



John Hanson Community School



Attendance Policy Autumn 2026

Ratified and adopted by Full Governing Board:

Autumn 2026

Date of Review:

Autumn 2027

Lead Committee:

Student Care, Guidance and Support

Lead Professional:

Kim Hide



1. Rationale / Statement of Intent

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the statutory guidance on [Working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE). We aim to achieve this through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, which includes:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

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.

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 students and their parents/carers through a school wide “Every John Hanson School Day is a great day” to promote the importance of good and punctual attendance.

For our children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered it is vital your child is at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for 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 which is at least 97% over time.

Good attendance (above 97%+) is important for several reasons:

- **Learning and academic achievement.** statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%.
- **Self Esteem / Good (Mental health).** Good attenders are more likely to feel good about themselves and confident interacting and communicating around others
- **Good Progress.** Regular attenders find learning more satisfying and make better progress, both socially and academically
- **Good Habits.** Instils that getting up and going to a setting (work in future) is important.
- **Secure Relationships.** Regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with
- **Transition to and from secondary school.** Regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school to secondary school to higher education and then employment or training



Attendance between 96-92% starts to be a cause for concern. Students are then in danger of becoming persistent absentee (PA). Tutors will be in touch with parents to identify any barriers to attending school that need addressing and any support that may be required to return to good attendance and a warning letter will be sent by the school if attendance does not improve.

Attendance below 92% is a serious concern as a student is likely to become a persistent absentee (PA) – that is attendance below 90%. The Attendance Officer and Key Stage Leader will be in contact to arrange a parental meeting to complete an Individual Attendance Plan where the school, parent and student will identify the support and targets required to return to good attendance.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the DfE's statutory guidance on [Working together to improve school attendance](#) and [School attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- › Part 6 of the [Education Act 1996](#)
- › Part 3 of the [Education Act 2002](#)
- › Part 7 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- › [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- › <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/1751/contents> [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- › The [Equality Act 2010](#)

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/757/regulation/2/made> It also refers to:

- › [School census guidance](#)
- › [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- › [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

3. Operating the Policy

Promoting Good Attendance

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.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Set a target of 97%+ for the school, year groups and individuals for attendance
- Attendance and punctuality are a central part of our school reward system of getting stamps. This allows students to get their bronze, silver, gold and platinum badges.
- Reward tutor groups weekly that have good attendance.



- Run a series of tutor and year group assemblies during the year to promote good attendance.
- Report to Parent/Carer three times a year on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance rate is and how this relates to their attitude for learning and attainment.
- Offer extracurricular and residential trips opportunities have the expectation that students have good attendance over time. Where a student starts to have poor attendance their place on the trip may be withdrawn.
- Offer reward trips are offered to those students with good attendance.
- Provide information on matters related to attendance in our weekly newsletter via our website.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

Responsibilities of the School's Attendance Leader:

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. This person will also ensure that attendance is both recorded accurately and analysed. (S)he will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, staff will discuss with parent/carers the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a student's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence **will always rest with the school.**

Responsibilities of Classroom Staff and Tutors:

- Ensure that all students are registered accurately
- Promote good attendance at all appropriate opportunities.
- Liaise with the Attendance Leader on matters of attendance and punctuality
- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence.
- Insist on catch up work and homework completion.

Responsibilities of Pastoral Team:

- Promote good attendance in the year group.
- Consistently apply school attendance procedures.
- Provide early support and intervention for students who do not have good attendance.
- Identify trends of poor attendance and put support in place to deal with identified poor attendance.
- Intervene with students and parents who are persistently absent to improve their attendance.
- Remain in contact with students who are absent for more than 5 days.

Responsibilities of Students:

- Attend every day unless they are ill or have an authorised absence.



- Arrive in school on time.
- Go to all their registrations and lessons on time.
- Take responsibility for registering at the Reception Desk if they are late or are leaving the school site during school hours.
- To catch up work missed and complete homework.

Responsibilities of Governors:

- Receive a report three times a year on attendance and punctuality to monitor school attendance in order to provide strategic direction to ensure at least good attendance.

Responsibilities of Parents and Carers:

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carers legal responsibility (section 7 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:

- Inform the school each day of absence
- Discuss with the tutor/class teacher any planned absences well in advance and complete request for absence form
- Support the school with their child in aiming for 100% attendance each year
- Make sure that any absence is clearly accounted for by phone or text on the first and subsequent days of absence
- 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
- Support your child in catching up work missed.

4. Recording and Reporting Attendance

The school has a "no absence goes unnoticed" approach to school attendance. Legally the register must be marked twice daily. This is once at the start of the school day 8.35am and again for the afternoon session at 12.30pm

Lateness /Punctuality

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 give out instructions or organise work. If your child is late they can miss work, time with their class teacher getting vital information, cause disruption to the lesson for others, and can be embarrassing leading to possible further absence.

- The school day begins at 8.35am. **All students are expected to be in school at 8.25am.** Morning registration is at 8.35 am and it closes at 8:55 am
- 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 student 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.



Students who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other students. On-going and repeated lateness is considered as **unauthorised absence and will be subject to legal action** (see section 6 for further detail).

Students who are late to morning registration will attend a 30 minute after school detention the following Friday. If a student is late to a lesson they will need to attend a 30 minute detention the following day. Parents or carers of students 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 6 of this policy for further detail).

What to do if my child is absent?

First 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 and subsequent days

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*
- If we are unable to get hold of you, we will use the other contacts provided to us

Third Day Absence

Please Note: If your child is not seen, and contact has not been established with 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, and wider family.

Ten Day's 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. Please help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up-to-date contact number.

Continued or Ongoing Absence

Where a student has more than 2 periods of absence in an 8-week period and falls below 95% attendance, the student's tutor will contact the parent to see if there are any problems or if there is anything the school can do to support better attendance.



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

If your child's illness is long term or frequent, we may request medical evidence. This will support us in planning for your child's needs.

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 request a meeting to discuss supporting an improvement in attendance.

We may:

- Send you letters alerting you to our concerns about your child's attendance
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with the Key Stage Lead and/or Assistant Headteacher/ Headteacher if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the Hampshire's Legal Intervention Team if absence is unauthorised and falls below 90%

5. Request for Leave of Absence

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 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 the school or 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/carers will be issued with a fixed-penalty fine, or other legal action in accordance the code (see section 6 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. Understanding types of absence

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:

- **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.

7. Legal Measures

Penalty Notices for Non-Attendance and other Legal Measures:

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

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 be considered through a referral to Hampshire's Legal Intervention Team 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 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 declined parent/carers request for leave of absence

Where a student 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 this [link](#).

The code of conduct states that:

Schools or Hampshire Local Authority will issue a Penalty Notice for any unauthorised absence where the student 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
- 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 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 of testing where dates are published in advance.**

Parents and Carers will be warned of the likelihood of a penalty notice being issued for unauthorised absence either via a letter, through the leave of absence request form, or through the school's 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. 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.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process.



In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

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. Advice for parents from Hampshire County Council can be found at this [link](#).

8. Promoting School Attendance at Home

My child is trying to avoid coming to 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 form tutor 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 he/she 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 a school planner each evening. Please ensure you look at it as it is used to communicate with you.

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!

9. Other Form of School Absence

Leavers

If your child is leaving our school (other than when leaving at the end of Year 11) parents/carers are asked to give the attendance officer comprehensive information about their 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 submitted to our school in writing

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



Absence through child participation in Public Performances, including theatre, film or TV work & Modelling.

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.

Parents of able sportsmen and women can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a regional, county, national and international events and competitions. It is however, down to the Headteacher's discretion whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Permission for your 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.

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.

Study Leave

We believe that students' needs are best met if they attend school every day in the period leading up to examinations. Therefore, no study leave will be granted during this period. Study leave will **only** be granted to Year 11 students during the time of the GCSE examination period, at the Headteacher's discretion. Should any students wish to attend school (or should their parents wish them to) on the days and at times when they are not sitting examinations, arrangements will be made for them to do so. The school will work within the legal requirements of:

- study leave should only be granted to Year 11 students and never to those in other year groups;
- it should never exceed 15 school days in a year and is most appropriately granted during the examination period itself, i.e., not before the beginning of that period;
- it 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 he/she 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 should be recorded and reported on by the school as such.



Teenage Pregnancy

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 should 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 should be treated as unauthorised.

10. 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.

11. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by Mrs K Hide, Assistant Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

12. Links with other policies (need updating once ratified at governors)

This policy links to the following policies:

- > [Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy](#)
- > [Behaviour Policy](#)