



Prospect School Attendance Policy 2019-20

Who were consulted in drafting this policy:

- Staff
- Parents
- Governors

Person (s) responsible for implementing and monitoring the policy:

- All staff
- The Headteacher

This Policy and the Law

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. This Attendance policy is also consistent with the following policies:

- Admissions
- Behaviour and bullying
- Exclusion
- Safeguarding
- Special Educational Needs
- Teaching and Learning

The level of attendance and punctuality expected from all our pupils is included in our school's home-school agreement which parents must sign following their child's admission to school.

It is very important therefore that you make sure your child attends regularly and this policy sets out how together we will achieve this. This policy will be annually publicised in writing for all staff, parents and pupils via the school website.

Section 1

Rationale / Statement of Intent:

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 pupils and we 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 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 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.

For our children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered it is vital that your child is at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. The routines of 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, secondary school, higher education and employment or training

Section 2

Operating the Policy

2.1 Promoting Good Attendance

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and 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:

- Provide information on all matters related to attendance in our Newsletter and Website
- 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;
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements;
- Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates and rewards.
- Set targets for the school and for classes for attendance and display these in school.
- Run events when parents, pupils and staff can work together on raising attendance levels across the school.

2.2 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 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 parents/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 the pupil'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:

- Ensure that all students are registered accurately
- Promote & reward 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.

Responsibilities of Students:

- Attend every day unless they are ill or have an authorised absence
- Arrive at school on time

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 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
- Sign children in and out of school should they be late for any reason

Section 3

Recording Attendance

3.1 Registration

Legally the register must be marked twice daily. This is once at the start of the school day at 8.45am and again for the afternoon session at 12.45pm.

3.2 Lateness/Punctuality

It is important to be on time at the start of the morning and afternoon school sessions. The start of school is used to give out instructions, organise work and practise basic skills. 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 embarrassed or worried leading to possible further absence or anxiety.

- The school doors open at 8.45am and all pupils are expected to be in school in good time for morning registration at 8.45am
- All lateness is recorded daily. This information will be required by courts, should a prosecution for non-attendance or lateness be necessary
- If a pupil 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.

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of other pupils. On-going and repeated lateness is considered as **unauthorised absence and will be subject to legal action.**

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 any support offered. If support is not appropriate or is declined and a child has 10 or more sessions 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 (See section 6 of this policy for further details).

The school doors open at 8.30am. Registers are open at 8.45am and close at 9.15am. A pupil will receive a late mark 'L' if they are not in the classroom at 8.45am when the registers are taken.

If collecting a child at the end of the school day please ensure that this is prompt. 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.

3.3 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 has had frequent absences you will be asked to send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even if you have telephoned.

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 as well as their regular school attendance**
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Wellbeing team, or the Headteacher or Assistant Head teacher if absences persist
- Consider referring 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 or 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, wider family and a member of the wellbeing team will visit your home to try to establish contact.

Ten Day's Absence

We have a legal duty to report the absences of any pupil 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 being 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 schooling across the school year for whatever reason they are defined as **persistent absentees**. Where this absence is unauthorised the school will:
 - Review the support offered during the year e.g. the attendance plan, support meeting notes
 - Consider making a referral to the Legal Panel for advice
 - An initial standard letter will be sent explaining how important attendance is. The parents/carers will be offered an appointment with the Wellbeing Team to explore ways to support the child and family to improve attendance
 - Any extenuating circumstances such as the child's ill health, hospital stay etc. will be taken into consideration.

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:-

- Send an initial standard letter explaining how important attendance is. The parents/carers will be offered an appointment with the wellbeing team to explore ways to support the child and family to improve attendance.
- Explore and extenuating circumstances such as the child's ill health, hospital stay etc.

All our Persistently Absent pupils and their parents are subject to an Attendance Plan/Contract, this may include:

- Referral to other agencies such as the Early Help Hub for support
- Advice from the Legal Panel
- Regular meetings with the Wellbeing Team
- Agreed strategies to be used by parents and the school to improve attendance.

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, they will not carry blame and be made to feel unhappy if their parents are not supportive or effective in these areas.

Section 4:

For national guidance refer to:

1. 'School attendance' 2015 located at -
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance>
2. National Association of Headteachers guidance document on 'Authorised Absence' 2014' -
<http://www.naht.org.uk/welcome/news-and-media/key-topics/parents-and-pupils/naht-issues-new-guidance-on-authorised-absence/>

For NHS guidance ill health refer to:

1. <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>

For county advice and guidance refer to:

1. Guidance on recording absence –
<http://documents.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/HIAS/Promptingpupilattendanceandrecordingabsence-maindocument.pdf>
2. Guidance on approval of 'Extended leave of absence' see county guidance-
<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/iba-resources-for-schools/atten-guidance-for-schools.htm>.