

ATTENDANCE POLICY (STUDENTS)

Principles

- At The Hamble School we are aiming for all students to achieve a 100% attendance over an academic year.
- We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our students and endeavour to provide an environment where students feel safe and valued.
- Every child has the right to access the education to which he/she is entitled to.
- Students should take advantage of educational activities, it is vital that your child is at school on time, every day that the school is open, unless the reason is unavoidable.
- The routines developed around attendance and punctuality at school are the same as the expectation for any future employment.
- We believe a whole school approach will maintain good attendance and decrease persistent absence.
- A student is classed as Persistently Absent if their attendance is less than 90% over the previous twelve months.

Good attendance is important because:

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

Promoting good attendance

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 regular information on all matters related to attendance in our weekly messages/newsletter/website.
- Report to you on how your child is performing in school, and what their attendance and punctuality rate is.
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements.
- Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates and outings/events.
- Set targets for the school and for classes for attendance and display these in the school.
- Run events when parents, students and staff can work together on raising attendance levels across the school.

Recording attendance

Legally the register must be marked twice daily. This is once at the start of the school day, 8.30am, and again for the afternoon session at 12:20pm.

Lateness and punctuality

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

The school day begins at 8:30am and all students are expected to be in school at this time. Morning registration is at 8:30am and it closes at 9:00am.

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. Any student receiving a U code will be set a 60 minute after school detention.

If a student is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence, coded M. Please be advised that, where possible, doctors' appointments should be outside of school hours.

Students who are late to tutor time will be given a break-time detention with the Attendance Officer. Students who do not attend their break-time detention will be issued with a lunchtime detention on the same day. If the lunchtime detention is not attended, it will become an after school detention for 60 minutes. Any student who gets three lates in one-week result in an after-school Head of Year detention.

Lateness to lessons will be followed up by the class teachers; a student late to three or more lessons in one week will be given a 30 minute after school detention. If a student receives three or more lates for two weeks within in a half term they will be set a 60 minutes after school detention and be placed on an attendance report card.

Students over 10 minutes late to lessons are deemed as truanting and will be set a 60 minutes after school detention by their class teacher.

Students who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of other students. 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 students 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).

Reporting absence

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

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence via our Class Charts using the attendance feature on the parent log in.
- If you are unable to report an absence through Class Charts, you are advised to report the absence through the email address attendance@thehambleschool.co.uk.

If your child is absent, we will:

Day 1 of unreported absence, the InTouch System is used to establish a reason for absence. If a 'reason for absence' is not provided, then a letter is sent with a warning that a failure to respond will result in the absence being marked as unauthorised. In the case of Safeguarding concerns, the relevant authorities will also be notified that contact cannot be made with the parents or carers of a student.

Day 2 of an unreported absence, a call is made by either the Attendance Officer or pastoral admin staff to establish a reason for absence.

Day 3 of any reported absence, a home visit will be carried out to check on the safety and wellbeing of the child and/or parents/carers.

Attendance records are kept up-to-date daily, with the exception of students for whom no reason for absence has been given. These will be addressed on a weekly basis through follow up by the Attendance Officer. Reasons for absence letters are sent to parents if previous contact has not been successful. If parents do not respond within 2 weeks of receiving the letter, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Ten days' absence

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any student 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/carers, then the local authority is notified that the child is at risk of being 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. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

Continued or ongoing absence: If your child misses 10% (three weeks/sessions) or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason, they are defined as persistent absentees. Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in his or her learning. Research shows these gaps affect attainment when attendance falls below 95%. As such, we monitor all absence thoroughly and all attendance data is shared with the local authority and the Department for Education. If your child's absence is falling towards 90%, we will contact you and arrange a convenient time to discuss attendance.

Request for leave of absence

Amendments to school attendance regulations were updated and enforced from September 2013: The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations state that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. It is important to note that headteachers can determine the length of the authorised absence, as well as whether absence is authorised at all. The fundamental principles for defining exceptional are rare, significant, or unavoidable, which means the event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. There are no rules on this as circumstances vary from school to school and family to family. There is, however, no legal entitlement for time off in school term time to go on holiday, and in the majority of cases, holiday will not be authorised. Parents/carers wishing to apply for leave of absence need to fill in an application form from reception in advance and before making any travel arrangements.

Understanding types of absence: Students 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 absence from school after a parent's request. This includes 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; and 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.

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: The school 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 the support from any agency to improve 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 students of compulsory school age who are registered at a school:

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

Where a child has unauthorised absence, the school must enforce Hampshire County Council's Code of Conduct: issuing Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence from schools or 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: www.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/attendance-guidance-forparents/possible-penalties. The Code of conduct states that schools or Hampshire County Council will issue a Penalty Notice for any unauthorised absence where the student has been:

- Absent for 10 or more half-day sessions (five school days) of unauthorised absence during any 100 possible school sessions – these do not need to be consecutive.
- Persistently late (coded U) for up to 10 sessions (five days) after the register has closed.
- 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.

If a child's unauthorised absence meets any of the above criteria and the family or child do not require any agency support to improve the attendance, then a Penalty Notice is issued for either:

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

This includes where a pupil has unauthorised absence due to either:

- Non-approval of a parent/carer's request for leave of absence, or
- A holiday that has been taken without permission.

Parents and carers will be warned of the likelihood of a Penalty Notice being issued for unauthorised absence via a letter, through the leave of absence request form, or through the school's attendance policy and website. The Penalty Notice is a fine that is issued to each parent/carer who condoned (or was responsible for the child) during the period of unauthorised absence for which the fine has been issued. 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 of two children, ie one Penalty Notice for each child to each parent. Each Penalty Notice carries a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days of the Penalty Notice being posted. If the fine is not paid within 21 days, the penalty is automatically increased to £120 if paid within 28 days. If the fine remains unpaid, Hampshire County Council will consider prosecution for the non-attendance. Payment methods are detailed on the Penalty Notices themselves. Penalties are to be paid to Hampshire County Council, and revenue resulting from payment of penalties is used by the County Council to help cover the costs of issuing Penalty Notices and/or the cost of prosecuting recipients who do not pay. Please note: If you pay the Penalty Notice and your child has further unauthorised absences, additional legal action will be taken.

For example, in the event that a Penalty Notice has previously been served to you due to unauthorised holiday, should your child have any future unauthorised leave, this will result in further legal action for you, such as prosecution or an Education Supervision Order. For further information, parents/carers can request a leaflet from their school and should visit Hampshire County Council's website at: www.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/attendance-guidance-forparents/possible-penalties.

If my child is not coming to 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 better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse. Contact your child's tutor or head of year immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons, including difficulties with school work, bullying, friendship problems, and 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.

Leavers

If your child is leaving our school (other than when leaving at the end of Year 11), parents are asked to:

- (1) Give the Attendance Officer comprehensive information about their plans, including any date of a move and your new address and telephone numbers, your child's new school and the start date when known. This should be submitted to our school in writing.
- (2) If students 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.

Absence through child participation in public performances, including theatre, film or television work and 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. 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 as to whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Permission for your child to leave early or arrive late to attend coaching and training sessions is also at the discretion of the headteacher and is not likely to be approved if it is a regular event, unless the sports club or association is providing an education tutor as part of their coaching.

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.

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.

Title of Policy	Attendance Policy (Students)
Review Cycle	1 Year
Policy reviewed by	SPK
Committee responsible	Learning & Achievement
Statutory/Discretionary/School	Statutory
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