The Federation of Broughton and West Tytherley Primary Schools

Attendance Policy

Name of school: Broughton Primary School and West Tytherley CE Primary School

Policy approved and adopted: March 2024

Person(s) responsible for implementing and monitoring the policy: Lucy Macey (Executive Headteacher)

Contact for day-to-day attendance issues, including possible absence:

- **Broughton email: adminoffice@broughton.hants.sch.uk, or telephone 01794 301286**
- **West Tytherley email: adminoffice@west-tytherley.hants.sch.uk, or telephone 01794 340338**

Policy due for review: March 2026

National guidance

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

- admissions
- child protection
- safeguarding
- special educational needs
- behaviour

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

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

Section 1

Rationale/statement of intent

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

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

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

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

Section 2

2.1 Promoting good attendance and punctuality

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:

- Strive to achieve 100% attendance
- provide information on all matters related to attendance in our regular school newsletter, on our website, or via specific letters
- report to you on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments
- base our approach on the maintenance of accurate records and regular analysis of attendance data
- review attendance data with the school governors and respond to their questions and ideas
- work across the school to highlight the importance of good attendance so that all staff convey this message to parents and carers
- provide support to parents, in combination with other agencies where necessary, to minimise levels of persistent absence

2.2 Roles and responsibilities

Responsibilities of the school

The Headteacher and Admin Officer 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. They 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 parents/carers the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school.

Responsibilities of classroom staff

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

Responsibilities of pupils

Responsibilities of parents/carers

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.

Parents will:

- inform the school on every day of absence, unless a long term illness has been certified by the GP or hospital, in which case the school should be informed of the start date and the expected time period of absence
- discuss with the class teacher any planned absences well in advance
- support the school with their child in aiming for 100% attendance each year
- make sure that any absence is clearly accounted for by telephone or e-mail on the first and subsequent days of absence, or by letter if a phone is unavailable
- avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments
- complete a form to request leave of absence in all cases other than urgent medical or dental appointments.

Section 3

3.1 Recording attendance

Legally the register must be marked twice daily. This is once at the start of the school day, 9.00am, and again for the afternoon session at 1.00 pm.

3.2 Lateness/punctuality

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

- The school day begins at 9.00am and all **pupils are expected to be in school at this time**. Morning registration is at 9.00 am and it closes at 9.25am.
- All lateness is recorded daily. This information will be required by the courts, should a prosecution for non-attendance or lateness be necessary.
- Arrival after the close of registration will be marked as unauthorised absence and coded *U* in line with Hampshire County Council and Department of Education guidance. This mark shows them to be on site, but is legally recorded as an absence.
- If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence, coded *M*. Please be advised that, where possible, doctors and dentists appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays.

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other pupils. 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 support offered. If support is not appropriate or is declined and a child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence due to lateness recorded in any 10 week period, the school or Hampshire County Council will be required to issue parents with a Penalty Notice in accordance with Hampshire County Council's *Code of conduct: issuing Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence from schools* (See Section 6 of this policy for further detail).

3.3 What to do if my child is absent?

First day absence

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

If your child is absent you must:

- contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence and any subsequent days.

If your child is absent we will:

- telephone you on the first and every subsequent day of absence if we have not heard from you – this is because we have a duty to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance
- invite you in to discuss the situation with our Headteacher if absences persist
- refer the matter to the Hampshire County Council's Attendance Legal Panels if absence is unauthorised and falls below 90%

Third day absence

If your child is not seen and contact has not been established with any of the named parents/carers, after three days of absence the school is required to start *child missing in education* procedures as set down by Hampshire County Council guidance. We will make all reasonable enquiries to establish contact with parents/carers and the child, including making enquiries to known friends and wider family.

Ten days' absence

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer then the local authority is notified that the child is *at risk of missing*. Children's Services staff will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child.

Please ensure that we always have an up-to-date contact number. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

Continued or on-going absence

If your child misses 10% (three weeks/sessions) or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason, they are defined as *persistent absentees*. Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in his or her learning. Research shows these gaps affect attainment when attendance falls below 95%. As such, we monitor all absence thoroughly and all attendance data is shared with the local authority and the Department for Education. If your child has had absence and their attendance level is falling towards 90% we will contact you via letter to inform you that your child's attendance has fallen into the category of a persistent absentee. The school will then follow one of the following routes:

- If your child is absent due to illness, the nature of the illness and projected time period before your child will return to school will be established. This may include correspondence with your child's GP
- Offer support in enabling your child to come to school. This may include alerting other Children's Services professionals and creating a support package for you and your child. In all cases it will include a home-school contract as to the roles and responsibilities of the school and parents/carers in ensuring your child's attendance.
- Initiate legal measures as set out in Section 6 below
- If parents/carers are unwilling to cooperate with the school in ensuring a child's attendance in either of the first two cases above, then legal measures will be initiated as set out in Section 6 below.

Section 4

Request for leave of absence

Amendments to school attendance regulations were updated and enforced from September 2013:

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations state that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. It is important to note that headteachers can determine the length of the authorised absence, as well as whether absence is authorised at all. The fundamental principles for defining *exceptional* are ***rare, significant, or unavoidable***, which means the event could not possibly be scheduled at another time. There are no rules on this as circumstances vary from school to school and family to family. There is no legal entitlement to holiday leave and requests for leave of absence to go on 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 on the school website) in advance and before making any travel arrangements.

If term-time leave is taken without prior permission from the school, the absence will be unauthorised and if the number of sessions absent hits the thresholds set down in Hampshire County Council's *Code of conduct,* parents/carers will be issued with a fixed-penalty fine or other legal action in accordance with the code (see Section 6 for detail). Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children out during school time.

Section 5

Understanding types of absence – authorised and unauthorised

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 of absence from school after a parent's request. This includes:

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

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

Section 6

Penalty Notices for non-attendance and other legal measures

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

Legal measures for tackling persistent absence or lateness

Hampshire schools and Hampshire County Council will use the full range of legal measures to secure good attendance. Legal measures will only be considered when there is unauthorised absence and:

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

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

- parenting contracts set at Education Planning Meetings
- parenting orders
- Penalty Notices
- education supervision orders
- prosecution

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

Penalty Notices for non-attendance – Hampshire's *Code of conduct*

The *Code of conduct* states that:

Schools or Hampshire County Council will issue a Penalty Notice for any unauthorised absence where the pupil has been:

- absent for 10 or more half-day sessions (five school days) of unauthorised absence during any 100 possible school sessions – these do not need to be consecutive (codes *G*, *U* or *O* on the register)
- persistently late (coded *U*) for up to 10 sessions (five days) after the register has closed
- persistently late before the close of the register (coded *L*), but the school has met with parents and has clearly communicated that they will categorise as unauthorised any further lateness (code *O*), and where the threshold of 10 sessions (five days) has been met
- absent for any public examinations of which dates are published in advance
- absent for any formal school assessments, tests or examinations where the dates have been published in advance

unless the issuing of a penalty notice would conflict with other intervention strategies in place or other sanctions already being processed.

Legal measures for absence taken when the headteacher has declined parents/ 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
2 A holiday that has been taken without permission

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

If a child has other types of unauthorised absence (coded *O* and *U*) 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 (five days) of unauthorised absence or lateness in any 100 possible school sessions/10 week school period
2 one 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 via a letter, through the leave of absence request form. The Penalty Notice is a fine that is issued to each parent/carer who condoned (or was responsible for the child) during the period of unauthorised absence for which the fine has been issued. For each case of unauthorised absence the school or Hampshire County Council will decide whether a Penalty Notice is issued **to one or more parents/carers** for each child. **NB:** This could mean four Penalty Notices for a family with two siblings both with unauthorised absence for holiday, ie one Penalty Notice for each child to each parent.

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

Please note: If you pay the Penalty Notice and your child has further unauthorised absences additional legal action will be taken. For example, in the event that a Penalty Notice has previously been served to you due to unauthorised holiday, should your child have any future unauthorised leave this will result in further legal action for you, such as prosecution or an Education Supervision Order.

For further information parents/carers can request a leaflet from their school and should visit Hampshire County Council's website at: www.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/attendance-guidance-for-parents/possible-penalties.

Section 7

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

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.
Contact your child's class teacher immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with school work, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem. In some cases, you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with another professional.

What can I do to encourage my child to attend school?
Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that he/she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his/her education.

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

7.2 Leavers

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

If pupils leave and we do not have the above information, then your child is considered to be a *child missing in education*. This requires schools and local authorities to then carry out investigations to try and locate your child, which includes liaising with Children's Services, the Police and other agencies. By giving us the above information, these investigations can be avoided.

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

Parents/carers of a child performer can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a performance. They must contact the headteacher to discuss the nature and frequency of the work, whether the child has a valid performance licence and whether education will be provided by the employer during any future leave of absence. It is, however, down to the headteacher's discretion as to whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Any absence recorded as part of a child's participation in a public performance is recorded as *C*, an authorised absence.

7.4 Absence through competing at regional, county or national level for sport

Parents of able sportsmen and women can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in regional, county, national and international events and competitions. It is, however, down to the headteacher's discretion 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. Absence for non-competition days will not be authorised for local or regional events.

Record preservation

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

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

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

Appendices

The law

The Education Act 1996, Part I, Section 7 states:

"The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable:

a) to his age, ability and aptitude and

b) to any special needs he may have

either by regular attendance at school or otherwise."

For educational purposes the term *parent* is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day-to-day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part VI, Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

Register and admission roll keeping

The legal requirements are found in: The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.

Guidance documents on attendance

The following Department for Education documents are used to guide attendance recording:

- *Absence and attendance codes* (guidance for schools and local authorities)
- *Keeping pupil registers* (guidance on applying the Education Pupil Registration Regulations).

These and other guidance documents are available on the Department for Education website.

Hampshire County Council guidance is available on Hantsweb at: www.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/lba-resources-for-schools/atten-guidance/attendance-guidance-for-schools.