



**Jack Hunt School
Governing Body**



**SECURING GOOD SCHOOL ATTENDANCE
POLICY DOCUMENT**

Version 4.2

September 2023

**Reviewed by SLT: September 2023
Approved by Academy Committee: September 2023
Date of Next Review: September 2024**

Our school

Jack Hunt School (JHS) is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils/students and recognises that this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based upon the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance.

Everyone – including pupils/students, parents and carers, all school staff, school governors, Local Authority, external agencies – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. We are committed to working in partnership with families and other agencies to achieve best outcomes for children via the early help pathways available.

We believe that ours is a successful, welcoming school which you and your child/children plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of our school community to achieve excellence. For children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly, and your child should be at school, on time, every day on which the school is open (Isle of Wight V Platt) unless the reason for the absence is exceptional.

All staff (teaching and support) at our school have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our pupils/students are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

Regular attendance is so important as it gives your child the best opportunity to learn. Any absences will affect the pattern of your child's schooling and consistent absences may seriously affect learning. Any child's absence disrupts teaching routines, not only for your child but for others in the same class.

Pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 (KS2) and key stage 4 (KS4) have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment. At KS4, pupils not achieving grade 9 to 4 in English and maths had an overall absence rate of 8.8%, compared to 5.2% among those achieving grade 4. The overall absence rate of pupils not achieving grade 9 to 4 was over twice as high as those achieving grade 9 to 5 (8.8% compared to 3.7%).

The school liaises closely with our Local Authority and other agencies using an Early Help pathway (Early Help Referral) which assists in the assessment of need in order for appropriate support to be given. This initial pathway enables further referrals to external agencies to be made and further support acquired to support families to remove any barriers that are preventing regular attendance.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Definition of a parent/carer in Education Law

It's important that schools and local authorities are aware that parents may be recognised differently under education law, than under family law. Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a parent (from which can be inferred 'biological parent') but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child.

For the purposes of education law, the department considers a 'parent' to include:

- all biological parents, whether they are married or not.

- any person who, although not a biological parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person - this could be an adoptive parent, a step-parent, guardian or other relative.
- any person who, although not a biological parent and does not have parental responsibility, has care of a child or young person

The Law relating to attendance and the right to a full-time education

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that ‘the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full-time education suitable:

- (a) to age, ability and aptitude and
- (b) to any special educational needs, he/ she may have

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise’

It is the legal responsibility of **every** parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an **additional legal duty** to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

The Isle of Wight Council v Platt case (2017) considered by the Supreme Court makes it clear that regular attendance shall mean in accordance with the school rules. Therefore, any non-attendance which is not in accordance with the school rules will be deemed unauthorised. The school rules are determined by the school and are the days and hours that they are open for pupils to attend. Under this judgment all children registered at a school should attend 100% of the time unless there are exceptional circumstances that prevent this.

The Law relating to Safeguarding

Section 175 of the Education Act 1996 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State regarding safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is **everyone’s responsibility** and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses: -

Attendance	Anti-Bullying
Behaviour Management	Access to the Curriculum
Health and Safety	Wellbeing

Failing to attend school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter. Creating and maintaining a pattern of punctual and regular attendance is **everybody’s** responsibility – parents/carers, pupils, school staff and, external agencies.

Expectations and Daily routines

JHS starts at 8.40am and we expect all children to be in class by this time. Registers are marked at 8.42am and close at 9.10am.

Your child will receive an unauthorised late mark if they arrive after the register is closed. Your child will be given a 'U' code (unauthorised late) in line with regulations, and this may mean that you face legal action if they persist.

When your child is late, they miss the start of the day, they can miss work, and this will impact on their learning. Late arrivals also disrupt lessons for other pupils in the class, which is not fair on them or your child.

To support students in understanding how important punctuality is, JHS run on the day afterschool late detentions for students who do not make it through the school gates by 8.40am or do not make it to lesson 1 by 8.42 am. For their first 4 lates in a half term, students receive a 30 minute on the day detention. For any further lates within the half term a one hour, on the day, after school detention will result.

Absence Procedure

If your child is going to be absent from school, you must contact the school on the first day and subsequent days of absence and inform the school the detailed reason for the absence. 'Feeling poorly' is not sufficient - how are they feeling poorly?

Please contact JHS by 8.30am by either:

Telephone: 01733 263526

Email: office@jhs.pkat.co.uk

If your child is absent and you do not contact us, under our safeguarding policy we will:

- Send truancy call on the first day and every following day of absence if we have not heard from you
- we may:**
- Contact emergency numbers held on our database
 - Undertake a home visit if no contact is received from you
 - Call 101 (Police) and request a safe and well check if all other attempts to contact you fail to get a response
 - Invite you to discuss the absences with us
 - Take legal action if there are persistent absences, which may be in the form of penalty notices issued to each parent/carer for each child or legal action through the courts.

Who to contact if you or your child/children have questions or concerns about attendance?

Day-to-day, speak to your child's form tutor, Student Support Officer (SSO) or Head of House.

House	SSO	Head of House
Brunel	Mrs W Ellis	Mr S Craig
Curie	Ms F Miller / Ms F Newell	Mrs M Stevens/Mr S Ahmed
Einstein	Mr K Cliffe	Mr R Blant
Kennedy	Ms S Ingham	Mr P Mountain
Mandela	Ms B Adams	Mrs K Ward
Nightingale	Mrs H Yeoman	Mr D Baines

All JHS staff email addresses are in the format:

Initial of christian name surname @jhs.pkat.co.uk

e.g. to contact Mr T Brown use tbrown@jhs.pkat.co.uk

Leadership of Attendance at JHS

The School Attendance Officers (SAO) Ms Clarke and Mr Morgan, in conjunction with the School Attendance Lead (SAL) Mrs Gooding, will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the work of JHS in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure that the JHS Attendance Policy is consistently applied.

Data and Monitoring

How we monitor attendance/absence

We keep track all our children's attendance and absences thoroughly through regular reports from our Management Information System. We look at the reports on a regular basis to track any concerns that may arise due to unauthorised absences and to ensure that any interventions are timely and appropriate.

We routinely monitor attendance and absences daily, weekly, half termly, termly and annually to assist the school in providing support and/or changes to our process where necessary to provide the correct support to families.

We analyse all patterns of absence, both authorised and unauthorised and try to ensure that parents/carers are informed of any child's attendance that fails below the National Average to prevent your child becoming a persistent absentee (PA) which means that they have an attendance below 90%. A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling within an agreed period **for whatever reason**. Absence at this level may cause considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need full parent/carer support and co-operation to tackle this.

Our interventions at this stage may include, but is not limited to:

- writing to parents/carers if attendance drops below the school's threshold of 92.5%.
- requesting that they provide evidence to support absences
- calling a School Attendance Meeting
- making an Early Help Referral
- referring to the Local Authority for support

PA pupils are also tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system, and we may also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

Understanding types of absence

Every half-day absence from school must be classified by the school (not by parents/carers) as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. Therefore, information about the cause of any absence is essential, preferably in writing so that it can be recorded correctly.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for an exceptional and unavoidable circumstance such as illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies, or other exceptional cause authorised by the Headteacher.

Should it be essential to have a medical appointment during the school day, students should attend school prior to the appointment and return to school after the appointment. A full day absence is not expected.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been authorised. These include, but are not limited to:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children, acting as interpreters or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time not authorised as an exceptional and unavoidable circumstance
- medical treatment overseas (unless part of emergency treatment whilst abroad on an authorised

absence).

This type of absence can lead to the Peterborough City Council, School Attendance Team, using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

Whilst any child may be absent from school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is **never** an option 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 usually makes things worse.

Impact analysis

As part of our data analysis and monitoring process we will regularly assess the outcomes of our support/interventions to measure the impact that they are having on the improvement of children's attendance and attainment.

We will continue to meet with and engage with families to find out and help resolve any barriers to regular attendance, including signposting or referring to other agencies.

We will regular review cases to ensure that the school is providing the appropriate support/referrals as legal action, for our school is a last resort, but sometimes cannot be avoided.

Legal Interventions

Fixed penalty notices

We may request a fixed penalty notice to be issued by the Local Authority in line with the Local Authority's Penalty Notice Code of Conduct for unauthorised leave of absence or where all support interventions do not secure an improvement in attendance.

Leave of absence/single absence event

As a school we ask parents/carers **not** to take children out of school without the permission of the headteacher as per the Law and Legislation. Please remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

Headteachers must comply with The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

All applications for leave of absence **must** be made in advance using the 'Leave of Absence Form'. In deciding about whether to authorise the leave the Headteacher will consider the circumstances of each application individually taking into account the evidence submitted in support. If the request is refused the Headteacher will inform all parties of their decision. If the Headteacher grants the request it is for the Headteacher to **determine** the length of time the pupil can be away from school.

It is important that you understand that we may **only** authorise such absences in **exceptional and unavoidable circumstances**. It is unlikely that a leave of absence will be granted for the purpose of a family holiday.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school (with at least four weeks' notice) and/or different from that agreed by the school will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice per parent/carer per child.

Absence due to Non School Attendance (Irregular/Persistent Absenteeism)

Where the school has implemented attendance interventions and parent/carers have failed to support the school, the school may request a penalty notice under the Peterborough City Council, Penalty Notice Code of Conduct.

A penalty notice can be issued if **one** of the following criteria can be met

- Level of unauthorised absence leads to an unauthorised absence rate of **10%** or more within a minimum period of any 8 school weeks (A maximum of 2 penalty notices for ongoing attendance concerns may be issued in any academic year)
- A single unauthorised absence event of at least 2 consecutive school days (4 consecutive sessions)
- Persistent late arrival at school after the register has closed contribute to a level of unauthorised absence at **10%** or above
- Lack of adherence to the dates agreed for any authorised leave of absence without reasonable justification
- Pupils identified in a public place whilst excluded from school (during the first five days of the exclusion period) without reasonable justification.

For further information regarding Penalty Notices please refer to the **Peterborough City Council Code of Conduct** which is available on the Peterborough City Council Website

Escalation of Procedures

When we escalate cases to higher level legal interventions

The school will make every effort to support families/children whose attendance is causing concern. However, there are some circumstances where despite the school's, the Local Authority's and extended work through multiple agencies fails to improve the attendance of children and at this point the school may instigate, or request that the Local Authority instigates a more formal legal intervention.

If this occurs a case may be prepared and presented to the Magistrates Court for prosecution under Section 444 (1) or 444 (1a) of the Education Act 1996.

The outcome of these cases will be determined by the courts, of which can be:

- where convicted under Section 444(1) Education Act 1996, you may be fined up to £1,000.
- where convicted under Section 444(1a) Education Act 1996 you may be fined up to £2,500 and/or a custodial sentence.
- Impose a Parenting Order

Incentives and Rewards

How our school is **promoting** and incentivising good attendance.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Have a whole school approach to attendance
- Provide details on attendance in our regular newsletters
- Report to you regularly on how your child/children are performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainment and rate of progress
- Update you at parent/carers evenings
- Celebrate and reward good and improving attendance through weekly, half term and term events, including prize draws at the end of each half term.

Our monitoring/intervention strategy

Below is the basis of our intervention pathway. We treat each child individually and therefore each case may take a different route depending on the barriers, needs of the family and any other circumstances which may be impacting on regular attendance. We try to take a holistic approach to dealing with and resolving barriers to non-school attendance and use legal interventions as a last resort.

97.5 - 100%

Attendance levels are good to excellent

Positive encouragement/incentives/rewards offered to encourage and maintain high attendance. If the absences are unauthorised, we may write to you. Monitoring continues.

97.5% = 1 week
(5 days) missed
school

95% - 97.4%

Attendance levels start to cause concern

The school analyses data and creates reports to regularly monitor attendance. If your child's attendance starts to fall the school may write to you expressing concerns and may advise that further absences will not be authorised without medical evidence. Monitoring continues. If the absences are unauthorised we may invite you to a meeting to discuss the barriers to your child's attendance and formulate an agreed course of action to support a return to regular attendance. Monitoring continues to assess impact of any agreed support or actions.

95% = 2 weeks (10
days) missed
school

92.5 - 94.9%

Attendance levels causing further significant concern.

At this point you will be invited to a meeting at the school and a plan of action offered. A Home School Agreement will be created to support an improvement in attendance. Your child will be monitored to ensure that there is an improvement in the coming weeks. You will be required to provide evidence to support absences and if none are received the absences will be recorded as unauthorised. You may be issued with a Final Warning Letter. Close monitoring is put in place to assess impact on attendance of any agreed support or actions.

92.5% = 2 weeks
4 days (14 days)
missed school

90 - 92.4%

Attendance levels do not improve, and further unauthorised absences are recorded

You may be issued with a Final Warning Letter or sent a further absence letter notifying you of a request to the Local Authority to issue a penalty notice. Attendance will continue to be monitored and further interventions may be put in place.

90% = 3 weeks
4 days (19) days
missed school

85 - 89.9%

Attendance levels do not improve, and further concerns are raised.

Below 90% means that your child is classed as a persistent absentee and further interventions may be instigated through legal routes if all other support has proved ineffective in improving attendance or there is lack of engagement by parents/carers. This may be with the use of a penalty notice or referral under Section 444 (1) (1a) for a legal meeting or an interview under caution. Monitoring continues.

85% = 5 weeks 4
days (29) days
missed school
HALF A TERM

1. Version History

1.1 Table of Versions

VERSION	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE	DATE
1.0	Draft Compiled	Alma McGONIGLE	19/02/2016
2.0	COVID changes incorporated	Alma McGONIGLE	09/09/2020
2.1	Formatting updated and approved by LGB	Niamh WALSH	21/09/2020
3.0	COVID and Personnel changes incorporated	Wendy Gooding	11/09/2021
4.0	Changes in accordance with 'Working together to improve school attendance'. Dfe Sep 2022	Wendy Gooding	30/10/22
4.1	Minor amendments to reflect changes in staffing and new late to school procedure	Wendy Gooding	23/09/23
4.2	Minor amendments to reflect staffing changes	Wendy Gooding	27/02/23