

Dear Parent/Carer,

We hope that you and your family are well.

Please take time to read this letter regarding attendance as we all need to ensure that we recognise the importance of a young person attending school regularly to support their development socially and academically whilst developing habits for their futures.

Firstly, thank you for ensuring that your young person has good attendance and punctuality to school. Attendance is everyone's business, and we all need to work together to foster these good habits and care when there are challenges.

Academically, poor attendance hampers children's progress and leads to gaps in their knowledge. When children are absent, they miss vital explanations and as a result, their learning suffers, leading to lower academic achievement and reduced confidence in their abilities. GCSE results demonstrate this link. While 78% of all children who were rarely absent passed at least 5 GCSEs including English and maths, only 36% of children who were persistently absent reached this same standard.

See more detail here:

<https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2023/09/28/what-are-ghost-children-and-why-is-school-attendance-important/>

Achieving 90% in a test is normally considered a great achievement. However, a child with an attendance of 90% misses a huge amount of educational input. What is often overlooked is detrimental effects on children's social and emotional development of poor attendance. School is a place for interaction with peers, fostering social skills, teamwork, and an environment that provides emotional wellbeing support. Regular attendance allows children to form friendships, engage in extracurricular activities, and develop a sense of belonging within their school community.

However, frequent absences isolate children from these important interactions, potentially leading to feelings of loneliness, detachment, and low self-esteem. They may struggle to build supportive relationships with peers and miss out on the emotional support that school environments can provide. As a result, children who are frequently absent may experience difficulties in their social development, impacting their overall well-being.

We are working as a local cluster of schools, to encourage and support attendance through:

- Aiming for 100% attendance for all schools, although we know that, due to some **exceptional** circumstances, this is not always possible.
- Sharing best practice within the local cluster as to how we can support good attendance.
- **Sharing with you all that Headteachers are not able to authorise holidays in term time.**
- Discussing decisions on absence between schools where siblings are in more than one local school.
- Working with families to improve attendance, particularly persistent absence (misses 10% or more of schooling, equivalent to nearly three weeks or more schooling across the year).
- Issuing Penalty Notices 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 for up to 10 sessions after the register has closed
 - persistently late before the close of the register, but the school has met with the Parent and has clearly communicated that they will categorise as unauthorised any further lateness if, and when, the threshold of 10 sessions has been met

Penalty notices will be issued if a child's attendance crosses any of the above thresholds. If a fine is raised, then each responsible parent will be fined £80 per child, from September 2024. Failure to pay within 21 days will incur further penalties of £160.

Headteachers have the authority to grant leave of absence only in exceptional cases. They are not able to authorise holidays during term time. Hampshire County Council reminds us that exceptional reasons are 'rare'. The DfE is clear that there is no parental/carer right for a family holiday; cost, experiences for the child, weather and overlapping with the school holidays are not factors on which the decision should be made.

The Hampshire Code of Conduct states that if a Penalty Notice has previously been issued and this has been ineffective in addressing the absenteeism, the case must be referred to the **Legal Intervention Team (LIT)** who will then decide whether to issue a subsequent Penalty Notice or recommend alternative intervention, which may include parental prosecution.

We will contact you if we have any concerns regarding your child's attendance. This link <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/> is helpful for guiding parents on minor illnesses and school.

Please find attached Hazel Wood's absence procedures for reporting absence.

If you have any other questions or concerns, please contact us on:

adminoffice@hazelwood-inf.hants.sch.uk

Thank you for your continued support.

With best wishes,

Hannah Simpson-Riggs
Headteacher

THIS POLICY IS SUPPORTED BY



Absence Reporting

Please notify the school of any absences by 09.00 am each day, for the duration of the student's absence.

Call 023 8066 6767 then select 'option 1', and leave a message detailing...

The student's name

Registration group

Nature of illness / appointment

Expected return date / time

