• "That sounds really painful." • "We will work together to make school feel safer." • "You deserve to feel respected and included."	Shows empathy and promotes problem-solving.
Feels overwhelmed by schoolwork or expectations	"It's too hard. I can't do it."	• "We'll break it into smaller steps." • "You do not have to do everything at once." • "We can start with one manageable part."	Reduces task overload and supports re-entry.
Has had a stressful school experience	"Something bad will happen again."	• "I'm sorry that happened." • "We'll make a plan to help you feel safer today." • "You have caring adults on your team."	Supports trust and emotional safety.
Shuts down or refuses to talk	"(Silence, crying, or turning away)"	• "It's okay. You don't have to talk right now." • "I'm here with you." • "When you're ready, we can take the next step together."	Reduces pressure and supports regulation.
Gets upset at the school entrance	"I can't go in."	• "This feels big right now, and we can go slowly." • "Let's just focus on getting to the next safe spot." • "We can do this one step at a time."	Encourages gradual movement without force.

Appendix 3 - Improving and managing attendance - overview



Appendix 4 - Support and legal intervention - overview

