

Botley C of E (Controlled) Primary School

Attendance Policy



1.0 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 children and endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome. Parents and pupils 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.

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. Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95% whilst regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically.

For children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered it is vital that children are 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.

Therefore the stated aims of the Botley C of E Primary School Attendance Policy is to meet the Department for Education's guidance (2014) by:

- promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence;
- ensuring that every child has access to full time education
- ensuring that pupils attend regularly so that they can take full advantage of the educational and other opportunities available to them and are punctual;
- working with the parents to ensure that children arrive at School on time, properly attired and in a condition to learn;
- ensuring that parents are aware that registered pupils of compulsory School age are required by law to be in School and that they perform this legal duty;
- acting early to address patterns of absence.

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child. The Home/School agreement details what parents will need to do to ensure their child achieves good attendance.

2.0 Attendance Roles and Responsibilities

2.1 Responsibilities of Headteacher:

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for co-ordinating, implementing and monitoring this policy and attendance as a whole school within the school and in applying the procedures as they are set out (Appendix 1). The Headteacher at this school is the named Attendance Champion.

2.2 Responsibilities of Senior Administration Manager:

The SAM will ensure that attendance records are kept up to date and any identified issues with attendance are identified to the Headteacher, as well as using Arbor to process any penalty notices.

2.3 Responsibilities of Teachers:

Teachers will ensure that all students are registered accurately and promote and reward good attendance at all appropriate opportunities. They will liaise with the Headteacher on matters of attendance and punctuality and communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence.

2.4 Responsibilities of Children:

Children will strive to attend school every day unless they are ill or have an authorised absence and will try to arrive in school on time, ensuring that they get to registration and lessons on time.

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

2.5 Responsibilities of Parents:

Ensuring children'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.

Parents will:

- Inform the school on the first day of absence.
- Discuss with the class teacher and school any planned absences well in advance.
- Support the school with their child in aiming for 100% attendance each year.
- Make sure that any absence is clearly accounted for by phone on the first and 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.
- Only request for leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance

3.0 Lateness /Punctuality

It is important to be on time at the start of the morning and afternoon school sessions. The start of school and lessons are used to give out instructions or organise learning. If a child is late they can miss learning opportunities, time with their class teacher getting vital information, cause disruption to the lesson for others, and this can cause embarrassment leading to possible further absence.

- The school day begins at 8.50am and all **pupils are expected to be in school at this time**. Morning registration is at 8.50am and it closes at 9.00am in the classroom and 9.30am in the school office
- The Arbor Attendance Register will be marked at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session.
- Only pupils absent should be marked. Any child not in the room when the register is taken will be marked absent.
- Any absence will be followed up by the School Office.
- 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 child is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence coded 'M'. Please be advised that where possible doctors and dentists appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays.

Children 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 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 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, 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).

Children should be collected promptly at the end of the school day, 3.20pm. 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. If one is available, the school will place a child into the after school club and provide the parent with the bill.

4.0 Absence

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

First Day of Absence

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of absence;
- Send a written explanation in on the first day they return confirming the reason for the absence – you must do this even if you have already telephoned us;

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you; *This is because we have a duty to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance*
- Refer the matter to the Hampshire's Attendance Legal Panels if absence is unauthorised and falls below 90%.

Third Day of Absence

If a child is not seen and contact has not been established with their parents after three days of absence the school is required to start 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, wider family.

Ten Days Absence

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any children who are absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer then the Local Authority is notified that the child is 'at risk of missing'. Children's Services Staff will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date contact number. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

Continued or Ongoing Absence

If a child misses 10% (3 weeks / 30 sessions) or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason they are defined as **persistent absentees**.

Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in his or her learning. Research shows these gaps affect attainment when attendance falls below 95%. As such we monitor all absence thoroughly and all attendance data is shared with the Local Authority and the Department for Education. If your child has had absence and their attendance level is falling towards 90% we will contact the parents for a detailed exploration and this could lead to the issuing by Hampshire County Council of a penalty notice.

5.0 Request for Leave of Absence:

Amendments to school attendance regulations were updated and enforced from September 2013: (Pupil registration) (England) regulations state a Headteacher's may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. It is up to the Headteacher to determine whether absence is authorised. The fundamental principles used at this school for defining 'exceptional' are **rare, significant, or unavoidable** which means the event could not **reasonably be scheduled** at another time. It is important for parents to understand that there is no legal entitlement for time off in school time to go on holiday and in the vast majority of cases holiday, including that for a wedding, will not be authorised. Parents wishing to apply for leave of absence need to fill in an application form (available from the school office and on the school website) 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 will be issued with a fixed-penalty fine, or other legal action in accordance the code (see section 7 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.

6.0 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
 - truancy before or during the school day
 - absences which have not been explained

This school will, if necessary, change an authorised absence to an unauthorised absence and vice versa if new information is presented. Any changes will be communicated to parents in writing. 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.

7.0 Penalty Notices for Non Attendance and other Legal Measures

In Education law, parents are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular attendance of their child of compulsory school age at the school at which the child is registered, unless the absence has been authorised by the school.

Legal Measures for tackling persistent absence or lateness

Hampshire Schools and Hampshire County Council will use the full range of legal measures to secure good attendance. Legal measures will only be considered through a referral to Hampshire's Attendance Legal Panels where:

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

The following legal measures 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 parental 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-guidance-for-parents/possible-penalties.htm>

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 (these are displayed on the school website)
- 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 has 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 or testing where dates are published in advance.

In scenario 1 a penalty notice for non-attendance will be issued if the child does not have otherwise good attendance (e.g. if the absence takes the child below the 90% attendance rate for the academic year). This position is based on the outcome of the Council verses Platt decision in the High Court and awaits further guidance and clarification from the DfE.

In scenario 2 a penalty notice for non-attendance will be issued in all circumstances.

Parents will be warned of the likelihood of a penalty notice being issued for unauthorised absence through the leave of absence request form and the schools attendance policy. 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

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.

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>

It is important to note that Hampshire County Council will not keep issuing Penalty Notices to the same parents endlessly. If records show that Penalty Notices have not changed the child's attendance then the decision may be taken to proceed directly to legal proceedings.

8.0 Gypsy Roma Traveller Showman and Showman families

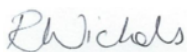
Absence of a child from a traveller family that has left the area may be authorised if the absence is for **work purposes only** and it is believed that the family intends to return. To

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.

9.0 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.

The content of this Policy has been fully reviewed and agreed by the School's Governing Body.

Signed: 
Chair of Whole Governing Body

Date: 18th June 2025

Date of Next Review: June 2027

Review Date	Changes made in addition to review and renewal date changes	Changes
05.06.25	No	-

Appendix 1

Botley C of E Primary School
Attendance Procedures

Botley C of E Primary School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our children and endeavours to provide an environment where all pupils feel safe, valued and

welcome. Parents and pupils 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.

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For our children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered it is vital they are 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

We have a target of ensuring that our attendance is always above 95.5%. In 2018/19 our overall attendance was 96.1%. Up to lockdown our 2019/20 attendance figure was also 96.1%. As a result, we need to work hard at attendance to ensure that we stay on target.

In order to do this we will monitor attendance using the three step process set out below:

<p>Step 1: Attendance practice for all pupils and for monitoring those below 95%</p> <p>1. End of each half term, monitor and record the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• overall attendance• class attendance• year group attendance• comparison between non-disadvantaged and disadvantaged attendance• levels of unauthorised absence• issuing of penalty notices/referral to APL• percentage for the school's population which fall into the category of persistent absenteeism identify and who these children are for monitoring (90%)• punctuality (L code in register)• lateness (U code in register)• below 95% print out for awareness <p>End of each term, also monitor and record the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• comparison between SEND and non-SEND attendance• comparison between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged attendance• comparison between EAL and non-EAL attendance
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • comparison between LAC/PLAC and non-LAC/PLAC attendance • comparison between travellers and non-traveller attendance • comparison between boys and girls attendance <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Update displays in reception areas with whole school target and cumulative totals for school for absence and punctuality each half term. 3. First day of absence - parents to contact the School Office with a phone call and the School Office to follow up any absence from school if no phone call has been received. All reasons for late (U) recorded on SIMs with number of minutes. 4. Consideration of leave of absence is for special circumstances only and holidays during term times will not be authorised, in line with Hampshire County Council guidelines. 5. Class teachers raise any attendance concerns they have in the initial Parents Evening Meetings. . 6. HT /DHs/ AO to hold half-termly meetings from October half term to discuss all pupils 95% and below. All pupils with attendance below 90%, that aren't deemed to have a justification, will be sent an attendance letter (Stage One) and attendance summary in first week of next half term. 7. Central Log outlining all interventions completed to support increase in attendance. 8. Attendance summaries given out to teachers and discussed at Staff Business Meeting to ensure teachers aware of attendance issues too. (half termly from October half term)
<p>Stage 2: Regular patterns of absence and no improvement after Stage 1 Interventions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify children whose attendance is still below 90% the next half-term and have received a Stage One Letter the half term before. For these children move to Stage 2. 2. Send a Stage Two letter explaining that if attendance remains below 90% by the end of the next half term then there will need to be a meeting with the Headteacher and Family Support Worker. 3. If attendance remains below 90% then letter sent to parents requesting them to meet with the Family Support Worker/Headteacher to discuss any additional support needed and next steps.
<p>Stage 3: Persistent patterns of absence classified as persistent absenteeism or no improvement after Stage 2</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If after the Stage 2 meeting with the Headteacher and Family Support Worker there has been no improvement over a half term, HT/AO to issue a Stage 3 letter and invite families in for a meeting with HT in school to discuss further interventions and support, but explain that there is a risk of a legal process beginning if there is no improvement in attendance. 2. Actions will be agreed at the meeting, minutes taken and recorded. 3. Monitor for a further half term, if there is an improvement, no action will be taken, but continue to ensure attendance continues to improve towards 95%. 4. If there is no improvement or there is a further decline, seek advice from other agencies and consider moving forward with legal action.