



Fryern Infant and Junior Schools

Attendance Policy

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

- admissions
- anti-bullying
- child protection
- exclusion
- safeguarding
- special educational needs
- Teaching & Learning
- Behaviour & Rewards

Section 1

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/ students 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 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

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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, and higher education, employment or training

Section 2:

Operating the Policy

1. 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 all matters related to attendance in our weekly newsletter and on our 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 attainments;
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying class achievements;
- Reward good or improving attendance through stickers, certificates and badges.
- Set targets for the school and for classes for attendance and display these in the school.

2. Roles and Responsibilities:

Responsibilities of the School's Attendance Leader

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 also ensure that attendance is both recorded accurately and analysed. They will

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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 parent/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 Classroom Staff:

- Ensure that all students are registered accurately
- Promote & reward good attendance at all appropriate opportunities.
- Liaise with the Attendance Leader on matters of attendance and punctuality and
- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence.

Responsibilities of Pupils:

- Attend every day unless they are ill or have an authorised absence.
- Arrive in school on time.
- Go to all their registrations and lessons on time.

Responsibilities of Parents and Carers:

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carers legal responsibility (section 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 tutor/class teacher 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 accounted for by phone on the first and subsequent days of absence, or by letter if a phone is unavailable.
- Avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments.
- Only request for leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance

Section 3

3.1. Recording Attendance

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Legally the register must be marked twice daily.

In the Infant School this is at the start of the school day at 8.55am and again for the afternoon session at 1.00pm.

In the Junior School this is at the start of the school day at 8.50am and again for the afternoon session at 1.00pm.

3.2. Lateness /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 are 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. It can be embarrassing for the child leading to possible further absence.

- Children in the infant school may be dropped at their class door between 8.45am and 8.55am. **All pupils are expected to be in school by 8.55am.** Morning registration is at 8.55am and it closes at 9.10am.
- Children in the junior school may be dropped at their class door between 8.40am and 8.50am. **All pupils are expected to be in school by 8.50am.** Morning registration is at 8.50am and it closes at 9.05am
- 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 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 doctors and dentists 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 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'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. If one is available, the school may place a child into the after school club and provide the parent/Carer with the bill.

3.3. What to do if my child is absent?

First Day 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 in the morning on the first day of absence or you can call into school and report the absence to the Reception team.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone 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*
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Head of School/ Headteacher if absences persist.

We need to have at least two active contact numbers. If we have not heard by midday we will then do a home visit

Third Day Absence

If your child is not seen and contact has not been established with any of the named parents/carers, after three days of absence the school is required to record all contact attempts on a Child Missing in Education tracking form as set down by Hampshire County Council guidance whilst still continuing to attempt to make contact. We will make all reasonable enquiries to establish contact with parents/carers and the child, including making enquiries to known friends and wider family. If appropriate, two members of staff may try to make a personal visit to any known addresses. If after twenty school days, contact still has not been made, the CME form will be submitted to cme@hants.gov.uk

Ten Day's Absence

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupils who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not

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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.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days, the pupil can be removed from the admission register when the school and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to establish the whereabouts of the child. This only applies if the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause.

We are required to notify the local authority within five days of adding a pupil's name to the admission register at a non-standard transition point. The notification must include all the details contained in the admission register for the new pupil. This duty does not apply when a pupil's name is entered in the admission register at a standard transition point – at the start of the first year of education normally provided by that school – unless the local authority requests that such returns are to be made.

Please 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 to ensure that the school has all up to date contact/information details.

Continued or Ongoing Absence

If your child misses 10% (3 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 attendance falls to 95% or below we will:

- invite you in to discuss the situation with the head of school/head teacher

If attendance falls to 90% or below we will:

- refer the matter to the Hampshire County Council's Attendance Legal Panels if absence is unauthorised and falls below 90% - you may be subject to a penalty warning notification and a fine
- persistent absentee pupils and their parents are subject to an Attendance Plan or home school contract
- we may contact the Eastleigh Early Help Hub for further advice and support as and when appropriate with each family context

See further guidance in Hampshire County Council's Guidance for children on roll but absent and at risk of missing in education:

<http://documents.hants.gov.uk/education/>

Guidanceforchildrenatriskofmissingineducation-revisedSept2014.pdf.

A Welcome Back

It is important that on return from **any absence** all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other pupils. It is vital that children enjoy coming to school, and whilst they will be encouraged to attend well and on time, they will not carry blame and be made to feel unhappy if there are family issues that result in attendance being compromised

Section 4:

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 available from the school office in advance and before making any travel arrangements. Leave of absence forms need to be collected by a parent from the school office, or parents need to call the office to request a form before one is sent home with a pupil.

When a leave of absence form is received by the school, we shall liaise with other schools who have siblings/relatives who would also be impacted by the absence request. It is your responsibility to indicate the schools that other siblings attend. All schools will respond within 3 school days after consultation with each other.

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

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expect parents to help us by not taking children out during school time.

For national guidance refer to:

- School attendance, 2014, located at:
www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance
- National Association of Headteachers' guidance document on Authorised absence, 2014: www.naht.org.uk/welcome/news-and-media/key-topics/parents-and-pupils/naht-issues-newguidance-on-authorised-absence/.

For Hampshire County Council advice and guidance refer to:

- Guidance on recording absence: <http://documents.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/HIAS/Promotingpupilattendanceandrecordingabsence-maindocument.pdf>
- Guidance on approval of Extended leave of absence:
www.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/iba-resources-for-schools/atten-guidance/attendance-guidance-for-schools.

Section 5:

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 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 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
 - 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.

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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. Penalty Notices are intended to be used in tackling parentally condoned absence, where it is reasonable to expect that the parent/carer can ensure the child's regular attendance, but the parent is not willing to take responsibility for doing so, e.g. where a parent is not co-operating with advice or support offered to help improve the child's attendance.

Legal Measures for tackling persistent absence or lateness

Hampshire Schools and Hampshire County Council will use the full range of legal measures to support and 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 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/attendance-guidance-for-parents/possible-penalties.htm>

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

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- 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 has unauthorised absence that meets any of the above criteria and the family or child do not require any agency support to improve the attendance then a single Penalty Notice is issued for either:

- 10 sessions of unauthorised absence or lateness in any 10 week school period
- 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 either via a letter, through the leave of absence request form, or through the schools 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. If, after a warning letter has been issued, there is sufficient irregular attendance to merit a Penalty Notice, it must be issued within 7 days of the period of absence, unless there are exceptional reasons against taking this action.

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 a holiday, i.e., 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 the 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.

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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 Councils website at:

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

Hampshire's Attendance Legal Panels

School must complete an attendance legal panel referral form if the threshold for legal action is met and if prosecution is appropriate. The panel considers if it is appropriate to pursue legal action on cases presented by the school and to ensure that the evidence provided is robust and unambiguous enough to be presented in court.

Section 7:

7.1 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 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 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 a suitable breakfast, 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.

Your child will bring home a reading diary each evening. Please ensure you look at it with your child and sign it ready for the next day.

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

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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.

EBSA

Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) is a broad umbrella term used to describe a group of children and young people who have severe difficulty in attending school due to emotional factors, often resulting in prolonged absences from school. A clear distinction is made between those that are absent from school due to truanting and those that are absent from school due to the specific emotional distress that they experience around attending school. School plays a very important role in identifying factors associated with pupil vulnerability and the potential triggers leading to EBSA. See EBSA documentation from Hampshire January 2021 –

<https://documents.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/EBSA-good-practice-guidance.pdf>

7.2 Leavers

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

- Give the school office 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.
- Inform the school, in writing, if choosing to electively home educate your child.

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

The regulations related to children participating in public performances are separate to those around authorising leave of absence. Headteachers can authorise this absence.

For further advice and guidance on child employment and performance licenses visit Hantsweb at

<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/childrenandyoungpeople/child-employment.htm>

National Advice - <https://www.gov.uk/child-performance-licence-england-scotland-wales>

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. The nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs will be discussed. 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 sportsmen and women can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a regional, county, national and international events and competitions. It is however, down to the headteachers 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.

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7.5 Gypsy Roma Traveller Showman and Showman families

For further advice and guidance on Attendance & GRT and Showman see County Guidance at: <http://documents.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/HIAS/Promotingpupilattendanceandrecordingabsence-Section6.pdf>

Please note pupils must have attended 200 sessions in a rolling 12month period to be able to request leave for work purposes

Further support & Guidance is available from Hampshire's EMTAS Service

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.

7.6 Religious Celebrations and Festivals

Government guidance says a pupil can be absent 'on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs'. It is, however, down to the headteacher's discretion as to whether to authorise this. The nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs will be discussed.

Section 8

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.