



South Baddesley CE Primary School

Attendance Policy

National Guidance:

This policy has been drawn up using a range of national documents. DfE School Attendance Guidance 2014 states that schools should:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled; and,
- Act early to address patterns of absence.

Parents are expected to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age, who are registered at school, attend regularly. All pupils should be punctual to their lessons.

1. Rationale:

At South Baddesley CE Primary School we recognise that full time and punctual school attendance is essential for children to achieve academically, as well as develop socially and emotionally. Pupils must attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

Good attendance enables pupils to achieve better in all areas of their learning and development. Pupils who attend regularly feel confident and secure within the school's routines and practices. They are able to fully contribute to their learning community and build strong, reliable friendships.

A child whose attendance drops to 90% will miss half a day of school each week, overtime this has a considerable impact on their learning.

We recognise our responsibilities to ensure pupils are in school and on time. We are committed to supporting all children to achieve 100% attendance and endeavour to work in partnership with parents/carers to achieve this. We seek advice and support from external professionals to ensure our procedures meet the legal requirements and advocate 'best-practice.'

Our policy applies to all children registered at this school and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of pupils via our school website.

2.1 Promoting Good Attendance and Punctuality:

Our Home-School Agreement explains how parents/carers can support their child in achieving good attendance.

In order to raise the awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of good attendance and punctuality, we provide additional information regarding attendance via:

- our monthly school newsletter,
- reports on individual pupil performance,
- termly attendance awards

2.2 Headteacher's role:

The Headteacher monitors the attendance and punctuality of every pupil.

If a pupil's attendance is below 95% for a period of one month a letter is sent to the child's parents or a meeting is requested to discuss the levels of attendance.

Subsequently, the child's attendance is monitored weekly.

The Headteacher reports whole school levels of attendance and punctuality to Governors each term. The Headteacher ensures that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties. Whole school strategies and practices are shared with Governors.

The Headteacher makes decisions regarding the authorisation of term-time absences. When necessary this is in consultation with the Governors and other local schools. Advice from external professionals is sought if appropriate.

2.3 Responsibilities of staff:

All staff actively promote good attendance and punctuality by creating a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued. They encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility and talk to pupils about the importance of good attendance and punctuality.

Teachers ensure that attendance is recorded accurately in registers and share information with Admin Staff regarding attendance and punctuality.

Admin Staff respond quickly when a child is late or absent. They contact parents/carers and record outcomes of conversations accurately so that any necessary follow-up actions can be taken by the Headteacher.

School staff work in partnership with families if a pupil is experiencing difficulties that are impacting upon their attendance and/or punctuality.

2.4 Responsibilities of pupils:

Pupils are encouraged to attend school every day unless they are unwell or have an authorised absence.

Pupils are expected to arrive at lessons on time and be ready to start learning.

2.5 Responsibilities of parents/carers:

Parents/ carers support the school in maintaining good levels of attendance and punctuality by ensuring that pupils are in school every day, unless they are unwell. They ensure that pupils arrive at school on time.

If a child is absent from school, parents inform school on the first day of absence, subsequent written confirmation will then be required (see 3.3 for further guidance). Advice concerning returning to school after an illness is sought from school staff if necessary.

Parents write written requests in advance, using the schools pro-forma, for term-time absence. Parents recognise that absence will only be authorised if the request is considered exceptional. Parents provide information about siblings attending local schools so that schools can work in partnership when considering absence requests.

Parents avoid taking children out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments.

3.1 Recording Attendance:

Legally, the register must be marked twice daily. This is once at the start of the school day, 8.40am and again for the afternoon session at 12.45pm.

3.2 Lateness/ Punctuality

The school day begins at 8.40am and all pupils are expected to be in school at the time.

Morning registration is at 8.40 am and it closes at 9.10am

- All lateness is recorded daily. This information will be required by the courts, should a prosecution for non-attendance or lateness be necessary.
- A pupil will receive a late mark 'L' if they are not in the classroom at 8.40am when the registers are taken.
- 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'.

Pupils who are **consistently** late are considered as **unauthorised absence (Code O) and will be subject to legal action** (see section 6 for further detail).

Parents/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/carers will be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem and support offered. If support 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 the 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 a late collection is exceptional and cannot be avoided, please contact school as early as possible to inform them of delay and expected time of arrival.

3.3. What to do if my child is absent?

If a child is unable to attend school it is vital that school are informed about the reasons for the absence.

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence. This may be by telephone.
- Send a note or an email on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – **you must do this even if you have already telephoned.**

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone or email 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 Headteacher (or in some cases our Senior Teachers) if absences persist.
- If the attendance difficulties persist* and there is not a reasonable reason or support has not been taken, school will refer the matter to the Hampshire's Attendance Legal Panels.

*Attendance difficulties occur when a child's attendance drops below 90% and is unauthorised.

3.4 Third Day Absence

If your child is still absent and we have not heard from you, we will:

- Send you a letter to contact the school immediately and to explain the absence.

Please Note: If your child is not seen and contact has not been established with you or any of the named parent/carers after three days of absence the school is required to start a child missing in education procedures as set down by Hampshire County Council Guidance. We will make all reasonable enquiries to establish contact with parents and the child, including making enquiries to known friends and wider family.

3.5 Ten Days Absence

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupils who are absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer then the Local Authority is notified that the child is 'at risk of missing'. Children's Services Staff will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child. 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.

3.6 Continued or On-going Absence

If your child misses 10% (3 weeks) 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%.

Consequently, we monitor all absence thoroughly and all attendance data is shared with the Local Authority and the Department for Education. If your child has had absence and their attendance level falls below 95% we will contact you to highlight the need to improve attendance.

Children at this school are dependent on their parents/carers, who are responsible for their level of attendance and punctuality.

4. Request for Leave of Absence

Amendments to school attendance regulations were updated and enforced from September 2013: **(Pupil registration) (England) regulations state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances**. It is important to note that Headteachers can determine the length of the authorised absence as well as whether absence is authorised at all. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are **rare, significant, or unavoidable** which means the event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. **There are no rules on this** as circumstances vary from school to school and family to family.

There is however, no legal entitlement for time off in school time to go on holiday **and in the majority of cases holiday will not be authorised**. Parents/Carers wishing to apply for leave of absence need to fill in an application form available from the school office, in advance and before making any travel arrangements.

If term time leave is taken without prior permission from the school, the absence will be unauthorised and if the number of sessions absent hits the thresholds set down in Hampshire's Code of Conduct parent/carers will be issued with a fixed penalty fine, or other legal action in accordance with the code (see section 6 for detail).

Schools within the Lymington Pyramid work together and share information regarding requests for leave. It is therefore helpful to inform us if you have a child at another local school so that we can work together to consider requests.

5. Understanding types of absence – Authorised and Unauthorised:

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 of 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.

6. Penalty Notices for Non Attendance and other Legal Measures:

In Education law, parents/carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular attendance of their child of compulsory school age at the school at which the child is registered, unless the absence has been authorised by the school.

Legal Measures for tackling persistent absence or lateness

Hampshire Schools and Hampshire County Council will use the full range of legal measures to secure good attendance. Legal measures will only be considered through a referral to Hampshire's Attendance Legal Panels where:

- 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

Legal Measures for absence taken when the Headteacher has declined parent/carers request for leave of absence

Where a pupil has unauthorised absence due to either:

1. non approval of a parent/carer's request for leave of absence or
2. a holiday that has been taken without permission and the unauthorised absence is for 10 or more sessions (5 days) in any 100 possible school sessions then a penalty notice for non-attendance will be issued.

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:

- 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 does not require any agency support to improve the attendance then a single

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.**

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. For each case of unauthorised absence the school or Hampshire County Council will decide whether a Penalty Notice is issued **to one or more parent/carers** for each child. **N.B** This could mean four penalty notices for a family with two siblings both with unauthorised absence for holiday i.e. one Penalty Notice for each child to each parent.

Each penalty notice carries a fine of £60 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>

7. 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.

Contact your child's class teacher, immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – it is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to resolve the problem.

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

There are a number of things that will support children attending school regularly:

- Getting enough sleep and getting up in plenty of time each morning.
- Having the correct clothes and equipment.
- Showing an interest and valuing your child's education
- For many parents, your child attending school may be your first experience of being separated from them. This can seem daunting at first for both of you but consistency and a caring supportive home and school life will make the transition a quick and easy experience for you both.

7.2 Leavers

If your child is leaving our school (other than when transferring to secondary school or leaving at the end of Year 6), 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.

Person (s) responsible for implementing and monitoring the policy:

Anne Moir – Headteacher

South Baddesley Governing Body

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