FAIR OAK JUNIOR SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

Name of School	Fair Oak Junior School
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Name of Headteacher	Jim Hartley (Interim Headteacher)
Signature of Headteacher	JHartley
Signature of Chair of Governors	Rob Holmes / Tim Dancer

Attendance Policy

Section 1: Rationale

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

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

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

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

Good attendance is important because:

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

Section 2: Operating the Policy

Promoting Good Attendance

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

- Provide information on all matters related to attendance, including school and HCC policies, in our newsletters and on our website;
- Report to you on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainment;
- Recognise good or improving attendance;
- Ensure parents, pupils and staff work together on raising attendance levels across the school.

Responsibilities of the School's Attendance Leader

The Headteacher will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. This person will also ensure that attendance is both recorded accurately and analysed. They will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, staff will discuss with parent/carers the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence **will always rest with the school**.

Responsibilities of Staff:

- Ensure that all students are registered accurately
- Promote & recognise good attendance at all appropriate opportunities
- Liaise with the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, Year Leader and/or CFSW on matters of attendance and punctuality and
- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence.

Responsibilities of Pupils:

- Attend every day unless they are ill or have an authorised absence.
- Arrive in school on time.
- Register in class on time both in the morning and afternoon.
- Register at reception if they are late or are leaving the school site during school hours.

Responsibilities of Parents and Carers:

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

Parents will:

- Inform the school on the first day and each subsequent day of absence by telephone.
- Discuss with the school any planned absences well in advance.

- Support the school with their child in aiming for attendance of at least 97% each year.
- Make sure that any absence is clearly accounted for by phone call on the first and subsequent days of absence, or by email to admin@fairoak-jun.hants.sch.uk titled **ABSENCE** if a phone is unavailable**.**
- Avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments.
- Where appointments are taken during the school day, ensure the child will be in school before and after the appointment.
- Only request leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance.

Section 3: Punctuality

Recording Attendance

Legally the register must be marked twice daily. This is once at the start of the school day 8.50am and again for the afternoon session at 1.00pm.

Lateness /Punctuality

It is important to be on time at the start of the morning and afternoon school sessions. The start of the school day is used to give out instructions or organise work. If your child is late, it can mean that they miss their teacher's input which will impact on their learning as well as being embarrassing for your child and causing disruption to the lesson for othersin the class.

- The school day begins at 8:50am with the gates opening at 8:40 am and all pupils are expected to be in school by 8:50am. Morning registration is at 8.50am after this time children will be recorded as Late (L) until 9.20am.

- All lateness is recorded daily. This information will be required by the courts should a prosecution for non-attendance or lateness be necessary.

- Arrival after 9.20am will be marked as unauthorised absence code 'U' in line with county and Department for Education (DfE) guidance. This mark shows them to be on site, but is legally recorded as an absence.

- If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence coded 'M'. Please be advised that where possible doctors and dentists appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays.

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

Parents, guardians or carers of pupils who have patterns of lateness will be contacted to discuss the importance of good time keeping and how this might be achieved. If lateness persists, parents, guardians or carers will be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem and put in place a plan to support a positive change in punctuality. If support is not appropriate or is declined and a child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence due to lateness recorded in any 10 week period the school or the Hampshire County

Council will be required to issue parents with a penalty notice in accordance with Hampshire's Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices for non-attendance (See section 4 & 6 of this policy for further detail).

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.

What to do if my child is absent?

First Day Absence:

A child not attending school is considered a **safeguarding** matter. This is why specific information about the cause of any absence is always required. It is not sufficient to say a child will not be in school. This call or email should be made prior to registration.

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us before school on the first day of absence and each day thereafter.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you; *This is because we have a duty to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance;*
- If we are unable to contact you, we will attempt to call family & friends listed on Arbor.
- Failing this, we will notify the police that your child is considered 'an absent or missing person.' The police will respond to this in different ways according to whether the child is considered missing or absent.

Third Day Absence:

Please Note: If your child is not seen and contact has not been established with you or any of the named parent/carers after three days of absence the school is required to start a child missing in education procedures as set down by Hampshire County Council Guidance. We will make all reasonable enquires to establish contact with parents and the child including making enquires to known friends and wider family.

Tenth Day Absence:

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer then the Local Authority is notified that the child is 'at risk of missing'. Children's Services Staff will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child. Parents can help us by making sure we always have an up-to-date contact number. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

Continued or Ongoing Absence:
Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in his or her learning. Research shows these gaps affect attainment when attendance falls below 95%. As such we monitor all absence thoroughly and all attendance data is shared with the Local Authority and the Department for Education. If your child has had absence and their attendance level is falling below 95% we may contact you and depending on the reasons for the absence will invite you to come and meet with us in school so we can put a plan of support in place.
If your child misses 10% (3 weeks) or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason this is defined as **persistent absenteeism.**
The school meet attendance team meet on a half termly basis to discuss the appropriate course of action for children whose attendance falls below 95%. See the flow diagram in appendix 5 which details how the school will make decisions in such circumstances.

Children at this school are dependent on their parents/carers, who are responsible for their level of attendance and punctuality. It is vital that children enjoy coming to school, and whilst being encouraged to attend well and on time, they will not carry blame and be made to feel unhappy if their parents are not supportive or effective in these areas.

Section 4: Leave of absence

Request for Leave of Absence

Amendments to school attendance regulations were updated in September 2013. Regulations state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

It is important to note that Headteachers can determine the length of the authorised absence as well as whether absence is authorised at all. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are **rare, significant, or unavoidable which means the event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time**. There are no rules on this as circumstances vary from school to school and family to family. There is however, no legal entitlement for time off in school time to go on holiday and **in the majority of cases holiday will not be authorised.**

Parents/Carers wishing to apply for leave of absence need to fill in an application form, available from the school office or the website, well in advance and before making any travel arrangements.

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

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

For national guidance refer to Appendix 1.

Section 5: Types of absence

Understanding types of absence:

Pupils are expected to attend school every day for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an ***exceptional reason*** for the absence.

There are two main categories of absences:

- **Authorised Absence** is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence, or given approval in advance for such an absence. If no explanation is received, absences cannot be authorised.

- **Unauthorised Absence** is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's leave absence from school after a parent's request. This includes:

    - parents giving their children permission to be off school unnecessarily such as for shopping, days out, birthdays, to look after siblings etc;
    - truancy before or during the school day;
    - absences which have not been explained;

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

Section 6: Penalty Notices

Penalty Notices for Non-Attendance and other Legal Measures:

In Education law, parents/carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular attendance of their child of compulsory school age at the school at which the child is registered, unless the absence has been authorised by the school.

Legal Measures for tackling persistent absence or lateness

Hampshire Schools and Hampshire County Council will use the full range of legal measures to secure good attendance.

Legal measures will be considered through a referral to Hampshire's Attendance Legal Panels where:

1. The child or family do not require the support from any agency to improve the attendance.
2. The child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence and parents are complicit in the child's absence.

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

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

Legal Measures for absence taken when the Headteacher has declined parent/carers request for leave of absence

Where a pupil has unauthorised absence due to either:

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

and the unauthorised absence is for 10 or more sessions (5 days) in any 100 possible school sessions then **a penalty notice for non-attendance will be issued**.

Where a child has **unauthorised absence** the school must enforce Hampshire's Code of Conduct for issuing Penalty Notices or follow its guidance on other Legal Measures for Non-Attendance.

The Code of Conduct is a statutory document that ensures that powers for legal sanctions are applied consistently and fairly across all schools and their families within the authority. A copy is available on the Hampshire County Council website, at the following address:

https://documents.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/HIAS/codeofconduct-IssuingPenaltyNoticesforunauthorisedabsencesfromschools.pdf

The Code of Conduct states that:

After taking the steps set out in Section 3, the County Council or the schools in Hampshire should issue a Penalty Notice for any of the following unauthorised absences where the pupil has been, within the last six months:

• unauthorised absent for 10 or more half-day sessions (five school days) over 100 possible school sessions – these do not need to be consecutive.
• persistently late (coded U) for 10 or more half-day sessions after the register has been closed – these do not need to be consecutive.
• persistently late before the close of the register (coded L), for 10 or more school sessions (these do not need to be consecutive) - unless the issuing of a Penalty Notice would conflict with other intervention strategies in place or other sanctions already being processed.

Unless the issuing of a Penalty Notice would conflict with other intervention strategies in place or other sanctions already being processed.

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

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

Parents and Carers will be warned of the likelihood of a penalty notice being issued for unauthorised absence either via a letter, through the leave of absence request form, or through the schools attendance policy and website. The penalty notice is a fine that is issued to each parent/carer who condoned (or was responsible for the child) during the period of unauthorised absence for which the fine has been issued.

For each case of unauthorised absence the school or Hampshire County Council will decide whether a Penalty Notice is issued **to one or more parent/carers** for each child. **N.B** This could mean four penalty notices for a family with two siblings both with unauthorised absence for holiday i.e. one PN for each child to each parent

n **England**, the current national school attendance penalty notice is:

- **£80 per parent, per child** if paid within **21 days**.
- **£160 per parent, per child** if paid between **22 and 28 days**.
- A **second penalty notice for the same child within 3 years is £160**, with no £80 early-payment discount.
- A **third offence within 3 years cannot normally result in another penalty notice**; the local authority must consider other action, including prosecution.

If the fine remains unpaid the Hampshire County Council will consider prosecution for the non-attendance.

Payment methods are detailed on the Penalty Notices themselves. Penalties are to be paid to Hampshire County Council and revenue resulting from payment of Penalties is used by the County Council to help cover the costs of issuing Penalty Notices and/or the cost of prosecuting recipients who do not pay.

For further information parents/carers can request a leaflet from their school and should visit Hampshire County Councils website at:

https://documents.hants.gov.uk/code-of-conduct-issuing-penalty-notices-for-unauthorised-absence-from-schools.pdf

Section 7:

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

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

Contact the school immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with school work, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important to 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.

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!

Leavers

If your child is leaving our school (other than when transferring to the secondary school) parents are asked to give the school comprehensive information about their plans, including any date of a move and your new address and telephone numbers, your child's new school and the start date when know. This should be given to our school in writing.

If a pupil leaves and we do not have the above information, then your child is considered to be a 'Child Missing in Education'. This requires schools and Local Authorities to carry out investigations to try and locate your child, which includes liaising with Children's Services, the Police and other agencies. By giving us the above information, these investigations can be avoided.

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

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

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

For further advice and guidance on child employment and performance licenses please refer to Appendix 3.

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

Parents of able sportsmen and women can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a regional, county, national and international events and competitions. It is however, down to the Headteacher's discretion whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will

continue if absence occurs. Permission for your child to leave early or arrive late to attend coaching and training sessions 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 are providing an education tutor as part of their coaching.

Gypsy, Roma, Traveller, Showman and Showman families

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

For further advice refer to Appendix 4.

Section 8: Retention

Record preservation

School registers are legal documents. We will ensure compliance with attendance regulations by keeping attendance records for at least 3 years. Computer registers will be preserved as electronic back-ups or microfiche copies.

Appendix 1 Requests for leave of absence

1. 'School attendance' 2022 located at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1099677/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf

For county advice and guidance refer to:

Guidance on recording absence https://documents.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/HIAS/Promotingpupilattendanceandrecordingabsence-maindocument.pdf

Appendix 2 Persistent absence or lateness

For national guidance on legal measures for tackling persistent absence or lateness refer to: **'Parental responsibility measures for behaviour and attendance'** which covers legal measures for non-attendance

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

Appendix 3 Child employment and performance licenses

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

Appendix 4 Gypsy, Roma, Traveller, Showman and Showman families

https://documents.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/HIAS/Promotingpupilattendanceandrecordingabsence-Section6.pdf

Please note pupils must have attended 200 sessions in a rolling 12 month period to be able to request leave for work purposes.
Further support and guidance is available from Hampshire's EMTAS Service.

https://www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/emtas/forparents/traveller-parents-carers

Appendix 5 Flowchart for dealing with attendance under 95%

End of each Half Term:

Is attendance below 91%?

Yes:

Is there a valid reason? e.g. significant medical condition that school is aware of and already supporting.

No:

No immediate action
Continue to monitor half-termly

Yes:

Monitor and possible DHT/ CFSW support depending on nature of reason

No:

Below 95% letter sent to parents + leaflet + range of intervention options which include:

- **Meeting with the HT / CFSW**
- **A parenting agreement**
- A **Referral to outside agency eg Children's Services**
- A **Referral to legal panel/Legal intervention team**

Is there an improvement?

Are parents engaging with school?

Yes:

Continue to monitor closely and ensure attendance moves up to above 95% within a reasonable time-frame (usually a term). Celebrate this with parents/carers and children.

No:

Revisit list of possible actions. (Legal panel more likely if parents not engaging with school / outside agencies or if attendance is declining further) + meeting with the HT