



FEDERATION ATTENDANCE POLICY 2025-2026

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Rationale: the importance of school attendance:

All children have a right to high quality education and to learn in an environment that is safe, supportive, calm and orderly. We take pride in knowing our children as individuals; their interests, talents and dispositions valued and understood. We want all children to love school, to want to be in school and to be keen and ready to learn.

We recognise that the obstacles that limit good attendance and prevent some children from accessing education are far, wide and complex, often specific to individual pupils and families. By building good relationships, rooted in trust, openness and honesty, we are able to work with our families to support them in overcoming the barriers that prevent regular attendance and improve outcomes for our pupils.

Improving attendance is a collective effort, which can only be achieved by:

- an engaging curriculum which excites children and fosters a love to learn
- excellent behaviour
- eliminating bullying, and having policies and procedures in place to quickly and effectively deal with bullying incidents (on and off line)
- provision for special educational needs support which is tailored to need and enables participation
- strong pastoral support
- making mental health and wellbeing a priority
- effective use of resources, including pupil premium.

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
- find school routines, school work and friendships easier to manage.
- find learning more satisfying
- are protected (school is a protective factor for all children, especially those who are vulnerable)
- are more successful when they transition between schools
- are prepared for transition and can adapt to change
- are equipped with the knowledge, skills and emotional security to take advantage of opportunities and experiences in later life.

Working together to improve attendance

We are passionate about the partnership we develop and nurture with our families. We recognise Parents are our children's first teachers and we take our responsibilities of guiding and educating children seriously- we know we are shaping future minds and generations- and we are committed to get it right for every family.

Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance requires commitment and collaboration. We work with, not against, our families to support them to facilitate change and improve outcomes for their child(ren).

We work together to:

MONITOR

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

EXPECT

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

FACILITATE SUPPORT

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

FORMALISE SUPPORT

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.

ENFORCE

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

Promoting good attendance and punctuality – expectations of schools

To ensure positive outcomes for every child, we consistently promote the benefits of regular attendance using a range of approaches:

Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance

Good attendance is a learned behaviour, which is why we place importance on developing good patterns as soon as children start school. The benefits of regular attendance are shared on open days and during welcome meetings with parents, and are reinforced throughout the academic year in different ways by the headteacher (newsletters, home/school agreements, website updates, meetings). All teaching and non-teaching staff promote the same message and work with the Headteacher to promote good attendance (a focus for parent

consultation meetings, daily absences are followed up immediately, well-being checks are undertaken, regular check ins with families take place). Our approach guarantees that attendance is everyone's responsibility and enables us to work together to secure high levels of punctuality and attendance for every child.

Regular attendance is rewarded and celebrated with our children. Our pupils understand that to achieve our vision: to become knowledgeable, empowered and emotionally secure to take advantage of opportunities and responsibilities in later life, driven by our values (which underpin our ethos and culture), regular attendance and high levels of engagement at school are key.

A calm, orderly environment, which permits all children to care, learn, engage, achieve, reflect (our school values), is essential in ensuring all children are able to learn. We pride ourselves on having excellent behaviour which makes it enjoyable for children to attend the Foxhills federation- they are keen to come to school and learn.

Policy and Procedures, Roles and Responsibilities

Our effective attendance culture is driven by clear expectations, procedures and responsibilities.

We expect every child to be in school every day unless there is a statutory reason they cannot not be. To ensure this happens:

The Headteacher will:

- champion and improve school attendance by overseeing, directing and co-ordinating the school's approach
- work with all partners in promoting regular attendance
- ensure the attendance policy is understood by everyone (leaders, staff, parents and children) and consistently applied throughout the school.
- work with the attendance officer to ensure that attendance is recorded accurately and analysed, and to make decisions about an appropriate course of action
- ensure that attendance issues are identified quickly and that immediate action is taken
- work with others to provide support for families and find ways to overcome specific barriers
- act on persistent absence including access to wider support services and the attendance legal team.
- Initiate the procedures for fixed penalty notices when other sanctions have been ineffectual

Teachers will:

- Ensure that all pupils are registered accurately.
- Promote and reward good attendance with pupils and their parents
- Liaise with the headteacher and home school link workers on matters of attendance and punctuality.
- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence.
- Support pupils with absence to engage with their learning once they are back in school.
- Undertake well-being check ins with pupils and parents returning from a period of absence
- Have discussions with parents as soon as their child's attendance reaches 90%

Admin staff will:

- Be the point of call for parents
- Manage the school's day to day processes: first day response, following up on absences with well-being checks, following up on unexplained absences
- Spot patterns in absences and report these to the data officer and headteacher
- Identify absences that arouse suspicion and refer these to SLT

Pupils will:

- Attend every day unless they are ill or have an authorised absence.
- Arrive at school on time.

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility (Section 444 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 before 9.00 am
- take responsibility for registering at the office if their child is late or need to leave school during the school day.
- notify the school of 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 telephone on the first and subsequent days of absence, or by letter/email if a phone is unavailable.
- avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments
- provide evidence of medical and dental appointments during the school day
- only request leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance.

If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, school staff will meet with parents and find ways to improve attendance. Our relationships with our families are rooted in trust, openness and honesty and we want to help families to empower themselves in overcoming personal barriers. We listen to our parents, support them in understanding obstacles and challenges, and work together to find solutions, drawing on advice and guidance from outside agencies as appropriate.

When this approach or support is ineffectual, and attendance continues to be a concern, support that is more formal is put in place. This can take the form of attendance contracts, education supervision orders, attendance prosecution, parenting orders and penalty notices.

Penalty Notices

A penalty notice is an out of court settlement, intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution. When a parent has failed to ensure their compulsory school aged child attends school, a penalty notice will be issued, usually for unauthorised holidays in term time (or when a parent allows their child to be present in a public place during schools hours without reasonable justification for the first five days of a fixed term exclusion).

Foxhills will only issue two penalty notices to the same parent in respect of the same child within a three-year rolling period and any second notice is charged at a higher rate. This is because the notice should serve as a deterrent for taking your child out of school during term time.

Recording attendance

The law requires all schools to have an admission register and an attendance register. At Foxhills, the attendance register is taken twice daily (at 8:50 am and 1:00pm) and children's attendance recorded. We will record pupils who are present and those who are absent. We also record those attending approved educational activities and children absent for exceptional circumstances.

Punctuality and Lateness

All children must be at school on time, everyday.

- The school day begins at 08.30 for the junior school and 8:35 am for the infants. All pupils must be in school by 8:45am.
- Morning registration is at 8.50am and it closes at 9.00 am.
- Lateness, for any reason, is recorded daily. A child is considered to be late after 9am, after which they will be marked as absent. Persistent lateness will result in referrals to the attendance legal team and could incur a prosecution.
- 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.

We will actively work with parents whose children are consistently late because it is disruptive and affects everyone's learning. Ongoing and repeated lateness is considered as **unauthorised absence and will be subject to legal action**.

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 to find solutions.

Parents are expected to collect their 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.

What to do if my child is absent?

First day absence

A child not attending school is considered a safeguarding matter, which is why information about the cause of any absence must be shared.

If your child is absent you must:

- contact us as soon as possible, by 9am, on the first day of absence by phone or email
- call in to the school office and let us know.

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*. We will call repeatedly and daily until we are able to make contact with you.
- invite you in to discuss the situation with Headteacher, if absences persist
- refer the matter to the Hampshire County Council's Attendance Legal Panels if absence is unauthorised and falls below 90%

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 we will commence 'child missing in education' procedures as set down by Hampshire County Council guidance. We will make all reasonable enquiries to establish contact with parents/carers and the child, including making enquiries to known friends and wider family. A visit to the home address will be made by the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher.

Ten days' absence

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/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.

Continued or ongoing absence

If your child misses 10% (three weeks/sessions) or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason, they are defined as *persistent absentees*.

Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in his or her learning. Research shows these gaps affect attainment when attendance falls below 95%. As such, we monitor all absence thoroughly and all attendance data is shared with the local authority and the Department for Education. If your child has had absence and their attendance level is falling towards 90% we will contact you and depending on the reasons for the absence will take further action as detailed in the policy. Where necessary the Headteacher will issue a penalty notice.

Children at this school are dependent on their parent/carers, who are responsible for their level of attendance and punctuality. It is vital that children enjoy coming to school, and whilst being encouraged to attend well and on time, will not carry blame and be made to feel unhappy if their parents are not supportive or effective in these areas.

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.

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 education and progress. We expect Parents to support us by not requesting a leave of absence for holidays during term time.

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
 - absences which have not been explained.

We 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. A penalty notice may then be issued.

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 will be used 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 County Council's *Code of conduct: issuing Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence from schools* or follow its guidance on other legal measures for non-attendance. The *Code of conduct* is a statutory document that ensures that powers for legal sanctions are applied consistently and fairly across

all schools and their families within the authority. A copy is available from:

www.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/attendance-guidance-forparents/ possible-penalties

The *Code of conduct* states that schools or Hampshire County Council will issue a Penalty Notice for any unauthorised absence where the 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 do not require any agency support to improve the attendance then a Penalty Notice is issued for either:

- 1 10 sessions of unauthorised absence or lateness in any 10 week school period**

2 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 either:

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

Parents and carers will be warned of the likelihood of a Penalty Notice being issued for unauthorised absence via a letter, through the leave of absence request form, or through the school's attendance policy and website. The Penalty Notice is a fine that is issued to each parent/ carer who condoned (or was responsible for the child) during the period of unauthorised absence for which the fine has been issued. For each case of unauthorised absence the school or Hampshire County Council will decide whether a Penalty Notice is issued to **one or more parents/carers** for each child. **NB:** This could mean four Penalty Notices for a family with two siblings, both with unauthorised absence for holiday, ie one Penalty Notice for each child to each parent.

Each Penalty Notice carries a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days of the Penalty Notice being posted. If the fine is not paid within 21 days the penalty is automatically increased to £120 if paid within 28 days. If the fine remains unpaid Hampshire County Council will consider prosecution for the non-attendance. Payment methods are detailed on the Penalty Notices themselves. Penalties are to be paid to Hampshire County Council and revenue resulting from payment of penalties is used by the County Council to help cover the costs of issuing Penalty Notices and/or the cost of prosecuting recipients who do not pay.

Please note: From February 2019 The Hampshire Code of Conduct states that if a Penalty Notice has previously been issued and this has been ineffective in addressing the absenteeism, the case must be referred to the Attendance Legal Panel (ALP). The attendance legal panel will decide whether to issue a subsequent Penalty Notice or recommend alternative intervention which may include parental prosecution or an education supervision order. .

For further information parents/carers can request a leaflet from their school and should visit Hampshire County Council's website at:

www.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/attendance-guidance-forparents/possible-penalties.

Attendance Analysis

Weekly, the headteacher and attendance officer monitor attendance to identify patterns and trends for individual children. This process enables both schools to identify concerns and facilitate discussions with parents and pupils (as appropriate). During this process, the root cause of problems and barriers are identified, and the school works with families to plan ways forward (strategies to improve punctuality and attendance). The school closely monitors the impact of these interventions and efforts to ensure they are effective in improving attendance (see persistent absence weekly tracking and 'watch list').

Pupils with medical conditions or special educational needs

We understand some children may not be able to attend school and have policies in place to ensure those with medical needs are appropriately supported (see supporting pupils with medical needs who cannot attend school).

Where a child has a greater barrier to attending school than their peers, we remain ambitious for their school attendance and champion their right to an education. We put suitable support in place to ensure they can still attend school regularly, typically:

- conversations with parents, recognising the need for sensitivity
- providing a named key adult for children with mental health and well-being conditions
- making reasonable adjustments to timings of the school day- allowing children to arrive early
- providing different entry and exit routes
- applying for, or following the recommendations within, education health care plans

- engaging with external partners
- accessing school transport for eligible pupils

Reduced hours provision

All children of compulsory school age have a right to full time education and should be in school. In very exceptional circumstances, and only when it is in the child's best interests, reduced hours attendance may be required. This is usually when a child has a medical condition and needs re-integration. It is never used to solely manage behaviour.

Reduced hours is time limited and held under review. With agreement from parents, provision is reviewed on a fortnightly basis and used for the shortest time possible, with clear plans in place for getting the child back to school full time. When pastoral support has been used, this must continue when the child returns to school full time.

Leavers

If your child is leaving our school we ask Parents to:

1 Give the Headteacher comprehensive information about the families plans, including any date of a move and your new address and telephone numbers, your child's new school and the start date when known. This should be submitted to our school in writing

2 If 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.

Absence through child participation in public performances, including theatre, film or television work and modelling

Parents of a child performer can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a performance. They must contact the headteacher to discuss the nature and frequency of the work, whether the child has a valid performance licence and whether education will be provided by the employer during any future leave of absence. It is, however, down to the headteacher's discretion as to whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Any absence recorded as part of a child's participation in a public performance is recorded as C, an authorised absence.

Absence through competing at regional, county or national level for sport

Parents can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in regional, county, national and international events and competitions. It is, however, down to the headteacher's discretion as to whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Permission for your child to leave early or arrive late to attend coaching and training sessions is also at the discretion of the headteacher and is not likely to be approved if it is a regular event, unless the sports club or association is providing an education tutor as part of their coaching.

Gypsy, Roma, Traveller and Showman families

Absence of a child from a Traveller family that has left the area may be authorised if the absence is for work purposes only and it is believed that the family intends to return. To ensure the continuity of learning for Traveller children, dual registration is allowed. That means that a school cannot remove a Traveller child from the school roll while they are travelling. When the Traveller is away, the home school holds the place open and records the absence as authorised through the T code. Distance learning packs for Traveller children are not an alternative to attendance at school.

Record Preservation

School registers are legal documents. We will ensure compliance with attendance regulations by keeping attendance records for at least 3 years. Computer registers will be preserved as electronic back ups.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be monitored by the Headteacher and the Governing Body. It will be reviewed annually.

Appendix 1: Frequently Asked Questions

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/carers and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse. Contact your child's 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 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. Set routines at home so it is easy for your child to wake up, get up, and get ready for the school day ahead. 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.

My child is absent from school due to mental or physical ill health, how will the school help us?

Many children experience normal but difficult emotions that make them nervous about attending school. It is important that pupils experiencing these feelings still attend school and work with us so we can help them. We do not want mental health concerns or worries to become a barrier to school attendance and will work with you and your child to mitigate anxious feelings in school as much as possible.

In developing a support plan, we will:

- understand the individual needs of the child and the family
- work in partnership to put additional support in place
- regularly review and update our approach, so it remains effective and supportive
- work with partner agencies where external support is needed (and available).
- consider whether a time-limited phased return to school would be appropriate

My child has special educational needs and disabilities. How will the school support us?

We will work in partnership with you, your family and your child to ensure we develop specific and bespoke support tailored to your child's needs. We will ensure provision that is set out in their education health care plan (EHCP) are accessed.

We will work with the LA to provide transport for your child, should they be eligible, and establish strategies for removing barriers your child may face. Reasonable adjustments will be made in respect of uniform, transport, access to site, routines, support in school and break time arrangements.

Any adjustments will be reviewed in consultation with parents to ensure they are effective and remain so.

