



Manor Junior School **Attendance Policy**

Ratified by Governors: 23.03.22
Review Date by: 31.03.25

Please note:

Attendance has been impacted over the past two years by the Covid-19 pandemic. However, the school has always put the children first and tried to maintain in-school attendance as far as possible throughout this period. We are currently trying to return to normal practice as far as possible.

Section 1

Aims:

At Manor Junior School we aim to Enjoy, Learn and Achieve together. For our children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered it is vital your child is at school, on time, every day. Therefore we strive for every child to achieve 100% attendance.

At Manor Junior School we aim to work closely with parents/carers to achieve and maintain high standards of attendance. We believe that good attendance and punctuality are essential to ensure that all children get the very best from their time at school. Research has shown that even a very short period away from school can have a huge impact on learning and progress.

Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- Regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- Regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school, and higher education, employment or training

Section 2

Operating the Policy

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child. The Home/School agreement will contain details of how we will work with parents and our expectations of what parents will need to do to ensure their child achieves good attendance.

In order to achieve this, the school will:

- Promote a welcoming and positive atmosphere in school, where children feel safe and that their presence is valued
- Promote parents support of this policy as a vital contribution towards their child's education
- Create attitudes towards high standards of attendance and punctuality, which pupils should retain throughout life
- Ensure that attendance is maintained effectively and absences and lateness are followed up promptly
- Meet legal requirements, with particular reference to identifying unauthorised absence
- Promote a culture of good attendance with the use of certificates and praise.
- Keep accurate registration documents identifying authorised/unauthorised absences and check registers regularly, to note unexplained absences and identify patterns of absence and lateness if they are occurring

- Raise parental awareness of the importance of attendance and punctuality through a variety of strategies
- Involve other agencies eg Legal Intervention Team, Social Services, Educational Psychologist, when difficulties arise
- Ensure all staff are aware of School policy and deal consistently with absence and punctuality
- Ensure good liaison when a change of school occurs
- School registers are legal documents. We will ensure compliance with attendance regulations by keeping attendance records for at least 3 years. Computer registers will be preserved as electronic back-ups or microfiche copies

Responsibilities of Parents and Carers:

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carers legal responsibility (section 444 of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.

Parents will:

- Inform the school on the first day of absence.
- Discuss with the tutor/class teacher any planned absences well in advance.
- Support the school with their child in aiming for 100% attendance each year.
- Make sure that any absence is clearly accounted for by phone or text on the first and subsequent days of absence, or by letter if a phone is unavailable.
- Avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments.
- Only request for leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance and complete the 'request to authorise absence' paperwork. (see Section 4)

Section 3

Attendance procedure

Legally the register must be marked twice daily. Once at the start of the day and once after lunch.

What to do if your child is absent:

Day One

- Parents **should notify** the school before 9.15am if a child is going to be absent.
- If a child is absent and a message has not been received by 9.15 am office staff will telephone parents to find out why the pupil is absent.
- If the absence is known in advance, a written note is required to inform the school prior to the period of absence.
- If a child has any unexplained absences a letter asking for an explanation of the absence is sent to parents. The attendance system used in school automatically records any unexplained absences as unauthorised absence.

Day Three

- If your child is still absent due to a medical reason and you have not confirmed the length of the expected time of absence then parents should contact school again.
- If your child is not seen and contact has not been established with you to explain absence then after three days of absence the school is required to start a child missing in education procedures as set down by Hampshire County Council Guidance. We will make all reasonable enquires to establish contact with parents and the child including making enquires to known friends, wider family or making a visit to the home

10 days absence

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupils who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and we have not been able to contact you, then the Local Authority is notified that the child is 'at risk of missing'. Children's Services Staff will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date contact number.

Hampshire County Guidance 'Children on roll but at risk of Missing in Education'
<http://documents.hants.gov.uk/education/Guidanceforchildrenatriskofmissingineducation-revisedSept2014.pdf>

Continued or Ongoing Absence

Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in his or her learning. Research shows these gaps affect attainment when attendance falls below 95%. As such we monitor all absence thoroughly and all attendance data is shared with the Local Authority and the Department for Education.

If your child has had absence and their attendance level is falling towards 90% we will contact you and clarify the reasons for the absence and offer support where appropriate.

If your child's misses 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason they are defined as persistent absentees. Where this absence is authorised the school will:

- Arrange with the parents to have an Attendance Review Meeting and agree on a strategy to improve attendance, where possible.
- With agreement of the parents, contact the GP to clarify for the reasons for absence.
- Not authorise further absence if it is felt that the reasons given are not sufficient.

Lateness Procedure

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other pupils. On-going and repeated lateness is considered as unauthorised absence and may be subject to legal action (see section 6 for further detail).

- School doors open at 8.35am and close at 8.45am. Children are expected to be in their classes at 8.45am.
- A child arriving after 8.45am will be marked late. They will need to enter the school by the main office and their names will be put in the late book. They will be given a card to take to class to let their teacher know they are late.
- A child arriving after 9.15 am will be marked absent (this absence will be recorded as unauthorised if no reason is given). An accompanying adult should sign in children arriving at reception after these times.
- Parents, guardians or carers of pupils who have patterns of lateness will be contacted to discuss the importance of good time keeping and how this might be achieved. If a problem is identified, the school will work closely with the parents to support them to get their child in to school.
- If support is declined and if a child has more than 10 lates (after 9.15am) in a period of 10 weeks, a Penalty Notice will be issued. (See Section 6) Also, if a child is consistently late (after 8.45am and before 9.15am) then the parents will be informed that lateness will be classed as an unauthorised absence and then the Penalty Notice procedure will be followed. (see section 6)

Please collect your child promptly at the end of the school day. Where late collection is persistent and/or significantly late, the school is obliged to take any uncollected pupil to a place of safety and share concerns as necessary with other agencies. If one is available, the school will place a child into the after school club and provide the parent/Carer with the bill.

Medical and Dental Appointments

- If possible routine appointments should be made outside school hours.
- If an appointment is made in school time an explanatory note should be sent to school on the day before the appointment
- The school will sign children out and back in again when attending appointments during the school day.

Section 4

Request for Leave of Absence:

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children out during school time.

Amendments to school attendance regulations were updated and enforced from September 2015:

- The regulations state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. It is important to note that Headteachers can determine the length of the authorised absence as well as whether absence is authorised at all. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, or unavoidable which means the event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. There are no rules on this as circumstances vary from school to school and family to family.
- There is however, no legal entitlement for time off in school time to go on holiday and almost always will not be authorised.
- Parents/Carers wishing to apply for leave of absence need to fill in an application form (available from the school office) in advance and before making any travel arrangements. They may then be asked to discuss the reasons for absence with the Headteacher or Family Link Worker.

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 parent/carers may be issued with a fixed-penalty fine, or other legal action in accordance the code (see section 6 for detail).

Holidays for Year 6 pupils may not be authorised under any circumstances during the months of April and May for reasons of preparation for and administration of SATs (National Curriculum Standard Assessment Tasks) and are not encouraged at any time during the year prior to SATs. In addition September and May are critical months due to the induction of new pupils and annual testing.

For national guidance refer to:

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

For county advice and guidance refer to:

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

Section 5

Understanding types of absence

Authorised Absence

This is when the school has accepted the explanation offered by the parent as satisfactory. For instance, when the child is medically unwell. The Headteacher has the discretion to mark illness as unauthorised if medical evidence is not supplied or accepted. Please note: if it is subsequently discovered that the reason given for absence is not justified, then the absence can be changed to unauthorised retrospectively.

Unauthorised Absence

Her Majesty's inspectors define unauthorised absence as:

"Absence from school for any period as a result of a pre-meditated or spontaneous act by the pupil or parent or both. This includes parentally condoned absence." (Education observed, No 13)

Examples of parentally condoned absences include absences when:

- A parent is ill
- A parent is using the pupil as a child minder
- A pupil is supporting other members of the family
- A parent wants company
- A parent gives in to a pupil who wants to stay at home
- It is a pupil's birthday
- A parent does not care whether the pupil attends school
- A parent has taken the pupil shopping
- A parent cannot control the pupil
- Family holidays/celebrations

All unauthorised absence will be noted on the child's school record and Annual Report to Parents and reported to the Legal Intervention Team as required.

Section 6

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.

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 through a referral to Hampshire's Attendance Legal Panels where:

1. Other support to improve the attendance has been considered.
2. The child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence and parents are complicit in the child's absence.

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

- Parenting contracts set at Education Planning Meetings
- Parenting orders
- Penalty notices
- Education Supervision Orders
- Prosecution

Where a child has unauthorised absence the school must enforce Hampshire's Code of Conduct for issuing Penalty Notices 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 <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/attendance-guidance-for-parents/possible-penalties.htm>

Penalty Notices

Schools or Hampshire Local Authority 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) of unauthorised absence 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 met with parents 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 has 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 single Penalty Notice is issued for either:

1. 10 sessions of unauthorised absence or lateness in any 10 week school period
2. 1 or more sessions of unauthorised absence during a public exam, formal school assessment of testing where dates are published in advance.

Parents and Carers will be warned of the likelihood of a penalty notice being issued for unauthorised absence either via a letter, through the leave of absence request form, or through the schools attendance policy and website. 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 parent/carers for each child. N.B This could mean four penalty notices for a family with two siblings both with unauthorised absence for holiday i.e. one PN 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 the 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.

For further information parents/carers can request a leaflet from their school and should visit Hampshire County Councils website at: <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/attendance-guidance-for-parents/possible-penalties.htm>

Section 7

Other types of absence

Absence through child participation in Public Performances, including theatre, film or TV work & Modelling.

Parents of a child performer can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a performance. They must contact the Headteacher to discuss the nature and frequency of the work, whether the child has a valid performance licence and whether education will be provided by the employer during any future leave of absence. Any absence recorded as part of a child's participation in a public performance is recorded as C an authorised absence.

Absence through competing at regional, county or national level for Sport.

Parents of able sportsmen and women can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a regional, county, national and international events and competitions. It is however, down to the headteacher's discretion whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Permission for your child to leave early or arrive late to attend coaching and training sessions are also at the discretion of the Headteacher and are not likely to be approved if it is a regular event, unless the sports club or association are providing an education tutor as part of their coaching.

Gypsy Roma Traveller Showman and Showman families.

Absence of a child from a traveller family that has left the area may be authorised if the absence is for work purposes only and it is believed that the family intends to return. To ensure the continuity of learning for Traveller children, dual registration is allowed. That means that a school cannot remove a Traveller child from the school roll while they are travelling. When the Traveller is away the home school holds the place open and records the absence as authorised through the T code. Distance Learning packs for traveller children are not an alternative to attendance at school.

For further advice and guidance on Attendance & GRT and Showman see County Guidance at:

<http://documents.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/HIAS/Promotingpupilattendanceandrecordingabsence-Section6.pdf>

Please note pupils must have attended 200 sessions in a rolling 12month period to be able to request leave for work purposes

Further support & Guidance is available from Hampshire's EMTAS Service

Section 8

Leavers

If your child is leaving our school (other than when transferring to the junior school/secondary school or leaving at the end of Year 11, parents are asked to:

1. Give the school office comprehensive information about their plans including any date of a move and your new address and telephone numbers, your child's new school and the start date when known. This should be submitted to our school in writing
2. If pupils leave and we do not have the above information, then your child is considered to be a 'Child Missing in Education'. This requires schools and Local Authorities to then carry out investigations to try and locate your child, which includes liaising with Children's Services, the Police and other agencies. By giving us the above information, these investigations can be avoided.

Record preservation

School registers are legal documents. We will ensure compliance with attendance regulations by keeping attendance records for at least three years. Computer registers will be preserved as electronic back-ups or microfiche copies (if schools are not SIMS centrally hosted and do not have secure electronic server back-up they must print hard copies of the official registers and bind into annual volumes).

ATTENDANCE POLICY REFERENCE DOCUMENT
(For School reference only)

Completing the register

Registers should be completed in pencil. Mark only children who are absent as the computer recognises that everyone else will be here. If a child is late for the session mark both the present and absent columns and the computer will read this as being late. Any alterations must be unambiguous. Children should not mark the register under any circumstance.

Symbols used in class registers

Present	/	am
Present	\	pm
B		Educated off site
C		Other authorised circumstances
D		Dual registration
E		Excluded
F		Extended family holiday (agreed)
G		Family holiday (not agreed)
H		Family holiday (agreed)
I		Illness
J		Interview
L		Late (before 9.15 a.m.)
M		Medical appointment
N		No reason yet provided for absence
O		Unauthorised absence
P		Approved sporting activity
R		Religious observance
S		Study leave
T		Traveller absence
U		Late (after 9.15 a.m.)
V		Educational visit or trip
W		Work experience
X		School closed to pupils
Y		Enforced closure
!		Non-compulsory school age absence
#		School closed to pupils and staff
*		Pupil not on roll
-		All should attend – no mark recorded

If a child has L (late marks) 3 times in one week/4 times in two weeks/or a regular pattern of lateness every week for a month, a letter will be sent to the parents asking them either to come into school if there is a difficulty causing lateness, or to ensure punctuality is kept.

Repeated unexplained lateness, or lateness with no acceptable reason, will be referred to the EWO and Social Services, if appropriate.

If parents know their child is going to be late for any reason, they should let the school know in advance.

Authorised or Unauthorised

After each absence a letter of explanation should be provided by the parent/carer, unless a telephone call had been received

The ultimate responsibility to authorise an absence rests with the Headteacher.

In the case of illness the school has the right to request further information.

We use the forms for sickness when parents phone in and this is used as notification.

Key Points

The following points may assist schools in categorising absence. The following bullet points cannot cover every eventuality and ultimately schools will be expected to exercise their reasonable discretion in certain circumstances.

- Registered pupils of compulsory school age are required by law to be in school
- Whilst schools should recognise that individual pupils and families may have problems, the aim should always be to expect regular attendance
- Schools should set out their policy on absence in the school prospectus. This is useful if parents later challenge the school's request for further information.
- Lateness should be actively discouraged
- Where a pupil is absent without prior authorisation an explanation is required. If one is not forthcoming (for whatever reason) and a valid reason for absence does not apply (eg religious observance) the absence should be treated as unauthorised.
- If the school is not satisfied with the explanation offered then further information should be sought from parents and the absence continues to be treated as unauthorised.
- If the school remains dissatisfied with the explanations offered, then the absence should be recorded as unauthorised. In the case of the absence explained as illness, the following could be considered;
 - Parents can be asked to provide medical evidence to support the reasons given but schools should remember that they are under no obligation to do this
 - The school or EWO can refer the matter to a doctor working in the school health service.