ATTENDANCE POLICY

SEPTEMBER 2026 - 27

Name	Role
Matt Johnson	**Headteacher**
Stuart Comben	**Designated Safeguarding Lead**
Janette Bailey	**Attendance Officer**
Matt Johnson & Chloe Beechurst	**Deputy Safeguarding Leads**

Governing Body approval gained in July 2026 Next review July 2027	
Policy proposed for adoption by Matt Johnson, Headteacher	
Headteacher's signature:	Chair of Committee signature:

For the purpose of this policy, a parent means:

- all natural parents, whether they are married or not;
- any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and,
- any person who has care of a child or young person (i.e. lives with and looks after the child).

Compulsory School Age: A child must start full-time education once they reach compulsory school age. This is on 31 December, 31 March or 31 August following their fifth birthday - whichever comes first. A child can leave school on the last Friday in June if they will be 16 by the end of the summer holidays. (See attendance coding guide in 'School attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities') They must then do one of the following until they're 18:

♣ stay in full-time education, for example at a college

♣ start an apprenticeship or traineeship

♣ spend 20 hours or more a week working or volunteering, while in part-time education or training

Legislation and guidance 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. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance: Part 6 of The Education Act 1996 Part 3 of The Education Act 2002 Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006 The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments) The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

The Law Relating to attendance and safeguarding: Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that: "the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable: (a) to age, ability and aptitude and (b) to any special educational needs he/she may have either at school or otherwise"

Rationale

Introduction

This Policy represents our commitment to striving for 100% attendance, which is achievable, and achieved by many children. It sets out the principles, procedures and practice the school will

undertake. Strategies, sanctions and possible legal consequences of poor Attendance and Punctuality are also detailed, as well as rewards for, and benefits of good attendance. This policy will be reviewed, amended as necessary and published annually in accordance with current legislation and guidance. The DfE guidance *Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2022* states that attendance to school is "essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances".

Principles

- Receiving a full-time, suitable education is a child's legal entitlement.
- It is a parents /carers' legal responsibility to ensure this happens.
- Attending school regularly aids intellectual, social and emotional development and is essential if children are to benefit fully from their school life.
- Attending school regularly safeguards the welfare of children whilst they are not in the care of their parents.
- All children whose attendance is poor will be treated as vulnerable.

These principles are enshrined in British law, within the Education Act 1996, the Children Act 1989, and other associated pieces of legislation.

Please click here for the DfE Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance

Aims of the Policy

- To ensure that all children attend school regularly and punctually, in order to maximise their educational achievement and social development. *Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%.*
- To discharge the schools duty to safeguard its pupils to the best of its ability.
- To ensure that all those responsible for children's education, including parents, carers, staff and governors understand and accept their responsibilities in relation to attendance.
- To minimise absence from school, thereby reducing levels of persistent absence.
- To improve the life chances of the children attending Copnor Primary School and prepare them to be fully contributing citizens when they reach adulthood. *Regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school, higher education and employment or training.*
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Attendance is everyone's business

Policy objectives:

- To safeguard the welfare, health, social and emotional development of children
- To reduce persistent/severe absence
- To reduce or eliminate term time holidays/leave of absence
- To promote commitment to education and high achievement
- To maximise the potential of every individual pupil
- Ensure robust systems are in place to monitor and manage attendance and punctuality throughout the school

Operating the Policy

Promoting Attendance

Copnor Primary School will use all possible opportunities to promote the importance of good attendance and punctuality. These will include the home/school agreement, newsletters, rewards and incentives for good or significantly improving attendance. The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child.

The School will:

- Provide and promote a welcoming and positive atmosphere so that children feel safe, and know that their presence is valued.

- Raise awareness of the importance of full attendance and punctuality, using newsletters and other communications to parents; making attendance a high priority.

- Employ a key member of staff with responsibility for monitoring, improving and evaluating school attendance. At Copnor Primary School, this role is fulfilled by Janette Bailey Attendance Officer - attendance@copnorprimary.co.uk

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

- Using data to improve attendance School will provide regular attendance reports to appropriate school staff/SLT etc to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies reducing persistent and severe absence

- Ensure there is a Senior Leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance to school is Matt Johnson - Headteacher
- Encourage parents to fully support the policy as a vital contribution towards their child's education. All new parents are introduced to the Policy and information on attendance in the School Prospectus. It is also accessible on the school website.

- Encourage the children to have a positive attitude towards attendance and punctuality so that they can retain this into adult life.

- Celebrate good attendance by Termly awards/rewards

- Ensure that attendance is effectively monitored, using Arbor management information system, and absences are followed up promptly in accordance with this policy.

- Communicate effectively with other agencies (Portsmouth City council, School Health, Traveller Education, Early Help, Social Services etc).

- Meet the legal requirements with the use of correct codes for absence, with particular reference to authorised and unauthorised absence. *(DFE guidance)*

- Ensure that all staff comply with the school policy and deal consistently with absence and punctuality.

- Provide training for staff in all matters of attendance

- Ensure attendance information is available for Governors and parents.

- Share good practice with other schools.

- Have procedures in place to help children settle back to school after a long absence. 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. If appropriate work will be sent home during the absence with teacher feedback.

- Liaise with the LA and other relevant agencies promptly for those children whose health needs do not allow them to attend school.

- Make every effort to meet the individual needs of the pupils with SEND

<u>Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.</u>

The school will:

- • Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- • Inform parents when their child's attendance becomes a concern
- • Send letters as needed to advise parents/carers of this and offer support. This letter acknowledges the pupil's circumstances but highlights the importance of good attendance.
- • Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- • Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance.

We expect the parent to:

- Provide up to date contact numbers and changes of address.

- Provide details of at least two contacts for emergency use.

- Notify the School when their child is unable to attend, with a reason, on the first day of the absence.

- Telephone the School after the first day of absence to advise the School if the absence is continuing.

- Respond to all follow up requests for information sent by email or by telephone contact.

- Keep the School well informed, in cases of lengthy absence. Parents/carers will be encouraged to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a child's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the School.

- Provide medical evidence indicating attendance at the dentist, doctor or optician before the arranged appointment unless an emergency situation has arisen. Whenever possible all appointments should be made outside of school hours.

- Ensure that their child arrives at school on time each day.

- Let the School know if their child is going to be late, e.g. if a car breaks down; if an urgent appointment has been made.

- Understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality and promote this with their child, aiming for 100% attendance each year.

- Provide written explanations of any absence and medical evidence for whole day appointments as well as medical evidence for persistent absence from school due to alleged illness.

- Only request leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance.

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 Head Teacher creates an offence in law.

We expect students to:

- 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.

Share effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools

One of the most successful approaches to improving attendance is the sharing of effective practice between schools. As a school we will therefore, access regular opportunities for our staff to learn from other's attendance expertise and share effective interventions. As a minimum this may include, sharing exemplar resources and documents such as communications to pupils and parents, regular networking or Q&A sessions, and topical best practice training or webinars.

The Governing Board: The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

Understanding types of absence coding

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the School as AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing. Medical evidence may also be required in the form of a copy of a prescription, GP note, etc. Types of absence that are likely to be authorised are illness, medical or dental appointments that unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies.

Examples of types of absence that are **not** considered reasonable and which will **not** be authorised under any circumstances are:

- Going shopping with parents, Birthdays
- Minding other younger children in the family
- Sibling unwell
- Staying at home because other members in the family are unwell
- Day trips and holidays in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances that have been approved by the Head Teacher/Principal
- Arriving at school too late to get a present mark (After the close of registration)
- Truancy
- Death of a pet

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.

Suspension from School

With effect from the 1st September 2022, any pupil who has been suspended from school, and provision has been arranged, if the student does not attend the provision this shall be recorded as an unauthorised absence. This may result in further action taken by the school, please see also penalty notice section.

SCHOOL PROCEDURES:

Registration and punctuality procedures

Legally the register must be taken twice a day, once at the start of the school day at 8.45am, and once during the afternoon session *at 1pm*. The registers will remain open for 15 minutes. Pupils arriving before the end of the Registration period will be coded L (Late before registers close) which is a present mark. The number of minutes late will be recorded in the register. Pupils arriving after the registers have closed will be coded U (Late after registers close) which counts as an unauthorised absence for the whole morning session.

Only the Head Teacher can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, until a satisfactory reason is provided. If the reason given is not satisfactory in the school's view, and/or evidence of the reason cannot be provided, the absence will be coded as O (Unauthorised absent). It is reasonable for

members of staff to ask questions regarding a child's attendance and punctuality and when appropriate, request evidence to support the reason for absence from school.

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other pupils. Ongoing and repeated lateness after the close of registration is considered as **unauthorised absence and will be subject to legal action**

If a pupil's attendance falls below 95%, parents will be contacted regarding their child's school attendance.

Children at Primary School:

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.

First Day Absence Contact

Parents are expected to notify the school if their child is unable to attend for any unavoidable reason, such as illness. Parents are requested to inform the school before 9.10am if their child is too unwell to attend school. If the school does not receive notification, it will text/telephone on the first day of absence, to try to ascertain the reason. First day contact will be carried out as early as possible in the school day, in order to notify parents whose children may have set off for school, but not arrived, as quickly as possible. If the child is still too unwell to attend the following day, parents will need to telephone the school again before 9.10am to inform them of this second day of absence. If a child is absent for longer than 3 days due to ill health, medical evidence will need to be provided in order that the school can authorise the absence. On return to school, the parent must put in writing the reason for absence in addition to telephoning the school on the days of absence.

Continuing Absence Procedures

If after 3 days of absence, your child has not been seen and contact has not been made with the school, we will make all reasonable enquiries to establish contact with parents/carers and the child, including making enquiries to known friends and wider family. In the event of an absence of three or more days without contact from the family, a home visit will be made, either by the Attendance and Welfare Officer's or other local authority professional, to ascertain the safety and well- being of the child and in addition to the reason for absence from school.

The Attendance Officer shall take advice from the schools designated safeguarding leads for any absences incurring more than 10 days.

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 education (CME)*. The Attendance Advisory Service staff at Portsmouth City Council 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.

Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs
School will work together with the local authority and other relevant professionals to ensure any child who is going to be absent for longer than 15 days due to medical reasons either consecutively or accumulatively, will have access to relevant and appropriate education. This includes Public Exam provision and the education of siblings where the family have had to travel and stay away from the home. Please see the Trust Policy *Supporting Children with Medical Needs policy for further information available on the school website.*

Reluctant attenders/school refusal
You should do everything possible to encourage your child to attend. However, if the reason for their reluctance appears to be school-based, such as difficulty with work, or bullying, please discuss this with the school at the earliest opportunity and the school will do everything possible to resolve. Colluding with your child's reluctance to attend is likely to make the matter worse.

School refusal/school phobia is a psychological condition that usually has been medically diagnosed. Other arrangements may be put in place for a child with genuine school phobia.

Mental Health, Emotionally Based School Avoidance and Wellbeing

Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) is a broad umbrella term used to describe a group of children and young people who have severe difficulty in attending school due to emotional factors, often resulting in prolonged absences from school.

The impact of EBSA on children is far-reaching, it has been linked to seriously hampering children's psychological, social, and academic performance and subsequently performance in exams and employment opportunities.

Parents who have concerns about their child's mental wellbeing can contact our school's Pastoral Team or Designated Safeguarding Leads for further information on the support available. Many children will experience normal but difficult emotions that make them nervous about attending school, such as worries about friendships, schoolwork, exams or variable mood. **It is important to note that these pupils are still expected to attend school regularly.** Summary_of_responsibilities_where_a_mental_health_issue_is_affecting_attendance.pdf

Parents should also contact their GP or the NHS Helpline by phoning telephone number 111 for advice if they are concerned. In case of emergency parents should dial 999.

Section 19 of the Education Act 1996 (as amended by Section 3 of the Children Schools and Families Act 2010) provides a duty on local authorities of maintained schools to arrange suitable education for those who would not receive such education unless such arrangements are made for them. This education must be full time, or such part time education as is in a child's best interests because of their health needs.

Reduced Timetables

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 reduced timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package. (Working Together to Improve School Attendance).

A reduced timetable must only be in place for the shortest time necessary and not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement should have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend fulltime, either at school or alternative provision. There should also be formal arrangements in place for regularly reviewing it with the pupil and their parents. In agreeing to a reduced timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must treat absence as authorised and code in the register as a C, which is an authorised absence.

The school will share the relevant reduced timetable paperwork with the local authority inclusion team who will ensure that the reasons for the timetable are necessary and proportionate.

Frequent/Persistent Absence Procedures

Regular monitoring of the registers and analysis of data, will be made by the Attendance Officer, to identify pupils with a pattern of absences that may lead to Persistent Absence (PA) and Severe Absence. The Attendance Officer will be responsible for putting in place actions for each pupil of concern. Initially the school will try to resolve the problem with parents/carers and this may involve requesting medical evidence in order for the school to authorise any further absence due to ill health and/or an Attendance clinic with the Attendance Officer and relevant staff or outside professionals. However, if the pattern continues the school will make a referral to the Local Authority. Portsmouth City Council and Attendance Improvement Coordinator will communicate regularly to discuss any attendance and punctuality concerns the school may have and review any current cases referred to the LA.

Parents/Carers of children whose attendance drops to below 96%, will receive a percentage information letter. In the event that there is then further absence from school, a letter to parents will now request that medical evidence is provided by the parent to enable the school to authorise any further absences due to ill health. Further unauthorised absence will result in a parental meeting to allow a plan of support to encourage regular attendance. Further unauthorised absence totalling 10 or more unauthorised sessions where support is not successful, or not engaged with, will result in a referral to the Local Authority for consideration of a Fixed Penalty Notice/Court action.

Consequences of Poor Attendance /Punctuality

For pupils whose attendance and/or punctuality fails to improve, after a range of interventions and support measures have been tried by the school, the ultimate consequences may be one of the following:

1) From February 2004, new measures introduced in the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 have made it possible that certain cases of unauthorised absence from school amounting to 10 sessions (5 days) can be dealt with by way of a Penalty Notice. These

Penalty Notices require the recipient to pay a fine of £60 per parent and per child, if paid within 21 days, or £120 if paid within 28 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

2) The Local authority may initiate court action under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, which could lead to fines of up to £2,500, or even imprisonment.
3) In some cases, action may be taken under the Children Act 1989 to protect the welfare and development of the child.

Children who are absent from education:

Children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation - particularly county lines. It is therefore important that the school responds to persistently absent pupils and children missing education as it supports identifying such abuse, and in the case of absent pupils, helps prevent the risk of them becoming a child missing education in the future.

This includes when problems are first emerging but also where children are already known to local authority children's social care and need a social worker (such as a child who is a child in need or who has a child protection plan, or is a looked after child), where being absent from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community. Further information and support, includes:

• Guidance on school attendance 'Working together to improve school attendance' including information on how schools should work with local authority children's services where school absence indicates safeguarding concerns.

• Information regarding schools' duties regarding children missing education, including information schools must provide to the local authority when removing a child from the school roll at standard and non-standard transition points, can be found in the department's statutory guidance: children-missing-education

• general information and advice for schools and colleges can be found in the Government's missing-children-and-adults-strategy

Leavers and children who cease to attend without prior notice (CME) procedures

Parents must inform the school in writing if they are planning to remove their child from Copnor Primary School. This must include the details of the new school the child is planning to attend or that they are exercising their right to educate their child otherwise. All Education Otherwise information will be passed into the Portsmouth Inclusions Team at Portsmouth City Council, who are responsible for monitoring all children who are educated otherwise. If after twenty day's continuous absence the school has been unable to ascertain the whereabouts of a pupil, they will refer the child's details to the Local Authority, in order to perform further checks that are not available to school.

Non starters

Pupils who are allocated places but fail to start are also treated as CME. If the school has been unable to make contact with the family during a twenty-day period after their expected arrival, they will refer the pupils to the Local Authority for further checks.

Vulnerable Children

Children who are Looked After (LAC), subject to a Child Protection Plan (CP) or Children in Need (CIN) will be treated with highest priority and will be known to the Attendance Officer. Any unexplained absence will be followed up immediately by a telephone call to the home. Any outside professionals who are also working with the children and family will also be notified of the absence (Social worker, Portsmouth LA etc). Children with Special Educational Needs (SEND) will be treated with similar priority in order that their time in school can be maximised, and their learning supported to the greatest extent possible.

Traveller Absence

The school will authorise the absence of a Traveller pupil of no fixed abode who is unable to attend school because they are travelling with their parent who is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place. This is subject to certain limits, depending on the child's age and number of sessions absent. The school will discuss cases individually with Traveller parents as necessary. Parents should let the school know of their plans as far in advance as possible. Authorised Traveller absence will be recorded appropriately in the register.

To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children, wherever possible, the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling for occupational purposes. In which case the child will be dual registered at that school and this school, which is their 'main' school.

Children from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities whose families do not travel for occupational purposes are expected to register at school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly.

Religious Observance

Our school acknowledges the multi-faith nature of the school community and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside of school holidays or weekends. In accordance with the law, the school will authorise one day's absence for a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs. Should any additional days be taken, these will be recorded in the register as unauthorised absence. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body, to confirm whether the day is set apart

USEFUL INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

This is a successful school, and you and your child play a part in making it so. We aim to encourage all members of the school community to reach out for excellence. For children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly, and your child should be at school in good time for the start of the school day, every day the school is open, unless they are genuinely ill or there is some other unavoidable reason.

Some children are reluctant to go to school and say they do not feel well. It is for you as the adult to judge whether they are genuinely unwell, or just unwilling. It will be better for them in the long run to go to school rather than avoid it, as days off mean they will fall further behind and make them even more reluctant. Your job as the parent is to encourage them to attend.

Medical evidence may be any of the following:

Hospital discharge letter
Note from your GP
Copy of your appointment card from your GP
Copy of the prescription or copy of the medication label
Note from a pharmacist
Note from any other health care professional (e.g. physiotherapist, optician, podiatrist etc

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

Contact the Attendance Officer immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with schoolwork, 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. If child brings 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!

EARLY HELP

Early identification of needs and support required can prevent concerns escalating. Early help plans should have focused outcomes for children and families, and should be actively planned with them. Plans should deliver evidence-based interventions using single agency or common assessment frameworks, and clear thresholds for specific agency intervention e.g. Social care, housing, mental health services. Early Help plans should be regularly reviewed.

We see how early help can transform a child in school, not just what they are able to achieve academically, but how their personal, social and emotional development can thrive with the right support. We are committed to early help because it is the right thing to do for our children to give them the best start in life.

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

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is YOUR legal responsibility and permitting absence without good reason is an offence in law and may result in legal action being taken, or a Penalty Notice being issued.

Any absence affects the child's learning, and the more they miss the harder it will be for them to catch up. Research has shown that for every percentage point of absence, attainment is significantly lower.

There is extensive research linking poor school attendance and exclusion with crime and anti-social behaviour, and risk of exploitation by unsuitable adults. For this reason, failure to attend regularly will be regarded as a safeguarding issue.

Understanding absence percentages: You may wonder why a school would be concerned if your child's attendance is 95%. This may make it easier to understand:

95% equates to half a day off every two weeks
90% equates to a day off every two weeks
85% equates to one and a half days off every

Attendance during school year	**Days lost in a year**	**Which is approximately**	**Approximate number of lessons missed**
95%	9.5 Days	2 Weeks	20 sessions
90%	19 Days	4 Weeks	40 sessions

Even the brightest and most enthusiastic learner will find it hard to keep up with their work with these levels of absence. That is why we encourage the highest attendance possible.

Effects of Late Arrival at School: When a child arrives late to school, they miss important events like assembly, teacher instructions and introductions. Children often also feel embarrassed at having to enter the classroom late.

The table below indicates how frequent lateness can add up to a considerable amount of learning being lost. This can seriously disadvantage children and disrupt the learning of others.

Minutes late per Day	Equates to Days of Teaching Lost in one Year	Which means this number of lessons missed
5 mins	3 Days	6 sessions
10 mins	6 Days	12 sessions
15 mins	9 Days	18 sessions

Persistent Absence

A pupil is classed as a persistent absentee (PA) when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year, **for whatever reason, whether it be authorised or unauthorised, or a mixture of both.** Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to a child's educational prospects and we need parents' full support and encouragement to tackle it. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system, and we combine this with tracking academic progress to assess the effect on the pupil's attainment. 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 their learning.

Severe Absence

Particular focus should be given by all partners to pupils who are absent from school more than they are present (those missing 50% or more of school). These severely absent pupils may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and as such are likely to need more intensive support across a range of partners. A concerted effort is therefore needed across all relevant services to prioritise them. All partners should work together to make this group the top priority for support – this may include specific support with attendance or a whole family plan, but it may also include consideration for an education, health and care plan or an alternative form of educational provision where necessary to overcome the barriers to being in school. If all avenues of support have been facilitated by schools, local authorities, and other partners, and the appropriate educational support or placements (e.g. an education, health and care plan) have been provided but severe absence for unauthorised reasons continues, it is likely to constitute neglect. Schools and local authorities should be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues in these cases and where these remain, conduct a full children's social care assessment.

Reporting your child's absence

If your child is absent, you must:

- Contact the school as early as possible, but before 9.00 am, on the first day of absence, either by telephone, email to attendance@copnorprimary.co.uk.

Penalty Notices

Penalty Notices can now be issued for a range of attendance-related offences, including unauthorised term-time holidays, poor attendance and poor punctuality, a child coming to the attention of the police in school time, or located twice or more in truancy sweeps in 6 months.

Participating in a performance
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 Headteachers discretion as to whether to authorise this (remains satisfied that this will not have a negative impact on the pupils education) and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs.

Participating in a supervised sporting activity
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 Headteachers 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.

Applications for leave of absence in term time (includes Holidays in term time)
All pupils are encouraged to attend school every day of the 190 days that school is open. The register is called twice daily and pupils are expected to be present for the 380 sessions, or half days. That leaves 175 days for family holidays, shopping trips and other needs.

As a school we prioritise teaching and learning, therefore, in accordance with the local and National guidelines, Copnor Primary School does not authorise holidays during term time. Permission, however, may be granted only in exceptional circumstances, when the benefit of the absence far outweighs the benefit of school attendance. A request for such absence should be made in writing to the Headteacher. When requesting leave of absence during term time may you be reminded that 10 days of absence equates to 20 sessions missed schooling, which is equivalent to 5.2% of absence.

Please note: any child who has taken a term time holiday will be required to provide medical evidence for any further absences during the remainder of the academic year. Any absences due to ill health either directly before or after a school holiday will need to provide medical evidence in order for the school to authorise the absence.

In the case of all unauthorised leave of absences, incurring 10 or more unauthorised sessions (5 days), an application for a Fixed Penalty Notice will be made to the local authority.

Notes:

- From February 2004, measures introduced in the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 have made it possible that certain cases of unauthorised absence from school amounting to 10 sessions (5 days) can be dealt with by way of a Penalty Notice.
- From August 2024 a new National Framework will come into force for issuing Penalty Notices Copnor Primary School will follow Portsmouth City Council's code of conduct. Penalty Notices are issued per parent per child and for a first offence £160 payable with 28 days. If paid within 21 days the Penalty Notice is reduced to £80. If within 3 years of your first penalty notice you commit a second offence the Penalty Notice will be £160 payable within 28 days (no reduction), and if a third offence a prosecution under s444 of the Education Act 1996.
- Non-payment of these fines will result in application to Criminal Court.

- If a Parent/Carer requests for a term holiday is refused, but the holiday taken, it will be classified as unauthorised absence and may be subject to a penalty notice being served to each parent/ carer that resides with the child by Portsmouth City Council.
- A formal application must be made in writing, IN ADVANCE and returned to the Attendance Officer.
- Permission sought after a holiday has been taken will not be granted.
- If the parent/ carer removes a student from their education for the purpose of a suspected holiday without advising the school this will be referred to the schools designated safeguarding leads. On the third day of absence a letter will be sent requesting that the parent/ carer contacts the school within 2 days to confirm the reason for absence. No response will assume to be a holiday absence and penalty notice(s) may be issued.

The Schools policy is not to authorise holidays during term time. Any applications for leave in term time must be made in writing to the Head Teacher. There is no automatic right to term time leave of absence, and your request is likely to be declined except in the most exceptional circumstances. Each application will be considered on its own merit, and the attendance record(s) of the child/ren concerned will be taken into account when making a decision.

Home Educated/Education Otherwise

On receipt of written notification to educate otherwise, parents will be invited into the school to discuss the reason for this decision and to seek a way forward that may enable the child to remain at the school if parents are in agreement. If the child does not remain at the school and is educated otherwise, the school must inform the pupils local authority that the pupil is to be deleted from the admission register.

Your contact details

Please make sure that the contact details you have given to the school are kept up to date, so that in the event of an accident, emergency or any other need to contact you we have the correct details.

Amendments to the Admissions Register and Attendance Register

Every amendment made to the admissions register and the attendance register must include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date on which the amendment was made and the name and position of the person who made the amendment.

Record preservation

School registers are legal documents. We will ensure compliance with attendance regulations by keeping attendance records for at least three years. Every entry in the admission register and attendance register must be preserved for a period of three years after the date on which the entry was made. 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).

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

From 19 August 2024, the new National Framework for issuing penalty notices will apply

Per Parent, Per Child

E.g. 2 parents taking 3 children out of school for a leave of absence in term time would incur 3 penalty notices for each parent
S.576 Education Act 1996 defines a parent as all natural parents, not a natural parent but has parental responsibility, or has care of a child.

National Threshold

There will be a single national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools of 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-week school period.
These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absences.
The 10-week school period can span different terms or school years.

1

First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for a leave of absence in term time or irregular school attendance the Penalty Notice will be charged at:
£160 per parent, per child, to be paid within 28 days.
This is reduced to £80 per parent per child if paid within the first 21 days.
(Unpaid Penalty Notices after 28 days will result in a prosecution)

2

Second Offence

(within 3 years of the first offence)

Where it has been deemed appropriate to issue a second Penalty Notice to the same parent for the same pupil within 3 years of the first notice, the second Penalty Notice will be charge at:

£160 per parent per child to be paid within 28 days (there is no reduction for this)

(Unpaid Penalty Notices after 28 days will result in a prosecution)

3

Third Offence and any Further Offences

(within 3 years of the first offence)

The third time that any offence is committed and a sanction is requested for either a leave of absence or irregular attendance, a Penalty Notice will not be issued, the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates Court. Prosecution can result in criminal records and fines up to £2,500.

Cases found guilty in the Magistrates Court can show on the parent's future DBS certificate, due to 'failure to safeguard a child's education'.

Attendance falls below 96% - a first contact (%) letter is sent

Further absence without medical evidence occurs - a letter requiring medical evidence is sent

Further absence without medical evidence - Parent is invited into school for a clinic/home visit is made. A follow-up letter confirming matters discussed and decisions made must be sent to the parent

Further unauthorised absences occur - a referral is made to the Local Authority. This should be as near to 10 sessions as possible

EXPECT

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

↓

MONITOR

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

↓

LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

↓

FACILITATE SUPPORT

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

↓

FORMALISE SUPPORT

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.

↓

ENFORCE

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

ATTENDANCE POLICY SEPTEMBER 2024 - 25

Name	Role
Matt Johnson	Headteacher
Matt Johnson and Lizzie Shaxkleford	Designated Safeguarding Leads
Janette Bailey	Attendance Officer
Sally Walker	Deputy Safeguarding Lead

Created: ***July 2024***
Ratified by Governors: ***July 2024***
Next Review: ***July 2025***

For the purpose of this policy, a parent means:
• all natural parents, whether they are married or not;
• any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and,
• any person who has care of a child or young person (i.e. lives with and looks after the child).

Compulsory School Age: A child must start full-time education once they reach compulsory school age. This is on 31 December, 31 March or 31 August following their fifth birthday - whichever comes first. A child can leave school on the last Friday in June if they will be 16 by the end of the summer holidays. (See attendance coding guide in 'School attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities') They must then do one of the following until they're 18:

♣ stay in full-time education, for example at a college

♣ start an apprenticeship or traineeship

♣ spend 20 hours or more a week working or volunteering, while in part-time education or training

Legislation and guidance 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. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance: Part 6 of The Education Act 1996 Part 3 of The Education Act 2002 Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006 The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments) The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

The Law Relating to attendance and safeguarding: Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that: "the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable: (a) to age, ability and aptitude and (b) to any special educational needs he/she may have either at school or otherwise"

Rationale

Introduction

This Policy represents our commitment to striving for 100% attendance, which is achievable, and achieved by many children. It sets out the principles, procedures and practice the school will

undertake. Strategies, sanctions and possible legal consequences of poor Attendance and Punctuality are also detailed, as well as rewards for, and benefits of good attendance. This policy will be reviewed, amended as necessary and published annually in accordance with current legislation and guidance. The DfE guidance *Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2022* states that attendance to school is "essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances".

Principles

- Receiving a full-time, suitable education is a child's legal entitlement.
- It is a parents /carers' legal responsibility to ensure this happens.
- Attending school regularly aids intellectual, social and emotional development and is essential if children are to benefit fully from their school life.
- Attending school regularly safeguards the welfare of children whilst they are not in the care of their parents.
- All children whose attendance is poor will be treated as vulnerable.

These principles are enshrined in British law, within the Education Act 1996, the Children Act 1989, and other associated pieces of legislation.

Please click here for the DfE Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance

Aims of the Policy

- To ensure that all children attend school regularly and punctually, in order to maximise their educational achievement and social development. *Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%.*
- To discharge the schools duty to safeguard its pupils to the best of its ability.
- To ensure that all those responsible for children's education, including parents, carers, staff and governors understand and accept their responsibilities in relation to attendance.
- To minimise absence from school, thereby reducing levels of persistent absence.
- To improve the life chances of the children attending Copnor Primary School and prepare them to be fully contributing citizens when they reach adulthood. *Regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school, higher education and employment or training.*
-

Attendance is everyone's business

Policy objectives:

- To safeguard the welfare, health, social and emotional development of children
- To reduce persistent/severe absence
- To reduce or eliminate term time holidays/leave of absence
- To promote commitment to education and high achievement
- To maximise the potential of every individual pupil
- Ensure robust systems are in place to monitor and manage attendance and punctuality throughout the school

Operating the Policy

Promoting Attendance

Copnor Primary School will use all possible opportunities to promote the importance of good attendance and punctuality. These will include the home/school agreement, newsletters, rewards and incentives for good or significantly improving attendance. The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child.

The School will:

- Provide and promote a welcoming and positive atmosphere so that children feel safe, and know that their presence is valued.

- Raise awareness of the importance of full attendance and punctuality, using newsletters and other communications to parents; making attendance a high priority.

- Employ a key member of staff with responsibility for monitoring, improving and evaluating school attendance. At Copnor Primary School, this role is fulfilled by Janette Bailey Attendance Officer - attendance@copnorprimary.co.uk

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

- Using data to improve attendance School will provide regular attendance reports to appropriate school staff/SLT etc to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies reducing persistent and severe absence

- Ensure there is a Senior Leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance to school is Matt Johnson - Headteacher
- Encourage parents to fully support the policy as a vital contribution towards their child's education. All new parents are introduced to the Policy and information on attendance in the School Prospectus. It is also accessible on the school website.

- Encourage the children to have a positive attitude towards attendance and punctuality so that they can retain this into adult life.

- Celebrate good attendance by Termly awards/rewards

- Ensure that attendance is effectively monitored, using Arbor management information system, and absences are followed up promptly in accordance with this policy.

- Communicate effectively with other agencies (Portsmouth City council, School Health, Traveller Education, Early Help, Social Services etc).

- Meet the legal requirements with the use of correct codes for absence, with particular reference to authorised and unauthorised absence. *(DFE guidance)*

- Ensure that all staff comply with the school policy and deal consistently with absence and punctuality.

- Provide training for staff in all matters of attendance

- Ensure attendance information is available for Governors and parents.

- Share good practice with other schools.

- Have procedures in place to help children settle back to school after a long absence. 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. If appropriate work will be sent home during the absence with teacher feedback.

- Liaise with the LA and other relevant agencies promptly for those children whose health needs do not allow them to attend school.

- Make every effort to meet the individual needs of the pupils with SEND

<u>Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.</u>

The school will:

- • Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- • Inform parents when their child's attendance becomes a concern
- • Send letters as needed to advise parents/carers of this and offer support. This letter acknowledges the pupil's circumstances but highlights the importance of good attendance.
- • Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- • Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance.

We expect the parent to:

- Provide up to date contact numbers and changes of address.

- Provide details of at least two contacts for emergency use.

- Notify the School when their child is unable to attend, with a reason, on the first day of the absence.

- Telephone the School after the first day of absence to advise the School if the absence is continuing.

- Respond to all follow up requests for information sent by email or by telephone contact.

- Keep the School well informed, in cases of lengthy absence. Parents/carers will be encouraged to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a child's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the School.

- Provide medical evidence indicating attendance at the dentist, doctor or optician before the arranged appointment unless an emergency situation has arisen. Whenever possible all appointments should be made outside of school hours.

- Ensure that their child arrives at school on time each day.

- Let the School know if their child is going to be late, e.g. if a car breaks down; if an urgent appointment has been made.

- Understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality and promote this with their child, aiming for 100% attendance each year.

- Provide written explanations of any absence and medical evidence for whole day appointments as well as medical evidence for persistent absence from school due to alleged illness.

- Only request leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance.

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 Head Teacher creates an offence in law.

We expect students to:

- 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.

Share effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools

One of the most successful approaches to improving attendance is the sharing of effective practice between schools. As a school we will therefore, access regular opportunities for our staff to learn from other's attendance expertise and share effective interventions. As a minimum this may include, sharing exemplar resources and documents such as communications to pupils and parents, regular networking or Q&A sessions, and topical best practice training or webinars.

The Governing Board: The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

Understanding types of absence coding

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the School as AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing. Medical evidence may also be required in the form of a copy of a prescription, GP note, etc. Types of absence that are likely to be authorised are illness, medical or dental appointments that unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies.

Examples of types of absence that are **not** considered reasonable and which will **not** be authorised under any circumstances are:

- Going shopping with parents, Birthdays
- Minding other younger children in the family
- Sibling unwell
- Staying at home because other members in the family are unwell
- Day trips and holidays in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances that have been approved by the Head Teacher/Principal
- Arriving at school too late to get a present mark (After the close of registration)
- Truancy
- Death of a pet

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.

Suspension from School

With effect from the 1st September 2022, any pupil who has been suspended from school, and provision has been arranged, if the student does not attend the provision this shall be recorded as an unauthorised absence. This may result in further action taken by the school, please see also penalty notice section.

SCHOOL PROCEDURES:

Registration and punctuality procedures

Legally the register must be taken twice a day, once at the start of the school day at 8.45am, and once during the afternoon session *at 1pm*. The registers will remain open for 15 minutes. Pupils arriving before the end of the Registration period will be coded L (Late before registers close) which is a present mark. The number of minutes late will be recorded in the register. Pupils arriving after the registers have closed will be coded U (Late after registers close) which counts as an unauthorised absence for the whole morning session.

Only the Head Teacher can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, until a satisfactory reason is provided. If the reason given is not satisfactory in the school's view, and/or evidence of the reason cannot be provided, the absence will be coded as O (Unauthorised absent). It is reasonable for

members of staff to ask questions regarding a child's attendance and punctuality and when appropriate, request evidence to support the reason for absence from school.

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other pupils. Ongoing and repeated lateness after the close of registration is considered as **unauthorised absence and will be subject to legal action**

If a pupil's attendance falls below 95%, parents will be contacted regarding their child's school attendance.

Children at Primary School:

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.

First Day Absence Contact

Parents are expected to notify the school if their child is unable to attend for any unavoidable reason, such as illness. Parents are requested to inform the school before 9.10am if their child is too unwell to attend school. If the school does not receive notification, it will text/telephone on the first day of absence, to try to ascertain the reason. First day contact will be carried out as early as possible in the school day, in order to notify parents whose children may have set off for school, but not arrived, as quickly as possible. If the child is still too unwell to attend the following day, parents will need to telephone the school again before 9.10am to inform them of this second day of absence. If a child is absent for longer than 3 days due to ill health, medical evidence will need to be provided in order that the school can authorise the absence. On return to school, the parent must put in writing the reason for absence in addition to telephoning the school on the days of absence.

Continuing Absence Procedures

If after 3 days of absence, your child has not been seen and contact has not been made with the school, we will make all reasonable enquiries to establish contact with parents/carers and the child, including making enquiries to known friends and wider family. In the event of an absence of three or more days without contact from the family, a home visit will be made, either by the Attendance and Welfare Officer's or other local authority professional, to ascertain the safety and well- being of the child and in addition to the reason for absence from school.

The Attendance Officer shall take advice from the schools designated safeguarding leads for any absences incurring more than 10 days.

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 education (CME)*. The Attendance Advisory Service staff at Portsmouth City Council 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.

Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs
School will work together with the local authority and other relevant professionals to ensure any child who is going to be absent for longer than 15 days due to medical reasons either consecutively or accumulatively, will have access to relevant and appropriate education. This includes Public Exam provision and the education of siblings where the family have had to travel and stay away from the home. Please see the Trust Policy *Supporting Children with Medical Needs policy for further information available on the school website.*

Reluctant attenders/school refusal
You should do everything possible to encourage your child to attend. However, if the reason for their reluctance appears to be school-based, such as difficulty with work, or bullying, please discuss this with the school at the earliest opportunity and the school will do everything possible to resolve. Colluding with your child's reluctance to attend is likely to make the matter worse.

School refusal/school phobia is a psychological condition that usually has been medically diagnosed. Other arrangements may be put in place for a child with genuine school phobia.

Mental Health, Emotionally Based School Avoidance and Wellbeing

Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) is a broad umbrella term used to describe a group of children and young people who have severe difficulty in attending school due to emotional factors, often resulting in prolonged absences from school.

The impact of EBSA on children is far-reaching, it has been linked to seriously hampering children's psychological, social, and academic performance and subsequently performance in exams and employment opportunities.

Parents who have concerns about their child's mental wellbeing can contact our school's Pastoral Team or Designated Safeguarding Leads for further information on the support available. Many children will experience normal but difficult emotions that make them nervous about attending school, such as worries about friendships, schoolwork, exams or variable mood. **It is important to note that these pupils are still expected to attend school regularly.** Summary_of_responsibilities_where_a_mental_health_issue_is_affecting_attendance.pdf

Parents should also contact their GP or the NHS Helpline by phoning telephone number 111 for advice if they are concerned. In case of emergency parents should dial 999.

Section 19 of the Education Act 1996 (as amended by Section 3 of the Children Schools and Families Act 2010) provides a duty on local authorities of maintained schools to arrange suitable education for those who would not receive such education unless such arrangements are made for them. This education must be full time, or such part time education as is in a child's best interests because of their health needs.

Reduced Timetables

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 reduced timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package. (Working Together to Improve School Attendance).

A reduced timetable must only be in place for the shortest time necessary and not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement should have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend fulltime, either at school or alternative provision. There should also be formal arrangements in place for regularly reviewing it with the pupil and their parents. In agreeing to a reduced timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must treat absence as authorised and code in the register as a C, which is an authorised absence.

The school will share the relevant reduced timetable paperwork with the local authority inclusion team who will ensure that the reasons for the timetable are necessary and proportionate.

Frequent/Persistent Absence Procedures

Regular monitoring of the registers and analysis of data, will be made by the Attendance Officer, to identify pupils with a pattern of absences that may lead to Persistent Absence (PA) and Severe Absence. The Attendance Officer will be responsible for putting in place actions for each pupil of concern. Initially the school will try to resolve the problem with parents/carers and this may involve requesting medical evidence in order for the school to authorise any further absence due to ill health and/or an Attendance clinic with the Attendance Officer and relevant staff or outside professionals. However, if the pattern continues the school will make a referral to the Local Authority. Portsmouth City Council and Attendance Improvement Coordinator will communicate regularly to discuss any attendance and punctuality concerns the school may have and review any current cases referred to the LA.

Parents/Carers of children whose attendance drops to below 96%, will receive a percentage information letter. In the event that there is then further absence from school, a letter to parents will now request that medical evidence is provided by the parent to enable the school to authorise any further absences due to ill health. Further unauthorised absence will result in a parental meeting to allow a plan of support to encourage regular attendance. Further unauthorised absence totalling 10 or more unauthorised sessions where support is not successful, or not engaged with, will result in a referral to the Local Authority for consideration of a Fixed Penalty Notice/Court action.

Consequences of Poor Attendance /Punctuality

For pupils whose attendance and/or punctuality fails to improve, after a range of interventions and support measures have been tried by the school, the ultimate consequences may be one of the following:

4) From February 2004, new measures introduced in the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 have made it possible that certain cases of unauthorised absence from school amounting to 10 sessions (5 days) can be dealt with by way of a Penalty Notice. These

Penalty Notices require the recipient to pay a fine of £60 per parent and per child, if paid within 21 days, or £120 if paid within 28 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

5) The Local authority may initiate court action under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, which could lead to fines of up to £2,500, or even imprisonment.
6) In some cases, action may be taken under the Children Act 1989 to protect the welfare and development of the child.

Children who are absent from education:

Children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation - particularly county lines. It is therefore important that the school responds to persistently absent pupils and children missing education as it supports identifying such abuse, and in the case of absent pupils, helps prevent the risk of them becoming a child missing education in the future.

This includes when problems are first emerging but also where children are already known to local authority children's social care and need a social worker (such as a child who is a child in need or who has a child protection plan, or is a looked after child), where being absent from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community. Further information and support, includes:

• Guidance on school attendance 'Working together to improve school attendance' including information on how schools should work with local authority children's services where school absence indicates safeguarding concerns.

• Information regarding schools' duties regarding children missing education, including information schools must provide to the local authority when removing a child from the school roll at standard and non-standard transition points, can be found in the department's statutory guidance: children-missing-education

• general information and advice for schools and colleges can be found in the Government's missing-children-and-adults-strategy

Leavers and children who cease to attend without prior notice (CME) procedures

Parents must inform the school in writing if they are planning to remove their child from Copnor Primary School. This must include the details of the new school the child is planning to attend or that they are exercising their right to educate their child otherwise. All Education Otherwise information will be passed into the Portsmouth Inclusions Team at Portsmouth City Council, who are responsible for monitoring all children who are educated otherwise. If after twenty day's continuous absence the school has been unable to ascertain the whereabouts of a pupil, they will refer the child's details to the Local Authority, in order to perform further checks that are not available to school.

Non starters

Pupils who are allocated places but fail to start are also treated as CME. If the school has been unable to make contact with the family during a twenty-day period after their expected arrival, they will refer the pupils to the Local Authority for further checks.

Vulnerable Children

Children who are Looked After (LAC), subject to a Child Protection Plan (CP) or Children in Need (CIN) will be treated with highest priority and will be known to the Attendance Officer. Any unexplained absence will be followed up immediately by a telephone call to the home. Any outside professionals who are also working with the children and family will also be notified of the absence (Social worker, Portsmouth LA etc). Children with Special Educational Needs (SEND) will be treated with similar priority in order that their time in school can be maximised, and their learning supported to the greatest extent possible.

Traveller Absence

The school will authorise the absence of a Traveller pupil of no fixed abode who is unable to attend school because they are travelling with their parent who is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place. This is subject to certain limits, depending on the child's age and number of sessions absent. The school will discuss cases individually with Traveller parents as necessary. Parents should let the school know of their plans as far in advance as possible. Authorised Traveller absence will be recorded appropriately in the register.

To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children, wherever possible, the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling for occupational purposes. In which case the child will be dual registered at that school and this school, which is their 'main' school.

Children from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities whose families do not travel for occupational purposes are expected to register at school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly.

Religious Observance

Our school acknowledges the multi-faith nature of the school community and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside of school holidays or weekends. In accordance with the law, the school will authorise one day's absence for a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs. Should any additional days be taken, these will be recorded in the register as unauthorised absence. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body, to confirm whether the day is set apart

USEFUL INFORMATION FOR

This is a successful school, and you and your child play a part in making it so. We aim to encourage all members of the school community to reach out for excellence. For children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly, and your child should be at school in good time for the start of the school day, every day the school is open, unless they are genuinely ill or there is some other unavoidable reason.

Some children are reluctant to go to school and say they do not feel well. It is for you as the adult to judge whether they are genuinely unwell, or just unwilling. It will be better for them in the long run to go to school rather than avoid it, as days off mean they will fall further behind and make them even more reluctant. Your job as the parent is to encourage them to attend.

Medical evidence may be any of the following:

Hospital discharge letter
Note from your GP
Copy of your appointment card from your GP
Copy of the prescription or copy of the medication label
Note from a pharmacist
Note from any other health care professional (e.g. physiotherapist, optician, podiatrist etc

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

Contact the Attendance Officer immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with schoolwork, 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. If child brings 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!

EARLY HELP

Early identification of needs and support required can prevent concerns escalating. Early help plans should have focused outcomes for children and families, and should be actively planned with them. Plans should deliver evidence-based interventions using single agency or common assessment frameworks, and clear thresholds for specific agency intervention e.g. Social care, housing, mental health services. Early Help plans should be regularly reviewed.

We see how early help can transform a child in school, not just what they are able to achieve academically, but how their personal, social and emotional development can thrive with the right support. We are committed to early help because it is the right thing to do for our children to give them the best start in life.

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

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is YOUR legal responsibility and permitting absence without good reason is an offence in law and may result in legal action being taken, or a Penalty Notice being issued.

Any absence affects the child's learning, and the more they miss the harder it will be for them to catch up. Research has shown that for every percentage point of absence, attainment is significantly lower.

There is extensive research linking poor school attendance and exclusion with crime and anti-social behaviour, and risk of exploitation by unsuitable adults. For this reason, failure to attend regularly will be regarded as a safeguarding issue.

Understanding absence percentages: You may wonder why a school would be concerned if your child's attendance is 95%. This may make it easier to understand:

95% equates to half a day off every two weeks
90% equates to a day off every two weeks
85% equates to one and a half days off every

Attendance during school year	**Days lost in a year**	**Which is approximately**	**Approximate number of lessons missed**
95%	9.5 Days	2 Weeks	20 sessions
90%	19 Days	4 Weeks	40 sessions

Even the brightest and most enthusiastic learner will find it hard to keep up with their work with these levels of absence. That is why we encourage the highest attendance possible.

Effects of Late Arrival at School: When a child arrives late to school, they miss important events like assembly, teacher instructions and introductions. Children often also feel embarrassed at having to enter the classroom late.

The table below indicates how frequent lateness can add up to a considerable amount of learning being lost. This can seriously disadvantage children and disrupt the learning of others.

Minutes late per Day	Equates to Days of Teaching Lost in one Year	Which means this number of lessons missed
5 mins	3 Days	6 sessions
10 mins	6 Days	12 sessions
15 mins	9 Days	18 sessions

Persistent Absence

A pupil is classed as a persistent absentee (PA) when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year, **for whatever reason, whether it be authorised or unauthorised, or a mixture of both.** Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to a child's educational prospects and we need parents' full support and encouragement to tackle it. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system, and we combine this with tracking academic progress to assess the effect on the pupil's attainment. 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 their learning.

Severe Absence

Particular focus should be given by all partners to pupils who are absent from school more than they are present (those missing 50% or more of school). These severely absent pupils may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and as such are likely to need more intensive support across a range of partners. A concerted effort is therefore needed across all relevant services to prioritise them. All partners should work together to make this group the top priority for support – this may include specific support with attendance or a whole family plan, but it may also include consideration for an education, health and care plan or an alternative form of educational provision where necessary to overcome the barriers to being in school. If all avenues of support have been facilitated by schools, local authorities, and other partners, and the appropriate educational support or placements (e.g. an education, health and care plan) have been provided but severe absence for unauthorised reasons continues, it is likely to constitute neglect. Schools and local authorities should be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues in these cases and where these remain, conduct a full children's social care assessment.

Reporting your child's absence

If your child is absent, you must:

- Contact the school as early as possible, but before 9.00 am, on the first day of absence, either by telephone, email to attendance@copnorprimary.co.uk.

Penalty Notices

Penalty Notices can now be issued for a range of attendance-related offences, including unauthorised term-time holidays, poor attendance and poor punctuality, a child coming to the attention of the police in school time, or located twice or more in truancy sweeps in 6 months.

Participating in a performance
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 Headteachers discretion as to whether to authorise this (remains satisfied that this will not have a negative impact on the pupils education) and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs.

Participating in a supervised sporting activity
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 Headteachers 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.

Applications for leave of absence in term time (includes Holidays in term time)
All pupils are encouraged to attend school every day of the 190 days that school is open. The register is called twice daily and pupils are expected to be present for the 380 sessions, or half days. That leaves 175 days for family holidays, shopping trips and other needs.

As a school we prioritise teaching and learning, therefore, in accordance with the local and National guidelines, Copnor Primary School does not authorise holidays during term time. Permission, however, may be granted only in exceptional circumstances, when the benefit of the absence far outweighs the benefit of school attendance. A request for such absence should be made in writing to the Headteacher. When requesting leave of absence during term time may you be reminded that 10 days of absence equates to 20 sessions missed schooling, which is equivalent to 5.2% of absence.

Please note: any child who has taken a term time holiday will be required to provide medical evidence for any further absences during the remainder of the academic year. Any absences due to ill health either directly before or after a school holiday will need to provide medical evidence in order for the school to authorise the absence.

In the case of all unauthorised leave of absences, incurring 10 or more unauthorised sessions (5 days), an application for a Fixed Penalty Notice will be made to the local authority.

Notes:

- From February 2004, measures introduced in the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 have made it possible that certain cases of unauthorised absence from school amounting to 10 sessions (5 days) can be dealt with by way of a Penalty Notice.
- From August 2024 a new National Framework will come into force for issuing Penalty Notices Copnor Primary School will follow Portsmouth City Council's code of conduct. Penalty Notices are issued per parent per child and for a first offence £160 payable with 28 days. If paid within 21 days the Penalty Notice is reduced to £80. If within 3 years of your first penalty notice you commit a second offence the Penalty Notice will be £160 payable within 28 days (no reduction), and if a third offence a prosecution under s444 of the Education Act 1996.
- Non-payment of these fines will result in application to Criminal Court.

- If a Parent/Carer requests for a term holiday is refused, but the holiday taken, it will be classified as unauthorised absence and may be subject to a penalty notice being served to each parent/ carer that resides with the child by Portsmouth City Council.
- A formal application must be made in writing, IN ADVANCE and returned to the Attendance Officer.
- Permission sought after a holiday has been taken will not be granted.
- If the parent/ carer removes a student from their education for the purpose of a suspected holiday without advising the school this will be referred to the schools designated safeguarding leads. On the third day of absence a letter will be sent requesting that the parent/ carer contacts the school within 2 days to confirm the reason for absence. No response will assume to be a holiday absence and penalty notice(s) may be issued.

The Schools policy is not to authorise holidays during term time. Any applications for leave in term time must be made in writing to the Head Teacher. There is no automatic right to term time leave of absence, and your request is likely to be declined except in the most exceptional circumstances. Each application will be considered on its own merit, and the attendance record(s) of the child/ren concerned will be taken into account when making a decision.

Home Educated/Education Otherwise

On receipt of written notification to educate otherwise, parents will be invited into the school to discuss the reason for this decision and to seek a way forward that may enable the child to remain at the school if parents are in agreement. If the child does not remain at the school and is educated otherwise, the school must inform the pupils local authority that the pupil is to be deleted from the admission register.

Your contact details

Please make sure that the contact details you have given to the school are kept up to date, so that in the event of an accident, emergency or any other need to contact you we have the correct details.

Amendments to the Admissions Register and Attendance Register

Every amendment made to the admissions register and the attendance register must include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date on which the amendment was made and the name and position of the person who made the amendment.

Record preservation

School registers are legal documents. We will ensure compliance with attendance regulations by keeping attendance records for at least three years. Every entry in the admission register and attendance register must be preserved for a period of three years after the date on which the entry was made. 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).

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

From 19 August 2024, the new National Framework for issuing penalty notices will apply

Per Parent, Per Child

E.g. 2 parents taking 3 children out of school for a leave of absence in term time would incur 3 penalty notices for each parent
S.576 Education Act 1996 defines a parent as all natural parents, not a natural parent but has parental responsibility, or has care of a child.

National Threshold

There will be a single national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools of 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-week school period.
These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absences.
The 10-week school period can span different terms or school years.

1

First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for a leave of absence in term time or irregular school attendance the Penalty Notice will be charged at:
£160 per parent, per child, to be paid within 28 days.
This is reduced to £80 per parent per child if paid within the first 21 days.
(Unpaid Penalty Notices after 28 days will result in a prosecution)

2

Second Offence

(within 3 years of the first offence)

Where it has been deemed appropriate to issue a second Penalty Notice to the same parent for the same pupil within 3 years of the first notice, the second Penalty Notice will be charge at:

£160 per parent per child to be paid within 28 days (there is no reduction for this)

(Unpaid Penalty Notices after 28 days will result in a prosecution)

3

Third Offence and any Further Offences

(within 3 years of the first offence)

The third time that any offence is committed and a sanction is requested for either a leave of absence or irregular attendance, a Penalty Notice will not be issued, the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates Court. Prosecution can result in criminal records and fines up to £2,500.

Cases found guilty in the Magistrates Court can show on the parent's future DBS certificate, due to 'failure to safeguard a child's education'.

Attendance falls below 96% - a first contact (%) letter is sent

Further absence without medical evidence occurs - a letter requiring medical evidence is sent

Further absence without medical evidence - Parent is invited into school for a clinic/home visit is made. A follow-up letter confirming matters discussed and decisions made must be sent to the parent

Further unauthorised absences occur - a referral is made to the Local Authority. This should be as near to 10 sessions as possible

EXPECT

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

↓

MONITOR

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

↓

LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

↓

FACILITATE SUPPORT

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

↓

FORMALISE SUPPORT

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.

↓

ENFORCE

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

ATTENDANCE POLICY SEPTEMBER 2024 - 25

Name	Role
Matt Johnson	Headteacher
Matt Johnson and Lizzie Shaxkleford	Designated Safeguarding Leads
Janette Bailey	Attendance Officer
Sally Walker	Deputy Safeguarding Lead

Created: ***July 2024***
Ratified by Governors: ***July 2024***
Next Review: ***July 2025***

For the purpose of this policy, a parent means:
• all natural parents, whether they are married or not;
• any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and,
• any person who has care of a child or young person (i.e. lives with and looks after the child).

Compulsory School Age: A child must start full-time education once they reach compulsory school age. This is on 31 December, 31 March or 31 August following their fifth birthday - whichever comes first. A child can leave school on the last Friday in June if they will be 16 by the end of the summer holidays. (See attendance coding guide in 'School attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities') They must then do one of the following until they're 18:

♣ stay in full-time education, for example at a college

♣ start an apprenticeship or traineeship

♣ spend 20 hours or more a week working or volunteering, while in part-time education or training

Legislation and guidance 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. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance: Part 6 of The Education Act 1996 Part 3 of The Education Act 2002 Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006 The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments) The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

The Law Relating to attendance and safeguarding: Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that: "the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable: (a) to age, ability and aptitude and (b) to any special educational needs he/she may have either at school or otherwise"

Rationale

Introduction

This Policy represents our commitment to striving for 100% attendance, which is achievable, and achieved by many children. It sets out the principles, procedures and practice the school will

undertake. Strategies, sanctions and possible legal consequences of poor Attendance and Punctuality are also detailed, as well as rewards for, and benefits of good attendance. This policy will be reviewed, amended as necessary and published annually in accordance with current legislation and guidance. The DfE guidance *Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2022* states that attendance to school is "essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances".

Principles

- Receiving a full-time, suitable education is a child's legal entitlement.
- It is a parents /carers' legal responsibility to ensure this happens.
- Attending school regularly aids intellectual, social and emotional development and is essential if children are to benefit fully from their school life.
- Attending school regularly safeguards the welfare of children whilst they are not in the care of their parents.
- All children whose attendance is poor will be treated as vulnerable.

These principles are enshrined in British law, within the Education Act 1996, the Children Act 1989, and other associated pieces of legislation.

Please click here for the DfE Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance

Aims of the Policy

- To ensure that all children attend school regularly and punctually, in order to maximise their educational achievement and social development. *Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%.*
- To discharge the schools duty to safeguard its pupils to the best of its ability.
- To ensure that all those responsible for children's education, including parents, carers, staff and governors understand and accept their responsibilities in relation to attendance.
- To minimise absence from school, thereby reducing levels of persistent absence.
- To improve the life chances of the children attending Copnor Primary School and prepare them to be fully contributing citizens when they reach adulthood. *Regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school, higher education and employment or training.*
-

Attendance is everyone's business

Policy objectives:

- To safeguard the welfare, health, social and emotional development of children
- To reduce persistent/severe absence
- To reduce or eliminate term time holidays/leave of absence
- To promote commitment to education and high achievement
- To maximise the potential of every individual pupil
- Ensure robust systems are in place to monitor and manage attendance and punctuality throughout the school

Operating the Policy

Promoting Attendance

Copnor Primary School will use all possible opportunities to promote the importance of good attendance and punctuality. These will include the home/school agreement, newsletters, rewards and incentives for good or significantly improving attendance. The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child.

The School will:

- Provide and promote a welcoming and positive atmosphere so that children feel safe, and know that their presence is valued.

- Raise awareness of the importance of full attendance and punctuality, using newsletters and other communications to parents; making attendance a high priority.

- Employ a key member of staff with responsibility for monitoring, improving and evaluating school attendance. At Copnor Primary School, this role is fulfilled by Janette Bailey Attendance Officer - attendance@copnorprimary.co.uk

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

- Using data to improve attendance School will provide regular attendance reports to appropriate school staff/SLT etc to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies reducing persistent and severe absence

- Ensure there is a Senior Leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance to school is Matt Johnson - Headteacher
- Encourage parents to fully support the policy as a vital contribution towards their child's education. All new parents are introduced to the Policy and information on attendance in the School Prospectus. It is also accessible on the school website.

- Encourage the children to have a positive attitude towards attendance and punctuality so that they can retain this into adult life.

- Celebrate good attendance by Termly awards/rewards

- Ensure that attendance is effectively monitored, using Arbor management information system, and absences are followed up promptly in accordance with this policy.

- Communicate effectively with other agencies (Portsmouth City council, School Health, Traveller Education, Early Help, Social Services etc).

- Meet the legal requirements with the use of correct codes for absence, with particular reference to authorised and unauthorised absence. *(DFE guidance)*

- Ensure that all staff comply with the school policy and deal consistently with absence and punctuality.

- Provide training for staff in all matters of attendance

- Ensure attendance information is available for Governors and parents.

- Share good practice with other schools.

- Have procedures in place to help children settle back to school after a long absence. 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. If appropriate work will be sent home during the absence with teacher feedback.

- Liaise with the LA and other relevant agencies promptly for those children whose health needs do not allow them to attend school.

- Make every effort to meet the individual needs of the pupils with SEND

<u>Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.</u>

The school will:

- • Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- • Inform parents when their child's attendance becomes a concern
- • Send letters as needed to advise parents/carers of this and offer support. This letter acknowledges the pupil's circumstances but highlights the importance of good attendance.
- • Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- • Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance.

We expect the parent to:

- Provide up to date contact numbers and changes of address.

- Provide details of at least two contacts for emergency use.

- Notify the School when their child is unable to attend, with a reason, on the first day of the absence.

- Telephone the School after the first day of absence to advise the School if the absence is continuing.

- Respond to all follow up requests for information sent by email or by telephone contact.

- Keep the School well informed, in cases of lengthy absence. Parents/carers will be encouraged to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a child's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the School.

- Provide medical evidence indicating attendance at the dentist, doctor or optician before the arranged appointment unless an emergency situation has arisen. Whenever possible all appointments should be made outside of school hours.

- Ensure that their child arrives at school on time each day.

- Let the School know if their child is going to be late, e.g. if a car breaks down; if an urgent appointment has been made.

- Understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality and promote this with their child, aiming for 100% attendance each year.

- Provide written explanations of any absence and medical evidence for whole day appointments as well as medical evidence for persistent absence from school due to alleged illness.

- Only request leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance.

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 Head Teacher creates an offence in law.

We expect students to:

- 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.

Share effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools

One of the most successful approaches to improving attendance is the sharing of effective practice between schools. As a school we will therefore, access regular opportunities for our staff to learn from other's attendance expertise and share effective interventions. As a minimum this may include, sharing exemplar resources and documents such as communications to pupils and parents, regular networking or Q&A sessions, and topical best practice training or webinars.

The Governing Board: The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

Understanding types of absence coding

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the School as AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing. Medical evidence may also be required in the form of a copy of a prescription, GP note, etc. Types of absence that are likely to be authorised are illness, medical or dental appointments that unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies.

Examples of types of absence that are **not** considered reasonable and which will **not** be authorised under any circumstances are:

- Going shopping with parents, Birthdays
- Minding other younger children in the family
- Sibling unwell
- Staying at home because other members in the family are unwell
- Day trips and holidays in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances that have been approved by the Head Teacher/Principal
- Arriving at school too late to get a present mark (After the close of registration)
- Truancy
- Death of a pet

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.

Suspension from School

With effect from the 1st September 2022, any pupil who has been suspended from school, and provision has been arranged, if the student does not attend the provision this shall be recorded as an unauthorised absence. This may result in further action taken by the school, please see also penalty notice section.

SCHOOL PROCEDURES:

Registration and punctuality procedures

Legally the register must be taken twice a day, once at the start of the school day at 8.45am, and once during the afternoon session *at 1pm*. The registers will remain open for 15 minutes. Pupils arriving before the end of the Registration period will be coded L (Late before registers close) which is a present mark. The number of minutes late will be recorded in the register. Pupils arriving after the registers have closed will be coded U (Late after registers close) which counts as an unauthorised absence for the whole morning session.

Only the Head Teacher can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, until a satisfactory reason is provided. If the reason given is not satisfactory in the school's view, and/or evidence of the reason cannot be provided, the absence will be coded as O (Unauthorised absent). It is reasonable for

members of staff to ask questions regarding a child's attendance and punctuality and when appropriate, request evidence to support the reason for absence from school.

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other pupils. Ongoing and repeated lateness after the close of registration is considered as **unauthorised absence and will be subject to legal action**

If a pupil's attendance falls below 95%, parents will be contacted regarding their child's school attendance.

Children at Primary School:

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.

First Day Absence Contact

Parents are expected to notify the school if their child is unable to attend for any unavoidable reason, such as illness. Parents are requested to inform the school before 9.10am if their child is too unwell to attend school. If the school does not receive notification, it will text/telephone on the first day of absence, to try to ascertain the reason. First day contact will be carried out as early as possible in the school day, in order to notify parents whose children may have set off for school, but not arrived, as quickly as possible. If the child is still too unwell to attend the following day, parents will need to telephone the school again before 9.10am to inform them of this second day of absence. If a child is absent for longer than 3 days due to ill health, medical evidence will need to be provided in order that the school can authorise the absence. On return to school, the parent must put in writing the reason for absence in addition to telephoning the school on the days of absence.

Continuing Absence Procedures

If after 3 days of absence, your child has not been seen and contact has not been made with the school, we will make all reasonable enquiries to establish contact with parents/carers and the child, including making enquiries to known friends and wider family. In the event of an absence of three or more days without contact from the family, a home visit will be made, either by the Attendance and Welfare Officer's or other local authority professional, to ascertain the safety and well- being of the child and in addition to the reason for absence from school.

The Attendance Officer shall take advice from the schools designated safeguarding leads for any absences incurring more than 10 days.

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 education (CME)*. The Attendance Advisory Service staff at Portsmouth City Council 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.

Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs
School will work together with the local authority and other relevant professionals to ensure any child who is going to be absent for longer than 15 days due to medical reasons either consecutively or accumulatively, will have access to relevant and appropriate education. This includes Public Exam provision and the education of siblings where the family have had to travel and stay away from the home. Please see the Trust Policy *Supporting Children with Medical Needs policy for further information available on the school website.*

Reluctant attenders/school refusal
You should do everything possible to encourage your child to attend. However, if the reason for their reluctance appears to be school-based, such as difficulty with work, or bullying, please discuss this with the school at the earliest opportunity and the school will do everything possible to resolve. Colluding with your child's reluctance to attend is likely to make the matter worse.

School refusal/school phobia is a psychological condition that usually has been medically diagnosed. Other arrangements may be put in place for a child with genuine school phobia.

Mental Health, Emotionally Based School Avoidance and Wellbeing

Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) is a broad umbrella term used to describe a group of children and young people who have severe difficulty in attending school due to emotional factors, often resulting in prolonged absences from school.

The impact of EBSA on children is far-reaching, it has been linked to seriously hampering children's psychological, social, and academic performance and subsequently performance in exams and employment opportunities.

Parents who have concerns about their child's mental wellbeing can contact our school's Pastoral Team or Designated Safeguarding Leads for further information on the support available. Many children will experience normal but difficult emotions that make them nervous about attending school, such as worries about friendships, schoolwork, exams or variable mood. **It is important to note that these pupils are still expected to attend school regularly.** Summary_of_responsibilities_where_a_mental_health_issue_is_affecting_attendance.pdf

Parents should also contact their GP or the NHS Helpline by phoning telephone number 111 for advice if they are concerned. In case of emergency parents should dial 999.

Section 19 of the Education Act 1996 (as amended by Section 3 of the Children Schools and Families Act 2010) provides a duty on local authorities of maintained schools to arrange suitable education for those who would not receive such education unless such arrangements are made for them. This education must be full time, or such part time education as is in a child's best interests because of their health needs.

Reduced Timetables

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 reduced timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package. (Working Together to Improve School Attendance).

A reduced timetable must only be in place for the shortest time necessary and not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement should have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend fulltime, either at school or alternative provision. There should also be formal arrangements in place for regularly reviewing it with the pupil and their parents. In agreeing to a reduced timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must treat absence as authorised and code in the register as a C, which is an authorised absence.

The school will share the relevant reduced timetable paperwork with the local authority inclusion team who will ensure that the reasons for the timetable are necessary and proportionate.

Frequent/Persistent Absence Procedures

Regular monitoring of the registers and analysis of data, will be made by the Attendance Officer, to identify pupils with a pattern of absences that may lead to Persistent Absence (PA) and Severe Absence. The Attendance Officer will be responsible for putting in place actions for each pupil of concern. Initially the school will try to resolve the problem with parents/carers and this may involve requesting medical evidence in order for the school to authorise any further absence due to ill health and/or an Attendance clinic with the Attendance Officer and relevant staff or outside professionals. However, if the pattern continues the school will make a referral to the Local Authority. Portsmouth City Council and Attendance Improvement Coordinator will communicate regularly to discuss any attendance and punctuality concerns the school may have and review any current cases referred to the LA.

Parents/Carers of children whose attendance drops to below 96%, will receive a percentage information letter. In the event that there is then further absence from school, a letter to parents will now request that medical evidence is provided by the parent to enable the school to authorise any further absences due to ill health. Further unauthorised absence will result in a parental meeting to allow a plan of support to encourage regular attendance. Further unauthorised absence totalling 10 or more unauthorised sessions where support is not successful, or not engaged with, will result in a referral to the Local Authority for consideration of a Fixed Penalty Notice/Court action.

Consequences of Poor Attendance /Punctuality

For pupils whose attendance and/or punctuality fails to improve, after a range of interventions and support measures have been tried by the school, the ultimate consequences may be one of the following:

7) From February 2004, new measures introduced in the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 have made it possible that certain cases of unauthorised absence from school amounting to 10 sessions (5 days) can be dealt with by way of a Penalty Notice. These

Penalty Notices require the recipient to pay a fine of £60 per parent and per child, if paid within 21 days, or £120 if paid within 28 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

8) The Local authority may initiate court action under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, which could lead to fines of up to £2,500, or even imprisonment.
9) In some cases, action may be taken under the Children Act 1989 to protect the welfare and development of the child.

Children who are absent from education:

Children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation - particularly county lines. It is therefore important that the school responds to persistently absent pupils and children missing education as it supports identifying such abuse, and in the case of absent pupils, helps prevent the risk of them becoming a child missing education in the future.

This includes when problems are first emerging but also where children are already known to local authority children's social care and need a social worker (such as a child who is a child in need or who has a child protection plan, or is a looked after child), where being absent from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community. Further information and support, includes:

• Guidance on school attendance 'Working together to improve school attendance' including information on how schools should work with local authority children's services where school absence indicates safeguarding concerns.

• Information regarding schools' duties regarding children missing education, including information schools must provide to the local authority when removing a child from the school roll at standard and non-standard transition points, can be found in the department's statutory guidance: children-missing-education

• general information and advice for schools and colleges can be found in the Government's missing-children-and-adults-strategy

Leavers and children who cease to attend without prior notice (CME) procedures

Parents must inform the school in writing if they are planning to remove their child from Copnor Primary School. This must include the details of the new school the child is planning to attend or that they are exercising their right to educate their child otherwise. All Education Otherwise information will be passed into the Portsmouth Inclusions Team at Portsmouth City Council, who are responsible for monitoring all children who are educated otherwise. If after twenty day's continuous absence the school has been unable to ascertain the whereabouts of a pupil, they will refer the child's details to the Local Authority, in order to perform further checks that are not available to school.

Non starters

Pupils who are allocated places but fail to start are also treated as CME. If the school has been unable to make contact with the family during a twenty-day period after their expected arrival, they will refer the pupils to the Local Authority for further checks.

Vulnerable Children

Children who are Looked After (LAC), subject to a Child Protection Plan (CP) or Children in Need (CIN) will be treated with highest priority and will be known to the Attendance Officer. Any unexplained absence will be followed up immediately by a telephone call to the home. Any outside professionals who are also working with the children and family will also be notified of the absence (Social worker, Portsmouth LA etc). Children with Special Educational Needs (SEND) will be treated with similar priority in order that their time in school can be maximised, and their learning supported to the greatest extent possible.

Traveller Absence

The school will authorise the absence of a Traveller pupil of no fixed abode who is unable to attend school because they are travelling with their parent who is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place. This is subject to certain limits, depending on the child's age and number of sessions absent. The school will discuss cases individually with Traveller parents as necessary. Parents should let the school know of their plans as far in advance as possible. Authorised Traveller absence will be recorded appropriately in the register.

To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children, wherever possible, the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling for occupational purposes. In which case the child will be dual registered at that school and this school, which is their 'main' school.

Children from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities whose families do not travel for occupational purposes are expected to register at school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly.

Religious Observance

Our school acknowledges the multi-faith nature of the school community and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside of school holidays or weekends. In accordance with the law, the school will authorise one day's absence for a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs. Should any additional days be taken, these will be recorded in the register as unauthorised absence. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body, to confirm whether the day is set apart

USEFUL INFORMATION FOR

This is a successful school, and you and your child play a part in making it so. We aim to encourage all members of the school community to reach out for excellence. For children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly, and your child should be at school in good time for the start of the school day, every day the school is open, unless they are genuinely ill or there is some other unavoidable reason.

Some children are reluctant to go to school and say they do not feel well. It is for you as the adult to judge whether they are genuinely unwell, or just unwilling. It will be better for them in the long run to go to school rather than avoid it, as days off mean they will fall further behind and make them even more reluctant. Your job as the parent is to encourage them to attend.

Medical evidence may be any of the following:

Hospital discharge letter
Note from your GP
Copy of your appointment card from your GP
Copy of the prescription or copy of the medication label
Note from a pharmacist
Note from any other health care professional (e.g. physiotherapist, optician, podiatrist etc

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

Contact the Attendance Officer immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with schoolwork, 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. If child brings 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!

EARLY HELP

Early identification of needs and support required can prevent concerns escalating. Early help plans should have focused outcomes for children and families, and should be actively planned with them. Plans should deliver evidence-based interventions using single agency or common assessment frameworks, and clear thresholds for specific agency intervention e.g. Social care, housing, mental health services. Early Help plans should be regularly reviewed.

We see how early help can transform a child in school, not just what they are able to achieve academically, but how their personal, social and emotional development can thrive with the right support. We are committed to early help because it is the right thing to do for our children to give them the best start in life.

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

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is YOUR legal responsibility and permitting absence without good reason is an offence in law and may result in legal action being taken, or a Penalty Notice being issued.

Any absence affects the child's learning, and the more they miss the harder it will be for them to catch up. Research has shown that for every percentage point of absence, attainment is significantly lower.

There is extensive research linking poor school attendance and exclusion with crime and anti-social behaviour, and risk of exploitation by unsuitable adults. For this reason, failure to attend regularly will be regarded as a safeguarding issue.

Understanding absence percentages: You may wonder why a school would be concerned if your child's attendance is 95%. This may make it easier to understand:

95% equates to half a day off every two weeks
90% equates to a day off every two weeks
85% equates to one and a half days off every

Attendance during school year	**Days lost in a year**	**Which is approximately**	**Approximate number of lessons missed**
95%	9.5 Days	2 Weeks	20 sessions
90%	19 Days	4 Weeks	40 sessions

Even the brightest and most enthusiastic learner will find it hard to keep up with their work with these levels of absence. That is why we encourage the highest attendance possible.

Effects of Late Arrival at School: When a child arrives late to school, they miss important events like assembly, teacher instructions and introductions. Children often also feel embarrassed at having to enter the classroom late.

The table below indicates how frequent lateness can add up to a considerable amount of learning being lost. This can seriously disadvantage children and disrupt the learning of others.

Minutes late per Day	Equates to Days of Teaching Lost in one Year	Which means this number of lessons missed
5 mins	3 Days	6 sessions
10 mins	6 Days	12 sessions
15 mins	9 Days	18 sessions

Persistent Absence

A pupil is classed as a persistent absentee (PA) when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year, **for whatever reason, whether it be authorised or unauthorised, or a mixture of both.** Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to a child's educational prospects and we need parents' full support and encouragement to tackle it. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system, and we combine this with tracking academic progress to assess the effect on the pupil's attainment. 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 their learning.

Severe Absence

Particular focus should be given by all partners to pupils who are absent from school more than they are present (those missing 50% or more of school). These severely absent pupils may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and as such are likely to need more intensive support across a range of partners. A concerted effort is therefore needed across all relevant services to prioritise them. All partners should work together to make this group the top priority for support – this may include specific support with attendance or a whole family plan, but it may also include consideration for an education, health and care plan or an alternative form of educational provision where necessary to overcome the barriers to being in school. If all avenues of support have been facilitated by schools, local authorities, and other partners, and the appropriate educational support or placements (e.g. an education, health and care plan) have been provided but severe absence for unauthorised reasons continues, it is likely to constitute neglect. Schools and local authorities should be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues in these cases and where these remain, conduct a full children's social care assessment.

Reporting your child's absence

If your child is absent, you must:

- Contact the school as early as possible, but before 9.00 am, on the first day of absence, either by telephone, email to attendance@copnorprimary.co.uk.

Penalty Notices

Penalty Notices can now be issued for a range of attendance-related offences, including unauthorised term-time holidays, poor attendance and poor punctuality, a child coming to the attention of the police in school time, or located twice or more in truancy sweeps in 6 months.

Participating in a performance
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 Headteachers discretion as to whether to authorise this (remains satisfied that this will not have a negative impact on the pupils education) and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs.

Participating in a supervised sporting activity
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 Headteachers 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.

Applications for leave of absence in term time (includes Holidays in term time)
All pupils are encouraged to attend school every day of the 190 days that school is open. The register is called twice daily and pupils are expected to be present for the 380 sessions, or half days. That leaves 175 days for family holidays, shopping trips and other needs.

As a school we prioritise teaching and learning, therefore, in accordance with the local and National guidelines, Copnor Primary School does not authorise holidays during term time. Permission, however, may be granted only in exceptional circumstances, when the benefit of the absence far outweighs the benefit of school attendance. A request for such absence should be made in writing to the Headteacher. When requesting leave of absence during term time may you be reminded that 10 days of absence equates to 20 sessions missed schooling, which is equivalent to 5.2% of absence.

Please note: any child who has taken a term time holiday will be required to provide medical evidence for any further absences during the remainder of the academic year. Any absences due to ill health either directly before or after a school holiday will need to provide medical evidence in order for the school to authorise the absence.

In the case of all unauthorised leave of absences, incurring 10 or more unauthorised sessions (5 days), an application for a Fixed Penalty Notice will be made to the local authority.

Notes:

- From February 2004, measures introduced in the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 have made it possible that certain cases of unauthorised absence from school amounting to 10 sessions (5 days) can be dealt with by way of a Penalty Notice.
- From August 2024 a new National Framework will come into force for issuing Penalty Notices Copnor Primary School will follow Portsmouth City Council's code of conduct. Penalty Notices are issued per parent per child and for a first offence £160 payable with 28 days. If paid within 21 days the Penalty Notice is reduced to £80. If within 3 years of your first penalty notice you commit a second offence the Penalty Notice will be £160 payable within 28 days (no reduction), and if a third offence a prosecution under s444 of the Education Act 1996.
- Non-payment of these fines will result in application to Criminal Court.

- If a Parent/Carer requests for a term holiday is refused, but the holiday taken, it will be classified as unauthorised absence and may be subject to a penalty notice being served to each parent/ carer that resides with the child by Portsmouth City Council.
- A formal application must be made in writing, IN ADVANCE and returned to the Attendance Officer.
- Permission sought after a holiday has been taken will not be granted.
- If the parent/ carer removes a student from their education for the purpose of a suspected holiday without advising the school this will be referred to the schools designated safeguarding leads. On the third day of absence a letter will be sent requesting that the parent/ carer contacts the school within 2 days to confirm the reason for absence. No response will assume to be a holiday absence and penalty notice(s) may be issued.

The Schools policy is not to authorise holidays during term time. Any applications for leave in term time must be made in writing to the Head Teacher. There is no automatic right to term time leave of absence, and your request is likely to be declined except in the most exceptional circumstances. Each application will be considered on its own merit, and the attendance record(s) of the child/ren concerned will be taken into account when making a decision.

Home Educated/Education Otherwise

On receipt of written notification to educate otherwise, parents will be invited into the school to discuss the reason for this decision and to seek a way forward that may enable the child to remain at the school if parents are in agreement. If the child does not remain at the school and is educated otherwise, the school must inform the pupils local authority that the pupil is to be deleted from the admission register.

Your contact details

Please make sure that the contact details you have given to the school are kept up to date, so that in the event of an accident, emergency or any other need to contact you we have the correct details.

Amendments to the Admissions Register and Attendance Register

Every amendment made to the admissions register and the attendance register must include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date on which the amendment was made and the name and position of the person who made the amendment.

Record preservation

School registers are legal documents. We will ensure compliance with attendance regulations by keeping attendance records for at least three years. Every entry in the admission register and attendance register must be preserved for a period of three years after the date on which the entry was made. 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).

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

From 19 August 2024, the new National Framework for issuing penalty notices will apply

Per Parent, Per Child

E.g. 2 parents taking 3 children out of school for a leave of absence in term time would incur 3 penalty notices for each parent
S.576 Education Act 1996 defines a parent as all natural parents, not a natural parent but has parental responsibility, or has care of a child.

National Threshold

There will be a single national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools of 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-week school period.
These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absences.
The 10-week school period can span different terms or school years.

1

First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for a leave of absence in term time or irregular school attendance the Penalty Notice will be charged at:
£160 per parent, per child, to be paid within 28 days.
This is reduced to £80 per parent per child if paid within the first 21 days.
(Unpaid Penalty Notices after 28 days will result in a prosecution)

2

Second Offence

(within 3 years of the first offence)

Where it has been deemed appropriate to issue a second Penalty Notice to the same parent for the same pupil within 3 years of the first notice, the second Penalty Notice will be charge at:

£160 per parent per child to be paid within 28 days (there is no reduction for this)

(Unpaid Penalty Notices after 28 days will result in a prosecution)

3

Third Offence and any Further Offences

(within 3 years of the first offence)

The third time that any offence is committed and a sanction is requested for either a leave of absence or irregular attendance, a Penalty Notice will not be issued, the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates Court. Prosecution can result in criminal records and fines up to £2,500.

Cases found guilty in the Magistrates Court can show on the parent's future DBS certificate, due to 'failure to safeguard a child's education'.

Attendance falls below 96% - a first contact (%) letter is sent

Further absence without medical evidence occurs - a letter requiring medical evidence is sent

Further absence without medical evidence - Parent is invited into school for a clinic/home visit is made. A follow-up letter confirming matters discussed and decisions made must be sent to the parent

Further unauthorised absences occur - a referral is made to the Local Authority. This should be as near to 10 sessions as possible

EXPECT

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

↓

MONITOR

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

↓

LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

↓

FACILITATE SUPPORT

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

↓

FORMALISE SUPPORT

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.

↓

ENFORCE

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

Attendance Ladder

ATTENDANCE POLICY SEPTEMBER 2024 - 25

Name	Role
Matt Johnson	Headteacher
Matt Johnson and Lizzie Shaxkleford	Designated Safeguarding Leads
Janette Bailey	Attendance Officer
Sally Walker	Deputy Safeguarding Lead

Created: ***July 2024***
Ratified by Governors: ***July 2024***
Next Review: ***July 2025***

For the purpose of this policy, a parent means:
• all natural parents, whether they are married or not;
• any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and,
• any person who has care of a child or young person (i.e. lives with and looks after the child).

Compulsory School Age: A child must start full-time education once they reach compulsory school age. This is on 31 December, 31 March or 31 August following their fifth birthday - whichever comes first. A child can leave school on the last Friday in June if they will be 16 by the end of the summer holidays. (See attendance coding guide in 'School attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities') They must then do one of the following until they're 18:

♣ stay in full-time education, for example at a college

♣ start an apprenticeship or traineeship

♣ spend 20 hours or more a week working or volunteering, while in part-time education or training

Legislation and guidance 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. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance: Part 6 of The Education Act 1996 Part 3 of The Education Act 2002 Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006 The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments) The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

The Law Relating to attendance and safeguarding: Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that: "the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable: (a) to age, ability and aptitude and (b) to any special educational needs he/she may have either at school or otherwise"

Rationale

Introduction

This Policy represents our commitment to striving for 100% attendance, which is achievable, and achieved by many children. It sets out the principles, procedures and practice the school will

undertake. Strategies, sanctions and possible legal consequences of poor Attendance and Punctuality are also detailed, as well as rewards for, and benefits of good attendance. This policy will be reviewed, amended as necessary and published annually in accordance with current legislation and guidance. The DfE guidance *Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2022* states that attendance to school is "essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances".

Principles

- Receiving a full-time, suitable education is a child's legal entitlement.
- It is a parents /carers' legal responsibility to ensure this happens.
- Attending school regularly aids intellectual, social and emotional development and is essential if children are to benefit fully from their school life.
- Attending school regularly safeguards the welfare of children whilst they are not in the care of their parents.
- All children whose attendance is poor will be treated as vulnerable.

These principles are enshrined in British law, within the Education Act 1996, the Children Act 1989, and other associated pieces of legislation.

Please click here for the DfE Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance

Aims of the Policy

- To ensure that all children attend school regularly and punctually, in order to maximise their educational achievement and social development. *Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%.*
- To discharge the schools duty to safeguard its pupils to the best of its ability.
- To ensure that all those responsible for children's education, including parents, carers, staff and governors understand and accept their responsibilities in relation to attendance.
- To minimise absence from school, thereby reducing levels of persistent absence.
- To improve the life chances of the children attending Copnor Primary School and prepare them to be fully contributing citizens when they reach adulthood. *Regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school, higher education and employment or training.*
-

Attendance is everyone's business

Policy objectives:

- To safeguard the welfare, health, social and emotional development of children
- To reduce persistent/severe absence
- To reduce or eliminate term time holidays/leave of absence
- To promote commitment to education and high achievement
- To maximise the potential of every individual pupil
- Ensure robust systems are in place to monitor and manage attendance and punctuality throughout the school

Operating the Policy

Promoting Attendance

Copnor Primary School will use all possible opportunities to promote the importance of good attendance and punctuality. These will include the home/school agreement, newsletters, rewards and incentives for good or significantly improving attendance. The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child.

The School will:

- Provide and promote a welcoming and positive atmosphere so that children feel safe, and know that their presence is valued.

- Raise awareness of the importance of full attendance and punctuality, using newsletters and other communications to parents; making attendance a high priority.

- Employ a key member of staff with responsibility for monitoring, improving and evaluating school attendance. At Copnor Primary School, this role is fulfilled by Janette Bailey Attendance Officer - attendance@copnorprimary.co.uk

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

- Using data to improve attendance School will provide regular attendance reports to appropriate school staff/SLT etc to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies reducing persistent and severe absence

- Ensure there is a Senior Leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance to school is Matt Johnson - Headteacher
- Encourage parents to fully support the policy as a vital contribution towards their child's education. All new parents are introduced to the Policy and information on attendance in the School Prospectus. It is also accessible on the school website.

- Encourage the children to have a positive attitude towards attendance and punctuality so that they can retain this into adult life.

- Celebrate good attendance by Termly awards/rewards

- Ensure that attendance is effectively monitored, using Arbor management information system, and absences are followed up promptly in accordance with this policy.

- Communicate effectively with other agencies (Portsmouth City council, School Health, Traveller Education, Early Help, Social Services etc).

- Meet the legal requirements with the use of correct codes for absence, with particular reference to authorised and unauthorised absence. *(DFE guidance)*

- Ensure that all staff comply with the school policy and deal consistently with absence and punctuality.

- Provide training for staff in all matters of attendance

- Ensure attendance information is available for Governors and parents.

- Share good practice with other schools.

- Have procedures in place to help children settle back to school after a long absence. 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. If appropriate work will be sent home during the absence with teacher feedback.

- Liaise with the LA and other relevant agencies promptly for those children whose health needs do not allow them to attend school.

- Make every effort to meet the individual needs of the pupils with SEND

<u>Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.</u>

The school will:

- • Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- • Inform parents when their child's attendance becomes a concern
- • Send letters as needed to advise parents/carers of this and offer support. This letter acknowledges the pupil's circumstances but highlights the importance of good attendance.
- • Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- • Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance.

We expect the parent to:

- Provide up to date contact numbers and changes of address.

- Provide details of at least two contacts for emergency use.

- Notify the School when their child is unable to attend, with a reason, on the first day of the absence.

- Telephone the School after the first day of absence to advise the School if the absence is continuing.

- Respond to all follow up requests for information sent by email or by telephone contact.

- Keep the School well informed, in cases of lengthy absence. Parents/carers will be encouraged to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a child's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the School.

- Provide medical evidence indicating attendance at the dentist, doctor or optician before the arranged appointment unless an emergency situation has arisen. Whenever possible all appointments should be made outside of school hours.

- Ensure that their child arrives at school on time each day.

- Let the School know if their child is going to be late, e.g. if a car breaks down; if an urgent appointment has been made.

- Understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality and promote this with their child, aiming for 100% attendance each year.

- Provide written explanations of any absence and medical evidence for whole day appointments as well as medical evidence for persistent absence from school due to alleged illness.

- Only request leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance.

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 Head Teacher creates an offence in law.

We expect students to:

- 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.

Share effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools

One of the most successful approaches to improving attendance is the sharing of effective practice between schools. As a school we will therefore, access regular opportunities for our staff to learn from other's attendance expertise and share effective interventions. As a minimum this may include, sharing exemplar resources and documents such as communications to pupils and parents, regular networking or Q&A sessions, and topical best practice training or webinars.

The Governing Board: The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

Understanding types of absence coding

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the School as AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing. Medical evidence may also be required in the form of a copy of a prescription, GP note, etc. Types of absence that are likely to be authorised are illness, medical or dental appointments that unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies.

Examples of types of absence that are **not** considered reasonable and which will **not** be authorised under any circumstances are:

- Going shopping with parents, Birthdays
- Minding other younger children in the family
- Sibling unwell
- Staying at home because other members in the family are unwell
- Day trips and holidays in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances that have been approved by the Head Teacher/Principal
- Arriving at school too late to get a present mark (After the close of registration)
- Truancy
- Death of a pet

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.

Suspension from School

With effect from the 1st September 2022, any pupil who has been suspended from school, and provision has been arranged, if the student does not attend the provision this shall be recorded as an unauthorised absence. This may result in further action taken by the school, please see also penalty notice section.

SCHOOL PROCEDURES:

Registration and punctuality procedures

Legally the register must be taken twice a day, once at the start of the school day at 8.45am, and once during the afternoon session *at 1pm*. The registers will remain open for 15 minutes. Pupils arriving before the end of the Registration period will be coded L (Late before registers close) which is a present mark. The number of minutes late will be recorded in the register. Pupils arriving after the registers have closed will be coded U (Late after registers close) which counts as an unauthorised absence for the whole morning session.

Only the Head Teacher can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, until a satisfactory reason is provided. If the reason given is not satisfactory in the school's view, and/or evidence of the reason cannot be provided, the absence will be coded as O (Unauthorised absent). It is reasonable for

members of staff to ask questions regarding a child's attendance and punctuality and when appropriate, request evidence to support the reason for absence from school.

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other pupils. Ongoing and repeated lateness after the close of registration is considered as **unauthorised absence and will be subject to legal action**

If a pupil's attendance falls below 95%, parents will be contacted regarding their child's school attendance.

Children at Primary School:

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.

First Day Absence Contact

Parents are expected to notify the school if their child is unable to attend for any unavoidable reason, such as illness. Parents are requested to inform the school before 9.10am if their child is too unwell to attend school. If the school does not receive notification, it will text/telephone on the first day of absence, to try to ascertain the reason. First day contact will be carried out as early as possible in the school day, in order to notify parents whose children may have set off for school, but not arrived, as quickly as possible. If the child is still too unwell to attend the following day, parents will need to telephone the school again before 9.10am to inform them of this second day of absence. If a child is absent for longer than 3 days due to ill health, medical evidence will need to be provided in order that the school can authorise the absence. On return to school, the parent must put in writing the reason for absence in addition to telephoning the school on the days of absence.

Continuing Absence Procedures

If after 3 days of absence, your child has not been seen and contact has not been made with the school, we will make all reasonable enquiries to establish contact with parents/carers and the child, including making enquiries to known friends and wider family. In the event of an absence of three or more days without contact from the family, a home visit will be made, either by the Attendance and Welfare Officer's or other local authority professional, to ascertain the safety and well- being of the child and in addition to the reason for absence from school.

The Attendance Officer shall take advice from the schools designated safeguarding leads for any absences incurring more than 10 days.

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 education (CME)*. The Attendance Advisory Service staff at Portsmouth City Council 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.

Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs
School will work together with the local authority and other relevant professionals to ensure any child who is going to be absent for longer than 15 days due to medical reasons either consecutively or accumulatively, will have access to relevant and appropriate education. This includes Public Exam provision and the education of siblings where the family have had to travel and stay away from the home. Please see the Trust Policy *Supporting Children with Medical Needs policy for further information available on the school website.*

Reluctant attenders/school refusal
You should do everything possible to encourage your child to attend. However, if the reason for their reluctance appears to be school-based, such as difficulty with work, or bullying, please discuss this with the school at the earliest opportunity and the school will do everything possible to resolve. Colluding with your child's reluctance to attend is likely to make the matter worse.

School refusal/school phobia is a psychological condition that usually has been medically diagnosed. Other arrangements may be put in place for a child with genuine school phobia.

Mental Health, Emotionally Based School Avoidance and Wellbeing

Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) is a broad umbrella term used to describe a group of children and young people who have severe difficulty in attending school due to emotional factors, often resulting in prolonged absences from school.

The impact of EBSA on children is far-reaching, it has been linked to seriously hampering children's psychological, social, and academic performance and subsequently performance in exams and employment opportunities.

Parents who have concerns about their child's mental wellbeing can contact our school's Pastoral Team or Designated Safeguarding Leads for further information on the support available. Many children will experience normal but difficult emotions that make them nervous about attending school, such as worries about friendships, schoolwork, exams or variable mood. **It is important to note that these pupils are still expected to attend school regularly.** Summary_of_responsibilities_where_a_mental_health_issue_is_affecting_attendance.pdf

Parents should also contact their GP or the NHS Helpline by phoning telephone number 111 for advice if they are concerned. In case of emergency parents should dial 999.

Section 19 of the Education Act 1996 (as amended by Section 3 of the Children Schools and Families Act 2010) provides a duty on local authorities of maintained schools to arrange suitable education for those who would not receive such education unless such arrangements are made for them. This education must be full time, or such part time education as is in a child's best interests because of their health needs.

Reduced Timetables

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 reduced timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package. (Working Together to Improve School Attendance).

A reduced timetable must only be in place for the shortest time necessary and not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement should have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend fulltime, either at school or alternative provision. There should also be formal arrangements in place for regularly reviewing it with the pupil and their parents. In agreeing to a reduced timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must treat absence as authorised and code in the register as a C, which is an authorised absence.

The school will share the relevant reduced timetable paperwork with the local authority inclusion team who will ensure that the reasons for the timetable are necessary and proportionate.

Frequent/Persistent Absence Procedures

Regular monitoring of the registers and analysis of data, will be made by the Attendance Officer, to identify pupils with a pattern of absences that may lead to Persistent Absence (PA) and Severe Absence. The Attendance Officer will be responsible for putting in place actions for each pupil of concern. Initially the school will try to resolve the problem with parents/carers and this may involve requesting medical evidence in order for the school to authorise any further absence due to ill health and/or an Attendance clinic with the Attendance Officer and relevant staff or outside professionals. However, if the pattern continues the school will make a referral to the Local Authority. Portsmouth City Council and Attendance Improvement Coordinator will communicate regularly to discuss any attendance and punctuality concerns the school may have and review any current cases referred to the LA.

Parents/Carers of children whose attendance drops to below 96%, will receive a percentage information letter. In the event that there is then further absence from school, a letter to parents will now request that medical evidence is provided by the parent to enable the school to authorise any further absences due to ill health. Further unauthorised absence will result in a parental meeting to allow a plan of support to encourage regular attendance. Further unauthorised absence totalling 10 or more unauthorised sessions where support is not successful, or not engaged with, will result in a referral to the Local Authority for consideration of a Fixed Penalty Notice/Court action.

Consequences of Poor Attendance /Punctuality

For pupils whose attendance and/or punctuality fails to improve, after a range of interventions and support measures have been tried by the school, the ultimate consequences may be one of the following:

10) From February 2004, new measures introduced in the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 have made it possible that certain cases of unauthorised absence from school amounting to 10 sessions (5 days) can be dealt with by way of a Penalty Notice. These

Penalty Notices require the recipient to pay a fine of £60 per parent and per child, if paid within 21 days, or £120 if paid within 28 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

11) The Local authority may initiate court action under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, which could lead to fines of up to £2,500, or even imprisonment.
12) In some cases, action may be taken under the Children Act 1989 to protect the welfare and development of the child.

Children who are absent from education:

Children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation - particularly county lines. It is therefore important that the school responds to persistently absent pupils and children missing education as it supports identifying such abuse, and in the case of absent pupils, helps prevent the risk of them becoming a child missing education in the future.

This includes when problems are first emerging but also where children are already known to local authority children's social care and need a social worker (such as a child who is a child in need or who has a child protection plan, or is a looked after child), where being absent from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community. Further information and support, includes:

• Guidance on school attendance 'Working together to improve school attendance' including information on how schools should work with local authority children's services where school absence indicates safeguarding concerns.

• Information regarding schools' duties regarding children missing education, including information schools must provide to the local authority when removing a child from the school roll at standard and non-standard transition points, can be found in the department's statutory guidance: children-missing-education

• general information and advice for schools and colleges can be found in the Government's missing-children-and-adults-strategy

Leavers and children who cease to attend without prior notice (CME) procedures

Parents must inform the school in writing if they are planning to remove their child from Copnor Primary School. This must include the details of the new school the child is planning to attend or that they are exercising their right to educate their child otherwise. All Education Otherwise information will be passed into the Portsmouth Inclusions Team at Portsmouth City Council, who are responsible for monitoring all children who are educated otherwise. If after twenty day's continuous absence the school has been unable to ascertain the whereabouts of a pupil, they will refer the child's details to the Local Authority, in order to perform further checks that are not available to school.

Non starters

Pupils who are allocated places but fail to start are also treated as CME. If the school has been unable to make contact with the family during a twenty-day period after their expected arrival, they will refer the pupils to the Local Authority for further checks.

Vulnerable Children

Children who are Looked After (LAC), subject to a Child Protection Plan (CP) or Children in Need (CIN) will be treated with highest priority and will be known to the Attendance Officer. Any unexplained absence will be followed up immediately by a telephone call to the home. Any outside professionals who are also working with the children and family will also be notified of the absence (Social worker, Portsmouth LA etc). Children with Special Educational Needs (SEND) will be treated with similar priority in order that their time in school can be maximised, and their learning supported to the greatest extent possible.

Traveller Absence

The school will authorise the absence of a Traveller pupil of no fixed abode who is unable to attend school because they are travelling with their parent who is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place. This is subject to certain limits, depending on the child's age and number of sessions absent. The school will discuss cases individually with Traveller parents as necessary. Parents should let the school know of their plans as far in advance as possible. Authorised Traveller absence will be recorded appropriately in the register.

To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children, wherever possible, the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling for occupational purposes. In which case the child will be dual registered at that school and this school, which is their 'main' school.

Children from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities whose families do not travel for occupational purposes are expected to register at school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly.

Religious Observance

Our school acknowledges the multi-faith nature of the school community and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside of school holidays or weekends. In accordance with the law, the school will authorise one day's absence for a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs. Should any additional days be taken, these will be recorded in the register as unauthorised absence. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body, to confirm whether the day is set apart

USEFUL INFORMATION FOR

This is a successful school, and you and your child play a part in making it so. We aim to encourage all members of the school community to reach out for excellence. For children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly, and your child should be at school in good time for the start of the school day, every day the school is open, unless they are genuinely ill or there is some other unavoidable reason.

Some children are reluctant to go to school and say they do not feel well. It is for you as the adult to judge whether they are genuinely unwell, or just unwilling. It will be better for them in the long run to go to school rather than avoid it, as days off mean they will fall further behind and make them even more reluctant. Your job as the parent is to encourage them to attend.

Medical evidence may be any of the following:

Hospital discharge letter
Note from your GP
Copy of your appointment card from your GP
Copy of the prescription or copy of the medication label
Note from a pharmacist
Note from any other health care professional (e.g. physiotherapist, optician, podiatrist etc

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

Contact the Attendance Officer immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with schoolwork, 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. If child brings 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!

EARLY HELP

Early identification of needs and support required can prevent concerns escalating. Early help plans should have focused outcomes for children and families, and should be actively planned with them. Plans should deliver evidence-based interventions using single agency or common assessment frameworks, and clear thresholds for specific agency intervention e.g. Social care, housing, mental health services. Early Help plans should be regularly reviewed.

We see how early help can transform a child in school, not just what they are able to achieve academically, but how their personal, social and emotional development can thrive with the right support. We are committed to early help because it is the right thing to do for our children to give them the best start in life.

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

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is YOUR legal responsibility and permitting absence without good reason is an offence in law and may result in legal action being taken, or a Penalty Notice being issued.

Any absence affects the child's learning, and the more they miss the harder it will be for them to catch up. Research has shown that for every percentage point of absence, attainment is significantly lower.

There is extensive research linking poor school attendance and exclusion with crime and anti-social behaviour, and risk of exploitation by unsuitable adults. For this reason, failure to attend regularly will be regarded as a safeguarding issue.

Understanding absence percentages: You may wonder why a school would be concerned if your child's attendance is 95%. This may make it easier to understand:

95% equates to half a day off every two weeks
90% equates to a day off every two weeks
85% equates to one and a half days off every

Attendance during school year	**Days lost in a year**	**Which is approximately**	**Approximate number of lessons missed**
95%	9.5 Days	2 Weeks	20 sessions
90%	19 Days	4 Weeks	40 sessions

Even the brightest and most enthusiastic learner will find it hard to keep up with their work with these levels of absence. That is why we encourage the highest attendance possible.

Effects of Late Arrival at School: When a child arrives late to school, they miss important events like assembly, teacher instructions and introductions. Children often also feel embarrassed at having to enter the classroom late.

The table below indicates how frequent lateness can add up to a considerable amount of learning being lost. This can seriously disadvantage children and disrupt the learning of others.

Minutes late per Day	Equates to Days of Teaching Lost in one Year	Which means this number of lessons missed
5 mins	3 Days	6 sessions
10 mins	6 Days	12 sessions
15 mins	9 Days	18 sessions

Persistent Absence

A pupil is classed as a persistent absentee (PA) when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year, **for whatever reason, whether it be authorised or unauthorised, or a mixture of both.** Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to a child's educational prospects and we need parents' full support and encouragement to tackle it. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system, and we combine this with tracking academic progress to assess the effect on the pupil's attainment. 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 their learning.

Severe Absence

Particular focus should be given by all partners to pupils who are absent from school more than they are present (those missing 50% or more of school). These severely absent pupils may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and as such are likely to need more intensive support across a range of partners. A concerted effort is therefore needed across all relevant services to prioritise them. All partners should work together to make this group the top priority for support – this may include specific support with attendance or a whole family plan, but it may also include consideration for an education, health and care plan or an alternative form of educational provision where necessary to overcome the barriers to being in school. If all avenues of support have been facilitated by schools, local authorities, and other partners, and the appropriate educational support or placements (e.g. an education, health and care plan) have been provided but severe absence for unauthorised reasons continues, it is likely to constitute neglect. Schools and local authorities should be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues in these cases and where these remain, conduct a full children's social care assessment.

Reporting your child's absence

If your child is absent, you must:

- Contact the school as early as possible, but before 9.00 am, on the first day of absence, either by telephone, email to attendance@copnorprimary.co.uk.

Penalty Notices

Penalty Notices can now be issued for a range of attendance-related offences, including unauthorised term-time holidays, poor attendance and poor punctuality, a child coming to the attention of the police in school time, or located twice or more in truancy sweeps in 6 months.

Participating in a performance
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 Headteachers discretion as to whether to authorise this (remains satisfied that this will not have a negative impact on the pupils education) and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs.

Participating in a supervised sporting activity
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 Headteachers 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.

Applications for leave of absence in term time (includes Holidays in term time)
All pupils are encouraged to attend school every day of the 190 days that school is open. The register is called twice daily and pupils are expected to be present for the 380 sessions, or half days. That leaves 175 days for family holidays, shopping trips and other needs.

As a school we prioritise teaching and learning, therefore, in accordance with the local and National guidelines, Copnor Primary School does not authorise holidays during term time. Permission, however, may be granted only in exceptional circumstances, when the benefit of the absence far outweighs the benefit of school attendance. A request for such absence should be made in writing to the Headteacher. When requesting leave of absence during term time may you be reminded that 10 days of absence equates to 20 sessions missed schooling, which is equivalent to 5.2% of absence.

Please note: any child who has taken a term time holiday will be required to provide medical evidence for any further absences during the remainder of the academic year. Any absences due to ill health either directly before or after a school holiday will need to provide medical evidence in order for the school to authorise the absence.

In the case of all unauthorised leave of absences, incurring 10 or more unauthorised sessions (5 days), an application for a Fixed Penalty Notice will be made to the local authority.

Notes:

- From February 2004, measures introduced in the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 have made it possible that certain cases of unauthorised absence from school amounting to 10 sessions (5 days) can be dealt with by way of a Penalty Notice.
- From August 2024 a new National Framework will come into force for issuing Penalty Notices Copnor Primary School will follow Portsmouth City Council's code of conduct. Penalty Notices are issued per parent per child and for a first offence £160 payable with 28 days. If paid within 21 days the Penalty Notice is reduced to £80. If within 3 years of your first penalty notice you commit a second offence the Penalty Notice will be £160 payable within 28 days (no reduction), and if a third offence a prosecution under s444 of the Education Act 1996.
- Non-payment of these fines will result in application to Criminal Court.

- If a Parent/Carer requests for a term holiday is refused, but the holiday taken, it will be classified as unauthorised absence and may be subject to a penalty notice being served to each parent/ carer that resides with the child by Portsmouth City Council.
- A formal application must be made in writing, IN ADVANCE and returned to the Attendance Officer.
- Permission sought after a holiday has been taken will not be granted.
- If the parent/ carer removes a student from their education for the purpose of a suspected holiday without advising the school this will be referred to the schools designated safeguarding leads. On the third day of absence a letter will be sent requesting that the parent/ carer contacts the school within 2 days to confirm the reason for absence. No response will assume to be a holiday absence and penalty notice(s) may be issued.

The Schools policy is not to authorise holidays during term time. Any applications for leave in term time must be made in writing to the Head Teacher. There is no automatic right to term time leave of absence, and your request is likely to be declined except in the most exceptional circumstances. Each application will be considered on its own merit, and the attendance record(s) of the child/ren concerned will be taken into account when making a decision.

Home Educated/Education Otherwise

On receipt of written notification to educate otherwise, parents will be invited into the school to discuss the reason for this decision and to seek a way forward that may enable the child to remain at the school if parents are in agreement. If the child does not remain at the school and is educated otherwise, the school must inform the pupils local authority that the pupil is to be deleted from the admission register.

Your contact details

Please make sure that the contact details you have given to the school are kept up to date, so that in the event of an accident, emergency or any other need to contact you we have the correct details.

Amendments to the Admissions Register and Attendance Register

Every amendment made to the admissions register and the attendance register must include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date on which the amendment was made and the name and position of the person who made the amendment.

Record preservation

School registers are legal documents. We will ensure compliance with attendance regulations by keeping attendance records for at least three years. Every entry in the admission register and attendance register must be preserved for a period of three years after the date on which the entry was made. 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).

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

From 19 August 2024, the new National Framework for issuing penalty notices will apply

Per Parent, Per Child

E.g. 2 parents taking 3 children out of school for a leave of absence in term time would incur 3 penalty notices for each parent
S.576 Education Act 1996 defines a parent as all natural parents, not a natural parent but has parental responsibility, or has care of a child.

National Threshold

There will be a single national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools of 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-week school period.
These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absences.
The 10-week school period can span different terms or school years.

1

First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for a leave of absence in term time or irregular school attendance the Penalty Notice will be charged at:
£160 per parent, per child, to be paid within 28 days.
This is reduced to £80 per parent per child if paid within the first 21 days.
(Unpaid Penalty Notices after 28 days will result in a prosecution)

2

Second Offence

(within 3 years of the first offence)

Where it has been deemed appropriate to issue a second Penalty Notice to the same parent for the same pupil within 3 years of the first notice, the second Penalty Notice will be charge at:

£160 per parent per child to be paid within 28 days (there is no reduction for this)

(Unpaid Penalty Notices after 28 days will result in a prosecution)

3

Third Offence and any Further Offences

(within 3 years of the first offence)

The third time that any offence is committed and a sanction is requested for either a leave of absence or irregular attendance, a Penalty Notice will not be issued, the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates Court. Prosecution can result in criminal records and fines up to £2,500.

Cases found guilty in the Magistrates Court can show on the parent's future DBS certificate, due to 'failure to safeguard a child's education'.

Attendance falls below 96% - a first contact (%) letter is sent

Further absence without medical evidence occurs - a letter requiring medical evidence is sent

Further absence without medical evidence - Parent is invited into school for a clinic/home visit is made. A follow-up letter confirming matters discussed and decisions made must be sent to the parent

Further unauthorised absences occur - a referral is made to the Local Authority. This should be as near to 10 sessions as possible

EXPECT

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

↓

MONITOR

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

↓

LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

↓

FACILITATE SUPPORT

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

↓

FORMALISE SUPPORT

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.

↓

ENFORCE

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

Attendance Ladder

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that *the 'parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full time education suitable to his/her age, ability and aptitude, and to any special educational needs he/she may have, either by regular attendance at school, or otherwise.'*

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and 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. The Children Act 1989 provides for a number of actions that can be taken to protect children's safety and welfare, on the premise that the welfare of the child is paramount.

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