



Cupernham
Junior School

ATTENDANCE POLICY

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This policy was updated in September 2024 and has undergone an Equalities Impact Assessment in line with the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty.



RATIONALE

We believe that good attendance at school is necessary in order to secure consistent progress in children's learning. School attendance is subject to various education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education and Hampshire County Council.

The Attendance Policy is also consistent with the following school policies:

- Admissions
- Safeguarding
- Child Protection
- Special Educational Needs
- Positive Relationships and Behaviour

For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our pupils/students and endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome. Parents and pupils play a part in making our school successful. Every child has a right to access the education to which he/she is entitled. Parents and teachers share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all.

It is our duty to consistently strive to achieve a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

For our children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered it is vital your child is at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. The routines children develop around attendance and punctuality at school are the same as the expectations of any future employer in the world of work. High attainment, confidence with peers and staff and future aspirations depend on good attendance.

High attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%.
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically.
- Regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with.
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying.
- Regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school, and higher education, employment or training.

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, and incorporated with the school prospectus;
- 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;
- use strategies, (if absence/punctuality become a matter for concern), devised in order to raise parental awareness of the importance of attendance and punctuality, so that they will make more effort to ensure their child attends school punctually and regularly;
- involve other agencies when difficulties arise, and the school needs extra support or help as appropriate – including the Early Help Hub, Education Psychology Service, Children's Services, Police;
- ensure all staff are aware of School Policy and deal consistently with absence and punctuality;
- ensure information on attendance and punctuality is available for Governors as required;
- ensure good liaison through the process of transition to a different school.

ATTENDANCE GUIDELINES

PROMOTING GOOD ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child. The Home-School agreement highlights the expectation that children attend school regularly and are on time.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Provide information on matters related to attendance in the Cupernham Chronicle
- Report to you on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments
- Celebrate good attendance by celebrating individual attendance – certificates termly
- Reward improving attendance through letters home
- Set targets for the school for attendance with parents and issue contracts if deemed necessary
- Celebrating class attendance weekly

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Headteacher (Mr Simon Frost) and Inclusion Leader (Mrs Francis) will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the attendance policy is consistently applied throughout the school. The Headteacher/Inclusion Leader will also ensure that attendance is both recorded accurately and analysed. (S)he will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that a support plan is put in place to deal with any difficulties. If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, staff (class teachers, family support co-ordinator - Mrs Pearce) will discuss with parent/carers the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note/email or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF YEAR LEADERS

Year leaders will oversee the impact of strategies that have been put in place by class teachers to increase levels of attendance in their Year group.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF CLASS TEACHERS

- Ensure that all students are registered accurately by 8.55am and 1.00pm
- Promote & reward good attendance at all appropriate opportunities
- Liaise with the Year Leaders on matters of attendance and punctuality

- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence on CPOMs
- Talk to parents about any concerns E.g. late arrivals or unauthorised absenteeism

RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS AND CARERS

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carers legal responsibility (section of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.

WHAT TO DO IF MY CHILD IS ABSENT?

FIRST DAY ABSENCE

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

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us by 9am on the first day of absence (phone or email). Or, you can call into school and report to reception - *This is because we have a duty to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school*

You should let the school know:

- the nature of the illness (although you may wish to talk confidentially about this)
- whether your child has seen their GP, or whether an appointment has been made for some other specialist service
- how long you expect your child to be absent from school
- the prognosis for the child's recovery
- Provide evidence of a doctors or hospital appointment letter
- Discuss with the class teacher any planned absences well in advance
- Support the school with their child in aiming for 100% attendance each year
- Avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments

SECOND AND THIRD DAY OF ABSENCE

Contact us by 9am on each day of absence (phone or email).

If your child is absent on a third day and we have not heard from you, the Inclusion Leader or Family Support Co-ordinator will phone to ensure all is well and safe.

Please Note After three days absence: If your child is not seen and contact has not been established with you any of the named parent/carers after five 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 enquires to establish contact with parents and the child including making enquires to known friends and/ or wider family. We may also visit the home carrying out a welfare visit.

PROCESS FOR REQUESTING A LEAVE OF ABSENCE

A doctors/dentist or hospital appointment - Let the school know and hand in a copy of the appointment. The school office staff will record the absence

A holiday - Fill out a “Request to authorise absence from school due to exceptional circumstances” form

New guidelines August 2024, the headteacher will now not authorise a holiday request unless it is exceptional circumstances. A letter will be sent confirming the Headteacher’s decision with an advice letter to parents about fining if applicable. When a holiday is taken (unauthorised) a fine is applicable to each parent. If this is not paid by the stated date the fining process will begin.

DFE guidance states:

Any parent whose child has 5 days of unauthorised absence over a 10-week rolling period will be considered for a Fixed Penalty Notice. Holidays will never be authorised. A Fixed Penalty Notice is £80 if paid within 21 days or £160 if paid within 28 days. In the case of repeated fines, if a parent receives a second fine for the same child within any three-year period, this will be charged at the higher rate of £160. Fines per parent will be capped to two fines within any three-year period.

Once this limit has been reached, other action like a parenting order or prosecution will be considered. If you’re prosecuted and attend court because your child hasn’t been attending school, you could get a fine of up to £2,500. Money raised via fines is only used by the local authority to cover the costs of administering the system, and to fund attendance support. Any extra money is returned to the government.

DAY TO DAY PROCESSES FOR MANAGING ATTENDANCE

RECORDING ATTENDANCE

Legally the register must be marked twice daily. This is once at the start of the school day 8.50am and again for the afternoon session at 12.50 pm.

- Registers should be completed on Arbor at the start of the school day and after lunch. Paper copy available if ICT problems occur.
- Any alterations must be unambiguous
- Children should not mark the register under any circumstance
- Supply teachers and PPA cover to use paper copy and administration staff will update on Arbor

Registers will be checked for regular attendance by the designated member of the office staff. Teachers should also be aware and report any concerns to the Headteacher or relevant senior member of staff. The register is a legal document and may be used as evidence in a Court of Law.

REGISTRATION TIMES

AM

Morning registration will take place at 8.50am

Children arriving up to 9.00am should be marked L

Children arriving after 9.00am shall be deemed to be “Late after registers close, unauthorised” and should be marked U.

PM

Afternoon registration will take place between 1.00pm and 1.10pm

Children arriving up to 1.10 should be marked L

Children arriving after 1.10 shall be deemed to be “Late after registers close, unauthorised” and should be marked U.

Teaching Staff will:

- Mark all children present or absent on Arbor
- Complete dinner register and return information to the office
- If a child is late (register closed at 9am), send the child to the office who will then be coded as a ‘U’ on their attendance record. This mark shows them to be on site, but is legally recorded as an absence

Administrative Staff will:

- Collate all absence messages from parents, which have been sent to the office, both email and by telephone and update the coding on a daily basis;
- Record late arrivals, if any at the start of each day
- Add the “C” symbol to Arbor if a holiday is taken;
- Monitor where absences are frequent, with particular regard for unauthorised absence and bring this to the attention of the headteacher and Inclusion Leader; See Appendix A for Arbor codes
- **Where a child has not arrived at school by 9.30am** and school have not heard from the parent or carer; no reason has been provided, the administration staff will initially send a text message and then by 10.15am phone the family to check on the whereabouts of the child and ensure they are safe.

LATENESS/PUNCTUALITY

It is important to be on time at the start of the morning and afternoon school sessions and to lessons. The start of school/lessons are used to give out instructions or organise work If your child

is late they can miss work, time with their class teacher getting vital information, cause disruption to the lesson for others, and can be embarrassing leading to possible further absence. **Pupils who are consistently late** are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other pupils. Ongoing and repeated lateness is considered as unauthorised absence and could be subject to legal action.

- The school day begins at 8.50am and all pupils are expected to be in school at the time. Morning registration is at 8.50am and it closes at 9.00am
- All lateness is recorded daily. This information will be required by the courts, should a prosecution for nonattendance or lateness be necessary
- Arrival after the close of registration will be marked as Late after register closes code 'U' in line with county and Department for Education (DfE) guidance. This mark shows them to be on site, but is legally recorded as an absence
- If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence coded 'M'. Please be advised that where possible doctors and dentists appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during the school holidays
- If a child has L – (late) and a regular pattern of lateness every week for a month or 10 lates in 50 school days; a text will be sent out as a reminder and then parents will be invited in for a meeting to discuss any difficulties causing lateness and ensure that punctuality is maintained. An attendance support plan may be put in place which will be reviewed in 6 weeks.

AUTHORISED/UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

Whenever a child is absent from school, the absence must be categorised as either 'authorised' or 'unauthorised'.

Authorised absences include:

- Illness or injury preventing the child attending school
- Absence to attend a medical appointment where that appointment can't be taken outside the school day
- Absence enforced through no fault of the child or family, e.g. snow closure days
- Any absence request which has been authorised by the headteacher. (see below).

Where an absence doesn't fall into one of these categories or when no evidence for the absence has been given, it is regarded as **unauthorised**.

What absences is the headteacher allowed to authorise?

Currently, headteachers only have the discretion to authorise an absence from school if it meets certain exceptional circumstances.

Examples of exceptional circumstances might include:

- A **reasonable** period of absence to allow a child to attend the wedding of a family member. For example, if a wedding is on a Friday, this might include time off school the day before to enable the family to make travel arrangements. If the wedding is abroad, the absence would not, however, include a two-week holiday
- A reasonable period of absence in order to attend a family funeral
- Absence linked to a specific religious observance
- Absence to attend an examination or take part in an exceptional sporting event
- Where families need time together to recover from a major trauma or crisis

THE SCHOOL'S STRATEGY FOR IMPROVING ATTENDANCE

All unauthorised absences will be noted on the child's school record and annual report to parents. It can also be found on the parent Arbor App.

Where absence levels fall below 90%, the school will either phone or write to parents, every term, to inform them of their child's level of absence and the consequence of missing so much school.



THE FOLLOWING ATTENDANCE LEVELS MAY ALSO TRIGGER FURTHER ACTION

- a) Parents, guardians or carers of pupils who have patterns of lateness will be contacted to discuss the importance of good time keeping and how this might be achieved. If lateness persists, parents, guardians or carers will be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem and support will be offered.
- b) When attendance falls below parents 90% at the end of a half and second half term, parents are informed of their child's high levels of absence. When this occurs parents, guardians or carers will be invited to attend a meeting with the Inclusion Leader, class teacher or Family Support Co-Ordinator to discuss the concerns; support will be offered by the school inclusion team.
- c) When attendance falls below 85%, parents are contacted and any potential barriers to attendance are discussed, targets will be set and reviewed fortnightly to ensure improvement is happening. An Early Help Hub referral could be considered to support the family too if deemed necessary.
- d) If absence does not improve and the early intervention form the school has not seen any impact or improvement. The school will contact the Local Authority for further support and guidance.
- e) When unauthorised absences exceed 10 sessions within a period of 100 sessions, an application for a fixed penalty will be considered. Meaning we now have the requirement that an attendance penalty notice must be requested if there are 5 or more days of unauthorised absence.

<https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence>

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 will only be considered through a referral to Hampshire's Attendance Legal Panels where: 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 (5 days) 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 maybe 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/attendance-guidanceforparents/possible-penalties.htm>

THE HAMPSHIRE 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 – on Arbor) 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 U), 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 would conflict with other intervention strategies in place or other sanctions already being processed.

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 (or was responsible for the child) during the period of unauthorised absence for which the fine has been issued.

Currently, if a child has high levels of unauthorised absences, parents can be issued with a fixed penalty notice, or fine for £60. Further unauthorised absences can then result in the case being taken to court by the local authority.

MY CHILD IS TRYING TO AVOID COMING TO SCHOOL

What should I do?

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child.

If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

Contact your child's class teacher immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with school work, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem. In some cases, you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties Mrs Pearce our Family Support Co-ordinator or with another professional; the school can support you, in signposting you to the right people to talk to.

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. Establish a morning routine that works for your family
- 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.
- 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

WEBSITES:

[Attendance guidance for parents/carers | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](#)

[The parents' guide to school attendance | TheSchoolRun](#)

<https://www.parentkind.org.uk/for-parents/understanding-education/about-schools/behaviour-and-attendance>

APPENDIX A

SYMBOLS TO BE USED IN SCHOOL REGISTER (ARBOR CODES)

/	Present (am)
/	Present (pm)
L	Late before register has closed.
U	Late after the register has closed
C	Other authorised circumstances.
E	Excluded
C	Holiday – (unauthorised)
M	Medical – Doctors/Dentist appointment
O	Unauthorised circumstances
P	Approved sporting activity
R	Religious Observance in the religious body to which the parents belong
I	Sickness/illness
T	Traveller absence
V	Educational visit or trip
B	Educated off site for residentials