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# SCHOOL POLICY

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## Attendance Policy 2025 - 2026



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| Policy Revision Date                           | 13 <sup>th</sup> October 2025     |
| Review Frequency                               | Annual                            |
| Role / Author                                  | HT – Catherine Paradine           |
| Governing Body Committee/HT                    | Full Governing Body               |
| Date of GB Meeting/HT review for approval      | 13 <sup>th</sup> October 2025     |
| Due with Clerk to Governors (where applicable) | 7 days before meeting date        |
| Governing Body/HT Approval Date                | FGB 20 <sup>th</sup> October 2025 |
| Status (draft / approved)                      | Approved                          |
| Date Policy Due for next review:               | October 2026                      |

## Policy Review

The following list must be completed prior to submission to the relevant Governing Body meeting/HT for approval.

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| Links with other Policies  | DfE document : Working together to improve school attendance read alongside guidance documents on parental responsibility measures, children missing education, supporting pupils with medical conditions at school, suspensions and exclusions, alternative provision, and safeguarding. |
| Model or Locally Produced  | LA Model, Reference to Model Policy from The Key for School Leaders   |
| Are changes to model policy or previous policy clearly identified (e.g. track changes)         | Existing policy   |
| In the view of the HT is the policy related to High, Medium or Low Risk activity to the school | Low   |
| What are the likely consequences to school of non-compliance                                   | Escalation to LA, safeguarding concerns   |
| Are the governors/SLT accountabilities clearly identified                                      | Yes   |
| Are other accountabilities clearly identified  | Yes   |
| Are there any particular issues/risks associated with implementation/operation of policy       | No  |
| How will policy effectiveness be evaluated   | Through monitoring exercise   |
| How will HT report to governors on effectiveness and when                                      | HT report at FGB  |
| When will the policy next be due for renewal (for statutory compliance)                        | October 2026  |
| Does the policy impact on available resources  | No  |



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## Introduction

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.’*

**DfE guidance: Working together to improve school attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities. Published: 29/2/24 Applicable from 19/8/24**

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

- Admissions
- Anti-bullying
- Child protection and Safeguarding

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.

## Section 1: Rationale and statement of intent

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%). **DfE guidance: Working together to improve school attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities. Published: 29/2/24 Applicable from 19/8/24**

### Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#) 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](#)
- Part 3 of the [Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)



## Section 2: Promoting good attendance

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child. The Home School Agreement will contain details of how we will work with parents, and our expectations of what parents will need to do to ensure their child achieves good attendance.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- provide information on matters related to attendance via school letters, our social media platforms and school 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 attainment,
- celebrate good attendance by acknowledging individual or class achievements when attendance targets are met,
- reward good or improving attendance through class competitions or certificates,
- set targets for the school for attendance and display these in the school,
- parents, pupils and staff will work together on raising attendance levels.

### Responsibilities of the governing body

- The governing board is responsible for:
  - Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
  - Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, 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

### Responsibilities of 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 fixed-penalty notices, where necessary, and/or authorising the Assistant Headteacher to be able to do so
  - Working with the parents 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 through all available channels

### Responsibilities of the school's attendance leader

- The school's designated senior leader (also referred to the 'senior attendance champion') for attendance is the Assistant Headteacher, and can be contacted via the school office (telephone 02392 583754 and [adminoffice@elson-jun.hants.sch.uk](mailto:adminoffice@elson-jun.hants.sch.uk))
- 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.
- They 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, parents or carers will be invited to come and work with the school to identify possible barriers for poor attendance and agree actions so it can be improved. 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.
- They will work with the school's Senior Admin Officer and Home Link Worker/Mental Health Lead to have a strong grasp of absence data, oversight of absence analysis, monitor and evaluate progress in attendance, benchmark attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement, and liaise with pupils, parents/carers, and external agencies where needed. As a result, this team will build close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues, create intervention or



reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers, and deliver targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

### Responsibilities of the attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the headteacher in line with the school absence procedures
- Advising the Headteacher/Assistant Headteacher (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is the Admin Officer, Rachel Blackwell, and can be contacted via the school office (telephone 02392 583754 and [adminoffice@elson-jun.hants.sch.uk](mailto:adminoffice@elson-jun.hants.sch.uk))

### Responsibilities of 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.

### Responsibilities of classroom staff

- 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.

### Responsibilities of 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.

### 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 Arbour app.

### Section 3: Recording attendance

Legally the register must be marked twice daily. The official start to the school day is 8.45 am. The playground doors open at 8.35am and close at 8.45 am. Anyone arriving after this time should enter the building via the school office. Register closes at 8.50 am. Anyone arriving after this time will be marked as late. The register is taken again after lunch.

Getting to school on time is very important. A variety of activities that support the children's academic and personal wellbeing development take place from the moment the doors open. For example: teachers meet and greet the class in order to help children to settle, this is chance for children to share news with their teachers and their friends, children complete morning task activities linked to the curriculum, the teaching team deliver interventions and class wellbeing sessions take place. If your child is late, they will miss out on these opportunities. Additionally it can be embarrassing for the child coming into a class that has already started learning, leading to possible further absence.

- The doors open at 8.35 am and remain open until 8.45 am. **All pupils are expected to be in school by this time.** Morning registration closes at 8.50 am and your child will be marked as late after this time.
- 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*. 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 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).

### Section 4: Absence



### What to do if my child is absent?

A child not attending school is considered a safeguarding matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

#### First day of absence

If your child is absent you must:

- contact us **by 9.00am** on the first day of absence.

If your child is absent 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 the primary listed contact, we will attempt contact with 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> contact numbers
- if we not able to make contact, we may conduct a home visit or submit an Inter-Agency Referral Form to Children's Services
- 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%.

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 the absence is longer than 5 days, or 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 towards 90%, we will contact you via letter



to alert you to 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 as set out in Section 6.

### **A welcome back**

There are times where absence is unavoidable and a child may be off school for a period of time. It is important that on return from an unavoidable absence all pupils are made to feel welcome. Class teachers will support pupils to settle back into class routines and units of learning. Liaising with parents/carers as appropriate.

### **Request for 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.

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 work with us to support their child's learning by not taking children out during school time.

## **Section 5: Understanding types of absence – authorised and unauthorised**

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:

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Role/Author: HT C Paradine

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- 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 allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

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
- 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.

Unique to each family, examples of 'exceptional circumstances' are:

- When a family needs to spend time together because of an immediate family members bereavement, crisis or serious illness
- Funeral of parent, grandparent or sibling
- Transport was not provided by the LA when it should have been
- Children of service personnel about to go on deployment
- 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 members graduation ceremony/passing out parade.
- Operations which require recovery time
- Holiday request for child on SEN register with complex needs who may require a quieter time away.
- Break requests for children under social care involvement or those who are looked after or previously looked after
- Religious observance

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

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.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.



Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least two weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

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

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- 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
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – 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)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, 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

## Section 6: 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.

### 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:

- 1 The child or family do not require or accept the support from any agency to improve the attendance
- 2 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, school must enforce Hampshire County Council's Code of conduct: 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. A copy is available from [www.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/attendance-guidance-for-parents/possible-penalties](http://www.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/attendance-guidance-for-parents/possible-penalties).

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**

Where a pupil has unauthorised absence due to either:

- 1 non-approval of a parent/carer's request for leave of absence or
- 2 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 then a Penalty Notice for non-attendance will be issued.

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:

- 1 10 sessions (five days) of unauthorised absence or lateness in any 100 possible school sessions/10 week school period
- 2 one or more sessions of unauthorised absence during a public exam, formal school assessment or testing where dates are published in advance.

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.

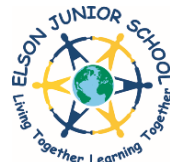
Please note: If you pay the Penalty Notice and your child has further unauthorised absences additional legal action will be taken. For example, in the event that a Penalty Notice has previously been served to you due to unauthorised holiday, should your child have any future unauthorised leave this will result in further legal action for you, such as prosecution or an Education Supervision Order.

For further information parents/carers should visit Hampshire County Council's website at: [www.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/attendance-guidance-for-parents/possible-penalties](http://www.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/attendance-guidance-for-parents/possible-penalties).

### 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



## Section 7: Supporting pupils who are reluctant to attend school

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.

If your child is reluctant to attend school, contact your child's class teacher immediately and they will be able to 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 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.

## Section 8: Pupils who are leaving school

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

1 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.

2 If pupils leave and we do not have the above information, then your child is considered to be a *child missing in education*. This requires schools and local authorities to then carry out investigations to try and locate your child, which includes liaising with Children's Services, the Police and other agencies. By giving us the above information, these investigations can be avoided.



## Section 9: Other Absence

### **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.

### **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 whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Permission for your child to leave early or arrive late to attend coaching and training sessions is also at the discretion of the Headteacher and is not likely to be approved if it is a regular event, unless the sports club or association is providing an education tutor as part of their coaching.

### **Gypsy, Roma, Traveller and Showman families**

Absence of a child from a Traveller family that has left the area may be authorised if the absence is for work purposes only and 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 further advice and guidance on attendance and Gypsy, Roma, Traveller and Showman families see Hampshire County Council guidance at: <http://documents.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/HIAS/Promotingpupilattendanceandrecordingabsence-Section6.pdf>.

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

### **Record preservation**

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

## **Attendance monitoring**

Our school has an attendance team (Assistant Headteacher, Admin Office and Home Link Worker/Mental Health Lead) which monitors attendance and absence data (including punctuality data), and systematically and regularly analyses it.

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) 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 body.

### **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 it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severed absence, and their families (see section 8.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, to facilitate and support discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing body and school leaders (including the SENDCo, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium lead)
- 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 section 5.2, above)

### Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's [guidance on school attendance](#).

| Code   | Definition  | Scenario   |
|--|---|--|
| /  | Present (am)  | Pupil is present at morning registration   |
| \  | Present (pm)  | Pupil is present at afternoon registration   |
| L  | Late arrival  | Pupil arrives late before register has closed  |
| <b>Attending a place other than the school</b> |   |  |
| K  | Attending education provision arranged by the local authority                       | Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority |
| V  | Attending an educational visit or trip  | Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school  |
| P  | Participating in a sporting activity  | Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school  |
| W  | Attending work experience   | Pupil is on an approved work experience placement  |
| B  | Attending any other approved educational activity                                   | Pupil is attending a place for 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   |
| <b>Absent – leave of absence</b>               |   |  |
| 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  |



|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <b>J1</b>  | Interview                                   | Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment   |
| <b>S</b>   | Study leave                                 | Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination  |
| <b>X</b>   | Not required to be in school                | Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend   |
| <b>C2</b>  | Part-time timetable                         | Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable   |
| <b>C</b>   | Exceptional circumstances                   | Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances   |
| <b>Absent – other authorised reasons</b>                             |   |  |
| <b>T</b>   | Parent travelling for occupational purposes | Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes                      |
| <b>R</b>   | Religious observance                        | Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance  |
| <b>I</b>   | Illness (not medical or dental appointment) | Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)   |
| <b>E</b>   | Suspended or excluded                       | Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made  |
| <b>Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause</b> |   |  |
| <b>Q</b>   | 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 |
| <b>Y1</b>  | 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   |
| <b>Y2</b>                            | Widespread disruption to travel          | Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency   |
| <b>Y3</b>                            | 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   |
| <b>Y4</b>                            | Whole school site unexpectedly closed    | Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)   |
| <b>Y5</b>                            | Criminal justice detention               | Pupil is unable to attend as they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In police detention</li> <li>• Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or</li> <li>• Detained under a sentence of detention</li> </ul> |
| <b>Y6</b>                            | Public health guidance or law            | Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law   |
| <b>Y7</b>                            | Any other unavoidable cause              | To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes   |
| <b>Absent – unauthorised absence</b> |  |   |
| <b>G</b>                             | Holiday not granted by the school        | Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school  |
| <b>N</b>                             | Reason for absence not yet established   | Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes  |
| <b>O</b>                             | 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   |
| <b>U</b>                             | Arrived in school after                  | Pupil has arrived late, after the register has  |



|                             |   |  |
|-----------------------------|---|--|
|                             | registration closed                         | closed but before the end of session   |
| <b>Administrative codes</b> |   |  |
| <b>Z</b>                    | Prospective pupil not on admission register | Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered                                |
| <b>#</b>                    | Planned whole-school closure                | Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays |