

Issued: March 2015

## New guidance for Absence and Lateness

Dear parents,

Firstly, may we thank all parents and carers who do regularly ensure that their children attend school at all time.

The attached letter outlines statutory changes that Hampshire County Council has made to its 'Code of Conduct' to ensure your child's/ student's attendance at school. This new guidance that will take effect from September 2015.

Key changes are:

- All schools aim to achieve a goal of 100% attendance
- Persistent absence threshold is now below 90% (3 weeks or more schooling across the year). The previous threshold was 85%
- Hampshire Local Authority 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
  - persistently late for up to 10 sessions (five days) after the register has closed
  - persistently late before the close of the register, but the school has met with parents/ carers and has clearly communicated that they will categorise as unauthorised any further lateness, and where the threshold of 10 sessions (5 days) has been met
  - absent for any public examinations, formal school assessments, tests or examinations of which dates are published in advance

Penalty notices will be issued if a child's attendance crosses any of the above thresholds. If a fine is raised, then each responsible parent will be fined £60 per child per week of absence. Failure to pay within a set period will incur further penalties.

Headteachers have the authority to grant leave of absence but only in exceptional cases. Fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' circumstances are absences that are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. By 'unavoidable' it is meant that an event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.

Absence from school, for whatever reason, can disadvantage a child by creating gaps in learning. Research shows that 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. If your child's attendance level is falling towards 90%, then we will first contact you to raise our concern. All schools within our cluster are committed to working together to support the improvement of children/ young people's attendance and punctuality to school. Please support us by giving your child the best opportunities through good attendance at school.

Yours faithfully,

Headteacher

**A child's absence and lateness will affect our ability to celebrate their achievements, such as attendance rewards, merit stars and house points.**



Abbotswood  
Junior School



Junior School



Growing & Learning Together



Coppthorne C of E Infant School



Eling Infant School



Forest Park School



Hounsdown School  
A Science College



TESTWOOD



SPORTS COLLEGE