

SERVICES FOR SCHOOLS

Model attendance policy for schools, academies and education centres

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Introduction to writing an attendance policy

The key to successful policy development is the process through which it is achieved. Wherever possible, schools should gain a consensus view from across the whole school community. In practice, this means canvassing opinions from:

- pupils
- parents
- staff (teaching and non-teaching)
- governors
- external agencies (where appropriate).

Although this process will undoubtedly increase the time it takes to arrive at the final product, it means that there will be ownership of the policy across the whole school community. It is therefore more likely to be accepted, understood and implemented.

Which policies?

There are key policies that are relevant to pupil attendance, registration procedures, and following up on pupil absence which, for your convenience, are listed below:

- admissions
- anti-bullying
- child protection and safeguarding
- exclusion
- safeguarding
- special educational needs
- teaching and learning
- behaviour and rewards.

What is essential is that they should be current (no more than two years old and preferably annually reviewed), reflect the views of the whole school community and be effectively circulated to ensure common understanding. At the time of validation formal written drafts may be acceptable for some, providing the majority are in place.

Writing the policy

Before you begin, canvas opinions, talk to colleagues from your own and other schools, consult with pupils (where appropriate). You may also wish to seek advice from Hampshire County Council's behaviour and attendance advisers, legal intervention court officers and early help hub managers. Ensure you are up to date on the latest regulations; any national and county guidance and current effective practice and, most importantly, identify who will have responsibility for:

- implementation
- monitoring
- evaluation
- review.

To support schools with this there is further advice and guidance available through Hampshire County Council's website, Hantsweb, at: www.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/lba-resources-for-schools/atten-guidance/attendance-guidance-for-schools.

A policy checklist

Remember:

- this is an open document
- to use simple straightforward language
- to involve representatives of the school community in the development of the document
- to work in a small task group representative of many interests
- to ensure it reflects the values and aims of the school
- to ensure that the statutory requirements are met
- to make reference to other relevant policies and documents that contribute to good attendance
- to identify who is responsible for the monitoring, evaluating and review of the policy.

Guidance on writing an attendance policy

This guidance provides suggestions for the types of information schools may wish to include within the various sections provided in the attendance policy template. These are intended as a starting point and schools are encouraged to expand and extend these to best reflect the needs and ethos of their individual school. Some schools will have their own format for policies.

If relevant information for some sections of the attendance policy is already included in other school policies, such as rewards, just refer to these rather than repeating information. Schools may wish to have a combined attendance and behaviour policy.

Notes to consider

Statutory: It is not statutory for schools to have an attendance policy. It is statutory to have a home school agreement as set down in Section 110 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

Department for Education guidance *School attendance (2014)*

Schools should:

- 1 Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence
- 2 Ensure every child has access to full-time education
- 3 Act early to address patterns of absence.

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

All pupils must be punctual to their lessons.

Attendance policy template

Attendance policy

Date policy formally approved

It is important to engage and seek approval from senior management and/or governors as this will ensure that there is a whole-school commitment to the policy.

Review dates

- The policy should be reviewed regularly.
- Ideally this should be done annually but, as a minimum, once every two years.
- Regular reviews provide an opportunity to revise objectives and how they are delivered to reflect developments that have taken place.

Who was consulted in drafting this policy?

Consultation is important to ensure that the policy and provision of physical activity is relevant for the needs of the school. It is important to consult with all members of the school community, including:

- pupils
- staff
- parents
- governors.

Person(s) responsible for implementing and monitoring the policy

For the impact of the policy to be maximised, a named person needs to be identified who will take overall responsibility for co-ordinating, implementing and monitoring the policy.

For example:

School attendance is subject to various education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education and Hampshire County Council. This attendance policy is also consistent with the following school policies:

- admissions
- anti-bullying
- child protection

- exclusion
- safeguarding
- special educational needs
- teaching and learning
- behaviour and rewards.

The level of attendance and punctuality expected from all our pupils is included in our school's Home School Agreement, which parents must sign following their child's admission to a school (statutory).

It is very important, therefore, that you make sure your child attends regularly and this policy sets out how together we will achieve this. This policy will be annually publicised in writing for all staff, parents and pupils via _____ and is available in the following languages:

Section 1: Rationale/statement of intent

Template notes: This section should make clear what the principles underlying the policy are; and state how they apply to the whole school community.

These principles should directly relate to the school's overall aims and should also link to the principles the school has for teaching and learning, delivery of the curriculum and safeguarding duties.

For example:

For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential.

We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our pupils/students and endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome. Parents and pupils play a part in making our school so successful. Every child has a right to access the education to which he/she is entitled. Parents and teachers share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all.

It is our duty to consistently strive to achieve a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

For our children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered it is vital your child is at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. The routines children develop around attendance and punctuality at school are the same as the expectations of any future employer in the world of work. High attainment, confidence with peers and staff, and future aspirations depend on good attendance.

Note: An optional section to include with key words and terms to draw upon:

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

Note: This section should make clear how the school will work in partnership with other stakeholders to achieve good attendance and punctuality.

It should refer to Home School Agreements, rewards, events and communication methods with parents.

Within this section schools may wish to set out roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders.

For example:

1 Promoting good attendance

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.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

Schools to add/delete/amend as required – below is an example

- provide information on all matters related to attendance in our regular/weekly home school bulletin/newsletter/website
- report to you on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments
- celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements
- reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates and outings/ events
- set targets for the school and for classes for attendance and display these in the school
- run events when parents, pupils and staff can work together on raising attendance levels across the school.

1 Roles and responsibilities (optional section)

Responsibilities of the school's attendance leader (add/delete as required)

A member of the senior leadership team will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the attendance policy is consistently applied throughout the school. This person will also ensure that attendance is both recorded accurately and analysed. (S)he will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, staff will discuss with parents/carers the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep

absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school.

Responsibilities of classroom staff *(add/delete as required)*

- Ensure that all students are registered accurately.
- Promote and reward good attendance with students at all appropriate opportunities.
- Liaise with the attendance leader on matters of attendance and punctuality.
- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence.
- Support pupils with absence to engage with their learning once they are back in school.

Responsibilities of students *(add/delete as required)*

- Attend every day unless they are ill or have an authorised absence.
- Arrive in school on time.
- Go to all their registrations and lessons on time.
- Take responsibility for registering at the reception desk if they are late or are leaving the school site during school hours.

Responsibilities of parents/carers *(add/delete as required)*

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's 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 telephone 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 leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance.

Section 3

3.1 Recording attendance

Note: This section should make clear how the school will record attendance and any absence or lateness and what the regulations are with respect to the official register.

For example:

Legally the register must be marked twice daily. This is once at the start of the school day, 8.30am, and again for the afternoon session at _____ pm.

3.2 Lateness/punctuality

Note: This section should make clear when official registration closes and when lateness becomes unauthorised. It should set out clearly the procedures for signing in, the impact lateness has on the child concerned and any sanctions the school operates for repeated lateness.

Department for Education guidance suggests all official registers should be closed a maximum of 30 minutes after the start of school – but schools can choose to use a shorter period.

For further advice and guidance refer to: Hampshire County Council's guidance, *Promoting pupil attendance recording absence*, available at: <http://documents.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/HIAS/Promotingpupilattendanceandrecordingabsence-maindocument.pdf>.

For example:

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

- The school day begins at _____ and all **pupils are expected to be in school at this time**. Morning registration is at _____ am and it closes at _____.
- All lateness is recorded daily. This information will be required by the courts, should a prosecution for non-attendance or lateness be necessary.
- Arrival after the close of registration will be marked as unauthorised absence and coded *U* in line with Hampshire County Council and Department of Education guidance. This mark shows them to be on site, but is legally recorded as an absence.
- If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence, coded *M*. Please be advised that, where possible, doctors and dentists appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays.

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** (see Section 6 for further detail).

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 lateness persists parents, guardians or carers will be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem and support offered. If support is not appropriate or is declined and a child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence due to lateness 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).

Primary schools may wish to add further comments, such as:

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/carers with the bill.

3.3 What to do if my child is absent?

This section should set out the school's expectations of parents in reporting any absence and set out the school's internal procedures for responding to a child's absence.

First day absence

Enter here a guide to the school's system for responding to a child's first day of absence, ie are parents expected to contact the school? Does the school make telephone/text contact? Who is responsible for this or making sure that it happens? How is any information collected, passed on and transferred to the registers?

See Hampshire County Council's *Good practice guidance for attendance and safeguarding* located at: <http://documents.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/HIAS/Goodpracticeguidanceforattendanceproceduresandsafeguarding-May2014.pdf>.

For example:

A child not attending school is considered a **safeguarding** matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

If your child is absent you must:

- contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence
- send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even if you have already telephoned us

or you can call into school and report to reception.

If your child is absent we will:

- telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you – this is because we have a duty to ensure your child’s safety as well as their regular school attendance
- invite you in to discuss the situation with our attendance officer and/or pastoral leaders and assistant headteacher if absences persist
- refer the matter to the Hampshire County Council’s Attendance Legal Panels if absence is unauthorised and falls below 90%.

Third day absence

Enter here what happens if a child is still away and there has been no contact from the parents/carers.

Is a standard letter sent? Are parents asked in the letter to contact school that day?

See further guidance in Hampshire County Council’s Guidance for children on roll but absent and at risk of missing in education: <http://documents.hants.gov.uk/education/Guidanceforchildrenatriskofmissingineducation-revisedSept2014.pdf>.

Please note: If your child is not seen and contact has not been established with any of the named parents/carers, after three days of absence the school is required to start *child missing in education* procedures as set down by Hampshire County Council guidance. We will make all reasonable enquiries to establish contact with parents/carers and the child, including making enquiries to known friends, wider family (**if schools have employed staff who would visit the family home to try to establish contact, such as a home school link worker, this should be added as an action here**).

Ten days’ absence

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer 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. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

Continued or ongoing absence

If your child misses 10% (three weeks/sessions) or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason, they are defined as *persistent absentees*. 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, depending on the reasons for the absence, will ... *(schools should add in their procedures for responding to persistent absentees here)*.

Schools may wish to add further comments, such as:

All our persistent absentee pupils and their parents are subject to an Attendance Plan or home school contract and these may include:

Timeline of school action for persistent absence *(optional section)*

Schools may wish to detail the series of steps and the timeline they use to follow up on ongoing and persistent absence.

A welcome back *(optional section)*

It is important that on return from an unavoidable absence all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date with any information that has been passed to the other pupils. Include details of how catch-up work will be organised.

Section 4

Note: This section should set out the law relating to request for leave of absence and procedures for how parents can make a request.

For national guidance refer to:

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

For Hampshire County Council 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*:
www.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/lba-resources-for-schools/atten-guidance/attendance-guidance-for-schools.

For example:

Request for leave of absence

Amendments to school attendance regulations were updated and enforced from September 2013: The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations state that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. 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 term time to go on holiday and in the majority of cases holiday will not be authorised. Parents/carers wishing to apply for leave of absence need to fill in an application form (available from ... [school to insert detail] ...) in advance and before making any travel arrangements.

If term-time leave is taken without prior permission from the school, the absence will be unauthorised and if the number of sessions absent hits the thresholds set down in Hampshire County Council's *Code of conduct*, parents/carers will be issued with a fixed-penalty fine or other legal action in accordance with the code (see Section 6 for detail).

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.

Section 5

Note: This section should set out the difference between authorised absence and unauthorised absence, and clarify it is the school that decides whether to accept the reasons given by the child and/or their parents/carers. It should set down clearly which attendance codes are unauthorised absences.

For example:

Understanding types of absence

Pupils are expected to attend school every day for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence. There are two main categories of absences:

- authorised absence: is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence or given approval in advance for such an absence. If no explanation is received, absences cannot be authorised
- unauthorised absence: is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's leave absence from school after a parent's request. This includes:
 - parents giving their children permission to be off school unnecessarily, such as for shopping, birthdays, to look after siblings
 - truancy before or during the school day
 - absences which have not been explained.

A school can, if needed, change an authorised absence to an unauthorised absence and vice versa if new information is presented. Any changes will be communicated to parents/carers. An example of this would be where a parent states a child is unwell but on return to school there is evidence they have been on holiday.

Section 6

Note: *In this section schools need to set out the use of Penalty Notices and other legal measures. It should cover when a legal measure will be considered and set down clearly when Penalty Notices will be issued so that Hampshire County Council's Code of conduct is consistently applied. Schools should state how parents will be warned of a Penalty Notice. Schools should refer to the use of Attendance Legal Panels and any other internal procedures for communicating with parents/carers of the possibility of any legal measures being taken.*

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

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

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

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

Recommended text to include:

Penalty Notices for non-attendance and other legal measures

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 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 and parents are complicit in the child's 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
- parenting orders
- Penalty Notices

- Education Supervision Orders
- prosecution.

Where a child has unauthorised absence the school must enforce Hampshire County Council's *Code of conduct: issuing Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence from schools* or follow its guidance on other legal measures for non-attendance. The *Code of conduct* is a statutory document that ensures that powers for legal sanctions are applied consistently and fairly across all schools and their families within the authority. A copy is available from:

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

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

- absent for 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 unauthorised absence meets any of the above criteria and the family or child do not require any agency support to improve the attendance then a Penalty Notice is issued for either:

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

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

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

Parents and carers will be warned of the likelihood of a Penalty Notice being issued for unauthorised absence via a letter, through the leave of absence request form, or through the school's 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 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.

Each Penalty Notice carries a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days of the Penalty Notice being posted. If the fine is not paid within 21 days the penalty is automatically increased to £120 if paid within 28 days. If the fine remains unpaid Hampshire County Council will consider prosecution for the non-attendance. Payment methods are detailed on the Penalty Notices themselves. Penalties are to be paid to Hampshire County Council and revenue resulting from payment of penalties is used by the County Council to help cover the costs of issuing Penalty Notices and/or the cost of prosecuting recipients who do not pay.

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

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

Section 7

Other recommended policy sections

7.1 My child is trying to avoid coming to school. What should I do?

Note: This section should set down advice and guidance to parents about how they can support and encourage their child to attend regularly and punctually. The school should set out what support is available to parents and carers from staff in school and other support services and agencies.

For example:

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

Contact your child's ... [class teacher/form tutor/head of year/house tutor] ..., immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with school work, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem. In some cases you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with another professional.

What can I do to encourage my child to attend school?

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that he/she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his/her education.

Schools may wish to add further comments, such as:

Your child will bring home a school diary each evening. Please ensure you look at it with your child and sign it ready for the next day.

Be interested in what your child is doing in school, chat to them about the things they have learnt, what friends they have made and even what they had for lunch!

For infant and primary schools:

For many parents, your child attending school may be your first experience of being separated from them. This can seem daunting at first for both of you, but consistency and a caring, supportive home and school life will make the transition a quick and easy experience for you both.

7.2 Leavers

Note: This section should set down what the expected procedures are for parents/carers whose children will be leaving for another school transfer.

For example:

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 (*please delete as necessary*)) parents are asked to:

- 1 Give the attendance officer 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 (*Please insert as necessary.*)

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.

7.3 Absence through child participation in public performances, including theatre, film or television work and modelling

The regulations related to children participating in public performances are separate to those around authorising leave of absence. Headteachers can authorise this absence.

For further advice and guidance on child employment and performance licenses visit Hantsweb at: www.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/childrenandyoungpeople/child-employment.

For national advice see: www.gov.uk/child-performance-licence-england-scotland-wales.

For example:

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. It is, however, down to the headteacher's discretion as to 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. Any absence recorded as part of a child's participation in a public performance is recorded as C, an authorised absence.

7.4 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 regional, county, national and international events and competitions. It is, however, down to the headteacher's discretion as to 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 is also at the discretion of the headteacher and is not likely to be approved if it is a regular event, unless the sports club or association is providing an education tutor as part of their coaching.

7.5 Gypsy, Roma, Traveller and Showman families

For further advice and guidance on attendance and Gypsy, Roma, Traveller and Showman families, see Hampshire County Council guidance at: <http://documents.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/HIAS/Promotingpupilattendanceandrecordingabsence-Section6.pdf>.

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

Further support and guidance is available from Hampshire County Council's Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service (EMTAS).

For example:

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.

Optional sections for secondary schools

7.5 Study leave

We believe that pupils/students' needs are best met if they attend school every day in the period leading up to examinations. No study leave will be granted during this period, therefore, and pupils/students will be expected to attend school in the usual way. (*Insert details of in-school revision arrangements and other activities.*) Study leave will only be granted to Year 11 pupils/students during the time of the GCSE examination period. Should any pupils/students wish to attend school (or should their parents wish them to) on the days and at times when they are not sitting examinations, arrangements will be made for them to do so. The school will work within the legal requirements, ie:

- study leave should only be granted to Year 11 pupils and never to those in other year groups
- it should never exceed 15 school days in a year and is most appropriately granted during the examination period itself, ie not before the beginning of that period
- it should always be granted sparingly, taking account of an individual pupil/student's ability to manage and benefit from unsupervised study
- any pupil has the right to attend school during study leave and a parent has the right to insist he/she does so
- any session given to pupils as study leave has a statistical meaning of authorised absence (it is not an *approved educational activity* as it is unsupervised) and should be recorded and reported on by the school as such.

7.6 Teenage pregnancy

Support will be directed to keeping a pupil in school and, wherever possible, her return to full-time education as soon as possible after the birth. A pupil who becomes pregnant should be allowed no more than 18 weeks' authorised absence to cover the time immediately before and after the birth of the child. After that time, any absence should be treated as unauthorised.

Section 8

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).