Dream Big, Aim High
& Make a Difference

Potley Hill Primary School

Attendance Policy

Policy Consultation & Review

This policy is available on our school website and is available on request from the School Office. We also inform parents about this policy when their children join our school and regularly thereafter through our weekly school bulletin and other relevant opportunities.

We recognise the expertise our staff build by managing school attendance daily and we therefore invite staff to contribute to and shape this policy and associated attendance and safeguarding arrangements.

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Governing Body on at least an annual basis. This policy was last reviewed and agreed by the Governing Body on **19th October 2026.** It is due for review in **October 2027.**

	Contents	
1	**Introduction/Aim**	3
2	**Legal Framework**	3
3	**Roles and Responsibilities** including parents & pupils	4
4	**Categorising Absence and Attendance**	7
4.1	Leave of absence	7
4.2	Medical appointments and absence due to illness	8
4.3	Pupil absence for the purposes of Religious Observance	9
4.4	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	9
4.5	Unauthorised absence	9
5	**Our Procedures**	10
5.1	Register keeping and recording	10
5.2	Late arrival at school	11
5.3	Expected absence procedure for parents	11
5.4	Attendance Rewards & Interventions	13
5.5	Support Systems	14
5.6	Persistent Absence, Severe Absence and the use of legal interventions	15
5.7	Lateness	16
5.8	Penalty Notices	17
6	**Related Policies**	19
7	**Statutory Framework**	19
8	**Appendices**	20
	Appendix 1: Example leave of absence request form	21
	Appendix 2: Example of school reply to leave of absence request	23
	Appendix 3: Attendance Policy Quick Guide for Parents	24
	Appendix 4: Attendance Policy Quick Guide for Students	26
	Appendix 5: Attendance codes	27

1. Introduction/Aim

At **Potley Hill Primary School** we believe that regular school attendance is essential if children are to achieve their full potential. We value the attendance of all pupils. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind and can put them at risk of wider harm. There is a wide range of evidence as to the health and wellbeing benefits of school-age education. Research commissioned by the Department for Education shows missing school for even a day can mean a child is less likely to achieve good grades, which can have a damaging effect on their life chances. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties at the earliest opportunity.
Our attendance policy aims to give clear guidance to staff, parents, pupils, and governors/trustees to:

- Promote good attendance, enabling pupil's achievement by establishing the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Recognise the key role of all staff in promoting good attendance.
- Provide a clear framework for monitoring and responding to pupil absences, acting early to address patterns of absence.
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school.
- Promote positive support systems and advocate multi-agency approaches to improve attendance.
- Make parents aware of their legal responsibilities and ensure their children have access to the education to which they are entitled.

We recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, prevention of bullying, behaviour, and inclusive learning. This policy also considers the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and other relevant legislation.

2. Legal Framework

This policy meets the requirements of the Working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures.

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability, and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory

school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

The government expects all schools and local authorities to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence.
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Act early to address patterns of absence.

Parents are expected to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.

In accordance with the Education Act 1996, we will work with parents and carers and the Local Authority to ensure that parents and carers are supported to secure education for children of compulsory school age. Where required, we will formalise support and where necessary, work with the LA to use legal measures.

A "Parent" is defined as:

- Any natural parent, whether married or not.
- Any parent who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility as defined in the Children Act (1989) for a child or young person.
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

At **Potley Hill Primary School** we believe that improving school attendance is everyone's business. It is a shared responsibility by governors/trustees, all school staff, parents, pupils, the wider school community and multi-agency partners. We aim to always work in partnership with our parents.

Role	Name	Contact details
Senior Attendance Lead	**Natalie Wallace**	**01252 876106**
Attendance Officer	**Melissa Fellowes & Sally-anne Ward**	**absence@potleyhill.hants.sch.uk**
Named Governor for Attendance	**Antje Neville**	**a.governors@potleyhill.hants.sch.uk**

The Governors of **Potley Hill Primary School** recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it through the school's ethos and across its policies. They may take an active role in attendance improvement by:

- Setting high expectations of all leaders, staff, pupils, and parents so that children attend school every day and are safeguarded.
- Identifying a member of the governing body/trustee to lead on attendance matters and ensuring that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance.
- Prioritising attendance in strategies, such as raising attainment, behaviour and combatting bullying, special educational needs and disabilities, wellbeing, and safeguarding.
- Ensuring school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties by rigorously evaluating the effectiveness of the school's attendance procedures so that consistent attendance support is provided for all pupils.
- Ensuring the schools' attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent attendance support is provided for pupils who require it most by prioritising the staff and resources needed. This includes ensuring schools engage and work effectively with the local authority School Attendance Support Team and wider local partners and services.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data, discussing, challenging trends, and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Ensuring high aspirations are maintained for all pupils and processes for support are adapted to the individual needs of pupils including those with long term illnesses, special educational needs and disabilities, pupils with a social worker, those pupils under the Virtual School and pupils from cohorts with historically lower attendance such as those eligible for free school meals.
- Ensuring all school staff receive adequate training on attendance and that relevant staff have access to opportunities to share and learn from good practice in other schools.
- Ensuring that attendance data is shared with the Local Authority or Department for Education in line with statutory reporting deadlines.
- Reviewing the school's Attendance Policy on at least an annual basis, ensuring that the required resources are available to fully implement the policy, which is published and publicised regularly so that it is easily accessible to pupils, parents and staff.

The Senior Management Team at **Potley Hill Primary School** will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents.
- Form and maintain positive relationships with pupils and parents.
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance, with good teaching and learning experiences, with a whole school culture that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve.
- Make sure all teaching and non-teaching staff know the importance of good attendance, are consistent in their communication with pupils and parents, and receive the training and professional development they need.
- Have a clear school attendance policy which all staff, pupils and parents understand. Monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed annually.

- Ensure the school have accurate, complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence.
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.
- Ensure that there is a named Senior Attendance Champion to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resource.
- Attend the termly school attendance supporting meetings with the local authority, focusing on those pupils with severe absence, making sure a regularly reviewed plan is in place.

All staff at **Potley Hill Primary School** will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents.
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents.
- Contribute to a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve.
- Know the importance of good attendance, are consistent in their communication with pupils and parents, and receive the training and professional development they need.

The member of staff responsible for attendance will work to further develop relationships with families to bring about improved attendance. This may involve seeking multi-agency support through Children's Services (for further information related to the school's safeguarding arrangements click here to see the Safeguarding Policy).

Potley Hill Primary School requests that parents:

- Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress.
- Ensure their child has regular attendance at school.
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment.
- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return, following this with a note wherever possible.
- Avoid unnecessary absences; for example, by making medical and dental appointments for outside of school hours.
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties with any aspect of their schoolwork or home and family life.
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance.

- Support the school by becoming involved in their child's education, forming a positive relationship with school, and acknowledging the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home.
- Maintain effective routines at home to support good attendance.
- Attend all meetings requested to discuss attendance issues.

Further information can be found at: Attendance guidance for parents | Hampshire County Council (hants.gov.uk)

Pupils will:

- Be aware of the school's attendance policy and when and where they are required to attend. This will be communicated to them by school staff, parents and through the school timetable.
- Speak to their class teacher or another member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance.
- Attend all lessons ready to learn, with the appropriate learning tools requested and on time for the class.
- Follow the school procedure if they arrive late. This will help the school to monitor attendance and keep accurate records for the child's individual attendance. This is also vital for health and safety in the event of a school evacuation.

4. Categorising Absence and Attendance

When marking our registers, we will apply the national codes as outlined and regulated by the Department for Education guidance to accurately record and report attendance.

4.1 Leave of Absence

Since September 2013, changes to Government regulations and guidance mean that Headteachers can no longer authorise leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. Generally, the DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance. Leave of absence should not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours. All absences associated with a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation during term time will be marked as unauthorised within the register. Any parents known to have removed their child from school for the sole purpose of a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation may be referred to the Local Authority and be issued with a penalty notice fine or referred to the Local Authority to consider prosecution.

We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are times where a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child due to 'exceptional

circumstances. At **Potley Hill Primary School** leave of absence is only granted at the discretion of the Headteacher and shall not be granted unless there are 'exceptional circumstances. **Potley Hill Primary School** will respond to all applications for leave of absence in writing.

Parents wishing to apply for leave of absence during term time must apply in writing to the Headteacher at least a month before the planned leave (see Appendix 1). If a written request for leave of absence is not completed and the leave is taken without a request being submitted, the leave will not be considered by the Headteacher, and it will be marked as unauthorised. **Potley Hill Primary School** will treat each application individually and discuss with parents the circumstances of the application before a decision is made. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised.

A penalty notice request or a referral for prosecution may be submitted to the Local Authority should: -

- The parent fails to submit a leave of absence request in advance of taking the leave.
- An application for a leave of absence is not agreed by the Headteacher but is still taken.
- A longer period is taken more than the agreed number of days.

When absence is granted by the Headteacher, the parents will need to agree a date of return. If a pupil fails to return on the expected date and contact is not received from, or made with the parents, school will seek advice from the Local Authority. This could result in possible children missing from education procedures being instigated.

The 1996 Education Act also sets out the circumstances in which a pupil has not failed to attend school regularly and therefore the parent has not committed an offence. 4.2, 4.3, 4.4 are examples of these. The full list is in the Appendix 5.

4.2 Medical Appointments and absence due to illness

Parents should try to make appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where appointments during school time are unavoidable, we ask that parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment wherever possible. The pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. In most circumstances, a child should not miss a whole day at school for an appointment. If a pupil must attend a medical appointment during the school day, parents must report this to the admin team and then collect the pupil from the School Office when required. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

In line with Department for Education guidance, if we do have a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness, we may ask the parent to provide medical evidence, such as a prescription, appointment card, or other appropriate form of

evidence. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Where a child has an emerging a pattern of non-attendance, we will discuss the reasons for absence with the child's parent. We will invite parents to attend a support meeting as an appropriate early intervention strategy. As part of this support, we may seek consent from parents and the pupil as appropriate to make a referral to the School Nursing Team and/or to liaise with the child's healthcare professional.

Where a pupil has a verified and chronic health condition, we will aim to work with parents to ensure children have access to education and provide appropriate support in line with Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school and Hampshire policies regarding supporting children with health issues, Behaviour and attendance resources for schools | Hampshire County Council (hants.gov.uk). We will also consider whether an Individual Healthcare Plan is required.

4.3 Pupil Absence for the purposes of Religious Observance

Potley Hill Primary School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that, on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and is recognised as such by a relevant religious authority. Where this occurs, the school will consider either authorising the pupil absence or making special leave for religious observance. Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school.
Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) page 86

4.4 Parent travelling for occupational purposes

The pupil is a mobile child and their parent(s) is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. A mobile child is a child of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode and whose parent(s) is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place.

To ensure we can effectively support all our pupils, we ask that parents:

- Advise the school of their forthcoming travelling patterns as soon as these are known and before they happen; and
- Inform the school regarding proposed return dates.

4.5 Unauthorised Absence

Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation, and it is accepted as such by the school. The decision to authorise absences is at the discretion of the Headteacher. Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include but are not limited to:

- A pupil's/family member's birthday.
- Shopping for uniforms.
- Arrangements or appointments for cutting the pupil's hair.
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes.
- An unwillingness to attend school, or inability to attend owing to inadequate personal/family organisation.
- A refusal to attend school on health grounds but where the pupil is considered well enough to attend.
- Absences taken without the authorisation of the school.

5. Our Procedures

5.1 Register Keeping and Recording

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended by 2016 regulations, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.
For the purpose of this policy, the school defines:

"Absence" as:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed.
- Not attending school for any reason.

"Regular" attendance as:

- Attendance at every session the school is open to pupils unless their absence has been authorised.

At **Potley Hill Primary School,** doors open for the children to enter their classrooms at 8.40am and the school day starts at 8.50am.

Pupils must be in school by 8.50am, with the register for the first session being taken at this time.

The register for the second session will be taken at 1pm for all year groups.

Registers are legal records, and all schools must preserve every entry in the attendance or admission register for 6 years from the date the data was entered. As the attendance register is a record of the pupils present at the time it was taken, the register should only routinely be amended where the reason for absence cannot be established at the time it is taken and it is subsequently necessary to correct the entry. Where amendments are made, all schools must ensure the register shows the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date on which the amendment was made, and the name of the person who made the amendment

On each occasion the register is taken the appropriate national attendance and absence code must be entered for every pupil (of both compulsory and non-compulsory school age) whose name is listed in the admission register at the time. The codes enable schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way and are used to collect statistics. The data helps schools, local authorities, and the government gain a greater understanding of the delivery of education and the level of, and reason for, absence.

Reporting to parents

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels through the sharing of a paper copy of their Attendance Certificate at both Parents Evenings together with this being included in the end of year school report in July.

5.2 Late Arrival at School

At **Potley Hill Primary School** all pupils are expected to arrive on time for every day of the school year. The school day begins at 8.50am. We advise all parents to ensure their child is on site prior to this. The school register will be taken at 8.50am. All pupils arriving after this time are required to report to the main office with their parents, who will be expected to sign their child in to school and provide a reason for their absence. If their arrival is before 9.15am it will be recorded as late - L code (Late before the close of register).

The school register will officially close at 9.15am**.** All pupils arriving on or after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the session - U code (Late after the close of register). This is categorised as an unauthorised absence for the session. Parents will be contacted to discuss any patterns of late arrival. Repeated arrival after the close of registration will result in appropriate interventions being instigated and may also result in a penalty notice being issued or prosecution.

5.3 Expected absence procedure for parents:

A parent has a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly and any absence is a safeguarding matter. If a child is unavoidably absent from school parents are expected to contact school by telephone call or email on the morning of the first day of absence and on each subsequent day, identifying the reason for absence and the expected date of return. If no contact is received, then absence protocols will be instigated.

If a child is absent and no parental contact has been received, the following actions will be initiated by the school:

- a telephone call to the first contact number saved on our system is made by the Admin Team by 9.30am
- if the parent does not answer the phone then a follow-up phone call is made by the Admin Team by 10.00am
- if there has been no contact with the parent by 10.00am then one phone call is made to all of the contact numbers on our MIS system by 11am asking for one of the child's parents/carers to contact the school by 11am or a Home Visit will be carried out
- if there has been no contact from one of the child's parents/carers by 11am then a member of the Senior Leadership Team is informed and a home visit is carried out by a staff member
- if the parent and pupil are at the property, unless visibly ill, then the expectation is for the parent to take them to school. A record of the Home Visit is logged on CPOMs.
- if the parent is at the property and the pupil isn't seen (with no reasonable explanation) then this is logged on CPOMs with an expectation that the pupil is seen the following day, either due to them attending school or via a home visit.
- if there is no-one at the property, on the return to school a phone call is made to the parent leaving a message explaining that if the child is not seen the following morning then a referral to Children's Services will be made. This sequence of events will then be logged on CPOMs.

Parents are asked to support school by ensuring all contact numbers for their child are kept up to date.

In certain circumstances the school may decide to carry out one or more of the following options:

- Visit the home of the pupil
- Write to the parents of a pupil to highlight attendance or punctuality issues.
- Invite parents to discuss how school can support the family to make improvement.
- Refer to Inclusion Support Service for support, guidance, and advice.
- Refer to the Local Authority for joint enquiries to be made to establish the whereabouts of the child through Inclusion Support Service (ISS) | Hampshire County Council (hants.gov.uk) and Behaviour and attendance resources for schools | Hampshire County Council (hants.gov.uk)
- Refer to the Local Authority to consider issuing a penalty notice or to consider prosecution when all other interventions have failed, or an unauthorised leave of absence has been taken.
- Refer the matter to an appropriate external agency for multi-agency support, such as implementing a Family Support Plan or consulting with the Children's Social Care or the police, where there are safeguarding concerns.

Extended periods of absence

10 consecutive days unauthorised absence (code G, N, O and/or U)
If a child of compulsory school age has been absent for a continuous period of 10 school days and has had their absence recorded with one or more of the unauthorized absence codes, the Local Authority will be notified so that efforts can be made to locate them and attempt to resolve the issues for non-attendance.

15 consecutive or cumulative days of authorised illness (code I)
If there are reasonable grounds to believe a child will have a continuous period of 15 or more school days absent due to illness or cumulatively will miss 15 or more school days due to illness over the course of the current school year, a 'sickness return' will be submitted to the Local Authority to help agree any provision needed to ensure continuity of education for pupils who cannot attend school due to health needs.

Prolonged Absence for children in the EYFS

In cases of prolonged absence, or when a child is absent without notification, we will attempt to contact the child's parents and alternative emergency contacts.

When deciding whether a child's absence should be considered prolonged, we will consider the:

- Patterns and trends in the child's absences and their personal circumstances
- Vulnerability of the child and their parents, as well as the circumstances of their home life

We will also implement our safeguarding procedures outlined in our child protection/safeguarding policy, refer any concerns to local children's social care and/or carry out a welfare check.

5.4 Attendance Rewards & Interventions

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child. To help us all to focus on this at Potley Hill Primary School we will:

- provide information on all matters related to attendance in our weekly School Bulletin
- help parents understand how to access their child's attendance record on Arbor
- send out termly letters to the parents of those pupils with attendance below 95%
- hold regular attendance meetings to discuss pupils who are PA /SA (or in danger of becoming so) and implement actions to address this (e.g. letter to parents to put a monitoring period in place, invite parents into school for a

meeting to discuss barriers to attendance, etc)
- report to parents annually on how their child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments
- celebrate good attendance by displaying each class' attendance in the weekly School Bulletin
- reward the class with the highest weekly attendance a certificate in Celebration Assembly and a treat e.g. an extra turn on the Adventure Play equipment
- provide a mufti-day for a class if they get 100% attendance over the course of a week
- give certificates to pupils if they achieve 100% attendance in a term/year
- set targets for the school and for classes for attendance and display these in the school

Monitor and Analyse attendance

Potley Hill Primary School will:

- Monitor and analyse weekly attendance patterns and trends and deliver intervention and support in a targeted way to pupils and families. This should go beyond headline attendance percentages and should look at individual pupils, cohorts and year groups (including their punctuality) across the school.
- Use this analysis to provide regular attendance reports to class teachers or tutors to facilitate discussions with pupils and to leaders (including any special educational needs coordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads).
- Undertake frequent individual level analysis to identify the pupils who need support and focus staff efforts on developing targeted actions for those cases.
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full year data to identify patterns and trends. This should include analysis of pupils and cohorts and identifying patterns in uses of certain codes, days of poor attendance and where appropriate, subjects which have low lesson attendance.
- Benchmark attendance data (at whole school, year group and cohort level) against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement.
- Devise specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data.
- Monitor in the data the impact of school wide attendance efforts, including any specific strategies implemented. The findings should then be used to evaluate approaches or inform future strategies.
- Provide data and reports to support the work of the board or governing body and local authority when appropriate.

At Potley Hill Primary School we will investigate any pupils who are on track to be persistently absent (PA) and will not wait until attendance is below 90%.

“Persistent absenteeism” (PA) as:

- Missing 10% or more of schooling across the year for any reason.

“Severe absence” (SA) as:

- Missing 50% or more of schooling across the year for any reason.

5.5 Support Systems

At **Potley Hill Primary School** we recognise that poor attendance can be an indication of difficulties in a family’s life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents are encouraged to inform school of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child’s attendance and/or behaviour in school, for example: bereavement, divorce/separation, emerging health concerns. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

We also recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance. The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance based on the individual needs and circumstances of the child.

Strategies we may use to support you include:

- Regular contact from pastoral school staff with parents and pupils
- Key adults visible during the start of the day
- Alternative arrangements for transition in to and out of school
- Access to parenting courses (both in school and with wider agencies)
- Employ appropriate strategies with pupils from the Emotional Based School Avoidance guidance

To plan the correct support, we will always invite parents and pupils to attend a meeting to discuss the concerns and devise a plan to support the child’s regular attendance. Support offered to families will be child-centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils.

5.6 Persistent Absence, Severe Absence and the use of legal interventions

A pupil becomes a ‘persistent absentee’ (PA) when their attendance drops to 90% and below for any reason. Over a full academic year this would be 38 sessions (19 days). Absence at this level could cause considerable damage to a child’s educational outcomes.

A pupil becomes a ‘severe absentee’ (SA) when their attendance drops to 50% and below for any reason. Over a full academic year this would be 190 sessions (95 days). Absence at this level is causing considerable damage to a child’s educational outcomes.

The attendance of all pupils at our school are monitored to identify children who are PA, or are on track to becoming PA. Where emerging concerns are identified we will instigate appropriate and timely interventions as outlined in the section above. Referrals may also be made to external agencies for targeted support. Inclusion Support Service (ISS) | Hampshire County Council (hants.gov.uk)

Timeline of school action for persistent absence

When pupils reach (or are close to) 90% attendance and if appropriate, a warning letter is sent highlighting the current rate of attendance and informing parents that attendance will be monitored over a set period (usually 4 weeks) during which time attendance is expected to be above 97%. All attendance warning letters are saved on the school's electronic safeguarding system

- If attendance does not improve during the monitored period, a request for an Attendance Support meeting is sent to parents. (If the relevant improvements have been made an acknowledgement letter is sent to parents).
- At the meeting a range of factors could be discussed including pastoral support for the pupil, medical evidence for absence, inter agency referral form (IARF), bullying, wider pastoral support for the family, etc.

If parents fail to engage with support and their child continues to have unsatisfactory attendance/punctuality, a Notice to Improve may be issued as a final opportunity to do so, before a request is made to the Local Authority to pursue legal proceedings either through a penalty notice, consideration of an Education Supervision Order or prosecution via the Magistrates' Court.

Parents found guilty of failing to secure their child's regular attendance at school under the provisions of the Education Act 1996, will receive a criminal record and a maximum penalty of a £1000 fine under a Section 444 (1) offence or a £2500 fine or up to a 3-month prison sentence, under a Section 444 (1a) offence.

In line with Hampshire County Council guidance, we will notify the Inclusion Support Service of all reduced timetables as soon as a plan has been agreed.

5.7 Lateness

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. Parents of pupils who have patterns of lateness will be contacted, usually by letter, to highlight the importance of good time keeping and how this might be achieved. Punctuality may be monitored over a set period (usually 4 weeks) when the child is expected to arrive at school on time every day.

If lateness persists parents, guardians or carers will be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem and support offered through an Attendance Support Meeting. If support is not engaged with, a Notice to Improve may be issued as a final opportunity to do so. If 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence due to lateness are 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 County Council's Code of conduct: issuing Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence from schools (See Section 6 of this policy for further detail).

5.8 Penalty Notices

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.

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 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10 week period (a school week means any week in which there is at least 1 school session) and parents are complicit in the child's absence. This threshold can be met with any combination of absence codes (eg. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term-time (code G) plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes (code U) and the period of 10 school weeks can span different terms and/or academic school years).
3 Legal measures may be considered where a parent repeatedly takes their child out of school for just less than the 10 session threshold e.g. a holiday of 4 days (8 sessions) or a return to school on the afternoon of the 5th day (9 sessions) and in doing so is consciously trying to avoid legal action being taken for the unauthorised absence.

The following legal measures will be used for pupils of compulsory school age who are registered at a school:

- Parenting Contracts set at Education Planning Meetings
- Education Supervision Orders
- Penalty Notices
- Prosecution
- Parenting Orders

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 https://www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/behaviour-attendance-parents

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 10 or more half-day sessions (five school days) during any 100 possible school sessions – these do not need to be consecutive
- persistently late (coded U) for up to 10 sessions (five days) after the register has closed
- persistently late before the close of the register (coded L), but the school has clearly communicated with parents that they will categorise as unauthorised any further lateness (code U) 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.

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 in writing, 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 the absence (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/carers for each child. NB: This could mean four Penalty Notices for a family with two siblings, both with unauthorised absence for holiday, ie one Penalty Notice for each child to each parent.

As per the new national guidance that came into force on 19th August 2024 and detailed on p59 of Working together to improve school attendance – GOV.UKand set out in Hampshire County Council's *Code of conduct: issuing Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence from schools* the Penalty Notice process is as follows:

- A first offence Penalty Notice issued to a parent in respect of a child carries a fine of £80 if paid within 21 days of the Penalty Notice being issued. If the fine is not paid within 21 days the penalty is automatically increased to £160 if

paid within 28 days. Late payments (paid after 28 days) are not accepted and will be refunded. Hampshire County Council will then consider prosecution for the non-attendance or withdrawal of the Penalty Notice if it was incorrectly issued.

There is no right of appeal by parents against a Penalty Notice.

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.

- A second offence within 3 years of the first offence carries a fine of £160 if paid within 28 days (there is no option to pay a reduced rate).

- A third offence within 3 years of the first offence will lead to prosecution or other attendance legal intervention. last 3 years at their old school will be shared, so the process continues regardless of a change of setting.

If your child moves to a new school/new Local Authority, information regarding the number of previous offences within the last 3 years at their previous school will be shared, so the process continues regardless of a change of setting.

6. Related Policies

To underpin the values and ethos of our school and our intent to ensure that pupils at our school attend school regularly and reach their full potential, the following policies are integral to this approach:

- Admissions
- Behaviour & Relationships
- Anti-bullying
- Child protection
- safeguarding
- SEND
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions
- Inclusion
- Teaching and Learning

7. Statutory Framework

This policy has been devised in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

- Working together to improve school attendance, DfE, (July 2026)
- School attendance parental responsibility measures, DfE (January 2026)
- Children missing education, DfE (September 2025)
- Keeping children safe in education, DfE (September 2026)
- Working together to safeguard children, DfE (March 2026)

8. Appendices

The following pages contain appendices relevant to this policy.

Appendix 1: Example leave of absence request form
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 authorised absence for a family holiday. If you take your child out of school without permission the absence will be unauthorised, and the local authority 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 enter 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 weeks 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 Warning to parent/carer. Any unauthorised absence during this period may be subject to a Penalty Notice OR may result in a prosecution if two previous penalty notices have been issued in a rolling three-year period

A Penalty Notice may be issued per parent/carer, per child (i.e. if two parents have two children this may result in four Penalty Notices – two Penalty Notices per parent).

Headteacher: _____ Date: _____

Current attendance rate: _____

Continuation of section B (if required):

Appendix 2: Example reply to leave of absence request not approved

Dear (Parent name)

RE: Absence during term time – Child Name (Child DOB)

Thank you for your application for absence in term time for (Child Name). Whilst we appreciate your circumstances, Potley Hill Primary School do not approve any absences during term time unless they are due to exceptional circumstances as per the guidance from the Department of Education.

The rationale behind this decision is that the Government has provided evidence that satisfactory progress at school is highly dependent on attendance.

The circumstances of your request have not been deemed as exceptional and therefore the request for absence for (Child Name) has not been approved.

Potley Hill Primary School works closely with the Inclusion Support Service and if you choose to take your child out of school for the above unauthorised leave, we will notify the local authority and further action including legal action may be considered.

Please note that such a Penalty is issued to each parent for each child taken out of school. A Penalty Notice is a fine of £80 which increases to £160 if not paid within the first 21 days. Thereafter if the Penalty remains unpaid after 28 days this may result in legal action being taken against you. Parents have a duty to ensure their child's regular attendance at school and failure to do so is an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

I have noted the dates that (Child Name) will be absent from Potley Hill Primary School and the registers will be marked with the G code (unauthorised family holiday) for this period.

If you would like to discuss the matter further, please contact the school on 01252 876106 or email adminoffice@potleyhill.hants.sch.uk

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

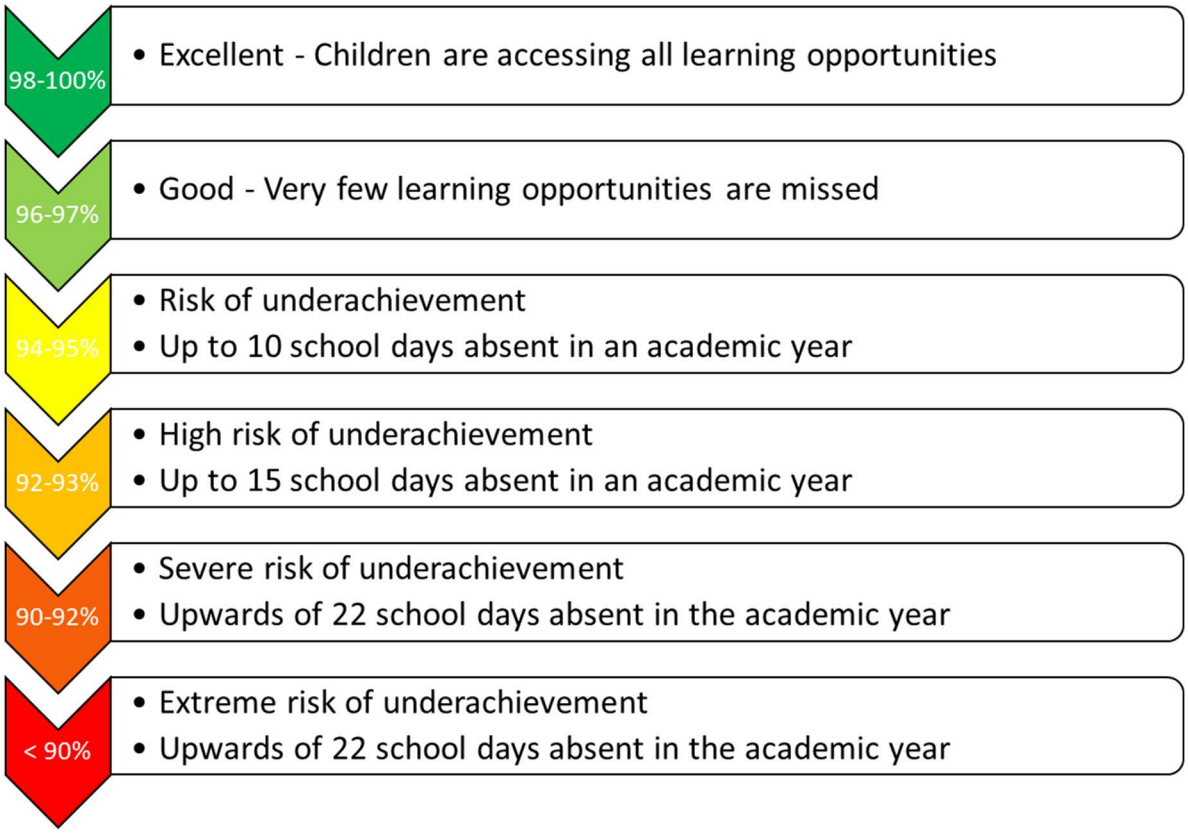
Appendix 3: Attendance Policy Quick Guide for Parents

Attendance Policy Quick Guide for Parents

We expect pupils to attend school for 100% of the academic year.
You can support your child to have excellent attendance by taking these steps:

- Ensure your child arrives on time for school every day and is ready to learn. Arriving after registration is recorded as an unauthorised absence. Pupils must be in school by 08:50am.
- If your child appears to be only slightly unwell, send them in to school. We have staff who will contact you if their condition deteriorates.
- Book any medical appointments outside of school hours. If this is unavoidable, please book for as late in the afternoon as possible and inform the school of appointments in advance.
- Supply a copy of the appointment card or hospital letter if your child has an appointment during school hours.

If your child becomes reluctant to go to school or you need help, please contact the school immediately; we are more likely to be able to work together to solve any problems if we act early.



'On the day' absences: what should I do if my child is not 'fit' to go into school?

On each day your child is unfit to come to school, please report this absence by phoning the school office on 01252 876106 to let us know or by emailing absence@potleyhill.hants.sch.uk to let us know. In the message you must leave your child's full name, year and class and give the specific reason for absence. The information you give will be recorded on our official register.

Leave of Absence

There may be exceptional circumstances where you need to request a leave of absence for your child. Please use our 'Leave of absence request' form to make these types of requests. The form should be submitted in advance of the leave of absence, via the School Office**.** You will receive a communication in response, to advise if the request has been granted or declined.

Punctuality

Pupils are expected to arrive on time for school in the morning and for every lesson during the day. Your child is late to school if they are not in their classroom by 8:50am.

The Government remains very clear that no child should miss school apart from in exceptional circumstances and schools must continue to take steps to reduce absence to support children's attainment. I hope we can count on your support in this matter.

Please contact the Headteacher, Mrs Wallace, if you require any support with ensuring your child's regular school attendance.

Appendix 4: Attendance Policy Quick Guide for Students

Attendance Policy Quick Guide for Students

Roles and responsibilities:

All members of the school community at Potley Hill Primary School have roles and responsibilities in promoting and ensuring good attendance and punctuality.

Role of the pupils:

Pupils have a responsibility to themselves and others to play a positive role in the life of the school and to make the most of the education opportunities available.

All pupils will:

- Ensure that they attend school regularly and on time.
- Be aware of their current attendance record and targets.
- Be aware of the consequences of poor attendance or truancy.
- Arrive to lessons punctually.
- Not leave school without permission.
- Inform a trusted adult if they feel that they are being bullied or feel unhappy in school.

Appendix 5: Attendance codes

The following codes are taken from Working Together to Improve School Attendance

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity approved by the school. Schools must also record the nature of the approved educational activity.	Examples of nature of activity • 1) Attending taster days at college • 2) Attending courses at college • 3) Attending unregistered alternative provision arranged by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
K	Attending education provision arranged by the Local Authority Schools must also record the nature of the provision	• Attending courses at college • Attending unregistered alternative provision such as, home tutoring
P	Sporting activity	The pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is a sporting activity
V	Educational visit or trip	An educational visit or trip arranged by or on behalf of the school and supervised by a member of school staff
W	Attending work experience	The pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is work experience provided under arrangements made by a local authority or the school as part of the pupil's education

Code	Definition	Scenario
Absent – leave of absence		
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance	Schools must judge each application individually considering the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind each request. Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days a pupil can be absent from school
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	All schools can grant leaves of absence for pupils to undertake employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable	All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs
E	Excluded	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	The pupil is unable to attend due to illness (both physical and mental health related). Schools should advise parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness
J1	Interview	Attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
M	Medical appointment	Attending a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	The pupil is absent on a day that is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body the parent(s) belong to
S	Study leave	Studying for a public examination. Must be used sparingly with revision opportunities in school
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	The pupil is a mobile child and their parent(s) is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school	

Code	Definition	Scenario
Absent - unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements	This is linked to transport not other access arrangements
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available	The school is not within walking distance of the pupil's home and the transport to and from the school that is normally provided for the pupil by the school or local authority is not 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 site being unexpectedly closed	Adverse weather
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention	In police detention, remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or detained under a sentence of detention.
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law	
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	An emergency has prevented the pupil from attending. The unavoidable cause must be something that affects the pupil, not just the parent.

Code	Definition	Scenario
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Holiday not granted by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	Where no reason for absence is established or the school is not satisfied that the reason given
U	Arrival after registration	A pupil has arrived late after the register has closed but before the end of session.

Code	Definition	Scenario
Administrative Codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	To enable schools to set up registers in advance of pupils joining the school to ease administration burdens.
#	Planned whole school closure	Whole school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day/use of whole school as polling station