

Student Attendance Policy

July 2020



Richard Glenny

Ratified by Board of Governors

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1 Rationale

- 1.1 Staff and governors at Priestlands School believe that in order for students to be successful they need excellent attendance.
- 1.2 At Priestlands, we believe good attendance is important because:
 - statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%.
 - high attenders make better progress, both socially and academically.
 - high attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with.
 - high attenders find learning more satisfying.
 - high attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school, and higher education, employment or training.
- 1.3 Although good attendance is defined as 95% or above in an academic year, Priestlands School is committed to increasing the number of students achieving 100% attendance. Our aspiration is that all students attend school all of the time. Every opportunity will be used to convey to students and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.
- 1.4 We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our students and endeavour to provide an environment where all students feel valued and welcome. Parents and students play a part in making our school so 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.
- 1.5 Similarly punctuality to school and to lessons is fundamental to academic and other successes. Students should therefore be in school unless they are too ill to attend, are on a pre-agreed absence of short duration or in rare cases where family circumstances are such that they cannot attend for a short time, for example in the case of bereavement.

2 Objectives

- 2.1 To promote attendance and punctuality.
- 2.2 To ensure that all members of the school community understand their role in promoting good attendance and punctuality.
- 2.3 To recognise and reward good attendance and punctuality.
- 2.4 To challenge Persistent Absence, working proactively with students and parents where attendance is below 90%.

3 Promoting Good Attendance

- 3.1 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.
- 3.2 To help us all to focus on this we will:
 - provide information on all matters related to attendance on our website and in the Headteacher's frequent letters.
 - report to parents on how well each student is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainment.
 - keep attendance high profile in assemblies and pastoral discussions.



- celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements.
- reward good or improving attendance through competitions, certificates and postcards.
- set targets for the school and for individuals for attendance.

4 Rewards that recognise good attendance

- 4.1 If students have individual targets for attendance, then groups will be judged on their aggregate success in meeting these targets i.e. groups will not be disadvantaged by one member with ongoing poor attendance.
- 4.2 A wide range of students and groups will be rewarded for good attendance. There will be half-termly, termly and yearly celebration. rewards will be awarded promptly following their achievement. (The school will also set targets for attendance in each year and celebrate appropriately groups that are achieving best attendance.)
- 4.3 Rewards will go to students with:
- Best attendance over a half-term, term and year.
 - Most improved attendance over a half-term, term and year.
 - Over 96% attendance - Bronze Award. over 98% attendance - Silver Award. 100% attendance - Gold Award.
- Also:
- At the end of the year, Headteacher's Awards will go to those who have best, or most improved, attendance.
- 4.4 Every fortnight, at the Head of Year's (HoY) briefing with tutor team, he/she will review those students with less than 94% attendance and, in particular, those whose attendance (<90%) places them in the category of Persistent Absence. They will document the list with +, -, or = depending on whether the student's attendance has improved or not. The tutor and HoY can then praise, cajole or encourage as necessary.
- 4.5 Tutor comments in Assessment Reports will refer to attendance and our overall goal of 96% attendance.
- 4.6 Tutors and HoYs will 'mention' attendance frequently. It undoubtedly influences students' resolve to attend school.
- 4.7 There will be a wide range of rewards, including:
- Certificates and Year Group-specific initiatives
 - Letters/postcards of congratulations sent home
 - Achievement Points
- 4.8 HoYs and the Senior Leadership Team will celebrate good attendance, in different ways, frequently.



5 Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 The Student is responsible for:

- Attending school on time except under circumstances outlined earlier in this policy. Any absence or lateness must be with the consent of a parent.
- Attending each lesson on time.
- Following school procedures if s/he needs to leave the site before 3.15pm on a school day.
- Registering at the School Office if a formal registration period is missed due to an appointment, or, on the odd occasion they are unavoidably late. There must be an appointment card or a note/email from parents to explain the absence.

5.2 The Parent is responsible for:

- Supporting the school's positive ethos on attendance. This includes ensuring their child is not absent for key events listed in the school calendar, such as examinations.
- Ensuring their child arrives punctually for school.
- Contacting the school if their child is going to be absent because of medical appointments.
- Avoiding holidays during term time. If a parent wishes to seek permission from the Headteacher to take their child out of school during term time they should complete a Leave of Absence Request Form in advance (see Appendix 3).
- Contacting school on the first day of absence and providing a written explanation for their child's absence, unless a conversation takes place with the Head of Year or Attendance Officer to establish the facts.
- Attending meetings to discuss absence concerns, including meetings called by the Education Welfare Officer.
- Alerting the school to any concerns which might affect their child's attendance or punctuality.

5.3 The Tutor is responsible for:

- Ensuring the student feels welcome in the tutor group and has a positive start to each school day.
- Taking the attendance register. This should be done formally by calling out each student's name and accurately recording their presence or absence in line with SIMS guidance. It should be noted that completing the register in this way is a legal requirement.
- Monitoring punctuality.
- Praising each student with good attendance and punctuality and those students whose attendance and punctuality has improved, rewarding students in accordance with the agreed process.
- Requesting absence notes from students and completing the absence return sheet weekly, in line with SIMS guidance. All absences must be accounted for by a letter signed by a parent, within three days of the absence. telephone calls alone are not acceptable as official notification unless agreed to by the HoY. The reason given for the absence must constitute an "authorised" reason. if in doubt the tutor must liaise with the HoY before authorising the absence.
- Promoting and monitoring punctuality. If a student is late to registration they will be set a same day break detention.



- Monitoring patterns of absence and punctuality. If a pattern is noticed then the Head of Year should be notified. When a student's attendance gives cause for concern, the tutor may be instructed by the HoY to record the absence as 'unauthorised' even if a note is provided. Any absence notes received from parents of these students should be passed to the Head of Year.
- Discussing any concerns with the Head of Year.
- Communicating these concerns as agreed with HoY to parents by telephone/SRB and reinforcing this in the annual school report as appropriate.

5.4 **The Subject Teacher is responsible for:**

- Ensuring lessons are well taught and address the needs of all students in each group.
- Ensuring students feel welcome to lessons.
- Responding to absences of students who have been highlighted as cause for concern and any patterns of absence amongst other individuals or groups of students. This will mean reporting their absence to the Attendance Admin Officer who will check whether a student is in school and then inform the HoY of any truants.
- Setting work for students, as requested, but particularly for students who are absent due to long-term illness or exclusion.
- Taking a register at the beginning of the lesson and following up on any punctuality issues.
- Ensuring a class seating plan is left as part of the cover work when away from school.
- Encouraging prompt movement and good behaviour between lessons by supervising in corridors at start and end of lessons.

5.5 **The Head of Year (HoY) is responsible for:**

- Setting a good ethos within their year group, which will encourage good attendance and punctuality: these must be promoted in as many ways possible, including the use of rewards and certificates.
- Monitoring overall patterns of attendance and punctuality for the year group (and sub-groups of students) by using Lesson Monitor and reviewing the weekly printout for each tutor group and overall statistics for their year group.
- Carrying out a full review of attendance at half termly intervals, meeting with the Education Welfare Officer and Senior Leadership Team to discuss issues, and responding appropriately where concerns exist. Responses may include: meeting with the student to set targets. writing home. a telephone call or a meeting with parents.
- Providing information to all staff on students where attendance and punctuality to lessons have been identified as a cause for concern.
- Setting up intervention groups to address poor punctuality and low attendance (including Persistent Absence).
- Acting promptly on any causes for concern, eg by speaking to the student, contacting home, referring to the Education Welfare Officer, liaising with appropriate staff.
- Ensuring that their tutors are fulfilling their responsibilities by knowing exactly what is expected of them and have the skills to carry this out. This also includes the induction of new tutors. The HoY is also responsible for challenging poor practice, in consultation with their Line Manager.
- Notifying the Attendance Admin Officer of the names of students whose absence should be recorded as unauthorised, regardless of any absence note or appointment card provided, absences due to exclusion, absences due to Alternative Provision.



- Monitoring all unauthorised absence, including that which the tutor has not authorised at the request of the HoY. This includes collating and acting on the information gleaned from spot checks carried out at intervals throughout the year. In addition, at the end of the spring term the HoY must review all unauthorised absences in readiness for the absence returns to the DfE in May.
- Providing any information needed for the Senior Leadership Team to monitor the attendance patterns of individual years or the whole school. This will include gathering evidence needed for referral to the Hants Legal Intervention Panel.
- Liaising with the Educational Welfare Officer over attendance and punctuality concerns. Where necessary the HoY is responsible for communicating with parents before possible involvement of EWO, and/or Legal Intervention Team.
- Providing information to the Attendance Admin Officer about new students joining the year group.
- Informing the Attendance Admin Officer of students leaving year group.

5.6 **The Pastoral Support Manager is responsible for:**

- Monitoring the names of students who are late to school and ensuring that there is a consistent response in line with school procedures.
- Working with the HoY to monitor overall patterns of attendance and punctuality for the year group.
- Undertaking half termly 'spot checks' with HoY.
- Following up all reports of internal truancy to ensure students make up the work and time missed in liaison with subject teachers.
- Working with the Attendance Admin Officer to contact the home of students on the first day of any unexplained absence.
- Setting up attendance and punctuality intervention groups in liaison with the HoY to work with, support and monitor students where these are a cause for concern.
- Meeting with the EWO on behalf of the HoY when requested.

5.7 **The responsibility of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) is:**

- To promote positive attendance and ensure students and parents are aware of their responsibilities.
- To review attendance statistics and consider implications for action on a monthly basis (at least) and more frequently if a Year Team's Line Manager alerts the SLT to particular issues.
- To ensure the training and development of staff, linked to this policy, takes place.
- To ensure that systems exist to enable the effective monitoring of the attendance amongst students. In addition they are responsible for ensuring that these systems are updated as appropriate.
- To ensure that reward systems are in place to promote positive attendance.
- To support HoY and EWO in particularly challenging cases of protracted truancy and Persistent Absence.
- To support HoY in identifying internal truancy with the half-termly spot checks throughout the year.
- To ensure all the necessary statistics are compiled for the DfE attendance returns.

5.8 **The Attendance Admin Officer is responsible for:**

- All SIMS administration concerning attendance, including printing out weekly and monthly attendance records and recording the names of those students who have left, are excluded or are attending alternative provision etc as notified by HoYs.



- Responding to anomalies in the daily attendance data shown by Lesson Monitor and informing HOYs and other staff as appropriate.
- Recording the attendance of students who are in receipt of education other than at school, in line with the document “School Attendance: Departmental advice for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities”.
- Sending letters of concern following instruction from Head of Year and SLT.
- Working with the Pastoral Support Managers to contact the home of students on the first day of any unexplained absence.
- Generating and sending Fixed Penalty Notices.
- Sending a text home to inform parents when a child has arrived late to school.
- Providing weekly data to enable tutors, PSMs, HoY and SLT to monitor attendance patterns.
- Monitoring the daily attendance of Looked After Children and children on a Child Protection Plan, informing social worker and Head of Year if the child is absent.

5.9 **The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) is responsible for:**

- Meeting regularly with the SLT member overseeing attendance and with each HoY to discuss attendance and punctuality concerns and strategies to improve these.
- Where necessary, liaising with home and other outside agencies to resolve attendance and punctuality issues. This may include completing referrals and legal paperwork for fixed penalty notices.
- Calling meetings with HoY and parents to discuss attendance and punctuality issues. .

5.10 **The Board of Governors is responsible for:**

- Monitoring this policy and reviewing attendance figures on a termly and annual basis so that absence is minimised and each child achieves the best possible academic and other success as described in the Schools Aims.

6 Recording Attendance

- 6.1 Legally the register must be marked twice daily. This is once at the start of the school day 8.45am and again for the afternoon session at the beginning of period 5 (1.30pm).
- 6.2 In addition every class teacher will take a register at the beginning of each lesson.

7 Punctuality

- 7.1 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 make announcements, give out instructions or organise work. If students are late they can miss work, time with their class teacher getting vital information and cause disruption to the lesson for others. In turn, this can be embarrassing, leading to possible further absence.
- 7.2 The school day begins with morning registration at 8.45am and all students are expected to be in school by this time. Morning registration closes at 9.03am.
- 7.3 All lateness is recorded daily. Detentions will be set for persistent lateness. This information will be required by the courts, should a prosecution for non-attendance or lateness be necessary.
- 7.4 Arrival after the close of registration may 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.



- 7.5 If a student is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence coded "M". parents will be advised that where possible doctors and dentists appointments should be made outside of school hours or during school holidays.
- 7.6 Students who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other students. Therefore, Priestlands will consider on-going and repeated lateness as unauthorised absence and must consider legal action in accordance with Hampshire's Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices for non-attendance (see section 9 and Appendix 2).
- 7.7 Parents, guardians or carers of students who have patterns of lateness will be contacted to discuss the importance of good timekeeping 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.
- 7.8 If the parents' response is not appropriate or support is declined and a child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence due to lateness the school will consider issuing parents with a penalty notice in accordance with Hampshire's Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices for non-attendance (See section 6 for further detail).

8 Request for Leave of Absence

General requests for leave of absence

- 8.1 Amendments to school attendance regulations were updated and enforced from September 2013: (Student 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.”
- 8.2 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 the school will consider issuing a fixed-penalty fine, or other legal action in accordance the code (see section 9 and Appendix 2).
- 8.3 Parents/carers wishing to apply for leave of absence should complete the Leave of Absence Request Form (Appendix 3) in advance. This form can be found on the school website at: <http://www.priestlands.hants.sch.uk/Forms>.

Leave of Absence

- 8.4 Parents/carers wishing to apply for leave of absence for family holidays should complete the Leave of Absence Request Form and return it to the Headteacher in advance and before making any travel arrangements.

Absence through participation in public performances, including theatre, film or TV work & modelling

- 8.5 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).



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

- 8.6 Parents of able sportsmen and women can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a regional, county, national, international and some other events and competitions. It is however, down to the Headteacher's discretion whether to authorise this. Permission for a 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.
- 8.7 Parents/carers wishing to apply for leave of absence should complete the Leave of Absence Request Form in advance and return it to the child's Head of Year.

Gypsy Roma Traveller Showman and Showman families

- 8.8 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.
- 8.9 Students must have attended 200 sessions in a rolling 12-month period to be able to request leave for work purposes.
- 8.10 Further advice and guidance on can be found at: <http://documents.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/HIAS/Promotingpupilattendanceandrecordingabsence-Section6.pdf>.

Study Leave

- 8.11 We believe that students' needs are best met if they attend school every day in the period leading up to examinations. No study leave will be granted during this period, therefore, and students will be expected to attend school in the usual way. Study leave will only be granted to Year 11 students during the time of the GCSE examination period. Even then, study leave will be allowed on a lesson-by-lesson basis after they have completed the last examination for each subject. In other words, students are expected to attend lessons in a given subject until they have completed the final exam for that subject. A study room will be provided for students if they or their parents wish them to remain in school.
- 8.12 The school will work within the legal requirements, namely that:
- study leave will be granted only to Year 11 students and never to those in other year groups.
 - study leave should never exceed 15 school days in a year and is most appropriately granted during the examination period itself.
 - study leave should always be granted sparingly taking account of an individual student's ability to manage and benefit from unsupervised study.
 - any student has the right to attend school during study leave and a parent has the right to insist s/he does so.
 - any sessions given to students as study leave has a statistical meaning of authorised absence (it is not an 'approved educational activity' as it is unsupervised) and will be recorded and reported on by the school as such.

Teenage Pregnancy

- 8.13 Support will be directed to keeping a student in school and wherever possible her return to full-time education as soon as possible after the birth. A student who becomes pregnant will



be allowed no more than 18 weeks' authorised absence to cover the time immediately before and after the birth of the child. After that time, any absence will be treated as unauthorised.



9 Understanding types of absence

- 9.1 Students 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:
- 9.2 **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.
- 9.3 **Unauthorised Absence:** is when the school does not accept the reason given for the absence, has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's leave of absence from school after a parent's request. This includes:
- parents giving their children permission to be off school unnecessarily such as for shopping, birthdays, to look after siblings
 - truancy before or during the school day
 - absences which have not been explained
- 9.4 The 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.

10 When a student is absent

- 10.1 On the first day a child is absent, if we have not heard from parents, we will phone text home.
- 10.2 If contact is made and a reason for absence is established, a decision will then be made whether or not to authorise the absence. The situation will then be monitored closely, with further contact home as appropriate.
- 10.3 If contact is not established, on-going efforts will be made to make contact. On the third day of absence if a child has not been seen and contact has not been established with any of the named parents/carers, the school is required to start the Child at Risk of Missing in Education procedures as set down by Hampshire County Council. We will write to parents at the last known address to tell them this is happening. We will also make all reasonable enquires to establish contact with parents and the child including making enquires to known friends and wider family. We may even try visiting the family home.
- 10.4 We have a legal duty to report the absence of any student who is absent without an explanation for ten consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer, the Local Authority will be 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.
- 10.5 If a child has had absence and their attendance level is falling towards 90% we will contact parents and depending on the reasons for the absence may issue a letter of concern. a member of staff may meet with the child and set a target for improvement.
- 10.6 If a child misses 3 weeks or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason, they are defined as a Persistent Absentee (PA). Where this absence is authorised the school will write home confirming the PA status and, depending on the circumstances, will ask for a meeting to discuss and set targets for improvement. If there is no significant improvement the decision may be made not to authorise further absences.
- 10.7 All our PA students and their parents are subject to a possible Attendance Plan or home school contract. these may include clear targets for improvement within a set time frame and rewards and consequences. Rewards will be used to celebrate improvement. Consequences



may include a decision not to authorise future absences (unless medical evidence is provided), which may in turn lead to the use of Penalty Notices or a referral to the local authority Attendance Legal Panel.

- 10.8 If a student on a Child Protection Plan, a Looked After Child or any other particularly vulnerable child is absent staff will inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will make a decision about next steps

11 Elective Home Education (EHE)

- 11.1 If a parent requests that their child be removed from the school roll because they intend to home-educate they will be asked to meet with a senior member of staff to discuss their request further. Their request must be confirmed in writing. They will be removed from the school roll with effect from the date of their letter. The Headteacher will notify the Hampshire Education Inclusion Service [EIS] and send a copy of the written request to them.

12 Legal Measures

- 12.1 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.
- 12.2 Priestlands School and Hampshire County Council will use the full range of legal measures to secure good attendance.
- 12.3 Where a child has unauthorised absence the school will follow Hampshire's Code of Conduct for securing good attendance (see Appendix 2).

13 Record Preservation

- 13.1 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.

14 Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

- 14.1 We will know that this policy is effective when:
- Overall Attendance is at least 95% and absence remains below national average
 - Pupil Premium absence remains below national average
 - Overall Persistent Absence remains below national average
 - Pupil Premium Persistent Absence remains below national average
 - Overall punctuality [lateness rate] remains below 1%
- 14.2 The policy will be reviewed annually to check that it is effective and accurate.



STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY

APPENDIX 1: ADVICE TO PARENTS



Thank you to parents for their work in securing students' good attendance.

There is no doubt that students need to have good attendance if they are to be successful at school. Good attendance is defined as 95% or above in an academic year. Similarly, punctuality to school and to lessons is fundamental to academic and other successes. Students should therefore be in school unless they are too ill to attend or, in rare cases, where family circumstances are such that they cannot attend for a short time, for example in the case of bereavement.

Good attendance is intertwined with good student behaviour and effective teaching and learning. Equally, students with poor attendance tend to fall behind with their work and can struggle to catch up. They often have more difficulty making friends. Poor attendance can also lead to poor behaviour. All our experience tells us students with good attendance are happier, better behaved and more successful – and not just in school!

We will continue to use electronic registration to track punctuality and attendance lesson by lesson. This means that we telephone parents if their child is not in school. Where parents have not already contacted us to explain an absence, we will try to telephone them before break to clarify the reason for absence.

Family Holidays

The law relating to family holidays during term-time changed from 1st September 2013. In the past, Headteachers had been able to grant leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during term time for up to ten school days per year. Since September 2013, the law has made it clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. It is then for Headteachers to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.

Full details can be found on the Leave of Absence Request Form that can be found on our website at: <http://www.priestlands.hants.sch.uk/Student-Absence>.

Medical Appointments

We ask parents, where possible, to arrange medical or dental appointments outside school hours. If it does need to take place on a school day, we ask that, if the consultation is local, students do attend the rest of the school day. Of course, some medical appointments last longer and a lengthy journey is sometimes necessary. In such cases it would be unreasonable to expect your child to attend any part of the school day.

Signing out for appointments during the school day

For safeguarding, health and safety reasons any student leaving the site must sign out at the Front Office.

We ask that when an appointment is made in advance, parents inform the school by telephone or email and write a note in the SRB. Students will be allowed to sign out only if the Attendance Officer is aware of the appointment.

Absence Line - 01590-613440

We have a dedicated phone number to report student absence. **01590-613440**.
Please use this number which has a voicemail service outside school hours





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, preferably by calling 01590 613440

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone or text 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.

Third Day Absence

If your child is not seen and contact has not been established with you any of the named parent/carers after three days of absence, the school is required to start 'child missing in education' procedures as set down by Hampshire County Council. We will write to you to tell you this is happening.

We will make all reasonable enquires to establish contact with parents and the child including making enquires to known friends and wider family. We may even try visiting your home.

Ten Days' Absence

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any student 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, please 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 On-going Absence

If your child's attendance is at 90% or below at any point in the school year for whatever reason, they are defined as a Persistent Absentee (PA).

Absence for whatever reason disadvantages students by creating gaps in their 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 may issue a letter of concern or a member of staff may meet with you and your child to set a target for improvement.

All our PA students and their parents are subject to a possible Attendance Plan or home school contract. These include clear targets for improvement within a set time frame and rewards and consequences. Rewards will be used to celebrate improvement. Consequences may include a decision not to authorise future absences (unless medical evidence is provided), which may in turn lead to the use of penalty notices or a referral to the Local Authority Attendance Legal Panel.



My child is trying to avoid 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 Pastoral Support Manager (PSM) or Head of Year 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 s/he leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his / her education.

Your child will bring home their Student Record Book (SRB) each evening. Please look at it with your child and sign it ready for the next day.

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!

What to do if my child is going to be changing school?

If your child is leaving our school (other than when leaving at the end of Year 11) please give your child's Pastoral Support Manager (PSM) or Head of Year as much information as possible about your 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 given to us in writing.

If students leave and we do not have the above information, then your child will be considered to be a "Child Missing in Education". This requires schools and Local Authorities to then carry out investigations to try to 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.



STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY

APPENDIX 2: LEGAL MEASURES

- 1 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.
- 2 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.

Legal Measures for tackling persistent unauthorised absence or lateness

- 3 Legal measures will only be considered through a referral to Hampshire's Attendance Legal Panels where:
 - The child or family do not require the support from any agency to improve the attendance
 - The child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence and parents are complicit in the child's absence.
- 4 The following legal measures are for students 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 refused request for leave of absence

- 5 Where a student 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 permissionand the unauthorised absence is for 10 or more sessions (5 days) in any 100 possible school sessions then a penalty notice for non-attendance may be issued.
- 6 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 may be issued for either:
 - 10 sessions of unauthorised absence or lateness in any 10 week school period. or
- 7 Parents and carers will be warned of the likelihood of a penalty notice being issued for unauthorised absence via the Headteacher's letters to all parents, the leave of absence request form, the school's attendance policy and website.
- 8 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.
- 9 Each penalty notice carries a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days of the penalty notice being posted. If the fine is not paid within 21 days the Penalty is automatically increased to £120 if paid within 28 days. If the fine remains unpaid the Hampshire County Council will consider prosecution for the non-attendance. Payment methods are detailed on the Penalty Notices themselves. Penalties are to be paid to Hampshire County Council and revenue resulting from payment of Penalties is used by the County Council to help cover the costs of issuing Penalty Notices and/or the cost of prosecuting recipients who do not pay.
- 10 For further information parents/carers can request a leaflet from the school or visit:
<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/attendance-guidance-for-parents/possible-penalties.htm>.



STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY**APPENDIX 3: LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST FORM****Request to authorise absence from school due to exceptional circumstances.**

Please read the notes on page 3 before completing the form.

Schools are only able to authorise absence from school in exceptional circumstances. In making a request for an authorised absence from school you will need to explain why the circumstances are exceptional. **Please note:** There is no general right to authorise absence for a family holiday. If you take your child out of school without permission the absence will be unauthorised and we will consider legal action.

You are advised not to make any arrangements until your request has been considered.

Section A – to the Headteacher, I wish to apply for

Child's name: _____ Tutor: _____

To be authorised as absent from school (please include dates and time):

from _____ to _____ (inclusive dates)

If your child has siblings that are also applying for a leave of absence please enter their name and school below:

Child's name(s): _____ School(s): _____

Section B Please explain why you are applying for an authorised absence and the **circumstances** which make your **application exceptional**. and therefore the leave cannot be taken within the normal 13 weeks holiday your child has from school. If you are requesting authorisation to attend a specific event please confirm the date of the event and explain your travel arrangements. If you require additional space, please continue on the other side of the page.

Section C I am the parent/carer with whom the pupil normally resides. The information I have given on this form is correct.

Signature (parent/carer): _____ Date: _____



PTO



Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 have been amended (as of 1 September 2013) to prohibit the proprietor (headteacher) of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

Section D – for school use only.

Tick as appropriate.

Request approved for ____ number of days from the dates and times _____

A personal discussion with you is requested. Please contact: _____

Request not approved as the circumstances are not considered to constitute an exceptional reason and/or the impact of this absence will affect your child's educational progress.

PLEASE NOTE: *This leave of absence form serves as a Penalty Notice Warning letter to parent/carers. Any unauthorised absence during this period of time may be subject to a penalty notice for non attendance being issued.*

Headteacher: _____ Date: _____

Current attendance rate: _____

Continuation of section B (if required):





Family Holidays & Extended Trips Abroad during Term Time

You are required under the Education Act (1996) to ensure your child attends school regularly. Amendments to the 2006 Regulations in Education (Pupil Registration) came into force in September 2013. The amendments make it clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Before completing this application we would advise that you consider very seriously how the absences will affect your child's education. National statistics show that 10 days of absence in any academic year will have a negative effect on attainment. Schools are not obliged to provide work for students taking leave of absence, however some schools may choose to do this.

The government advises that any absence after a refusal of leave of absence must be recorded as unauthorised by the school on the student's records. As you may be aware an accumulation of unauthorised absences may result in legal proceedings against you either through a Fixed Penalty Notice or the Magistrates' Court.

If the Headteacher does not approve an application for a leave of absence an appeal can be made through the Board of Governors. This cannot be made retrospectively.

Fixed Penalty Notices

With the implementation of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act (2003) the Local Authority has statutory powers to use Penalty Notices to help tackle irregular school attendance and unauthorised absences. An unauthorised absence is any absence for which the school has not given permission or for which the parent/carer has been unable to provide a reason that is acceptable to the school. From September 2015, where a child has unauthorised absence the school is expected to enforce Hampshire's Code of Conduct for issuing Penalty Notices. 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.

Where a student has 10 or more unauthorised absences (5 days) due either to a holiday that has been taken without permission or the refusal of a parent/carer's request for leave of absence and unauthorised absence is for 10 or more sessions (5 days), a penalty notice for non-attendance may be issued.

Unless the issuing of a Penalty Notice would conflict with other intervention strategies in place or other sanctions already being processed, Priestlands School or Hampshire Local Authority may issue a Penalty Notice for any unauthorised absence where the student has been:

- absent or late for 10 or more half-day sessions (five school days) during any 100 possible school sessions – these do not need to be consecutive. or

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. This could mean four penalty notices for a family with two siblings both with unauthorised absence for holiday (one penalty notice for each child to each parent).

Each penalty notice carries a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days of the penalty notice being posted. If the fine is not paid within 21 days the Penalty is automatically increased to £120 if paid within 28 days. If the fine remains unpaid the Hampshire County Council will consider prosecution for the non-attendance.



For further information parents/carers can request a leaflet from the school or visit the Hampshire County Council website at: <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/attendance-guidance-for-parents/possible-penalties.htm>

