

Langrish Primary School Attendance Policy



Policy approved and adopted: Full Governing Body – September 2020

Section 1: Rationale/Statement of Intent

Attendance is central to raising standards in education 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 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.

Langrish Primary School expects the highest attendance and punctuality from all pupils, at all times. We support pupils and their families to ensure that excellent attendance is achieved.

DfE Guidance School Attendance (2014):

Schools should:

1. Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence
2. Ensure every child has access to full time education
3. Act early to address patterns of absence

Parents must perform their legal duty by ensuring children of a compulsory school age who are registered to a school attend regularly.

In addition, all pupils must be punctual to their lessons.

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: Promoting Good Attendance and Punctuality

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and their child. 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 parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Provide information on all matters related to attendance in our regular Newsletter and on our website
- Report to you on your child performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying class achievements
- Reward good or improving attendance through Attendance Golden Time

Section 2.2 Role and Responsibilities

The 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 and that attendance is recorded accurately and analysed, ensuring that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place with any difficulties.

The Class Teacher will ensure that all students are registered accurately and will promote and reward good attendance at all appropriate opportunities. They will communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for the child's absence.

Pupils will attend every day unless they are ill or have an authorised absence. They will arrive in school on time and go to registration on time.

Parents/carers will inform the school on the first day of absence. They will support the school by aiming for 100% attendance each year. They will make sure that any absence is clearly accounted for by phone or email on the first and subsequent days of absence and avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments. A request for leave of absence will only be made in exceptional circumstances. Parents will take responsibility for registering at the Reception Desk if they are late or are leaving school site during school hours.

Section 3 Recording Attendance, Lateness and Punctuality

Legally the register must be taken twice daily, once at the start of the school day at 8.40 am with registers closing at 8.45 am and again for the afternoon session at 1.00 pm with registers closing at 1.10 pm. Queries will then be dealt with via the school office following registration sessions.

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 DfE guidance. This mark shows the child to be on site, but is legally recorded as absent. 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 made out of school hours or during school holidays.

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of other pupils. On-going and repeated lateness is considered as unauthorised absence and will be subject to legal action.

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 to discuss the problem and support offered. If this 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 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.

3.2 Managing an Absence

Parents must contact the school on the first morning of absence by telephone or email. The reason for absence will then be detailed on the student information management system (SiMS). A child not attending the school is a safeguarding matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

If your child continues to be absent, contact must be made daily to advise of the reason for absence. If a child is not seen and no contact has been made to establish the reasons why, the school is required to start a child missing in education procedure as set down by Hampshire County Council guidance.

Section 4 Request for Leave of Absence

Amendments to school attendance regulations were updated and enforced from September 2013: **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 Headteacher's can determine the length of the authorised absence as well as whether absence is authorised at all. The fundamental principles of defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant or unavoidable which means the event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. **There are no rule 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 will not be authorised.** Parents/Carers wishing to apply for leave of absence need to fill in an application form (available from Langrish Primary School) 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.

Section 5 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.

5.2 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 referral to Hampshire's Legal Panels where:

1. **The child or family do not require support from any agency to improve the attendance**
2. **The child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence and parents complicit in the child's absence**

5.3 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 school and their families within the authority. A copy is available from <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/attendance-guidance-for-parents/possible-penalties.htm>

The Code of Conduct states that:

Schools or Hampshire Local Education 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 the last 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 the parents and has clearly communicated that they will categorise as unauthorised any further lateness (coded 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 for 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 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 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 a 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 a 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.

Each penalty notice carries a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days of the penalty 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 non-attendance. Payment methods are detailed in 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.

Hampshire Leaflet on the following link:

<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/information-on-penalty-notice-for-non-attendance-at-school-leaflet-july-2015-revised-final.pdf>