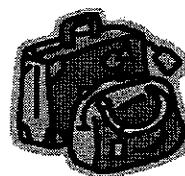


Most childhood sickness that prevents school attendance will be classed as authorised absence. However, if your child is frequently absent from school due to sickness, the school can ask that you provide medical evidence or they may have to stop authorising the absences. This does not mean that the school do not believe you or your child, but that they want to do the best for you by ensuring your child can attend school as much as possible, providing extra support such as accessing the school nursing team if needed.

As a parent you can help keep your child's level of absence down by sending them into school every day and arriving on time. In many schools the registers will close ½ hour after the beginning of the start of the school day. Arriving after this time will mean your child is marked as having an unauthorised absence and this could lead to a fine being issued

Help support your child and your school by keeping absence rates down. Children who are frequently absent are usually those who fall behind and find it hard to keep friendships, which can lead to being unhappy in school.

Since September 2013 headteachers have only been able to grant a leave of absence for exceptional circumstances. As a rule of thumb a family holiday or travelling abroad is not considered to be an exceptional reason.

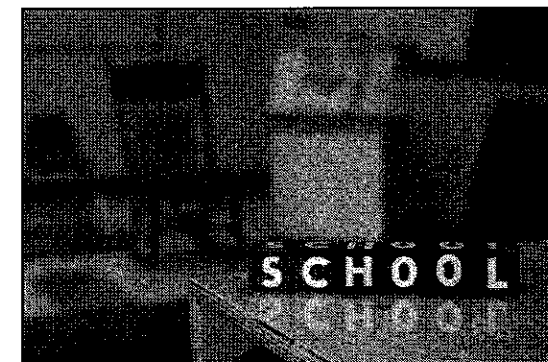


There are 38 weeks in the year when schools are open, and 14 weeks (175 days) when families can visit family overseas; go on holiday; travel; pupils can work, take educational trips, attend non urgent medical appointments.....**So is your request for leave exceptional?**

This is for the headteacher to decide but consider would your employer grant you additional leave?

Reduce absence due to medical reasons by making non-urgent medical appointments for your child outside of school hours. Always let your child's school know the type of illness your child has that prevents them attending at the start of the school day. They will guide you as to whether your child needs to be absent from school all day and when they should be expected to return.

Good School Attendance Guide



Helping your child to make the most out of school.

Good School attendance habits are best started early. Children learn from those around them and you as parents set the standards and expectations for your child.

Showing your child the importance of attending school every day not only helps your child to settle quickly when starting school but helps them to keep and sustain friendships and enjoy the school environment.

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.

Your child's school is there to support you, they understand the difficulties some parents can face and will work with you. Trust the experience of the class teacher and other school staff and share with them any concerns you may have.

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!

Remember children can be tired when coming out of school, so a short chat over a snack may produce a better result than a long list of questions.

If your child raises anything that concerns you, it is much better to raise it with your child's school, usually the class teacher, at the earliest opportunity. Allow the school the opportunity to address any concerns or difficulties. This often can help put your mind at rest, know that your child is ok and is doing well in school.

In Hampshire we want all children to have a positive experience of school life and be able to reach their full potential. One way in which parents can help their child to do this is by ensuring they attend school everyday.

Parents can often feel that more time is spent at school than at home. By completing a quick and easy sum we can see just how many days children attend school.

There are **365** days in the year and **190** days in the school year.

If we take the days in school away from the days in the year we see that for **175** days children are at home with their parents.

If a child takes leave of absence during term time, **10** school days, attendance starts to fall to only **180** days in school. If the child is then ill for **5** or more days in a year, they start to be at home more than they are in school.

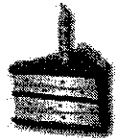
$$365 - 190 = 175$$

As the parent you are responsible for ensuring that once your child is registered at a school that they attend regularly and punctually. Starting good habits earlier on is much easier than trying to change poor attendance habits, battling with your child to attend school and struggling to get out of the door on time. Be organised, have a plan, be consistent and involve your child.

School absence falls into one of two categories; **Authorised**, those which schools can give you permission for and **Unauthorised**, those which they will not.

Examples of absences which the school is unlikely to authorise can include:

- Sickness of a parent, or other family member**
- Inadequate clothing for school**
- Child being used as a carer**
- Problems with transport**
- Non urgent medical treatment**
- School refusal or truancy**
- Days off for birthdays, shopping trips**
- Family Holiday**



Whilst as a parent you may think you can give your child permission to be at home, you cannot. **The only person who can give permission for a child to be absent from school is the school's Headteacher.**

If your child will be absent from school, you must notify them by telephone call on the first day of absence and follow this up with a note once the child returns to school. The school's Headteacher will decide whether or not to authorise the absence, depending upon the reason given.

- **Is there an appeal process?**

There is no statutory right of appeal. Once a Penalty Notice has been issued, it can only be withdrawn if it can be shown that it was issued in error.

- **How do I pay?**

Details of payment arrangements are included in the Penalty Notice. Parents **must ensure** they include their Penalty Notice reference number on any payment method so the payment can be tracked. Failure to do so may result in the Penalty Notice being recorded as unpaid. Full payment is required within the 21 days or 28 days timescales. Payment in part or by instalments is not possible. Late payments cannot be accepted and the Penalty Notice is recorded as unpaid.

- **What happens if I do not pay?**

You will have up to 21 days at £60 or 28 days at £120 from the date of posting to pay the Penalty Notice in full. If you fail to do so, the Local Authority is required, by law, to commence proceedings in the Magistrates' Court for the original offence of poor school attendance.

If convicted of this offence under the Education Act 1996, there are a number of possible sentences including a fine of up to £1000 (in the case of a prosecution under section 444(1)) or a fine of up to £2500 and/or a period of up to 3 months' imprisonment (in the case of a prosecution under section 444(1A)).

- **What if my child has further unauthorised absence from school?**

If you pay the Penalty Notice and your child has further unauthorised absences, you may be prosecuted for the further unauthorised absences but not for the absences during the period covered by the Penalty Notice.

- **Can I get help if my child is not attending school?!**

Yes. The school are available to provide advice and support and signpost you to other support agencies in the locality. You can also contact 0300 5551384 (Hantsdirect).

<https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence/overview>



Information on Penalty Notices for Non- Attendance at School

Education Act 1996, section 444A

Advice for parents and carers

Applied from September 2015

Penalty Notices and the Education Act 1996

Section 444A of the Act gives powers to the Local Authority (LA), and headteachers to issue Penalty Notices in circumstances where it is believed that a person has committed an offence under s.444(1); that is where a child fails to attend regularly at their registered school.”

- **What is a Penalty Notice?**

A Penalty Notice is a fine which may be issued as an alternative to prosecution. If it is paid it does not require a court appearance and does not result in a criminal record.

- **Who can be issued with a Penalty Notice?**

Where absence warrants the issuing of a Penalty Notice, each individual parent/ carer can be issued with one Penalty Notice for each of their children with unauthorised absence. A maximum of two fines can be issued per parent in any school year. Other legal sanctions will instead be considered if there is further unauthorised absence.

- **How is a Penalty Notice issued & how much is the fine?**

Penalty Notices are posted to your home. Each Penalty Notice fine is £60 if paid within 21 days of the date of posting and £120 if paid after this but within 28 days of the date of posting.

- **When are they issued?**

As set down by the Department for Education, Penalty Notices can be issued for unauthorised absence. In Hampshire, Penalty Notices are issued where a pupil has had 10 or more half-day sessions (equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence, in any 10 school week period; or 1 or more unauthorised absence/s during a public exam, assessment or test (where the dates have been published). Unauthorised absence is absence not approved by the school and will be coded on your child's attendance record as either:

1. 'O' Unauthorised Absence
2. 'U' Late after Close of Registration
3. 'G' Non approved Leave of Absence (Holiday)

- **Is a warning given?**

For unauthorised leave of absence or during public exams, assessment and testing the school will provide warning of a penalty notice in its school policy, or through letters, newsletters, the school website, and the leave of absence request form. In such cases a Penalty Notice can be issued without further warning.

If a child has an ongoing pattern of unauthorised absence then parent/carers will receive a written warning of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued. This warning will advise the parent/carers about the extent of the child's absence and warn them that if the child's attendance does not show a significant improvement and if this improvement is not maintained thereafter, a Penalty Notice may be issued without further warning.

Further Support, Advice and Guidance is available at:

The Department for Education:

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

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance>

Hampshire County Council:

<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/attendance-guidance-for-parents.htm>



MARCHWOOD JUNIOR SCHOOL
Main Road, Marchwood, Southampton SO40 4ZH



Twiggs Lane, Marchwood, SO40 4ZE



Hampshire
Services

HIAS SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Request to authorise absence from school due to exceptional circumstances

Schools are only able to authorise absence from school in exceptional circumstances. In making a request for an authorised absence from school you will need to explain why the circumstances are exceptional. **Please note:** There is no general right to authorise absence for a family holiday. If you take your child out of school without permission the absence will be unauthorised and we will consider legal action.

You are advised not to make any arrangements until your request has been considered.

Section A – to the headteacher, I wish to apply for

Child's name: _____ Class: _____

To be authorised as absent from school (please include dates and time):

from _____ to _____ (inclusive dates)

If your child has siblings that are also applying for a leave of absence please enter their name and school below:

Child's name(s): _____ School(s): _____

If you are a Service Family and are within 6 months of a deployment which is longer than 4 weeks, you should provide written authorisation from your Commanding Officer.

Signature (Commanding Officer): _____ Date: _____

Section B Please explain why you are applying for an authorised absence and the **circumstances** which make your **application exceptional**; and therefore the leave cannot be taken within the normal 13 weeks holiday your child has from school. If you are requesting authorisation to attend a specific event please confirm the date of the event and explain your travel arrangements. If you require additional space please continue on the other side of the page.

PLEASE NOTE: This leave of absence form serves as a Penalty Notice Warning letter to parents/carers. Any unauthorised absence during this period of time may be subject to a penalty notice for non attendance being issued.

Section C I am the parent/carer with whom the pupil normally resides. The information I have given on this form is correct.

Signature (parent/carer): _____ Date: _____



Hampshire
County Council

www.hants.gov.uk