



# Attendance Policy

**Hayling Island Schools: Working together to  
provide outstanding education for all**

Name of Unit/Premises/Centre/School	Mengham Junior School
Date of Policy Review	27 <sup>th</sup> September 2024
Date of Next Review	September 2025
Name of Headteacher	Mrs Odele Davies
Senior Attendance Champion	Odele Davies, headteacher

## **SECTION 1**

### **Rationale**

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 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.

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
- 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

## **SECTION 2**

### **Operating the Policy**

#### **Promoting Good Attendance**

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child. The Home/School Agreement will contain details of how we will work with parents and our expectations of what parents will need to do to ensure their child achieves good attendance.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Provide information on all matters related to attendance in our regular newsletters and on our website
- Provide parents and carers with termly attendance reports together with an annual report
- Celebrate good attendance;
- Recognise good or improving attendance;
- Parents, pupils and staff work together on raising attendance levels across the school

### **Responsibilities of the Senior Attendance Champion**

Mrs Davies, headteacher, 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. She will also ensure that attendance is both recorded accurately and analysed. She will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties. Attendance tracking will also consider any particular groups of children whose attendance is causing concern and she will liaise with the home school link worker in order to target vulnerable groups.

If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, staff 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 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 Staff:**

- Ensure that all students are registered promptly and accurately
- Promote & reward good attendance at all appropriate opportunities.
- Liaise with the senior attendance champion on matters of attendance and punctuality and
- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence.

### **Responsibilities of Students/Parents of younger students:**

- Attend every day unless they are ill or have an authorised absence.
- Arrive in school on time.
- Go to all their registrations and lessons on time.
- Take responsibility for registering at the reception desk if they are late or are leaving the school site during school hours.

### **Responsibilities of Parents and Carers:**

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's 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.

### **Parents/carers will:**

- Inform the school office on the first day of absence via **phone - 02392 462162 or email – adminoffice@mengham-jun.hants.sch.uk**
- Discuss with the school any planned absences well in advance and use the appropriate request for a leave of absence form is completed.
- Support the school with their child in aiming for 100% attendance each year.
- Make sure that any absence is clearly accounted for on subsequent days of absence, or by letter if a phone is unavailable.
- Avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments.
- Where appointments are taken during the school day, the child will be in school before and after
- Only request for leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance

- Contact school to ask for support with attendance where they feel there are barriers to attending school so that they can be referred to the appropriate member of the school pastoral support team.

## SECTION 3

### 3.1. Recording Attendance

Legally the register must be marked twice daily. This is once at the start of the school day at 8:50am and again for the afternoon session at 1pm. Registration will take place in the class base with the class teacher. Please note it will usually happen a few minutes after these times once the children have transitioned inside.

### 3.2. Lateness/Punctuality

It is important to be on time at the start of the morning and afternoon school sessions. 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 it can be embarrassing for them entering once everyone else is settled, leading to possible further absence.

- The school day begins at 8.50am and all pupils are expected to be in school at the time. School doors open at 8.40am. Morning registration is at 8.50am and closes at 9.20am. Afternoon registration is taken at 1pm.
- All lateness is recorded daily. This information will be required by the courts, should a prosecution for non-attendance or lateness be necessary
- 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'. Please be advised that, where possible, doctor and dentist appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays.
- The school day ends at 3.20pm. Children will either receive a direct handover to a suitable adult or, if permission has been given, released to walk home or to a meeting point.
- All year 3 children will receive a direct hand over until the Spring term of year 3.

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other pupils. On-going and repeated lateness is considered as **unauthorised absence and will be subject to legal action** (see section 6 for further detail).

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 offered. If support is not appropriate or 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).

### 3.3 Late pick up

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.

### 3.4 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 as soon as possible on the first day of absence and each day thereafter with a clear reason why your child will not be in school. Illness must be specified. See section 1 for contact details.

Where school is not able to make contact with you we will then follow up using the emergency contact numbers you have provided, in order, until we are able to make contact. If school is concerned that could be a safeguarding issue, then we may decide to visit your home address to carry out a wellbeing check.

#### Third Day of 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 Procedure as set down by Hampshire County Council Guidance. We will always make all reasonable enquires to establish contact with parents and the child on the first day of absence, including making enquires to known friends or wider family, but by day 3 this becomes a wider safeguarding issue.

#### 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 to the local authority. 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% or more of their schooling across the school year, for whatever reason, they are defined as **Persistent Absentees (PA)**. Where this absence is authorised the school will endeavour to make contact with you and, if appropriate, seek help and advice from the school nurse service or other agencies to help improve attendance.

If your child misses more than 50% of school. They are classed as **severely absent** and school will be part of a multiagency approach aimed at trying to overcome any barriers to attendance that exist.

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.

Where there is ongoing absence, school will request medical proof of illness before authorising further absence. This can take the form of a copy of a prescribed medicine label or note from a GP/Consultant.

All our PA pupils and their parents may be subject to a voluntary attendance contract and this may include:-

- ensuring that parents/carers are made aware of any attendance concerns through phone calls, letters and meetings
- rewarding good attendance
- ensure that any concerns about attendance and/or punctuality which cannot be resolved internally are discussed with colleagues from appropriate support services/agencies

### **School Support**

Children at this school are dependent on their parents/carers, who are responsible for their level of attendance and punctuality. It is vital that children enjoy coming to school and are encouraged to attend well and on time. Children will not carry blame or made to feel uncomfortable if their parents/carers are not supporting them with their attendance. The school will:-

- promote a welcoming atmosphere which makes all pupils feel safe and valued
- encourage and promote good relationships between themselves and parents/carers
- include parents/carers in meetings about their child's attendance and involve them in any initiatives introduced by the school to promote attendance
- ensure that they deal fairly and consistently with authorised and unauthorised absence

School has a home school link worker who is available to work with parents to support them with attendance. This support includes the setting up of reward systems and charts with individual children to promote attendance, supporting parents with transport applications and, in emergency cases, providing staff and transport to support a parent who may be struggling with getting their child to school.

School works closely with the school nursing team and our local Mental Health Support Team to support parents where there are ongoing health concerns, either physical or mental, that lead to increased absence.

Where the needs are wider and a whole family response is more appropriate, support is likely to include a voluntary early help assessment.

Where parents do not wish to engage with these services to work with school to promote improved attendance, school will then refer to Hampshire's Legal Support Team who will support school to either access wider support services where appropriate or start a legal process.

## SECTION 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 or the website well 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 the code (see section 6 for detail).

**Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children out during school time.**

#### **For national guidance refer to:**

1. 'School attendance' last updated Nov 16 is located at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance>
2. National Association of Headteachers guidance document on '**Authorised Absence**' 2014  
<http://www.naht.org.uk/welcome/news-and-media/key-topics/parents-and-pupils/naht-issues-new-guidance-on-authorised-absence/>

#### **For county advice and guidance refer to:**

1. Guidance on recording absence <http://documents.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/HIAS/Promotingpupilattendanceandrecordingabsence-maindocument.pdf>
2. Guidance on approval of '**Extended leave of absence**' see county guidance <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/lba-resources-for-schools/atten-guidance/attendance-guidance-for-schools.htm>

## SECTION 5

### 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
  - parents are ill or work patterns have changed
  - 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. 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 or a child discloses that they weren't unwell.

## SECTION 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

For national guidance refer to: '**Parental responsibility measures for behaviour and attendance**' which covers legal measures for non-attendance

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-responsibility-measures-for-behaviour-and-attendance>

For county guidance refer to: '**Guidance for Schools on available support and procedures for pursuing legal action for non-attendance at school**' May 2015

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



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/carers 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 through a link on the school website.

### **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 do 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 of 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 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 parent/carers for each child.

**N.B** This could mean four Penalty Notices for a family with two siblings both with unauthorised absence for holiday i.e. one PN for each child to each parent

From Autumn term 2024, only 2 penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3 year rolling period and any second notice within that period is charged at a higher rate:

- The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at **£160** if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to **£80** if paid within 21 days.
- A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of **£160** if paid within 28 days.
- A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution, but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.

If the fine remains unpaid then 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/learning-behaviour-attendance/attendance-guidance-for-parents/possible-penalties.htm>

## **SECTION 7**

### **7.1 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 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.

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!

### **7.2 Leavers**

If your child is leaving our school (other than when transferring to the junior school/secondary school or leaving at the end of Year 11) parents are asked to give the school 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.

### **7.3 Absence through child participation in Public Performances, including theatre, film or TV work & Modelling.**

***The regulations related to children participating in public performances are separate to those around authorising leave of absence. Headteachers can authorise this absence.***

***For further advice and guidance on child employment and performance licenses visit Hantsweb at***

***<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/childrenandyoungpeople/child-employment.htm>***

***National Advice - <https://www.gov.uk/child-performance-licence-england-scotland-wales>***

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. Any absence recorded as part of a child's participation in a public performance is recorded as C an authorised absence.

#### **7.4. Absence through competing at regional, county or national level for Sport.**

Parents of able sportsmen and women can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a regional, county, national and international events and competitions. It is however, down to the Headteacher's discretion 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 are also at the discretion of the Headteacher and are not likely to be approved if it is a regular event, unless the sports club or association are providing an education tutor as part of their coaching.

*For further advice and guidance on Attendance & GRT and Showman see County Guidance at: <http://documents.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/HIAS/Promotingpupilattendanceandrecordingabsence-Section6.pdf>*

*Please note pupils must have attended 200 sessions in a rolling 12month period to be able to request leave for work purposes*

*Further support & Guidance is available from Hampshire's EMTAS Service*

#### **7.5 Gypsy Roma Traveller Showman 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.

### **SECTION 8**

#### **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 or microfiche copies

This policy is be read in conjunction with:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-for-children-with-health-needs-who-cannot-attend-school>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions--3>