



Bartley C of E Junior School and The Oaks C of E Learning Federation Attendance Policy 2018-2020

Name of Unit/Premises/Centre/School	Bartley CE Junior School
Date of Policy Issue/Review	17.11.18
Name of Responsible Manager/Headteacher	Karen Stonehouse (HT & DSL)
Date approved by Governors if statutory:	26.11.18

Introduction

At Bartley C of E Junior School we endeavour to provide a safe, secure environment. We believe that good attendance promotes a positive attitude towards learning and ensures that children make the most of their learning opportunities.

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 school policies: Admissions, Anti-Bullying, Child Protection, Safeguarding, Special Educational Needs, Teaching and Learning and Positive Behaviour Policy.

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 publicised annually in writing for all staff, parents, carers and pupils via the school website and through Parentmail.

It will be reviewed annually by the Full Governing Body and monitored and administered by the Attendance Assistant in the school office. Data will be reviewed and evaluated by the Headteacher and Governors.

Why is regular school attendance so important?

In order for your child to achieve their very best in all aspects of school life, a high level of attendance is essential. At Bartley C of E Junior School and The Oaks C of E Learning Federation, we strive for excellence in all that we do. To constantly strive for a goal of 100% attendance for all our children is a key part of this.

We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our pupils/students and endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome. Parents, carers and pupils 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, carers and teachers share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all.

Parent and carers are central to their child's educational success. Through enabling their child to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered at Bartley C of E Junior School and Oaks C of E Learning Federation, it is vital that your child is at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for absence is unavoidable.

By promoting a positive attitude and placing high value on punctuality and regular good attendance, parents and carers will naturally instil and maintain good habits from the outset. 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.

For more information click on this link

<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/attendance-guidance-for-parents.htm>

At Bartley C of E Junior and Oaks C of E Learning Federation we also know that good attendance is important because our children who attend regularly:

- Enjoy their learning, learn quickly and are able to build on and consolidate their learning each day, therefore achieving more
- Can maintain friendships more easily and have greater opportunity to become involved in wider opportunities (clubs/ team membership; responsibilities such as house captains etc.)
- Understand and adapt to school routines quicker
- Make better progress, both socially and academically
- Ultimately have a greater chance of success in their chosen careers, by being able to successfully transfer from infant to junior school, secondary and higher education and ultimately employment and training.

Promoting good attendance

We know that the foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between our school, our parents, carers and our children.



So that we work effectively with parents and carers, at Bartley C of E Junior School we will ensure that we:

- Inform you of how your child is progressing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their achievements, both academically and socially.
- Send out termly traffic light letters keeping you up-to-date with your child's attendance.
- Celebrate your child's great attendance by our Attendance Lion, ROARY (Raising Our Attendance Record Yeah), awarding them with a certificate for a 100% attendance for a half term during a special Attendance assembly.
- The class with the best attendance for a half term will receive a cup from ROARY and a reward of some free time.
- Celebrate 100% attendance for the academic year with a tea party/special treat with ROARY.
- Reward your child's good or improving attendance by giving them praise, stickers and postcards home.
- Call you on the first day of your child's absence if we have not heard from you or if we are worried by their absence. We need to be sure that your child is safe as well as needing to monitor their attendance.
- Ensure your child feels welcome back at school after a period of absence and help them to catch up missed work.
- Help and support parents and carers when attendance is causing concern. We may invite you in to discuss the situation if the absence persists.

For parents and carers to work effectively with the school they will:

- Ensure that they inform the school office of absence, for any reason, before 9:30am.
- Encourage their children to arrive at school on time.
- Take responsibility for registering at the reception desk if their children are late.
- Register at school reception if their children are leaving the school site during school hours.
- Discuss any planned absence well in advance with the school.

Family holidays

- Children have 13 weeks annual holiday from school and holiday dates are published well in advance.
- For more information see <https://www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/schoolholidays>
- All parents and carers are expected to plan and take their family holidays at this time so as not to disrupt their children's education.
- **No** authorised absence will be given for a holiday for any reason.

Medical/Dental appointments

- Please try to ensure that medical appointments and dental appointments are taken outside of school hours or during school holidays.

The school has the authority to authorise/un-authorise absences and the ultimate responsibility for this sits with the Head teacher. They may grant absence for leave in exceptional circumstances only.

Lateness/punctuality

It is important that children are on time at the start of the morning and afternoon school sessions and to lessons. The start of school/lessons is used to give out instructions or organise work. If your child is late they can miss work time with their class teacher, miss receiving vital information, cause disruption to the lesson for others and it can be embarrassing leading to possible further absence.

- The school day begins at **9.00am** and all **pupils are expected to be in school at this time.**
- Pupils may arrive from **8:45am.**
- Morning registration is at **9.00am** and it closes at **9.20am.**
- Afternoon registration is at **1:05pm** and closes at **1:20pm.**
- 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 and coded *U* in line with Hampshire County Council and Department of Education guidance. This mark shows them to be on site but is legally recorded as an absence.
- If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence, coded *M*.
- Department for Education guidance suggests all official registers should be closed a maximum of 30 minutes after the start of school – but schools can choose to use a shorter period.
- At Bartley C of E Junior School the register closes 20 minutes after the start of school.
- Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other pupils.
- Ongoing and repeated lateness is considered as **unauthorised absence and will be subject to legal action.**
- For further advice and guidance refer to: Hampshire County Council's guidance, *Promoting pupil attendance recording absence*, available at: <http://documents.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/HIAS/Promotingpupilattendanceandrecordingabsence-maindocument.pdf>.
- Parents and 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 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 **ten** or more sessions of unauthorised absence due to lateness recorded in any **ten week** period, the school or Hampshire County Council are required to issue parents or carer with a Penalty Notice in

accordance with Hampshire County Council's *Code of conduct: issuing Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence from schools*.

What to do if your child is absent:

A child not attending school is considered a **safeguarding** matter. It is for this reason that information about the cause of any absence is always required.

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact the school office as soon as possible (**02380 812173 by 9.30am**) on the first day of absence and then on each subsequent day of absence, unless there is a specified recovery period e.g. from an operation, etc.
- Send a written note on the first day your child returns to school with an explanation of the absence, preferably by Parentmail or by email to admin.office@bartley.hants.sch.uk, as this can then be recorded on their attendance record - you must do this even if you have already telephoned us.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone or text you (**Between 9.30 and 10.00am, dependant on office capacity**) 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 the class-teacher/Year Leader and/or Deputy Headteacher if absences persist.
- Refer the matter to the Hampshire County Council's Attendance Legal Panels if absence is unauthorised and falls below 90%, despite all efforts for parents and carers and school to work together to improve attendance.

Persistent absence

- If your child misses 10% or more schooling across the school year, they are defined as *persistent absentees*.
- If your child has not been seen and contact has not been established with any of the named parents or carers, after **three** days of absence the school is required to start *child missing in education* procedures as set down by Hampshire County Council guidance.
- We will make all reasonable enquiries to establish contact with parents and carers and the child.
- If your child is absent without an explanation for **ten** consecutive days, we have a legal duty to report their absence.
- We notify the local authority that the child is at *risk of missing*. Key services will then be alerted to locate the child.
- 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%.

Request for Leave of Absence

Amendments to school attendance regulations were updated and enforced from September 2013: The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations state that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

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 no legal entitlement for time off in school term time to go on holiday and holiday will not be authorised.

Parents/carers wishing to apply for leave of absence need to fill in an application form available from the office 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 County Council's *Code of conduct*, parents and 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 and carers to help us by not taking children out during school time.

Understanding types of absence

Pupils 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:

- This 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.
- Absence will be authorised as one day for a funeral or wedding.
- Absence **may** be authorised for;
 - Competitive sport at regional, national or county level
 - Gypsy, Roma, Traveller and Showman families for work purposes
 - Participation in public performances as per HCC Guidelines.

Un-authorised absence;

- This is when the school has not received a reason for absence
- The school has not approved a child's leave absence from school after a parent's request and may include:
 - parents and carers giving their children permission to be off school unnecessarily, such as for shopping, birthdays, to look after siblings, etc.
 - 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.
- 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 a holiday.
- Any changes will be communicated to parents and carers.

Penalty Notices for non-attendance and other legal measures

In education law, parents and 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 when there is unauthorised absence and:

1. The child or family do not require the support from any agency to improve the attendance
2. The child has ten or more sessions of unauthorised absence and parents and carers are complicit in the child's absence.

For national guidance refer to: *Parental responsibility measures for behaviour and attendance*, which covers legal measures for non-attendance:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-responsibility-measures-for-behaviour-andattendance.

For Hampshire County Council guidance refer to: *Guidance for schools on support and procedures for pursuing legal action for non-attendance*, May 2015:

www.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/lba-resources-for-schools/attendance-guidance/attendance-guidance-for-schools.

Where a child has unauthorised absence the school must enforce Hampshire County Council's *Code of conduct: issuing Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence from schools* 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:

www.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/attendance-guidance-forparents/possible-penalties.

The *Code of conduct* states that schools or Hampshire County Council will issue a Penalty Notice for any unauthorised absence where the pupil has been:

- absent for ten 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 ten 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 carers 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 Penalty Notice is issued for either:

1. Ten sessions of unauthorised absence or lateness in any Ten week school period
2. One or more sessions of unauthorised absence during a public exam, formal school assessment or testing where dates are published in advance.

This includes where a pupil has unauthorised absence due to either:

- non-approval of a parent/carer's request for leave of absence, or
- a holiday that has been taken without permission.

Parents and carers will be warned of the likelihood of a Penalty Notice being issued for unauthorised absence via a letter, through the leave of absence request form. 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 parents and carers** for each child. **NB:** This could mean four Penalty Notices for a family with two siblings, both with unauthorised absence for holiday, i.e. one Penalty Notice 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 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.

Please note: If you pay the Penalty Notice and your child has further unauthorised absences additional legal action will be taken. For example, in the event that a Penalty Notice has previously been served to you due to unauthorised holiday, should your child have any future unauthorised leave this will result in further legal action for you, such as prosecution or an Education Supervision Order. For further information parents and carers can request a leaflet from their school and should visit Hampshire County Council's website at:

www.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/attendance-guidance-forparents/possible-penalties.

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