

## Attendance & Absence Policy

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# HISP Multi Academy Trust Portswood Primary School Attendance & Absence Policy

## 1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#).

These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting 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 Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (and [2010](#), [2011](#), [2013](#), [2016](#) amendments)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

### 3.1 The Academy Committee

The Academy Committee is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

### 3.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

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## **3.3 The attendance officer**

The school attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

## **3.4 Class teachers**

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

## **3.5 School office staff**

School office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

## **4. Recording attendance**

### **4.1 Attendance register**

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.55am on each school day.

The morning register will be taken at 8.55am and will be kept open until 9.05am. The afternoon register will be taken at 1.00pm and will be kept open until 1.05pm

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## **4.2 Unplanned absence**

The pupil's parent must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.00am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

Please call the school before 9.00am and choose option 1 to leave a message or stay on the line to talk to a member of the office staff.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/ will be notified of this in advance.

## **4.3 Planned absence**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Please call the school and choose option 1 to leave a message or stay on the line to talk to a member of the office staff.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

## **4.4 Lateness and punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Repeated lateness will be brought to the attention of the Headteacher and Late Letter 1 issued (Appendix 8). If there are more than six occurrences in a term, a letter will be sent to the parent – Late Letter 2 (Appendix 9).

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## **4.5 Following up absence**

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent to ascertain the reason, by making a telephone call during the morning and/or send a truancy call.
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use
- Issue attendance letter if no reply from phone call (see appendix 2-7)

## **4.6 Reporting to parents**

Parents will be informed of their child's attendance in their annual report. The Annual report will include:

- The total number of sessions (half days) for the year.
- The total number of absences for each child for the year.
- The total number of unauthorised absences.

Parents will also receive a termly update concerning their child's attendance as part of the pupil progress/attainment reporting process.

## **5. Authorised and unauthorised absence**

### **5.1 Approval for term-time absence**

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion.

You will need to complete a leave of absence request form (appendix 10) in advance.

Examples of any exceptional circumstances where leave may be granted during term time are as follows:

- If a parent is service personnel and is returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a close relative, only if Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional;
- Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement. Documentary evidence of this event will be required.

If a request meets the above exceptional circumstances but falls within the following times, the Headteacher must be convinced that absence from school is the only option:

- 1) The first half term of any academic year (applies to all pupils).
- 2) Year six transition day (for pupils in year six).
- 3) Year six SATs week (for pupils in year six).

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- 4) Key Stage 1 phonics screening week
- 5) Year 4 Timestable checking window.

When considering exceptional term time leave requests, the following factors may help to reach a decision:

- Time of the academic year when the leave has been requested
- Duration of the absence – number of school days being missed
- The child's current attendance and punctuality rate
- Exceptional Term time leave requested/taken in previous academic years for a similar purpose
- Whether parents have considered limiting the amount of time the child would be absent from school e.g. wrapping around school holiday
- Have alternative care arrangements been considered by the parent/carer to limit the time away from school
- Impact on any interventions, assessments or referrals being undertaken with the child or family e.g. family support, social care assessments, CAMHS, SEN
- The impact that the absence will have on the child.
- Whether it falls within any key stage national tests or exams;

#### Examples of circumstances NOT considered as exceptional

- Holidays abroad for the purpose of visiting a sick relative, excepting where that person is seriously ill. Medical evidence may be requested.
- Holidays taken in term time due to lower cost/parental work commitments.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- There being no suitable transport (and school is not within walking distance).
- The child's participation in an approved public performance.
- Other possible 'exceptional circumstances' where the Headteacher may grant term-time holiday e.g., absence following the death of a close member of the family.

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#### 5.2 Reducing persistent absence

Parents will be made aware of actions which the school will take to follow up absences.

- Every unauthorised absence should be followed up by the school using the letters included as Attendance Letter 1 & 2 (appendix 2 & 3).
- Repeated absences (i.e., attendance falls to 90% or below national average) should be brought to the attention of the Headteacher. A further letter should be sent to the parent and a meeting may be requested to discuss the reasons for absence. These are included as Attendance Letters 3 & 4 (appendix 4-6).
- The Education Welfare Officers should be informed.
- A penalty notice is issued.

Registers should always be available for inspection by the Education Welfare Officer. The Headteacher will arrange regular meetings with the Education Welfare Officer to discuss all concerns related to attendance matters. Issues raised will be dealt with in accordance with the service level agreement between the Education Welfare Service and the Governing Body.

The Education Welfare Officer should also be notified by the school office:

- Of any unauthorised absences of more than 20% of total attendance.
- Of any reasons where, having checked with the parents, the school has doubts about the reasons given for a pupil's absence.

If a child has a large number of absences through illness, and this gives cause for concern, then the parents should be interviewed by the Headteacher or the Education Welfare Officer. A medical can be arranged by making a referral to the school nursing team.

#### 5.3 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

From autumn term 2024, only 2 penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3 year rolling period and any second notice within that period is charged at a higher rate:

- The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £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 issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution.

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Penalty notices can be issued by a Head of School, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

## **6. Strategies for promoting attendance**

Attendance is rewarded in a number of ways both individually and collectively. Pupils attendance is recognised weekly in assembly with the strongest attendance from each Key Stage receiving a golden ticket. The classes from each Key Stage with the least number of 'lates' also receives a golden ticket. These tickets are 'cashed in' at the end of term for golden time. The more a class earns the more golden time they receive. Children also contribute to their 'houses' attendance figures. At the end of term house points are distributed to each house depending on their position with regard to attendance. These points contribute to a houses overall collection of points and results in a termly house wide reward.

## **7. Attendance monitoring**

The attendance officer at our school monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

A pupil's parent is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2). You are expected to make a call each day your child is ill.

If a pupil's absence goes above 3 days, the school will contact the parent of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this.

If a pupil's absence continues to rise after contacting their parent, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the governing board.



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## **8. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum yearly by Deputy Head of School Inclusions. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Trust.

## **9. Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

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#### Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

	Code	Description
Attending the school	/	Present at the school - morning session
	\	Present at the school - afternoon session
	L	Late arrival before the register is closed
Attending a place other than the school	K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority.
	V	Attending an educational visit or trip
	P	Participating in a sporting activity
	W	Attending work experience
	B	Attending any other approved educational activity
	D	Dual registered at another school
Absent – leave of absence	C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad
	M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
	J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
	S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
	X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend
	C2	Leave of absence for compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
	C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances
Absent – <b>other authorised reasons</b>	T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes
	R	Religious observance
	I	Illness
	E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause	Q	Unable to attend the school because of lack of access arrangements
	Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
	Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
	Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
	Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school sit being unexpectedly closed
	Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
	Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause.	
Absent – <b>unauthorised absence</b>	G	Holiday not granted by the school
	N	Reason for absence not yet established
	O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
	U	Arrived in school after registration closed
Administrative codes	Z	Pupil's name entered in advance of start date
	#	Planned whole school closure – no session to take place e.g. inset day.

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## Appendix 2: attendance letter 1

[Date]

Dear

Re:

According to our records, your child has been absent for the sessions that are listed on the attached slip.

Could you therefore complete the attached slip and return it or telephone the school, within 10 days in order that our records may be updated.

Thank you for your help in this matter.

Yours sincerely

Tony Head  
Headteacher

.....

Class Teacher:

Pupil:

Dates and sessions of absences(s)

Reason(s) .....

Signed ..... (Parent/Guardian)

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## Appendix 3: attendance letter 2

[Date]

Dear

Re:

With reference to my previous letter regarding absences for \_\_\_\_\_ we do not appear to have received a response. Your child has now had total of \_\_\_\_\_ unexplained sessions/days of absence which will affect his/her learning. Please find enclosed your child's attendance report.

As your child's attendance is at an unsatisfactory level, we would like to invite you into a meeting in school on \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ in order that this matter can be resolved.

If you do not attend this meeting and your child's attendance does not improve, we will have no alternative but to make a referral to the Education Welfare Service.

If you feel that school can offer you any support, please make an appointment through the school office.

Yours sincerely

Tony Head  
Headteacher

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## Appendix 4: attendance letter 3

[Date]

Dear

Re:

Please find enclosed your child's latest Attendance Report. You will see that ..... 's attendance is only          percentage attendance, which means that he/she has had          days of absence since September.

I understand that these absences have been due to holiday/illness but as ..... 's attendance is less than/close to 80%, it could be/will be monitored by the Education Welfare Service and may be followed up by them.

Regular attendance is important to help your child achieve and reach their potential. Please try to ensure your child attends school regularly in the future.

If you feel that school can offer any support, please make an appointment through the school office.

Yours sincerely

Tony Head  
Headteacher

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## Appendix 5: attendance letter 4

[Date]

Dear

Re:

As there has been little or no improvement regarding .....’s attendance and there has been no medical evidence to support these absences I have no option but to refer your child’s absence to the Education Welfare Service.

Yours sincerely

Tony Head  
Headteacher

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## Appendix 6: attendance letter 4a

[Date]

Dear

Re:

As there has been little or no improvement regarding .....’s attendance I have no option but to refer your child’s absence to the Education Welfare Service.

Yours sincerely

Tony Head  
Headteacher

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## **Appendix 7: attendance letter 5**

Dear Parent,

The Local Authority has brought to the attention of every school in Southampton the powers in the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 to tackle poor attendance.

This came into force 1 September 2007 and it will mean that the Education Welfare Service can issue Penalty Notices for pupils with unauthorised absence from school (i.e., absence that the school has not given permission for).

The Penalty Notice will be issued by post to a pupil's home, after one warning letter. Cases of unauthorised absence include pupils caught on Truancy Sweeps, persistent late attendance after the register has closed, internal truancy from lessons and unauthorised holiday. In the case of unauthorised holiday, a Penalty Notice may be issued straight away without a warning letter.

Penalty Notices provide an alternative to prosecution under s444 (1) of the Education Act 1996 and payment within 28 days of receipt of a Penalty Notice is £80 and if it remains unpaid after 28 days the amount will increase to £160. If a Penalty Notice remains unpaid after 42 days, the case will progress to the Magistrates Court for the original offence of poor attendance – this can mean a fine of up to £2500.

At Portswood Primary School we consider that regular attendance is so important and these new powers so significant that we are now bringing this legislation to the attention of every parent with a child in this school.

It means that any parent of a pupil with a level of unauthorised absence may now be issued with a Penalty Notice by the Education Welfare Service.

If you believe at any stage that your child's absence record from school may leave you liable to receive a Penalty Notice, it is extremely important that you take action to secure their regular attendance.

Support and guidance is always available from the school and the Education Welfare Service. If you have any questions regarding Penalty Notices or any other attendance issue, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely,

Education Welfare Service and Tony Head (Headteacher)



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## Appendix 8: late letter 1

[Date]

Dear

Re:

It has been noticed that ..... has been late into school times last week, which is causing some concern.

Unfortunately, pupils who arrive late after class has started can cause some disruption and a late mark is recorded against them.

May I remind you that pupils are allowed into the playground from 8.45am and it would therefore be appreciated if you could ensure that ..... arrives at school before start of school at 8.55am.

Yours sincerely

Tony Head  
Headteacher

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## Appendix 9: late letter 2

[Date]

Dear

Re:

Further to my previous letter, advising you that ..... has been late into school, unfortunately there has been no improvement in his/her punctuality. He/She has arrived late into school a further ... times last week and this is causing concern as his/her class will have already started. This does cause disruption to the teacher and other pupils and late marks will be recorded on his/her school record.

If there are any concerns you wish to discuss with me, please contact the school to arrange an appointment but in the meantime, I look forward to seeing an improvement in .....’s punctuality.

Yours sincerely

Tony Head  
Headteacher

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Appendix 10: leave of absence form.

## Portswood Primary School Leave of Absence Application Form 2024/2025

Parents/Carers/Guardians have a legal responsibility to ensure their child/children's attendance at school. Good attendance is linked to higher achievement. Under Government legislation, the Headteacher is only able to authorise leave of absence of a pupil during term time, if they deem the reason/s given for the leave of absence to be exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher will consider your application using the information you have provided below so please include as much information as possible. You will be notified of the Headteacher's decision in writing.

**Applications should be received at least three weeks in advance to allow consideration**

### Pupil Information:

FORENAME	SURNAME	DATE OF BIRTH	YEAR GROUP	CLASS/TUTOR
<b>Details of siblings at other schools that will be travelling:</b> <i>(Please note that we may contact these school/s in relation to this application)</i> <b>Name of sibling/s:</b> _____ <b>Current school/schools:</b> _____				
<b>I am applying for leave of absence for my child/children</b> <b>from:</b> _____ <b>to:</b> _____				
<b>Total number of school days absent:</b> _____				
<b>Please explain fully the purpose of this absence &amp; why it cannot take place during the 13 out of term time weeks:</b>    				
<b>Name of City/Country being visited during the leave of absence?</b>				<i>Please attach outbound and inbound flight confirmation concerning the leave of absence and any other supporting evidence.</i>
<b>Parent/s email addresses and contact telephone numbers whilst on the leave of absence:</b>		<b>Email:</b> <b>Telephone Number:</b> <b>Current Address:</b>		
<b>Has your child had leave of absence in the last 12 months?</b> <b>If yes, please provide dates/details:</b>		<b>Yes/No</b>		

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I submit the information above for consideration by the Headteacher:	Signed:	Printed:
	Relationship to Pupil:	
	Date:	

## 5 DAYS OF ABSENCE

If your child has 5 days of unauthorised absence for a family holiday or authorised absence during the year for a family holiday and takes no other time off for illness or other reasons, their attendance over the school year will be 97.4%

## PENALTY NOTICES

Unauthorised absence and persistent lateness may result in the issue of a Penalty Notice (currently £80.00) to each parent, for each child if paid within 21 days, rising to £160.00 if paid between day 21 and 28.

Five days of unauthorised absence which forms all or part of a family holiday will automatically result in the issue of a Penalty Notice to each parent, for each child.

## SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

If your leave of absence goes beyond your original request, we will require further evidence to support your reasons for not returning. This could include original flight details and amendments, or medical proof.

Attendance Figure	Days absent by the end of the school year	School time missed by the end of Year 11.
100%	0	0
95%	10	¼ of the year
90%	20	½ of the year
85%	30	¾ of the year
80%	40	1 Whole year