Policy

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Distribution:	All Staff
	All Governors

Policy Reviewed:	September 2023
Date for Review:	September 2024
Policy Owner:	Rebecca Richardson

This Policy is consistent with the Hampshire model policy (2015), the Department for Education Guidance (DfE) for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities and the (DfE).

Contents

1.   Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:
- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence to be at least in line with national averages
- Reducing persistent absence to be in line or better than national averages
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

We expect students' attendance to be above 97.3%; this is because research shows that regular attendance is essential for success and students are 2.2 times more likely to achieve 5 or more GCSE passes than pupils whose attendance is 85% or 90% during KS4.
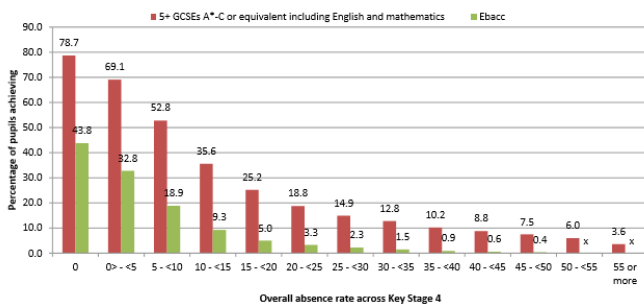

Figure 1: DfE Report - The link between absence and attainment at KS2 and KS4.

90% attendance means that the student is missing 1 day per fortnight and the equivalent of 20 days off school over the year; therefore, if attendance falls to below 90% it is classed as being persistent absence.

2.   Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:
- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- Working Together To Improve School Attendance 2022

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

In addition to DfE guidance, this policy takes into account Hampshire County Council guidance for schools on improving student attendance.

3.   School procedures

3.1 Attendance register
By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:
- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent – and coded accordingly
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:
- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved throughout the students' time at school and for 3 years after the student leaves school.

Pupils must arrive in school by 08:40 on each school day and be ready to register with their tutor.

The register for the first session will be taken at 08:40 and will be kept open until 09:05. The register for the second session will be taken at 13:15 and will be kept open until 13:30.

3.2 Unplanned absence
Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 08:00 or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6). The phone number to report a child's absence is 01256 322691 or email absences@aldworth.hants.sch.uk

Parents are asked to provide a reason for the absence and this is recorded on the attendance register. Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised until medical evidence is received.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments
Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences. However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

To notify the school of any planned medical or dental appointments telephone 01256 322691 or email absences@aldworth.hants.sch.uk

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality
A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code. A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code, and the minutes late will be recorded.

Lateness to school will be followed up according to the guidance in the Staff Handbook.

If parents are not able to support the school and a student accumulates ten or more 'U' marks in any 10 week period, the school will be required to issue parents with a Penalty Notice (PN), in accordance with Hampshire County Council's Code of conduct: issuing Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence from schools.

3.5 Following up absence
The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.
See Appendix 2 for the procedure if we have been unable to establish contact with the family and believe the child to be Missing in Education (CME)

3.6   Reporting to parents
Parents will be informed of their child's attendance on each school report. Attendance will also be regularly monitored throughout the year and parents will be informed if their child's attendance falls below certain levels throughout the year

4.   Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence
Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.
We define 'exceptional circumstances' as unusual events or an abnormal occurrence.
The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** may include, but are not limited to:
- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- Other reasons may be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Headteacher.

4.2 Legal sanctions

Where a child has unauthorised absence the school must enforce HCC's Code of Conduct: Issuing Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence from schools or follow it's 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.

Parents/carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular attendance of their child at school, where they are of compulsory school age, unless the absence has been authorised by the school.

HCC will use the full range of legal measures to ensure good attendance, when necessary.
Legal measures will only be considered when there is unauthorised absence and:
- the child or family do not require the support from any agency to improve the attendance and/or have rejected or not responded to support from the school or HCC.
- the child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence in any 100 sessions, and parents are complicit in the child's absence.

The following legal measures can be taken:
- parenting contracts set at Education Planning Meetings
- parenting orders
- Penalty Notices
- Education Supervision Orders
- prosecution

The code of conduct states that HCC will issue a Penalty Notice for any unauthorised absence where the pupil has:
- accumulated 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 absences.
- been persistently late (coded U) on 10 or more occasions (five days), after the register has closed.
- been 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
- been absent for any public examinations of which dates are published in advance, without authorisation.

If the 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:
- 10 sessions of unauthorised absence or lateness in any 10 week school period
- one 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:

- 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 return of a 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 HCC will decide whether a Penalty Notice is issued to one or more parents/carers for each child. NB: This could mean four Penalty Notices for a family with two siblings, both with unauthorised absence for holiday, 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 documents 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.
Note: If the Penalty Notice is paid and a student has further unauthorised absences, additional legal action will be taken. For example, in the event that a Penalty Notice has previously been served due to unauthorised holiday, should the child have any future unauthorised leave, this will result in further legal action, such as prosecution or an Education Supervision Order.

5.   Strategies for promoting attendance

Attendance is promoted through assemblies, the tutor program, communication between the school and parents, individual pastoral work from the tutor, Head of Year and pastoral leaders. Where the impact of the standard strategies are insufficient, individual cases may be escalated from the tutor, to the Head of Year and then to the senior leadership team (SLT). SLT may use 'Pathways' or 'Newport' as a strategy for the most challenging cases. SLT will lead the attendance strategy, the operational detail of which can evolve over time.
Tutors will identify students who may benefit from early intervention and use the 20-day challenge.
If selected the student will be expected to attend school for 20 consecutive days and will be rewarded with a certificate and prize for successful completion of the challenge or for improving their attendance following completion of the challenge.
Students with 100% attendance are also recognised in end of term assemblies and presentation evenings.

6.   Attendance monitoring

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2), daily phone calls should be received for each day of absence to ensure that the school are notified of absences and to allow us to offer early intervention if needed.

If we have not received notification of absence from parents, the school will contact home to determine the location of the student.

If we are concerned about attendance, parents will receive a phone call or letter advising them of our concerns. If, after contacting parents, a pupil's attendance continues to fall, we will have an escalation process that may ultimately involve external agencies.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

7.   Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The Governing Body
The Governing Body is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

7.2 The Headteacher
The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.
The Headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

7.3 The Associate Assistant Headteacher
The Associate Assistant Headteacher:
- delivers clear messages about expectations, routines and consequences to pupils and families
- organizes a physical presence to reinforce routines and expectations on arrival and departure to the school
- regularly communicates expectations for attendance and punctuality and school performance through the regular channels of communication with staff, pupils and parents
- Organises a clear escalation process for dealing with attendance concerns
- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level and reports this to the Headteacher and Governing Body
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Headteacher and Governing body
- Works with external agencies to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the Headteacher when fixed-penalty notices or legal action are necessary

7.4 The Attendance Officer

The Attendance Officer:

- Monitors attendance data at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to AAHT/SLT
- Works with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the AAHT/administration staff when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- Maintains a database of persistent absentees, facilitating effective actions and evaluation of impact over time
- Is responsible for ensuring that daily 'Persistent Absence' calls to parents.

7.5 Tutors

Form Tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office. They will support and intervene as appropriate using the guidance in the staff handbook and the training given.

7.6 Head of Year

The Head of Year

- reviews tutor group attendance weekly to share data, identify issues, intervene early and help set targets
- Promotes good attendance at assemblies, tutor meetings, through rewards and praise and in their day to day interactions with students and parents
- emphasises the importance of attendance and its impact on attainment
- promotes rewards and celebrates progress but continues to outline sanctions
- follows up on absence and lateness with pupils to identify barriers and reasons for absence
- considers the individual needs and vulnerabilities of pupils
- Ensures tutors are following up as per the guidance they are given
- Works with students and families who are escalated to them from the tutor
- Escalate issues as appropriate to the Leadership Team.

7.7 Reception staff

Reception staff

- Take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.
- Are responsible for issuing daily truancy texts.
- If the attendance officer is not available, reception staff will generate and send the Persistent Absentee list to the admin office or pastoral office.

7.8 Responsibilities of parents/carers

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law – this includes taking a child out of school for holiday during term time. 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.

Parents will:

- support the school in aiming for 100% attendance each year.
- inform the school on the first day of absence.
- notify the tutor/Head of Year of any proposed absences, well in advance.
- make sure that any absence is clearly accounted for by telephone or email.
- 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.
- notify the school of any changes to contact details.
- ensure that the school has contact details for two adults

8.   Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the school and governors. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

9.   Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy.

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
****	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2: Procedure for Child Missing in Education (CME) and Elective Home Education Requests (EHE)

CHILD MISSING EDUCATION

Criteria (Please highlight)	Tasks	Completed?	Sign and Date
Has the student failed to attend school on the agreed start date and/or missed 10 or more days of school without permission??	**Daily – Reception team** Contact parent/carer by telephone for each day of absence (truancy call) – record on communication log on SIMS		
Has the student failed to attend school for 10 consecutive days after an authorised absence or been absent for 20 consecutive days?	**Day 6 – DSL** Complete CPOMs log to record concerns and complete safeguarding checks and/or home visit.		
	Day 10 – Administration Manager If unable to establish contact notify local authority by the 10th day of absence		
	Day 10 – Administration Manager Inform parents in writing that the student will be removed from the admissions register unless we hear from them within 10 days of the letter date.		
	Day 20 – DSL Check if Local Authority have been able to establish contact. If unable to establish contact inform local authority of decision to remove student from admissions register.		
	Day 20 – Administration Manager Inform parent / carer in writing of decision to remove student from admissions register		
	Day 20 – Administration Manager Take student off the admissions register		

I am satisfied that the school and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to establish the whereabouts of the child. I am satisfied that all the above checks have been carried out and authorise for the student to be removed from the school admissions register.

Signed:_____   **Date:**_____

Chris Rice
Headteacher

ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION

Criteria (Please highlight)	Tasks	Completed?	Sign and Date
Parent requests EHE?	**Year Leaders** Advise parent/carer that we require written evidence stating that they wish to Electively Home Educate their child.		
	DSL Complete CPOMs log to record parental request to EHE and complete safeguarding checks and/or home visit.		
	Headteacher Written evidence received from parents confirming their decision to EHE.		
	Administration Manager Inform Local Authority of parental decision to EHE		
	Administration Manager Take student off the admissions register		
	Administration Manager Inform parent/carer in writing that student has been taken off admissions register		

I am satisfied that all the above checks have been carried out and authorise for the student to be removed from the school admissions register.

Signed:_____   Date:_____

Chris Rice
Headteacher