



## ATTENDANCE POLICY

NAME OF SCHOOL	STANMORE PRIMARY SCHOOL
DATE OF POLICY ISSUE	MAY 2018
DATE OF POLICY REVIEW	MAY 2021
NAME OF RESPONSIBLE MANAGER/HEADTEACHER	Mrs Sharon Taylor
SIGNATURE OF RESPONSIBLE MANAGER/HEADTEACHER	<i>Sharon Taylor</i>

**National guidance:**

***Guidance for schools on support and procedures for pursuing legal action for non-attendance.***

***Code of conduct – issuing penalty notices for unauthorised absence from schools (2015).***

***Effective practice document for school attendance procedures and admissions for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children 2014.***

***Guidance for children on school roll but absent and at risk of missing in education (2014).***

## **Section 1:**

### ***Rationale***

The Government expects schools and local authorities to reduce absence, including persistent absence, to ensure that every pupil has access to full time education and to act early to address patterns of absence.

The Attendance Policy is based on 'School attendance and the Law' from the Department for Children, Schools and Families, March 2010 ([www.directgov.uk/Schoolattendanceandyourchild](http://www.directgov.uk/Schoolattendanceandyourchild)) and their 'Guidance for Local Authorities in Setting Education Performance Targets-August 2008'. In accordance with the Hampshire Guide to Schools "Maintaining and Improving Attendance", the Governing Body and staff of this school agree that "Regular and full time attendance is essential if children and young people are to benefit fully from their school career". Punctuality is of equal importance.

The purpose of this Policy Document is to set out the ways in which matters of attendance and punctuality should be managed in this school, in order to ensure school and parents work together to achieve and maintain high standards in this area.

*In order to achieve this the school will:*

- Promote a welcoming and positive atmosphere in school, where children feel safe and that their presence is valued
- Enable parents to feel their support of this policy is recognised by the school as a vital contribution towards their child's education
- Create attitudes towards high standards of attendance and punctuality, which pupils should retain throughout life
- Ensure that attendance is maintained effectively and absences or lateness is followed up promptly
- Meet legal requirements, with particular reference to identifying unauthorised absence
- Check registers regularly, to note unexplained absences and identify patterns of absence and lateness, if they are occurring
- If absence or punctuality becomes a matter for concern, use strategies devised in order to raise parental awareness of the importance of attendance and punctuality so that they ensure their child attends school punctually and regularly (see next section "Strategies to

Promote and Maintain Attendance and Punctuality")

- Involve other agencies when acute difficulties arise, and the school needs extra support or help as appropriate – including Children's Services, Young Carers, Health
- Ensure all staff are aware of the School Policy and deal consistently with absence and punctuality
- Ensure information on attendance or punctuality is available for Governors, as required
- Ensure good liaison when a change of school occurs
- Keep accurate registration documents to include authorised/unauthorised absence

- Provide information related to attendance through newsletters, letters and booklets

### *Strategies to Promote and Maintain High Standards of Attendance and Punctuality*

It needs to be remembered that children in education are dependent on their parents/carers, who are responsible for their level of attendance and punctuality. It is vital that children enjoy coming into school. Whilst being encouraged to attend well and on time they must not carry the blame and be made to feel unhappy if their parents are not supportive or effective in these areas.

Registers will be checked for regular attendance by admin staff and the cluster Home School Link Worker.

Teachers should also be aware and report any concerns to the head teacher or relevant senior member of staff. The register is a legal document and may be used as evidence in a Court of Law. The head teacher will monitor attendance below 95%.

The head teacher may refer to the Attendance Legal Panel (ALP), or issue a penalty notice, when there are 10 or more unauthorised sessions of absence, across 100 sessions (50 days). Authorised absence will not be included in this total and the sessions do not need to be consecutive. The referral follows where contacts with home have not brought about any improvement in attendance and there is poor communication with home regarding explanations for absence/lateness.

### *Registration*

- Registers should be maintained neatly, accurately
- Any alterations must be unambiguous
- Children must not mark the register under any circumstances
- **The school day begins at 8.50am for KS2 pupils and 8.55am for Year R and KS1 pupils and all pupils are expected to be in school at this time.**
- There are two possible attendance marks each day, so both AM and PM registration periods are equally important.
- Admin staff can advise on the symbols/codes to use in registers.
- Attendance marks are transferred onto SIMS by admin staff each session.

## Monitoring

The registers will be monitored weekly by the Attendance Officer and cluster Home School Link Worker

- The Attendance Officer will bring issues of concern to the head teacher's notice
- Attendance of children of concern will be part of regular discussions between the head teacher and the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

## Collection of children

It is parents' responsibility to ensure that their child/ren are collected promptly from school as soon as the school day or after school clubs finish, when the school is no longer responsible for their supervision. The school day for KS1 pupils at 3.10pm and KS2 pupils finish at 3.15pm.

Parents are responsible for making proper arrangements for the collection of their child/ren from school promptly at the allocated time by a responsible adult or designated person and for informing the school of these arrangements and personnel. Persistent lateness in collection will be discussed with parents by the head teacher.

## Absence

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

School must be informed about absence by:

- A telephone call or email to the office on *each day of absence* detailing reasons for absence
- Where there has been no notification, admin staff will text (or call) parents to ascertain the reason

## Authorised Absence

Only the school can authorise an absence. An absence is not automatically classed as 'authorised' because it is covered by a written or verbal note from the parent; this is at the head teacher's discretion and will take into account any number of previous pupil absences, the progress the pupil is making and reasons given for the absences.

Head teachers **may not** grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The head teacher decides if the circumstances are exceptional e.g. leave for families of Service personnel which is dependent upon shore leave or troop deployment; funerals; religious observance.

*Circumstances which are not considered exceptional:*

- Cost of holiday being cheaper during term time
- Parents booking a holiday in term time by mistake
- The need to meet everyone's commitments if a large group (family or friends) are going on holiday together
- The time of year and climate/weather conditions in the holiday location • A holiday won as a prize or dates given by a newspaper promotion
- Another family member buys the holiday as a surprise.

### ***Compassionate leave:***

Compassionate leave will normally be authorised where there is a death or very serious illness in the family. Please come and talk to the head teacher to explain the circumstances and time needed.

### ***Medical leave:***

Parents/carers will need to ask the school's permission and provide evidence of the appointment e.g. an appointment card or letter. In general parents/carers are asked to make these appointments outside school time, or if this is impossible, to schedule them as early or as late as possible to keep the child's time away from school to a minimum.

### ***Unauthorised Absence:***

Her Majesty's Inspectors define unauthorised absence as ***"Absence from school for any period as a result of a premeditated or spontaneous act by the pupil or parent or both. This includes parentally condoned absence."***

Parentally condoned absences include absences when:

- a parent gives in to a pupil who wants to stay at home
- a parent is ill
- a parent is using the pupil as a childminder
- a pupil is supporting other members of the family
- work patterns, for example shift work, make it difficult for the family to ensure the child attends school
- a parent wants company
- it is the pupil's birthday
- a parent does not care whether the pupil attends school
- a parent has taken the pupil shopping
- a parent cannot control the pupil
- a parent has taken the pupil to the hairdresser
- a parent is hostile towards the school or towards education in general
- a parent distrusts authority
- a parent is using the pupil as an interpreter.

### ***School Procedures for Dealing with Pupil Absence:***

- If a pupil is absent without explanation, the school will contact the parents by text on the first day by 9.30am
- All contact regarding attendance and reasons for absence will be recorded on SIMS to provide a comprehensive chronology if required
- If a pupil is absent for three days in one week without an explanation the class teacher will contact the parents/carers for an explanation. If contact is unable to be made Letter Ab1 will be sent. If no contact with any named parents/carers has been able to be made, the school is required to start a Child Missing in Education procedure as set down by Hampshire County Council Guidance. The school will make reasonable enquiries with family and friends, but if unsuccessful will follow HCC guidance
- If absence falls below 90% parents will receive a letter (letter Ab2) drawing their attention to the level of absence and outlining the consequences for the child's learning and progress
- If absence continues below 90% or without significant improvement parents will be asked to attend a meeting with the head teacher to discuss reasons and agree a target for improvement
- If the target is met this will be acknowledged by letter with a maintenance target included (letter Ab2a)
- If absence continues below 90% or without significant improvement the school will notify parents that all future absence will be unauthorised without a letter from a medical practitioner and outline the consequences of persistent unauthorised absence (letter Ab3)
- If absence continues below 90%, without significant improvement, or is likely to meet the sessions of unauthorised absence threshold for legal referral the school will write to warn parents of the possibility of referral to the legal panel and the possible outcomes from this (letter Ab4)
- If absence meets the unauthorised sessions threshold the school will make a referral to the ALP (Attendance Legal Panel) for legal action
- Where children are absent for 10 days and their whereabouts are unknown the school will alert the local authority (children missing in education)
- The school will invite parents / carers of persistent absentees to the school to discuss the issues and agree an action plan to support the parent/carer/child. (Persistent absentees are children with attendance which drops below 90% over a number of weeks, or have missed 10% or 3 weeks schooling in one year, for whatever reason.)

### ***School Procedures for Dealing with Pupil Lateness***

All lateness is recorded daily. This information will be required by the courts should a prosecution for non-attendance or lateness be necessary.

- If parents know their child is going to be late for any reason, they should let the school know in advance
- If persistent patterns of lateness continue, parents will be asked to attend a meeting with the head teacher to discuss reasons and agree a target for improvement. (In rare circumstances, if the school is aware of the situation, an arrangement allowing some

flexibility can be agreed with the head teacher.) If a child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence due to lateness, the school, in partnership with 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 unauthorised absence from schools September 2015. (Appendix 1)

- Where persistent lateness does not improve a referral to the Locality Team can be considered for agency intervention.

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>

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:

- Persistently late (coded 'U') for 10 sessions or more, after the register has closed. In addition, 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 (am registration) sessions has been met.

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/carers who condoned the absence (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 PN 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.

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/learningbehaviour-attendance/attendance-guidance-for-parents/possible-penalties.htm>

### ***School Procedures for dealing with reluctant attendee:***

The school recognises that 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. The parent should contact the child's class teacher immediately and openly discuss any worries and to identify the reason for reluctance to attend with a view to working together to tackle the problem.

### ***Advice on how to encourage a child to attend School:***

The school advice is to make sure children get enough sleep and get up in plenty of time each morning ensuring that they leave home in the correct clothes and are properly equipped. Parents can show by interest that they value their child's education.

Children will bring home a home-school book in their bookbag. Parents should look at it with their child and use it to communicate with the class teacher.

Parents can show interest in what their child is doing in school by chatting to them about the things they have learnt, what friends they have made and even what they had for lunch.

### ***Leavers:***

Parents of leavers should notify the school in writing of the child's last day of school and the name and address of the new school.

### ***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](http://documents.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/HIAS/Promotingpupilattendanceandrecordingabsence-Section6.pdf)

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.



## ***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 full-time 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

### **Guidance documents on attendance**

The following DfE documents are used to guide attendance recording.

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

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

These and other guidance documents are available on the DfE website Hampshire County Council Guidance is available on Hantsweb at

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

### **Monitoring:**

This policy will be reviewed when deemed appropriate by the Headteacher, staff and Governing Body. The School Improvement Committee will monitor the implementation of the policy through data provided to FGB meetings, to ensure the best outcomes in knowledge and understanding for our pupils through promoting regular school attendance. Monitoring of the levels of communication from the Head teacher to non-compliant parents will take place through analysis of the data provided.

