

Attendance Policy September 2022-2024

Name of Responsible Manager / Headteacher:	Mr John DF Martin
Policy Owner:	Ms Willmouth/Mrs T Lund
Date of last Policy Review:	September 2022
Date of next Policy Review:	September 2023

This policy has been reviewed and updated in accordance with the latest Government guidance (effective September 2022)

National Guidance

DfE Guidance: “Working together to improve school attendance”, May 2022 (applies from September 2022)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

Improving attendance is everyone’s business. The foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn (1:7)

The law on school attendance and right to a full-time education:

- The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time educationIt is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education... (1:9)
- Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure that 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. (1:10)

Expectations of schools:

- Schools have a continuing responsibility to proactively manage and improve attendance across their school community. Attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all pupils and should therefore be seen as everyone’s responsibility in school. (2:14)

Section 1

1.0 Rationale/Statement of Intent

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

We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our pupils and endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome. Parents and pupils play a part in making our school so successful. Every child has a right to access the education to which he/she is entitled. Parents 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 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

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

Good attendance is important because:

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

Section 2

2.1 Promoting good attendance and punctuality

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child. To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Provide information on all matters related to attendance in our newsletters and on our website
- Report to you each half term on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments
- Celebrate good attendance

2.2 Roles and responsibilities

Responsibilities of the Headteacher (Mr JDF Martin)

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data with senior leadership team and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

Responsibilities of the Inclusions/Attendance Team

At Castle Hill we have a dedicated team that focus on attendance. The team includes the attendance leads (R Willmouth (DHT) and T Lund (Inclusions Manager)); our site specific Pastoral Leads (S Shephard & C Munde); and our site specific admin team (R Davies & S Hart). The Attendance Team:

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Liaises with The Legal Intervention Team (LIT). The LIT is an integral part of the Family Support Service. Our team work closely with the Legal Intervention Court Officers (LICOs) to seek advise an support with attendance
- Works with other external agencise e.g Early Help Hub and to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

Responsibilities of the school's attendance leader (Miss Willmouth/Mrs Lund)

The attendance leads are members of the senior leadership team and 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 also ensure that attendance is both recorded accurately and analysed. 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, staff will discuss with parents/carers the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school.

Responsibilities of class teachers

- Recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the admin team through Pupil Asset
- Promoting and rewarding good attendance at all appropriate opportunities
- Contacting parents if attendance issues arise
- Liaising with the School Attendance Leads on persistent concerns with attendance and punctuality and 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 the Admin team

- The Admin Team staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system. Key members of the Admin Team track and log absence and report trends to the Attendance Team on a half termly basis.

Responsibilities of pupils

- Attend every day unless they are ill or have an authorised absence.
- Arrive in school on time and be in their classroom ready for registration
- Take responsibility for registering at the reception desk if they are late or are leaving the school site during school hours.
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Responsibilities of parents/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
- discuss with the class teacher/school any planned absences well in advance
- support the school with their child in aiming for 100% attendance each year
- make sure that any absence is clearly communicated to school on the first and subsequent days of absence
- 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 (and this MUST be done in advance)

Section 3

3.1 Recording attendance

Legally the register must be marked twice daily. This is once at the start of the school day (**08:45**) and again for the afternoon session.

3.2 Lateness / Punctuality

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

- School gates/doors open **08:35**. Registration begins at **08:45** and all pupils are expected to be in school at this time. Morning registration closes at **08:50**, doors will be closed at this point. After 8:50, pupils will need to report to reception.
- 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 **09:15** will be marked as unauthorised absence (code 'U') in line with County and Department for Education (DfE) 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, doctor and dentist appointments are to 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. **On-going 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 timekeeping 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's Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices for non-attendance (See section 6 of this policy for further detail).

Please collect your child promptly at the end of the school day. Where late collection is persistent and/or significantly late, the school is obliged to take any uncollected pupil to a place of safety and share concerns as necessary with other agencies.

3.3 What should I 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

Please contact the school **before 09:00** to report any absence (by phoning, leaving an answer phone message, or speaking to the admin team). Any un-reported absences will be followed up with a phone-call from the school. This is because we have a duty to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular attendance at school. You are expected to contact the school on each, individual day of absence unless you have notified us in advance that your child will not be in for a number of days (eg in the case of a sickness bug or chicken pox). In certain cases, a welfare check will be made by a member of staff if we cannot make contact.

Third Day Absence

Please Note: If your child is not seen and contact has not been established with you or any of the named parent/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 enquires to establish contact with parents and the child including making enquires to known friends and wider family. In circumstances of persistent absence, a member of staff (usually the pastoral lead) may visit the family home to try to establish contact.

Ten Day's 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. Help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date contact number. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

Continued or Ongoing Absence

If your child misses 10% (3 weeks/15 sessions) or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason they are defined as **persistent absentees**. Where this absence is authorised, school will meet with parents/carers in order to ascertain any underlying medical reasons for the level of absence. The school may decide not to authorise any future absences without medical evidence.

Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in his or her learning. Research shows these gaps affect attainment when attendance falls below **95%**. As such we monitor all absence thoroughly and all attendance data is shared with the Local Authority and the Department for Education. If your child has had absence and their attendance level is falling below **95%**, we will contact you and depending on the reasons for the absence we will agree a plan with you to ensure that attendance improves. (Please see Appendix A that outlines steps of support)

If this support is not taken up or is unsuccessful, we will refer to Hampshire County Council for guidelines on commencing legal proceedings.

Children at this school are dependent on their parents/carers, who are responsible for their level of attendance and punctuality. It is vital that children enjoy coming to school and, whilst being encouraged to attend well and on time, will not carry blame and be made to feel unhappy if their parents are not supportive or effective in these areas.

Section 4

4.1 Request for Leave of Absence

Amendments to school attendance regulations were updated and enforced from September 2013: **(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 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. Any supporting evidence for the request must be attached to the application.

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's Code of Conduct parent/carers will be issued with a fixed-penalty fine or other legal action in accordance with the code (see section 6 for detail).

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children out during school time. (Please refer to national guidance here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>)

Section 5

5.1 Understanding types of absence

Pupils are expected to attend school every day for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence. There are two main categories of absence:

- **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.
 - Examples of authorised absence include genuine illness, unavoidable medical appointments, religious observance, death of a close relative.
- **Unauthorised Absence:** is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's leave absence from school after a parent's request.

- Examples of unauthorised absence include transport difficulties, being tired/overslept, illness of parent, birthdays, unexplained absences, child not wanting to come to school and avoidable appointments (e.g. haircut)

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.

Section 6

Penalty Notices for Non-Attendance and other Legal Measures

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 when there is unauthorised absence and:

1. The child or family do not require 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 are for pupils of compulsory school age who are registered at a school:

- Parenting contracts set at Education Planning Meetings
- Parenting orders
- Penalty notices
- Education Supervision Orders
- Prosecution

Where a child has **unauthorised absence**, the school must enforce Hampshire's Code of Conduct for issuing Penalty Notices or follow its guidance on other Legal Measures for Non-Attendance. The Code of Conduct is a statutory document that ensures that powers for legal sanctions are applied consistently and fairly across all schools and their families within the authority. A copy is available from <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour/attendance/attendanceguidance-for-parents/possible-penalties.htm>

Penalty Notices for non-attendance- Hampshire's Code of Conduct

The code of conduct states that:

Schools or Hampshire Local Authority 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 parent/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 (5 days) in any 100 possible school sessions 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 (5 days) of unauthorised absence or lateness in any 100 possible school sessions/10-week school period
2. 1 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 either via a letter, through the leave of absence request form, or through the school's Attendance Policy and website. The penalty notice is a fine that is issued to each parent/carer who condoned (or was responsible for the child) during the period of unauthorised absence for which the fine has been issued. For each case of unauthorised absence, the school or Hampshire County Council will decide whether a Penalty Notice is issued to one or more parent/carers for each child. N.B This could mean four penalty notices for a family with two siblings, both with unauthorised absence for holiday i.e. one Penalty Notice for each child to each parent.

Each Penalty Notice carries a fine of £60 per parent per child 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 then 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.

For further information parents/carers can request a leaflet from school and should visit Hampshire County Councils website at:

<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/attendanceguidance-for-parents/possible-penalties.htm>

For national guidance refer to 'Parental responsibility measures for behaviour and attendance' at:
<https://www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/behaviour-attendance-parents>

Section 7

7.1 Advice and Guidance for Parents

My child is trying to avoid coming to School. What should I do?

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give into pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

Contact your child's class teacher immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with school work, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem. In some cases, you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with another professional.

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

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning, having had breakfast. 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.

Your child will bring home a home-school book each evening. Please ensure you look at it with your child and sign it ready for the next day, if appropriate.

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.

7.2 Leavers

If your child is leaving our school (other than when transferring to secondary school) parents are asked to give the Admin Team 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.

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

7.3 Absence through child participation in Public Performances, including theatre, film or TV work & Modelling

Parents of a child performer can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a performance. They must contact the Headteacher to discuss the nature and frequency of the work, whether the child has a valid performance licence and whether education will be provided by the employer during any future leave of absence. Any absence recorded as part of a child's participation in a public performance is recorded as C (an authorised absence).

7.4 Absence through competing at regional, county or national level for Sport

Parents of able children can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a regional, county, national or international event or competition. 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 are also at the discretion of the Headteacher and are not likely to be approved if it is a regular event, unless the sports club or association are providing an education tutor as part of their coaching.

7.5 Gypsy Roma Traveller Showman and Showman families

Absence of a child from a traveller family that has left the area may be authorised if the absence is for work purposes only and it is believed that the family intends to return. To ensure the continuity of learning for Traveller children, dual registration is allowed. That means that a school cannot remove a Traveller child from the school roll while they are travelling. When the Traveller is away the home school holds the place open and records the absence as authorised through the T code. Distance Learning packs for traveller children are not an alternative to attendance at school.

Section 8

8.1 Record preservation

School registers are legal documents. We will ensure compliance with attendance regulations by keeping attendance records for at least 3 years. Computer registers will be preserved as electronic back-ups or microfiche copies.

Appendices

The Law

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient fulltime education suitable:
[a] To his age, ability and aptitude and
[b] To any special needs he may have.
either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term *parent* is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

Register and Admission Roll keeping:

The legal requirements are found in: The Education [Pupil Registration] (England) Regulations 2006

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20131216163513/http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/1751/content/s/made>

Guidance documents on attendance:

The following DfE documents are used to guide attendance recording:

- *Absence and Attendance codes* (Guidance for Schools and Local Authorities)

<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/absence-and-attendance-codes.pdf>

- *Keeping Pupil Registers* (Guidance on applying the Education Pupil Registration Regulations)

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130401151715/https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/Governancemanagementandfinance/Page4/DCSF-01488-2008>

These and other guidance documents are available on the DfE website

Hampshire County Council Guidance is available on Hantsweb at

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/hias/teaching-learning/behaviour-attendance>

For national guidance refer to:

1. **DfE Guidance: “Working together to improve school attendance”, May 2022 (applies from September 2022)**

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>)

2. **‘School attendance’** located at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance>

3. National Association of Headteachers guidance document on **'Authorised Absence'** 2014

<http://www.naht.org.uk/welcome/news-and-media/key-topics/parents-and-pupils/naht-issues-new-guidance-on-authorised-absence/>

Parent Guide – Working Together To Improve School Attendance document:

<https://www.castlehillprimary.net/our-school/attendance>

For county advice and guidance refer to:

1. Guidance on recording absence

<http://documents.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/HIAS/Promotingpupilattendanceandrecordingabsence-maindocument.pdf>

2. <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/childrenandyoungpeople/child-employments>

3. Guidance on approval of 'Extended leave of absence' see county guidance

<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/lba-resources-for-schools/attendance-guidance/attendance-guidance-for-schools.htm>

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

Person(s) responsible for implementing and monitoring the policy: R Willmouth/T Lund

Last date approved and adopted by Governing Body: September 2022