




Attendance Policy 2023- 2024

Chair of Governors signature	
Headteacher signature	
Policy type (statutory / non-statutory)	Statutory
Date	4 th October 2023
Next review date	October 2024

Attendance Policy



Context and Rationale

Droxford Junior School recognises the importance of minimising absence from school and so maximising children's life chances through successful education.

We want to ensure that all pupils receive a full-time education to maximise opportunities for everybody to realise their potential. Experience and research both locally and nationally demonstrate a clear link between good attainment and good attendance. The school believes that setting a clear policy for attendance and punctuality is an excellent preparation for later school years and future employment. The school strives to be welcoming and caring, so that everybody in the school community feels wanted and secure. All school staff work with pupils and their families to ensure everybody attends school punctually on every day of each term. The school pro-actively works with individual children and their families to improve attendance.

Droxford Junior School understands school attendance is subject to various education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education and Hampshire County Council.

The Attendance Policy is also consistent with the following school policies and guidance:

- Admissions
- Child protection
- Safeguarding
- Anti-bullying
- Special Educational Needs
- Behaviour, Exclusions and Discipline
- Teaching and learning policy
- Staff Handbook

Attendance & punctuality is included in our school's home-school agreement which parents must sign following their child's admission to a school. It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this policy sets out how together we will achieve this. This policy will be annually reviewed and regularly signposted to all staff, parents and children through our website.

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.

Target

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 children and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

For 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.

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

Promoting Good Attendance & Punctuality

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:

- Report to you on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments.
- Set targets for the school for attendance.

Roles and Responsibilities

Responsibilities of the Governors

The governing body is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on a termly basis. It also holds the head teacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

Responsibilities of the Head teacher/School's Attendance Leader:

- Ensure the implementation of this policy at school
- Monitor school level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Support staff to monitor the attendance of individual pupils
- Arrange calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Issue fixed penalty notices, when necessary

Responsibilities of Classroom Staff:

- Ensure that all children are registered accurately twice a day and submitting this information to the school office
- Liaise with the Head teacher on matters of attendance and punctuality and record any appropriate information on CPOMs
- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence
- Support children with absence to engage with their learning once they are back in school

Responsibilities of Parents and Carers:

Ensuring your child'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 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, text or e-mail 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

For many parents, your child attending school may be your first experience of being separated from them. This can seem daunting at first for both of you but consistency and a caring supportive home and school life will make the transition a quick and easy experience for you both.

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 class teacher 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.

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.

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!

Attendance registers

Registers are taken at 9.00am and 1.00pm

- Registers are taken by learning base teachers. Children are marked as present; attending an offsite educational activity; absent; unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
- The administration team are responsible for checking that registers are being accurately completed
- Absence information is entered onto Arbor using the DfE codes
- The Head teacher makes the decision as to whether an absence is unauthorised

Lateness /Punctuality

The school day begins at 8.55am in order for children to be organised for morning registration. Morning registration starts at 9 a.m. and it closes at 9.15 am. The afternoon session is taken at 1pm and kept open until 1.15pm.

- All lateness is recorded daily in Arbor.
- 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 children. On-going and repeated lateness is considered as **unauthorised absence and will be subject to legal action.**

Parents, guardians or carers of children 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 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.

Collecting children on time

Please collect your child promptly at the end of the school day. Where late collection is persistent and/or significantly late, the school may seek further advice from other agencies.

Data

- Droxford Junior School aims to achieve attendance rates which are above both national and local percentages.
- Data is monitored half-termly to identify issues relating to absence and punctuality.
- A termly analysis of authorised absences identifies percentages of illness, holidays and other factors. This is then used to set targets and respond to adverse trends.

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.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone and email you on the first day of absence (by 9.30am) if we have not heard from you. We record the call history in Arbor; *this is because we have a duty to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance*. If we have concerns related to safeguarding, we will make additional efforts to contact wider family/known contacts. We will take further steps to make contact if we feel it necessary.
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Headteacher and SENCO (Inclusions Lead) if absences persist.
- Refer the matter to Hampshire's Attendance Legal Panels if absence is unauthorised and falls below 90% (in line with Hampshire Code of Conduct: *issuing penalty notices for unauthorised absences from school* March 2020)

Third Day Absence

If your child is absent on the second and third day and we have not heard from you, we will continue to try and contact you by telephone. We will send a standard letter via email on the third day of absence requesting you contact us and we may additionally visit the family home.

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 procedure 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/ or wider family.

Ten Day Absence

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any child 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 Ongoing Absence

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

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 unauthorised attendance falls below 96%, and this has been, we will contact you in writing and offered support with improving this by the head teacher.

If attendance then falls to 90% or below, then a further letter will be sent and an Attendance Plan that is written in partnership with parents to improve children's attendance will be put in place. 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.

A Welcome Back

It is important that on return from an unavoidable absence all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other pupils.

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 our website or from reception) 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 with the code.

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.

Understanding types of absence:

Children 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:** 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. Examples of
- **Unauthorised Absence:** is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's absence from school after a parent's request. This includes:
 1. parents giving their children permission to be off school unnecessarily such as for shopping, birthdays, to look after siblings
 2. truancy before or during the school day
 3. 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.

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 Head teacher 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 head teacher'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 Head teacher 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.

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 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 children 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>

If a child 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 (5 days) 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 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

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 may refer to this leaflet issued by Hampshire County Council: <https://documents.hants.gov.uk/code-of-conduct-issuing-penalty-notices-for-unauthorised-absence-from-schools.pdf>

Leavers

If your child is leaving our school (other than when transferring to the secondary school) parents are asked to:

- Give reception 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 pupils 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.

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. All communications related to attendance will also be reported using the school's CPOMS systems and therefore records will be transferred to the child's next school.

Accepted by the Full Governing Body: 4th October 2023

Date of next review: October 2024

Appendices

The Law

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, 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 V1 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 <https://www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/behaviour-attendance-parents>

Punctuality letter

Dear

I am writing to inform you of my concerns that your child has been late on _____ occasions this term (DATES). It is important to stress that every time your child is late they are missing out on their learning.

I understand that there may be specific circumstances relating to the lateness, however, we will be monitoring this closely over the coming half term to see that this improves. If you would like to discuss this matter with me, then please do contact the school office to arrange an appointment.

It is my role to inform you that if there is evidence of the following and/or no evidence of improvement in your child's punctuality, then the school can refer this matter to Hampshire Local Authority and a fine may be issued:

- A pupil who has been more than 15 minutes late on ten or more occasions within a ten-week period
- A pupil has ten or more unauthorised lates within a ten-week period

I look forward to seeing an improvement.

Yours sincerely,

Matthew Dampier

Head teacher

Attendance letter (shared if attendance falls below 96%)

Dear

I am writing to inform you of my concerns about your child's attendance.

From _____ until now, your child's attendance stands at _____. The national expectation for attendance is 96%.

I am aware that there may be reasons such as sickness or exceptional circumstances, but it is absolutely essential that you make every effort to bring your child to school every day and that you only keep them at home when absolutely necessary. It is my role to inform you that poor attendance may result in a referral to Hampshire Local Authority and a fine be imposed.

We understand that there may be specific circumstances relating to the absence, so therefore invite you in for a meeting on _____ to discuss this issue with me and to find a way forwards in order to see improvement.

If you are not able to attend, please contact the school office to arrange an alternative date and time.

I look forward to meeting with you and working together.

Yours sincerely,

Matthew Dampier

Head teacher

Penalty notice referral letter (shared if no improvement since warning letter)

Dear

I am writing to inform you of my continued concerns about your child's attendance/punctuality.

From _____ until now, your child's attendance/punctuality stands at _____ which shows there has been no improvement since our meeting on _____ when the attendance/ punctuality was _____.

It is my role to now inform you that this matter has now been referred to Hampshire County Council, who may issue you with a Penalty Notice which is charged at £60 per child, per parent.

If you would like to discuss this, please arrange an appointment through the school office.

Yours sincerely,

Matthew Dampier

Head teacher