

## Ranvilles Junior School Attendance

### 1. ACCESSIBILITY

This policy is available in large print or Braille.  
Please contact the school office who will be happy  
to arrange this for you.

### 2. PURPOSE OF POLICY

TO ADHERE TO THE RELEVANT CHILDREN ACTS, EDUCATION ACTS, REGULATIONS AND  
GUIDANCE FROM THE DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION IN ADDITION TO GUIDANCE FROM  
THE LOCAL AUTHORITY IN ORDER TO ENSURE CHILDREN ATTEND SCHOOL  
REGULARLY.

### 3. APPROVAL

Approval date: April 2019

Date for next review: April 2020

#### 4. **INTRODUCTION**

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. Ranvilles Junior School fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure pupils are in school and on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours.

Our policy applies to all children registered at this school and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of pupils who are registered at our school on our school website.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Headteacher and Governors at our school work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.

#### 5. **REFERENCES**

- **Information on Penalty Notices for non-attendance at school**  
Education Act 1996, section 444A  
**Advice for parents and carers**  
Applied from September 2015
- **Code of conduct**  
Issuing Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence from schools  
September 2015 / Hampshire County Council
- **Request to authorise absence from school due to exceptional circumstances /**  
Hampshire County Council

#### 6. **CONTENT**

##### Aims and Objectives

This attendance policy ensures that all staff and governors in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this Policy we aim to:

1. Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
2. Achieve a minimum of 95% attendance for all children, apart from those with chronic health issues.
3. Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.

4. Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
5. Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the Education Welfare Service so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
6. Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of individual responsibility.
7. Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
8. Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance.

We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

9. Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and pupils.
10. Ensuring that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
11. Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development.
12. Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, pupils, staff and governors on school attendance matters.
13. Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
14. Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.
15. Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.

## Definitions

### **Authorised absence**

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence. Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

### **Unauthorised absence**

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school. Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

## Procedures

Our school will undertake to follow the following procedures to support good attendance:

16. Maintain appropriate registration processes.
17. Maintain appropriate attendance data.
18. Communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, governors, parents and pupils.
19. Have consistent and systematic daily records which give detail of any absence and lateness.
20. Follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school.
21. Inform parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
22. Strongly discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time.
23. Work with parents to improve individual pupils attendance and punctuality
24. Refer to the Educational Welfare Service any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve.
25. Report attendance statistics to Hampshire LA and the DfE where requested.

## Responsibilities

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have:

### Class teacher

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers
- Informing the Leadership Team where there are concerns and acting upon them
- Providing background information to support referrals
- Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns

- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness
- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation which should be noted inside the register
- Discussing attendance issues at consultation evenings where necessary

### **Headteacher**

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Overall monitoring of school attendance
- Trends in authorised and unauthorised absence
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised
- Making referrals to external agencies when and as appropriate
- Providing reports and background information to inform discussion with the school's EWO
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.

### **Administration staff**

- Staff in the School Office are responsible for:
  - Collating and recording registration and attendance information.
  - Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence
  - Ensuring the Absence/Late Book is completed
  - Contacting parents of absent children where no contact has been made.
  - Recording details of children who arrive late or go home
  - Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers and reporting concerns to the Headteacher
- Sending out standard letters regarding attendance

### **Parents**

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment.
- Contacting the school office on the first morning of absence.
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we do require evidence from the doctor or dentist. (Appointment card/letter)
- Making requests for authorised absence in term time for exceptional circumstances and only if absolutely necessary as these are not automatically authorised.
- Communicating with the school as soon as possible about any concern to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

## Registration

All the school doors open at 8.45 am until 9.00 am. This time is sufficient for all pupils to come into their classroom.

Each class teacher has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance. Any pupil who is absent must be recorded at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session. The attendance register must be completed by the class teacher by 9.05am and by 1.10pm. These registers are then returned to the school office.

All attendance records are documented using SIMs software, which is supported by the Local Authority. Attendance registers are legal documents and these must be kept secure and preserved for a period of three years after the date they were last used.

## Lateness

Once the doors are closed at 8.55am the only way to get into school is via the school office. Any pupil who comes into school this way from 8.55am will be marked as late in the attendance record. Records are kept of those pupils who are late; this is documented on the electronic register for each pupil (Attendance code L). Any child who arrives for school later than 9.25am will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning. (Attendance code U).

Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school later than 9.05am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M).

Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness parents/carers will receive a letter advising them of the concerns and the school will provide opportunities for parents/carers to seek support and advice to address these issues.

## ABSENCES

Parents/carers should contact the school on the first day of their child's absence. When parents/carers notify us of their child's absence it is important that they provide us with details of the reason for their absence.

All absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised absences on the computer. It is important that we receive accurate information from parents with reasons for the child's absence. This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. The Headteacher has the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.

Where we have not received reasons for a child's absence then we send a letter requesting these details. If this letter is not completed and returned by the specified date then the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (Attendance Code O)

### **First Day Contact**

Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, then we initiate a first day contact process. Office colleagues check all of the registers from 9.05am to 9.30am on a daily basis, to identify those pupils who are absent. There are occasions when we are unaware why the child is absent and we will contact the parent to check the reasons for the child's absence.

### **Illness**

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school long term, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services to see if arrangements can be made for the child to be given some home tuition outside school.

Where over the course of an academic year, a child has repeated periods of illness, the school will write to parents to ask them to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness related absence. This evidence could be a Doctor's note, appointment card or copy of a prescription. We may seek written permission from you for the school to make their own enquiries.

## **Parental Request for Absence from School for Holiday**

With effect from September 2013 the government abolished the right of Headteachers to authorise absence specifically for holidays of up to 10 days per year if special circumstances exist. Instead, Headteachers will only be allowed to grant leave of absence for any reasons if they are satisfied exceptional circumstances exist. The fundamental principles used at this school for defining 'exceptional' are **rare**, or **unavoidable** which means the event could not **reasonably be scheduled** at another time. It is important for parents to understand that there is no legal entitlement for time off in school time to go on holiday and in the vast majority of cases holiday, including that for a wedding, will not be authorised. Parents wishing to apply for leave of absence need to fill in an application form (available from the school office and on the school website) in advance and before making any travel arrangements.

The DfE has not produced an example list of exceptional requests but firmly believes that all children have the right to an education before and above a holiday. Ranvilles Junior School follows the DfE and Hampshire guidelines regard authorising requests. Unauthorised requests which incur more than 5 days absence from school will result in a fine which will be paid to the local council.

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 parents will be issued with a fixed-penalty fine or other legal action in accordance the code.

We actively encourage our parents to request a leave of absence through completion of the Parental Request for Absence form which is available from our school website, the school office and via email if requested.

## Appendix 1 Request for Leave of Absence



### Request to authorise absence from school due to exceptional circumstances

Schools are only able to authorise absence from school in exceptional circumstances. In making a request for an authorised absence from school you will need to explain why the circumstances are exceptional. **Please note:** There is no general right to authorise absence for a family holiday. If you take your child out of school without permission the absence will be unauthorised and we will consider legal action.

**You are advised not to make any arrangements until your request has been considered.**

#### Section A – to the headteacher, I wish to apply for

Child's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

To be authorised as absent from school (please include dates and time):

from: \_\_\_\_\_ to: \_\_\_\_\_ (inclusive dates)

If your child has siblings that are also applying for a leave of absence please end their name and school below:

Child's name(s): \_\_\_\_\_ School(s): \_\_\_\_\_

**Section B** Please explain why you are applying for an authorised absence and the **circumstances** which make your **application exceptional**; and therefore the leave cannot be taken within the normal 13 week holiday your child has from school. If you are requesting authorisation to attend a specific event please confirm the date of the event and explain your travel arrangements. If you require additional space please continue on the other side of the page.

**Section C** I am the parent/carer with whom the pupil normally resides. The information I have given on this form is correct.

Signature (parent/carer): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 have been amended (as of 1 September 2013) to prohibit the proprietor (headteacher) of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

**Section D – for school use only.**

Tick as appropriate.

Request approved for \_\_\_\_ (number of days) from the dates and times:  
\_\_\_\_\_

A personal discussion with you is requested. Please contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Request not approved as the circumstances are not considered to constitute an exceptional reason and/or the impact of this absence will affect your child's educational progress.

**PLEASE NOTE: *This leave of absence form serves as a Penalty Notice Warning letter to parent/carers. Any unauthorised absence during this period of time may be subject to a penalty notice for non attendance being issued.***

Headteacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Current attendance rate: \_\_\_\_%      Other requests this academic year: YES/NO

If 'yes', dates: \_\_\_\_\_

Service family: YES/NO

If 'yes' has confirmation of dates document been received from Commanding Officer and is attached? YES/NO

Continuation of section B (if required):