



Court Lane Infant School

Attendance Policy

At Court Lane Infant School we believe that regular attendance and punctuality at school is essential if children are to benefit from their school experiences and opportunities. Optimum levels of attendance can only be fully achieved when responsibility is accepted and shared by all concerned: pupils, parents, carers, school staff, governors, Portsmouth City Council and the local community.

1. The Law

The law states that all pupils of compulsory school age (5-16) should attend school regularly to obtain the maximum benefit from their education.

These requirements are contained in:

- The Education Act 1996 – section 434(1)(3)(4)&(6) and 458(4)&(5);
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 ;and
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

1.2 Parents

The 1996 Education Act Section 7 states that it is the duty of parents to secure the education of children of compulsory school age. The Act (section 576) also defines “parent” to include:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not, and
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person, and
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has responsibility for care of a child or young person.

Having care of a child or young person means that a person who the child lives with and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child, is considered to be a parent in education law.

1.3 The LA's statutory functions undertaken by the LA Attendance Monitoring Service are:

1. Chairing School Attendance Panels
2. Monitoring Pupils with 20 or more sessions of unauthorised absence as part of the Pupil Attendance Review meeting
3. Carrying out attendance audits in schools
4. Undertaking statutory action against parents.

1.4 Completing the register

Registers are legal documents that may be used in evidence where parents are being prosecuted for attendance offences. They are retained in school for a period of three years. The governing body are legally responsible for the attendance register and must register with the Data Protection Registrar under the Data Protection Act 1998.

In the register children will be entered under their legal name, i.e. the name on their birth certificate or as changed by deed poll, their known as name may be shown on the register in brackets.

Registers at Court Lane Infant School are completed using the SIMS system. (See Appendix 1 for a copy of the SIMS codes.) **All registers are to be completed in black pen.**

2.1 Lateness

- If children are late (after 8:50 am) they must be brought into school via the school office entrance. Parents will be asked to provide an explanation for their child's lateness and to sign their child into school.
- Any child who arrives after 9:20 a.m. is considered to be late after the register has closed. This late arrival is recorded in the register as an unauthorised absence (U) Late after register closed and counts as unauthorised.
- If a child is regularly late for school, class teachers and administrative staff will inform the headteacher, who will follow this up..
- The headteacher will regularly monitor lateness and will arrange for an appropriate member of staff to contact parents so that the problem is addressed. In addition the headteacher may request that Rachel Magill, School Attendance Officer (appointed by the N.E. Cluster schools) contacts parents regarding their child's school attendance.
- It is a parent's responsibility to ensure their child is collected at 3.20 pm, with the exception of those children attending Farlington Wrap Around. Those children attending FWA will be formally handed to FWA personnel. If parents/carers know they will be late they need to contact the school office. After 3.30 p.m. parents/carers will be contacted to ascertain who will collect the child and when this will be so the child can be reassured.

2.2 Communication

- On the first day of absence the school expects parents/carers to inform the school office of their child's absence and the reason for it. The administrative staff will text or phone if the school has not heard a reason for absence, and ask for an explanation for a child's absence.
- Reasons for absence are recorded in the school office and transferred onto the computerised SIMS system by the administrative staff.
- All letters from parents regarding absence must be sent to the school office.
- Parents are asked to provide a written explanation of absence when the child returns to school or to telephone the school office with an explanation for the absence if this is not forthcoming the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

3. Absences.

3.1

If a pupil of compulsory school age is absent, the register must show whether this was authorised or unauthorised. 3.2 Authorised absence

3.2 Authorised Absence

The Department for Education (DFE) points out that it is the school which authorises an absence and that a note containing an unacceptable explanation for an absence does not allow it to be treated as authorised absence. Parents may not authorise absence, only schools can do this. If the school feels a child has too many authorised absences we will inform the parents that future absences may not be authorised without additional assurances or evidence that the absences were unavoidable. **All other absences will be treated as unauthorised.**

See Appendix 3 for further details on authorised absence.

3.3 Unauthorised Absence

Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) (Education Observed, 13) offer the following definition of unauthorised absence:

"Absence from school for any period as a result of a premeditated or spontaneous act by the pupil or parent or both. This includes parentally condoned absence."

See Appendix 4 for circumstances that may lead to parentally condoned absence.

3.4 Leave Absence of in term time

All leave of absence is solely at the discretion of the Headteacher.

Any request for a leave of absence in term time must be made on a Leave of Absence from school request form (LOAFSR), by the parent. This form needs to be made in advance of any leave. Each request will be considered on its own merits by the Headteacher.

Parents will be informed in writing, by post, if the leave is granted or not. If the leave is granted then it will be marked as an authorised absence. If the leave is not granted then it will be marked as an unauthorised absence. Any unauthorised absences may be dealt with by way of penalty notices issued by Portsmouth City Council.

Court Lane Infant School fully supports the view of the Government and the Local Authority that children should not be taking a leave of absence in term time in term time because of the disruption and detrimental effect caused to their learning. The attendance of all year groups is viewed as being very important.

Therefore from September 2013 no leave of absence will be granted unless there are exceptional circumstances.

3.5 Extended leave of absence abroad

The same policy and procedure will apply as per a leave of absence in term.

If granted (because of exceptional circumstances) and the child does not return on the return date specified by the parents, the school will contact the parents by phone or in writing. If the headteacher has no reason to believe that the pupil is unable to attend due to sickness or 'unavoidable cause' then the Children Missing Education procedures will be followed.

3.6 Fixed Penalty Notices

The issuing of a Penalty Notice is generally considered appropriate in the following circumstances:

- Following 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a term
- Parentally-condoned absences
- Unauthorised leave of absence in term time
- Unauthorised delayed return from extended holidays without prior school agreement
- Late arrival at school after the register has closed.

Children who have at least 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence within a term may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN).

Penalty Notices are issued per parent per child. Under the Education Act 1996 each parent is severally liable for their child's attendance at school.

When a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued there is no right of appeal.

Parents can receive more than one fixed penalty notice within a year.

For further information regarding fixed penalty notices please contact Portsmouth City Council.

3.7 Removing pupils from the school roll.

When a pupil leaves Court Lane Infant School they will not be removed from the school roll until they have been accepted onto the roll of another school or until we have authorisation from the Local Authority (LA) to remove the child from the school roll.

If any child does not return to the school within 10 days of the specified return date of a leave period the school will try to establish contact with parents. The Headteacher will then follow the procedures for children missing education. The Attendance Monitoring will be contacted once all procedures have been exhausted the pupil can be removed from roll and placed on S2S.

3.8 Suspected changes of address

When it is suspected that a family has moved away from the area without notifying the school, the school must contact parents by phone, if unsuccessful a letter will be written to the last known address requesting contact. After 10 days if there has been no response and there are no safeguarding concerns the matter will be referred to the Attendance Monitoring Service. If there are safeguarding concerns contact will be made with social care and the Attendance Monitoring Service. The LA Children Missing Education officer will be contacted and the pupil remains on roll until advised by the Attendance Monitoring Service.

3.9 The role of the school

Whilst the Headteacher is the only person in school who can authorise absence it is recognised that other members of staff also play a vital role in following up absence. When a child is absent without explanation a member of the school Administrative Staff will contact the parent on the first day of absence. Notes, records of telephone calls and medical certificates will be placed in the register by class teachers and then kept in individual pupil's files in the school office. The school and the Cluster School Attendance Officer will identify children at risk of becoming **persistent absentees** (PAs) and will offer support to parents as appropriate.

4.0 The role of the parent

Whatever efforts are made by the school and the Cluster School Attendance Officer it is ultimately the parents' responsibility to see that their child attends school regularly and punctually. If parental support is not forthcoming, strategies to encourage good attendance may fail.

It is the parents' responsibility to inform school of the reason for a child's absence as promptly as possible and to provide any further information which may be required. For any absence other than sickness a LOAFSR form must be completed. Parents are expected to attend meetings with school and the Cluster School Attendance Officer in relation to their child's attendance and take an active

role in improving their child's attendance. Where children have individual targets for attendance parents are expected to work with school.

Parents are given a copy of their child's attendance record at the time of each termly Parents Meeting and for the academic year with their child's Annual Report. An additional copy of each child's attendance for the Autumn and Spring Terms is sent home to each parent in January and in April so that parents have comprehensive information about their child's attendance. Parents may also request an up to date print out of their child's attendance percentage from the school office. The school may also send a print out to the parents to highlight a particular pattern of attendance or concern and always sends an attendance record print out.

4.1 Referrals for non-attendance

The Cluster Attendance Officer (CAO) attends school on a regular basis to meet with the Headteacher and the Administrative Assistant. The school works closely with the CAO and if there are any pupils who are showing patterns of poor attendance it may be necessary for a referral to be made by the school to the CAO.

The CAO will become involved when:

- School has contacted the parents expressing their concerns over level of attendance/ unauthorised absence and it has not improved
- Pupils have 10 sessions (5 days) or more absence in any term.

When a referral has been made the parent will be contacted by the CAO and a visit will be arranged at home or school to address options to improve attendance and to offer support to the parents.

When a referral is made to the LA Attendance Monitoring Service this is, in legal terms, a request for an investigation into whether the parents have committed a criminal offence. Therefore all aspects of CAO intervention may be used as evidence in any future legal proceedings. It is important that this is made clear to parents/ guardians at the outset.

6. Rewards for good attendance

In school we praise children for good attendance and for arriving in school on time to prepare themselves for the day. Parents are actively encouraged to celebrate good attendance with their children.

Children who achieve 100% attendance in a term receive a certificate which is presented in assembly. Letters are sent home to parents congratulating them on this good attendance. Children with improving attendance will be rewarded with certificates and letters home to parents. 100% attendance for the year is celebrated in a Celebration assembly with pupils being given a certificate

At Court Lane Infant School we believe good attendance is vital for our children to gain the maximum from their time in school. We aim to work collaboratively with all involved parties for the benefit of all of our children. At any time school may reward good attendance in other ways e.g. Golden Time and may hold specific attendance

drives to promote good attendance at school. These will always be clearly communicated to children and parents.

Policy discussed at Governors Resources Committee on 11th October 2010

Policy discussed and agreed by FGB on 13th October 2010

Policy reviewed Summer 2014

Policy agreed at Full Governors Meeting on Wednesday 18th December 2014

LIST APPENDICES

Appendix 1	SIMS Attendance Codes
Appendix 2	Leave of Absence from School Request Form
Appendix 3	Authorised Absences
Appendix 4	Unauthorised Absences

LA Attendance Publications copies available on the school website or from school office:

- Penalty Notices – Information Leaflet
- Penalty Notices – Frequently Asked Questions For Parents
- Education Supervision Orders – Information Leaflet
- School Attendance Panels Advice to Parents
- Attendance Monitoring Service Request for Penalty Notice/School Attendance Panel

Appendix 1 – SIMS codes

/	Present (am)
\	Present (pm)
#	School closed for all pupils
-	All should attend no mark recorded
B	Educated off site
C	Other authorised circumstances
D	Dual registration (attending other establishment)
E	Excluded
G	Family holiday (not agreed or days in excess)
H	Annual holiday (agreed)
I	Illness (not med/dental appointment)

J	Interview
L	Late (before register closed)
M	Medical/ dental appointment
N	No reason yet provided
O	Unauthorised absences (not covered by any other code)
P	Approved sporting activity
R	Religious observance
S	Study leave
T	Traveller absence
U	Late (after register closed)
V	Educational visit
W	Work experience
X	Non compulsory school age absence
Y	Enforced closure
Z	Pupil not on roll

Appendix 2 Leave of Absence Request Form

LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

To be completed by Parent/Carer/Guardian <small>(one form to be completed for each child)</small>	
Name of Pupil:	National Curriculum Year:
School:	Group/Class/Tutor Group:

Your request will be considered by the Headteacher. Please note all requests will be judged on an individual basis but any leave of absence can only be approved in exceptional circumstances.

Dates for Requested Leave of absence: From To
Please give brief reasons for your request for the leave of absence.
Signature(s)..... Date:
NAME:.....

To be completed by School						
Your request for leave of absence has/has not* been approved for the following reason(s): <i>*delete as appropriate</i>						
Headteacher's Signature:..... Date:						
The code placed in the register will be: <small>(please circle relevant code)</small>	C Performance (licence required) /Exceptional circumstances	G Unauthorised Leave of absence	H Authorised Leave of absence	O Unauthorised (other reason)	P Approved sporting activity	R Religious observance
For office use Attendance record :						

Appendix 3 – authorised absences

An absence may be counted as authorised if a child is absent:

- When prevented from attending by sickness
- On a day set aside for religious observance
- If the school is not within walking distance (3 miles) of the child's home and no suitable arrangements have been made for his or her transport by the LA to and from school, enabling him or her to become a registered pupil at a school nearer to his or her home.
- On approved work experience
- Participating in a public performance

Furthermore school may “reasonably exercise discretion to grant leave” for:

- Absence following the death of a close member of the child's family.

Appendix 4 – unauthorised absences

Circumstances that may lead to parentally condoned absences include:

- The child's father/ mother/ carer being ill
- A pupil being used as a child minder
- A pupil being used to support members of the family
- Family work patterns
- A parent's desire for company
- Indulging a child who wants to stay at home
- A child's birthday
- Apathy on the part of the parents
- Buying clothes or shoes
- A parent's inability to control the child
- Hairdressing appointments
- Child used as an interpreter
- Uneasy relationships with an institution representing authority.