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## Attendance policy

At The Federation of Trosnant Schools we believe that regular school attendance is crucial in raising standards in education and ensuring that every child can have full access to the school curriculum and reach their potential. The Federation of Trosnant Schools will strive to promote an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance and where each pupil will feel valued and secure.

For our children 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

### AIM

- To improve/maintain the overall attendance and punctuality of pupils at Trosnant schools.
- To provide advice, support and guidance to parents/guardians and pupils.
- To promote good relationships with the Home –School Liaison Officer.
- To clarify procedure for requesting a leave of absence during term time.

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child. The Home School Agreement will contain details of expectations good attendance.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- provide information on all matters related to attendance in our newsletters
- report to you on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is
- celebrate good attendance at Celebration Assemblies
- reward good or improving attendance through Horizons Vouchers
- set targets for the school for attendance
- run events when parents, pupils and staff can work together on raising attendance levels



## **THE SCHOOLS WILL ENSURE THAT**

- Good attendance at school and punctuality are a priority for all children.
- Trosnant Schools expect pupils to attend school everyday and arrive on time.
- Pupils are registered accurately and efficiently.
- Good attendance is encouraged and rewarded
- It works closely with parents. The HSLO or office staff will contact parents by telephone or text message on the first day of absence if contact by parent has not been received within the first hour if possible.
- We work closely with parents should attendance or punctuality give cause for concern.

### **Roles and Responsibilities:**

#### **Responsibilities of the School's Attendance**

A member of the Senior Leadership Team 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 will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties. The HSLO will ensure that attendance is both recorded accurately and analysed.

#### **Responsibilities of Classroom Staff:**

- Ensure that all pupils are registered accurately
- Promote good attendance at all appropriate opportunities.
- Liaise with the Attendance Leader on matters of attendance and punctuality and communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence.

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

Ensuring your child's regular, punctual 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/carers will**

- Ensure their child(ren) attend every day unless they are ill or have an authorised absence.
- Ensure their child(ren) arrive in school on time for registration and are ready for the start of the day.
- Take responsibility for registering their child(ren) at the Reception Desk if they are late or are leaving the school site during school hours
- Inform the school on the first day of absence before 9.30.
- Make sure that any absence is clearly accounted for
- Only request for leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance
- Avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments.
- Collect children promptly at the end of the school day

#### **Recording attendance:**

- Legally the register must be marked twice daily. This is once at the start of the school day 8.50am and again for the afternoon session at 12.45 pm (Junior) at 13.00 (Infant).
- Pupils entering the class room during registration will be marked as 'late'.
- Registration will officially be closed at **9.00am** with pupils arriving between 8.50am and 9.00am being registered as late.
- Arrival after 9.00am is an unauthorised absence unless they have an authorised reason.
- Children self-register for lunch options every morning on the IVB using Tucasi

The schools use an electronic system to maintain attendance data. Reports are printed for both schools at the end of each week. The Attendance Lead and HSLO aim to discuss the attendance of individuals on a weekly basis.

## Lateness/Punctuality

It is important to be on time at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions. The start of the day is used to give instructions or organise work and set up the children for the day. If your child is late they can miss work, vital instructions, time with their class teacher getting vital information, cause disruption of the learning of others, and can be embarrassing leading to further possible absence.

- The school day begins with the doors opening at 8.45 and **all children should be in class by 8.50 when the doors close.**
- 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 at **9.00**, will be marked as an unauthorised absence (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 the pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence (M). Please be advised that where possible, doctors and dentists appointments are to be made outside school hours or during school holidays.

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 Persistent Absentees** for further detail).

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.

## School absence

### What to do if my child is Absent?

Absences from school may be authorised if it is for the following reasons:

- Unavoidable medical or dental appointments. **(Preferably, these should be made after school or during holidays.)**
- Sickness
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional family circumstances i.e. bereavement.

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 Absence:

#### You must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence (by 9:30 at the latest) either by note, phone call or text with an explanation of the absence or you can call into school and report to reception.

#### 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
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Attendance Lead and/or HSLO if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the Hampshire's Attendance Legal Panels if absence is unauthorised and falls below 90%

### **Third Day Absence**

Please Note: 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 a child missing in education procedures as set down by Hampshire County Council Guidance. We will make all reasonable enquires to establish contact with parents and the child including making enquires to known friends, wider family and the Attendance Lead and /or HSLO will visit the family home to try and establish contact.

### **Ten Days Absence**

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupils 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 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**

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 you and depending on the reasons for the absence will invite you in for a supportive meeting to see if we can offer any help or support to improve your child's absence.

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 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.

The following reasons will be unauthorised by the school:

- Work patterns, for example shift work, make it difficult for the family to ensure the child attends school
- A parent or sibling unwell
- A parent is using the pupil as a child-minder or supporting other members of the family
- Taking relative to the airport
- Birthdays / Shopping / Hairdresser
- A parent cannot control the pupil
- A parent is hostile towards the school or towards education in general

Any pupil's attendance that drops below 90% will now need to produce medical evidence for any future absences to be authorised. 10 unauthorised absences will result in an education school meeting. If attendance still continues to drop then a penalty notice or legal action could be sort.

## **PERSISTENT ABSENTEES**

Persistent absentees (PA) are children whose attendance drops **below 90%** may find it hard to cope with school over time both socially and academically. A child not attending school is considered a safeguarding matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. Attendance Lead and HSLO will keep in regular contact with persistent absentees and meet with them in school.

All our PA pupils and their parents are subject to an Attendance Plan or home school contract.

Persistent absentees (PA) will be referred to the Attendance Legal Panel and if no improvement in attendance, without good reason, possible legal action may be taken.

The Governing Body has decided that the Headteacher can refuse to authorise the absence of PAs for sickness reasons without evidence to support that sickness.

Regular incentive schemes for improving good attendance:

- Pencils/pens
- Stickers
- Certificates
- Wristbands
- Whinnied the Whippet
- Weekly Draw

### **Penalty Notices for Non Attendance and other Legal Measures:**

Reducing absence and improving punctuality in schools is a key priority both nationally and locally because missing school damages a pupil's attainment levels.

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**

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 in any continuous 100 session period, 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

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>

## **Penalty Notices for non-attendance- Hampshire's Code of Conduct**

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 (codes G, U, or O on the register)
- 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.

### **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 (coded G) is for 10 or more sessions (5 days) in any 100 possible school sessions/10 week period then a penalty notice for non-attendance will be issued

If a child's has other types of unauthorised absence (coded O and U) 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 (5days) of unauthorised absence or lateness in any 100 possible school sessions/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.

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 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 the fine has been issued. F

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>

## 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.

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.

## 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 **Trosnant School Office** 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 Persistent Absentees 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.**

November 2015

## Appendices

### The Law

The Education Act 1996 Part I, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable-

[a] to his age, ability and aptitude and

[b] to any special needs he may have

either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part VI Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

### Register and Admission Roll keeping.

The legal requirements are found in: The Education [Pupil Registration] (England) Regulations 2006

### Guidance documents on attendance.

The following DfE documents are used to guide attendance recording.

Absence and Attendance codes (Guidance for Schools and Local Authorities)

Keeping Pupil Registers (Guidance on applying the Education Pupil Registration Regulations)

These and other guidance documents are available on the DfE website

Hampshire County Council Guidance is available on Hantsweb at <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/lba-resources-for-schools/atten-guidance/attendance-guidance-for-schools.htm>