

# Locks Heath Infant & Nursery School

## Attendance Policy



Reviewed	Next Review
Spring 2026	Spring 2027

**Summary of changes:**

The model policy has been revised to reflect changes to the statutory guidance [Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance)

# School Attendance Policy

Locks Heath Infant & Nursery School

## Policy Consultation & Review

This policy is available on our school website and is available on request from the school office. We also inform parents and carers about this policy when their children join our school and regularly thereafter through our school newsletter and other relevant opportunities.

We recognise the expertise our staff build by managing school attendance daily and we therefore invite staff to contribute to and shape this policy and associated attendance and safeguarding arrangements.

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Governing Body on at least an annual basis. It is due for review in January 2027.

# Contents

1	<b>Introduction/Aim</b>	5
2	<b>Legal Framework</b>	6
3	<b>Roles and Responsibilities</b> including parents	7
4	<b>Categorising Absence and Attendance</b>	11
4.1	Leave of absence	11
4.2	Medical appointments and absence due to illness	13
4.3	Pupil absence for the purposes of Religious Observance	13
4.4	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	13
4.5	Unauthorised absence	15
5	<b>Our Procedures</b>	15
5.1	Register keeping and recording	15
5.2	Late arrival at school	16
5.3	Expected absence procedure <b>for parents &amp; carers</b>	17
5.4	Attendance Support & Interventions	18
5.5	Support Systems	20
5.6	Persistent Absence and the use of legal interventions	22
6	<b>Related Policies</b>	22
7	<b>Statutory Framework</b>	23
8	<b>Appendices</b>	24
	Appendix 1: Fixed penalty notice whole school warning letter	25
	Appendix 2: Example leave of absence request form	28
	Appendix 3: Attendance Policy Quick Guide for Parents & Carers	31
	Appendix 4: Attendance codes	32
	Appendix 5: Information specific to Nursery School aged children (2, 3 or 4 year olds):	33

## 1. Introduction/Aim

At **Locks Heath Infant & Nursery School** we believe that regular school attendance is essential if children are to achieve their full potential. We value the attendance of all pupils.

Missing out on time in school leaves children vulnerable to falling behind and can put them at risk of wider harm. There is a [wide range of evidence](#) as to the health and wellbeing benefits of school-age education. [Research](#) commissioned by the Department for Education shows missing school for even a day can mean a child is less likely to achieve good grades, which can have a damaging effect on their life chances. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties at the earliest opportunity.

Our attendance policy aims to give clear guidance to staff, parents & carers, pupils, and governors/trustees to:

- Promote good attendance, enabling pupils' achievement by establishing the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Recognise the key role of all staff in promoting good attendance.
- Provide a clear framework for monitoring and responding to pupil absences, acting early to address patterns of absence.
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school.
- Promote positive support systems and advocate multi-agency approaches to improve attendance.
- Make parents and carers aware of their legal responsibilities and ensure their children have access to the education to which they are entitled.

We recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, prevention of bullying, relational behaviour, and inclusive learning and special educational needs. This policy also considers the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and other relevant legislation.

*\*Addendum:*

*Throughout this policy, the word 'school' refers to both the Infant and Nursery School. Leaders have high aspirations for attendance at both settings but fully understand that the legal framework and DfE guidance in Working Together to Improve School Attendance can only be applied to children of school age. Specific aspects of Nursery attendance and expectations are located in Appendix 5 on page 38 of this policy.*

## 2. Legal Framework

This policy meets the requirements of the [Working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#).

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents and carers must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability, and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory

school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

The government expects all schools and local authorities to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence.
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Act early to address patterns of absence.

Parents and carers are expected to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.

In accordance with the Education Act 1996, we will work with parents and carers and the Local Authority to ensure that parents and carers are supported to secure education for children of compulsory school age. Where required, we will formalise support and where necessary, work with the LA to use legal measures.

A “Parent” is defined as:

- Any natural parent, whether married or not.
- Any parent who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility as defined in the Children Act (1989) for a child or young person.
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person.

### 3. Roles and Responsibilities

At **Locks Heath Infant & Nursery School**, we believe that improving school attendance is everyone’s business. It is a shared responsibility by governors, all school staff, parents and carers, pupils, the wider school community and multi-agency partners. We aim to always work in partnership with our parents and carers.

<b>Role at Locks Heath Infant &amp; Nursery School</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Contact details</b>
<b>Senior Attendance Lead/Champion</b>	Mrs Sian Cowley <i>(Home School Link Worker / DDSL)</i>	01489584180
<b>Attendance Officer</b>	Mrs Kristy Bieles <i>(Senior Admin Officer)</i>	01489584180
<b>Named Governor for Attendance</b>	Mrs Clare Georgeson <i>(Chair of Governors)</i>	<a href="mailto:a.governor@locksheath-inf.hants.sch.uk">a.governor@locksheath-inf.hants.sch.uk</a>

The Governors of **Locks Heath Infant & Nursery School** recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it through the school's ethos, and across its policies. They take an active role in attendance improvement by:

- Setting high expectations of all leaders, staff, pupils, and parents and carers so that children attend school every day and are safeguarded.
- Identifying a member of the governing body to lead on attendance matters and ensuring that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance.
- Prioritising attainment, behaviour, special educational needs and disabilities, wellbeing and safeguarding.
- Ensuring school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties by rigorously evaluating the effectiveness of the school's attendance procedures so that consistent attendance support is provided for all pupils.
- Ensuring the schools' attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent attendance support is provided for pupils who require it most by prioritising the staff and resources needed. This includes ensuring schools engage and work effectively with the local authority School Attendance Support Team and wider local partners and services.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data, discussing, challenging trends, and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Ensuring high aspirations are maintained for all pupils and processes for support are adapted to the individual needs of pupils including those with long term illnesses, special educational needs and disabilities, pupils with a social worker, those pupils under the Virtual School and pupils from cohorts with historically lower attendance such as those eligible for free school meals.
- Ensuring all school staff receive adequate training on attendance and that relevant staff have access to opportunities to share and learn from good practice in other schools.
- Ensuring that attendance data is shared with the Local Authority or Department for Education in line with statutory reporting deadlines.
- Reviewing the school's Attendance Policy on at least an annual basis, ensuring that the required resources are available to fully implement the policy, which is published and publicised regularly so that it is easily accessible to pupils, parents and carers and staff.

The Senior Management Team at **Locks Heath Infant & Nursery School** will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents and carers.
- Form and maintain positive relationships with pupils and parents and carers.
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance, with good teaching and learning experiences, with a whole school culture that encourages all pupils to attend and to achieve.
- Make sure all teaching and non-teaching staff know the importance of good attendance, are consistent in their communication with pupils and parents and carers, and receive the training and professional development they need.
- Have a clear school attendance policy which all staff, pupils and parents and carers understand. Monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed annually.
- Ensure the school have accurate, complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day-to-day processes in place to follow-up absence.
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.
- Ensure that there is a named Senior Attendance Champion to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resources.
- Attend the termly school attendance hub support meetings with the local authority, focusing on those pupils with severe absence, making sure a regularly reviewed plan is in place.

All staff at **Locks Heath Infant & Nursery School** will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents and carers.
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents and carers.
- Contribute to a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve.
- Know the importance of good attendance, are consistent in their communication with pupils and parents and carers, and receive the training and professional development they need.
- Understand the link between exciting, tailored and purposeful learning experiences, and children who subsequently want to attend school.

The member of staff responsible for attendance will work to further develop relationships with families to bring about improved attendance. This may involve seeking multi-agency support. Where this is the case or where a child is at risk of harm, more information can be found via our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policies and Procedures which can be accessed [here](#).

**Locks Heath Infant & Nursery School** requests that parents

and carers:

- Ensure their child has regular attendance at school.
- Instill the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment.
- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return, following this with a note wherever possible.
- Avoid unnecessary absences; for example, by making medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties with any aspect of their schoolwork or home and family life.
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance.
- Support the school by becoming involved in their child's education, forming a positive relationship with school, and acknowledging the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home.
- Maintain effective routines at home to support good attendance.
- Attend all meetings requested to discuss attendance issues.
- Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress.

Further information can be found at: [Attendance guidance for parents | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](https://www.hants.gov.uk/attendance-guidance-for-parents)

Pupils will:

- Speak to their class teacher or another member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact their attendance.
- Attend all learning opportunities ready to learn, following the expectations of the school as set out in the Relational Behavior Policy and in accordance with the school's ethos and Learning Values.

## 4. Categorising Absence and Attendance

When marking our registers, we will apply the national codes as outlined and regulated by the Department for Education guidance to accurately record and report attendance.

### 4.1 Leave of Absence

Since September 2013, changes to Government regulations and guidance mean that Headteachers can no longer authorise leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. Generally, the DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday

or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance. Leave of absence should not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours. All absences associated with a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation during term time will be marked as unauthorised within the register. Any parents and carers known to have removed their child from school for the sole purpose of a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation may be referred to the Local Authority and be issued with a penalty notice fine or referred to the Local Authority to consider prosecution.

We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are times when a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child due to 'exceptional circumstances'. At Locks Heath Infant & Nursery School, leave of absence is only granted at the discretion of the Headteacher and shall not be granted unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'. Locks Heath Infant & Nursery School will respond to all applications for leave of absence in writing, via return of the formal Leave of Absence Request form.

Parents and carers wishing to apply for leave of absence during term time must apply via the Leave of Absence Request form, in writing, to the Headteacher at least one month before the planned leave (see Appendix 2). If a written request for leave of absence is not completed and the leave is taken without a request being submitted, the leave will not be considered by the Headteacher, and it will be marked as unauthorised. The Headteacher will treat each application individually and, where necessary, discuss with you the circumstances of the application before a decision is made. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised.

A penalty notice request or a referral for prosecution may be submitted to the Local Authority should: -

- The parent fail to submit a leave of absence request in advance of taking the leave.
- An application for a leave of absence not be agreed by the Headteacher but where the absence is still taken.
- A longer period of absence than the agreed number of days be taken.

When absence is granted by the Headteacher, the parents and carers will need to agree a date of return. If a pupil fails to return on the expected date and contact is not received from, or made with the parents and carers, school will seek advice from the Local Authority. This could result in possible children missing from education procedures being instigated.

The 1996 Education Act also sets out the circumstances in which a pupil has not failed to attend school regularly and therefore the parent has not committed an offence.

4.2, 4.3, 4.4 are examples of these.

## 4.2 Medical Appointments and absence due to illness

Parents and carers should try to make appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where appointments during school time are unavoidable, we ask that parents and carers notify the school in advance of the appointment wherever possible. The pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. In most circumstances, a child should not miss a whole day at school for an appointment. If a pupil must attend a medical appointment during the school day, the parent or carer must **contact the school to communicate this and the school administrative staff will ensure the child is correctly signed in and out before leaving and / or returning to school**. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

In line with Department for Education guidance, if we do have a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness, we may ask the parent to provide medical evidence, such as a prescription, appointment card, or other appropriate form of evidence. If the school is not satisfied with the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Where a child has an emerging pattern of non-attendance, we will discuss the reasons for absence with the child's parent. We will invite parents and carers to attend a support meeting as an appropriate early intervention strategy. As part of this support, we may seek consent from parents and carers, and the pupil as appropriate to make a referral to the School Nursing Team and/or to liaise with the child's healthcare professional.

Where a pupil has a verified and chronic health condition, we will aim to work with parents and carer to ensure children have access to education and provide appropriate support in line with [Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school](#) and Hampshire policies regarding supporting children with health issues, [Behaviour and attendance resources for schools | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](#). We will also consider whether an Individual Healthcare Plan is required.

## 4.3 Pupil Absence for the purposes of Religious Observance

**Locks Heath Infant & Nursery School** acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that, on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and is recognised as such by a relevant religious authority. Where this occurs, the school will consider either authorising the pupil's absence or making special leave for religious observance. Parents and carers are requested to give advance notice to the school. [Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) page 86

## 4.4 Parent travelling for occupational purposes

The pupil is a mobile child, and their parent(s) is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. A mobile child is a child of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode and whose parent(s) is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place.

To ensure we can effectively support all our pupils, we ask that parents and carers:

- Advise the school of their forthcoming travelling patterns as soon as these are known and before they happen; and
- Inform the school regarding proposed return dates.

## 4.5 Unauthorised Absence

Absence will not be authorised unless parents and carers have provided a satisfactory explanation and it is accepted as such by the school. The decision to authorise absences is at the discretion of the Headteacher. Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include but are not limited to:

- A pupil's/family member's birthday.
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes.
- An unwillingness to attend school, or inability to attend owing to inadequate personal/family organisation.
- A refusal to attend school on health grounds but where the pupil is considered well enough to attend.
- Places of work not allowing parents and carers to take holidays during the school holiday period.
- My child having good or 100% attendance
- False reporting of illness. (Schools are expected to carry out home visits if a holiday is suspected. School will report this to the local authority).
- Absences taken without the authorisation of the school.

## 5. Our Procedures

### 5.1 Register Keeping and Recording

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended by 2016 regulations, requires schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again at the start of the afternoon session.

For the purpose of this policy, the school defines:

"Absence" as:

- Arrival at school / nursery after the register has closed.
- Not attending school / nursery for

any reason. "Regular" attendance as:

- Attendance at every session the school is open to pupils unless their absence has been authorised.

Pupils must arrive in the Infant School by **8.55am** each school day. (**Classroom doors are open from 8.45am**). The register for the first session (morning) will be taken at **8.55am**. Arrivals **between 8.55am and 9.10am** will be registered a code L (Late before the close of the register) with the time of arrival being recorded in the school office. Any arrivals from **9.10am** will be registered as code U (Late after the close of register) – **this is categorized as an unauthorised absence for that session**. The register for the second session (afternoon) will be taken at **1.05pm**. (*Nursery times and expectations are explained in Appendix 5, on page 33*)

Registers are legal records and all schools / nurseries must preserve every entry in the attendance or admission register for 6 years from the date the data was entered. As the attendance register is a record of the pupils present at the time it was taken, the register should only routinely be amended where the reason for absence cannot be established at the time it is taken and it is subsequently necessary to correct the entry. Where amendments are made, all schools / nurseries must ensure the register shows the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date on which the amendment was made, and the name of the person who made the amendment. On each occasion the register is taken the appropriate national attendance and absence code must be entered for every pupil (of both compulsory and non- compulsory school age) whose name is listed in the admission register at the time.

The codes enable schools/nurseries to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way and are used to collect statistics. The data helps schools, local authorities, and the government gain a greater understanding of the delivery of education and the level of, and reason for, absence.

### **Reporting to parents and carers**

The school/nursery uses a data management system (Arbor) that all parents and carers have access to. Parents and carers are, at any time during the year, able to access their child's attendance records. In addition to this, the school formally reports attendance and absence levels as part of the formal written reports which are shared with all parents and carers in July of every academic year.

## **5.2 Late Arrival at School**

At **Locks Heath Infant & Nursery School** all pupils are expected to arrive on time for every day of the school year or, for the Nursery provision, every day that parents and carers have previously agreed to.

The Infant School day begins at **8.55am**. We advise all parents and carers to ensure their child is on site prior to this **with classroom doors open from 8.45am**. The school register will be taken at **8.55am**. All pupils arriving after this time are required to report to the main office with their parent or carer, **where the child will be signed in**. If their arrival is **between 8.55am and 9.10am** it will be recorded as late - L code (Late before the close of register).

The Infant School register will officially close at **9.10am**. All pupils arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the session - U code (Late after the close of register). This is categorised as an unauthorised absence for the session. Parents and carers will be contacted to discuss any patterns of late arrival. Repeated arrival after the close of registration will result in appropriate interventions being instigated and may also result in a penalty notice being issued or prosecution.

### 5.3 Expected absence procedure for parents and carers:

A parent has a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school/nursery regularly. If a child is unavoidably absent from school, parents and carers are expected to contact school/nursery by telephone on the morning of the first day of absence and on each subsequent day, identifying the reason for absence and the expected date of return. If no contact is received, then absence protocols will be instigated.

If a child is absent with no information being passed to the school via phone, the following actions will be initiated by the school/nursery:

- The first day calling procedures will be activated at **9.30am** for all pupils who are not in school after close of register and where no reason for absence is known.
- If there is still no contact made from the pupil's parent or carer, a further telephone call will be made again, that morning. If no response can be gained, the child's other named emergency contacts will be telephoned.
- If school cannot contact a parent, a home visit may be carried out or, depending upon the circumstances, Children's Services or the Police may be contacted.
- School will telephone home if a pupil leaves the school without permission.

**More information can be sought via our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures which can be accessed by clicking [here](#).**

In certain circumstances the school may also:

- Visit the home of the pupil.
- Write to the parents and carers of a pupil to highlight attendance or punctuality issues.
- Invite parents and carers to discuss how school can support the family to make improvements.
- Refer to Inclusion Support Service for support, guidance, and advice.
- Refer to the Local Authority for joint enquiries to be made to establish the whereabouts of the child through [Inclusion Support Service \(ISS\) | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](https://www.hants.gov.uk) and [Behaviour and attendance resources for schools | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](https://www.hants.gov.uk)
- Refer to the Local Authority to consider issuing a penalty notice or to consider prosecution when all other interventions have failed or an unauthorised leave of absence has been taken.
- Refer the matter to an appropriate external agency for multi-agency support, such as implementing a Family Support Plan or consulting with Children's Social Care or the police, where there are safeguarding concerns.

### 5.4 Attendance Support & Interventions

Leaders and governors at Locks Heath Infant & Nursery School strongly believe that the school's engaging and exciting curriculum, along with the family friendly ethos, ensures that children feel safe, happy and want to come to school every day.

The school/nursery regularly monitors attendance and absence, acting swiftly to support parents and carers where attendance levels are low.

The school and nursery's Home School Link Worker meets regularly with the other Designated Safeguarding Leads to ensure cases of persistent and / or severe absence are addressed, involving support services and outside agencies where appropriate and in a formal manner. In all these cases, the Home School Link Worker will work closely with parents and carers to provide tailored support and challenge in getting their child(ren) to school.

This may take the form of a Parent Contract detailing agreed actions to improve attendance. Should prosecution in a Magistrates Court occur as a last resort, refusal to enter into this contract or not sticking to agreed actions would become evidence.

The school/nursery regularly promotes the importance of school attendance, sharing guidance, advice and expectations with the parent and carer community. The school is rightly proud of the consistently high levels of attendance it achieves. Because of the high priority school/nursery leaders, staff and governors place on this matter, the school consistently achieves an attendance rate of around 96%.

### **Monitor and Analyse attendance**

The **Home School Link Worker** will:

- Monitor and analyse weekly attendance patterns and trends and deliver intervention and support in a targeted way to pupils and families. This should go beyond headline attendance percentages and should look at individual pupils and cohorts (including their punctuality) across the school.
- Use this analysis to provide regular attendance reports to class teachers to facilitate discussions with parents and carers, and to leaders (including any special educational needs coordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads).
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full year data to identify patterns and trends. This should include analysis of pupils and cohorts and identifying patterns in uses of certain codes and days of poor attendance.
- Benchmark attendance data (at whole school, year group and cohort level) against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement.
- Devise specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data.
- Monitor in the data the impact of school wide attendance efforts, including any specific strategies implemented. The findings should then be used to evaluate approaches or inform future strategies.
- Provide data and reports to support the work of the board or governing body and local authority when appropriate.

At Locks Heath Infant & Nursery School we will investigate any pupils who are heading towards becoming persistently absent (PA) and will not wait until attendance is below 90%.

“Persistent Absenteeism” (PA) is:

- Missing 10% or more of schooling across the year for any reason.

“Severe Absence” (SA) is:

- Missing 50% or more of schooling across the year for any reason.

## 5.5 Support Systems

At Locks Heath Infant & Nursery School leaders recognise that poor attendance can be an indication of difficulties in a family’s life. This may be related to problems at home and / or in school. Parents and carers are encouraged to inform school of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child’s attendance and/or behaviour in school, for example: bereavement, divorce/separation, emerging health concerns. This will help the school/nursery identify any additional support that may be required.

The school also recognises that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance. The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance based on the individual needs and circumstances of the child.

Strategies we may use to support you include:

- Being honest and open with you when your child’s attendance falls below the level expected.
- Supportive meetings with our Home School Link Worker to explore possible support that can be mutually agreed upon.
- Utilising Hampshire County Council support networks and services such as The School Nursing Team and Family Support Services.
- Building tailored support packages for you and your family in order to support you in meeting your personal needs.

To plan the correct support we will always invite parents and carers, and where appropriate pupils, to attend a meeting to discuss the concerns and devise a plan to support the child’s regular attendance. Support offered to families will be child-centered and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and carers, and where appropriate the pupils.

## 5.6 Persistent Absence, Severe Absence and the use of Legal Interventions

A pupil becomes a ‘Persistent Absentee’ (PA) when their attendance drops to 90% and below for any reason. Over a full academic year this would be 38 sessions (19 days). Absence at this level **could** cause considerable damage to a child’s educational outcomes.

A pupil becomes a ‘Severe Absentee’ (SA) when their attendance drops to 50% and

below for any reason. Over a full academic year this would be 90 sessions (45 days). Absence at this level **is** causing considerable damage to a child's educational outcomes.

The attendance of all pupils at our school/nursery is monitored to identify children who are PA, or are at risk of becoming PA. Where emerging concerns are identified we will may issue a Notice to Improve and instigate appropriate and timely interventions as outlined in the section above.

Referrals may also be made to external agencies for targeted support. [Inclusion Support Service \(ISS\) | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](#)

If parents and carers fail to engage with support and their child continues to have unsatisfactory attendance/ punctuality, a request may be made to the Local Authority to pursue legal proceedings either through a penalty notice, consideration of an Education Supervision Order or prosecution via the Magistrates' Court.

Any parents and carers found guilty of failing to secure their child's regular attendance at school (School age) under the provisions of the Education Act 1996, will receive a criminal record and a maximum penalty of a £1000 fine under a Section 444 (1) offence or a £2500 fine or up to a 3-month prison sentence, under a Section 444 (1a) offence.

In cases where severe or persistent absenteeism is due to an agreed Reduced Hours Provision, we will notify the Inclusion Support Service in line with Hampshire County Council guidance.

## 6. Related Policies

To underpin the values and ethos of our school/nursery and our intent to ensure that pupils at our school/nursery attend school regularly and reach their full potential, the following policies are integral to this approach:

- Safeguarding including Child Protection.
- Supporting Children with Medical Needs.
- Admissions.
- Anti-bullying.
- Special Educational Needs.
- Relational Behaviour Policy
- Home School Agreement

## 7. Statutory Framework

This policy has been devised in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

- [Working together to improve school attendance, DfE, \(August 2024\)](#)
- [School attendance parental responsibility measures, DfE \(January 2015\)](#)
- [Children missing education, DfE \(September 2016\)](#)

- [Keeping children safe in education, DfE \(September 2024\)](#)
- [Working together to safeguard children, DfE \(July 2023\)](#)

## **8. Appendices**

The following pages contain appendices relevant to this policy.

## Appendix 1: Fixed penalty notice whole school warning letter for Infant age children:

Dear Parent,

Date: xx/xx/2026

### Attendance at school and legal intervention

**Where parents and carers decide to have their child registered at the Infant school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly and meet their child's educational needs.**

[Research](#) commissioned by the Department for Education shows missing school for even a day can mean a child is less likely to achieve good grades, which can have a damaging effect on their life chances. At Locks Heath Infant & Nursery School our aim is to work with parents and carers to ensure that all our pupils receive the most from their education and reach their full potential.

This letter is to remind all parents and carers about the law that requires them to ensure that their child attends school regularly. The Government is very clear that no child should miss school unless there are exceptional circumstances and schools must take steps to reduce absence to support children's attainment.

The DfE policy document entitled, '[Working together to improve school attendance](#)' states:

All schools are able to grant a leave of absence at their discretion. A leave of absence from a maintained school by a local authority or a special school not maintained by a local authority, must not be granted unless there are exceptional circumstances. A need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance.

If the school does not receive a request for leave, the head teacher will be unable to consider your individual circumstances and the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. There will be no obligation on the head teacher to reconsider authorising the leave if an application has not been made in advance.

The Local Authority operates a system where any pupil will meet the criteria for legal intervention if they have **at least 10 sessions (5 school days) lost to unauthorised absence by the pupil during 100 sessions (10 school weeks)**. The intervention could be in the form of a fixed penalty notice. Any pupil at **Locks Heath Infant & Nursery School** who meets the criteria, will be referred to the Local Authority for action to be considered.

If a fixed penalty notice is issued, the arrangement for the payment will be detailed on the notice. The first penalty notice issued to a parent or carer in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to

£80 if paid within 21 days. A second penalty notice issued to the same parent or carer in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days. A parent or carer may receive more than one separate penalty notice resulting from unauthorised absences. When penalty notices are issued each parent or carer will receive one per child. Therefore, each parent or carer could receive multiple notices if they have more than 1 child who has been absent. You should be aware that failure to pay the total amount within the timescale will result in legal action being taken. In some circumstances, the Inclusion Support Service may choose not to issue a further penalty notice in the same academic year and may instead choose to prosecute a parent under the Education Act 1996 S444. There is no right of appeal by parents and carers against a fixed penalty notice.

I hope we can continue to count on your support in maintaining your child's attendance to ensure best outcomes in all areas of their learning and development. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher

Appendix 2: Example leave of absence request form for Infant school aged children:



**LOCKS HEATH INFANT & NURSERY SCHOOL**

**Request to authorise absence from school due to exceptional circumstances**

**There is no general right to authorised absence for a family holiday.** If you take your child out of school without permission the absence will be unauthorised; you may be issued a Penalty Notice, and the Local Authority may consider legal action.

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.

If you remove your child for an unauthorised period and it is the belief of the school and Local Authority that you have done this in a way as to avoid being issued a Penalty Notice, the Local Authority reserves the right to authorise the issuing of a Penalty Notice before the national threshold is met.

**You are advised not to make any arrangements until your request has been considered and this form is returned to you.**

**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): \_\_\_\_\_

**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).

**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: \_\_\_\_\_

Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 have been amended (as of 1 September 2013) to prohibit the proprietor (headteacher) of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

**Section D – for school use only.**

Tick as appropriate.

Request approved for \_\_\_\_ number of days from the dates and times \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

A personal discussion with you is requested. Please contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Request not approved as the reasons given are not considered to constitute an exceptional circumstance and/or the impact of this absence will affect your child's educational progress.

**PLEASE NOTE: This leave of absence form serves as a Warning to parent/carer. Any unauthorised absence during this period may be subject to a Penalty Notice OR may result in a prosecution if two previous penalty notices have been issued in a rolling three-year period**

*A Penalty Notice may be issued per parent/carer, per child (i.e. if two parents have two children this may result in four Penalty Notices – two Penalty Notices per parent).*

Headteacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Current attendance rate: \_\_\_\_\_

Continuation of section B (if required):

Headteacher: Mr R Jump BA (Hons), Jump BA (Hons), NPQH, MSc, CMgr, FCMl  
Warsash Road, Locks Heath  
Southampton, SO31 9NZ  
Tel: 01489 584180  
Email: [adminoffice@locksheath-inf.hants.sch.uk](mailto:adminoffice@locksheath-inf.hants.sch.uk)  
Web: [www.locksheathinfant.com](http://www.locksheathinfant.com)



\*Parents and carers are asked to request this form via the School Office.

### Appendix 3: Attendance Policy Quick Guide for Parents and Carers

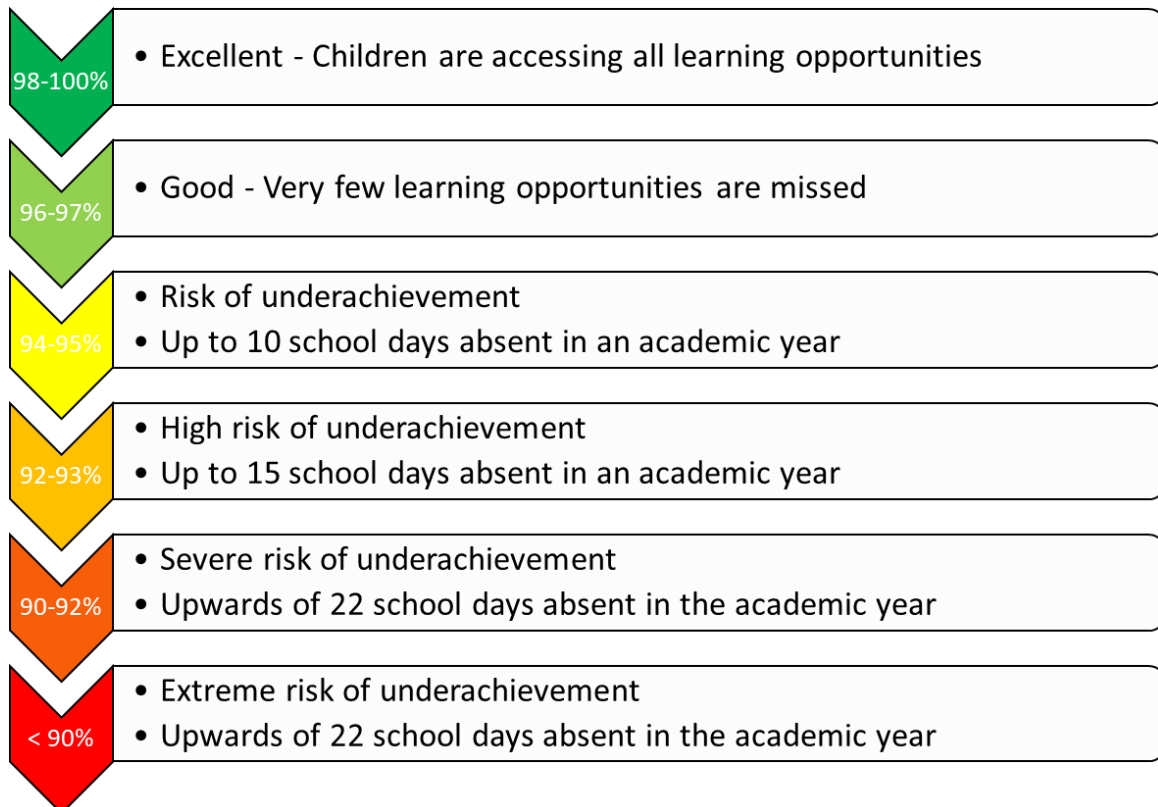
## Attendance Policy Quick Guide for Parents and Carers

We expect pupils to attend school for 100% of the academic year.

**You can support your child to have excellent attendance by taking these steps:**

- Ensure your child arrives on time for Infant School every day and is ready to learn. Arriving after registration is recorded as an unauthorised absence. Pupils must be in school by **8.55am**.
- If your child appears to be only slightly ill, send them in to school. We will contact you if their condition deteriorates.
- Book any medical appointments outside of school hours. If this is unavoidable, please book for as late in the afternoon as possible and inform the school of appointments in advance.
- Supply a copy of the appointment card or hospital letter if your child has an unavoidable appointment during school hours.

If your child becomes reluctant to go to school or you need help, please contact the school/nursery immediately; we are more likely to be able to work together to solve any problems if we act early.



## **‘On the day’ absences: What should I do if my child is not ‘fit’ to go into school?**

On each day your child is unfit to come to school/nursery, please report this absence using **01489 584180 before 8:30am** to let us know. In the message you must leave your child’s full name and class and give the *specific reason* for absence. The information you give will be recorded on our official register.

### **Leave of Absence**

There may be exceptional circumstances where you need to request a leave of absence for your child. Please use our ‘Leave of Absence Request’ form to make these types of requests. The form should be submitted in advance of the leave of absence, via a **paper copy handed to the school office or via email**. You will receive a response to advise if the request has been granted or declined.

### **Punctuality**

Infant School pupils are expected to arrive on time for school in the morning and for every lesson during the day. Your child is late to school if they are not in the classroom door by **8.55am**. If they arrive after the close of register at **9.10am**, this will result in an unauthorised absence being recorded for that session.

The Government remains very clear that no child should miss school apart from in exceptional circumstances and schools must continue to take steps to reduce absences to support children’s attainment. I am confident we can count on your support with this very important matter.

Please contact **our Home School Link Worker via the school office on 01489 584180** if you require any support with ensuring your child’s regular school attendance.



#### Appendix 4: Attendance codes applied to both Infant and Nursery School children:

The following codes are taken from Working Together to Improve School Attendance

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity approved by the school. Schools must also record the nature of the approved educational activity.	Examples of nature of activity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1) Attending taster days at college</li> <li>• 2) Attending courses at college</li> <li>• 3) Attending unregistered alternative provision arranged by the school</li> </ul>
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
K	Attending education provision arranged by the Local Authority Schools must also record the nature of the provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attending courses at college</li> <li>• Attending unregistered alternative provision such as, home tutoring</li> </ul>
P	Sporting activity	The pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is a sporting activity
V	Educational visit or trip	An educational visit or trip arranged by or on behalf of the school and supervised by a member of school staff
W	Attending work experience	The pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is work experience provided under arrangements made by a local authority or the school as part of the pupil's education

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Absent – leave of absence</b>		
<b>C</b>	<p>Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances</p> <p>Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance</p>	Schools must judge each application individually considering the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind each request. Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days a pupil can be absent from school
<b>C1</b>	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	All schools can grant leaves of absence for pupils to undertake employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours
<b>C2</b>	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable	All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs
<b>E</b>	Excluded	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made
<b>I</b>	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	The pupil is unable to attend due to illness (both physical and mental health related). Schools should advise parents and carers to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness
<b>J1</b>	Interview	Attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution

<b>M</b>	Medical appointment	Attending a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	The pupil is absent on a day that is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body the parent(s) belong to
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Studying for a public examination. Must be used sparingly with revision opportunities in school
<b>T</b>	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	The pupil is a mobile child and their parent(s) is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them
<b>X</b>	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school	

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>Absent - unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause</b>		
<b>Q</b>	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements	This is linked to transport not other access arrangements
<b>Y1</b>	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available	The school is not within walking distance of the pupil's home and the transport to and from the school that is normally provided for the pupil by the school or local authority is not available
<b>Y2</b>	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel	
<b>Y3</b>	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed	

<b>Y4</b>	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed	Adverse weather
<b>Y5</b>	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention	In police detention, remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or detained under a sentence of detention.
<b>Y6</b>	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law	
<b>Y7</b>	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	An emergency has prevented the pupil from attending. The unavoidable cause must be something that affects the pupil, not just the parent.

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Holiday not granted by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason for absence not yet established	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	Where no reason for absence is established or the school is not satisfied with the reason given
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	A pupil has arrived late after the register has closed but before the end of session.



Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Administrative Codes</b>		
<b>Z</b>	Prospective pupil not on admission register	To enable schools to set up registers in advance of pupils joining the school to ease administration burdens.
<b>#</b>	Planned whole school closure	Whole school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day/use of whole school as polling station

## Appendix 5: Information specific to Nursery School aged children (2, 3 or 4 year olds):

### Nursery School Day – Times & Expectations:

The Nursery School morning and all day sessions begin at **9.00am**. The Nursery School register will be taken at **9.05am**. All pupils arriving after this time are required to report to the main office with their parent or carer, **where the child will be signed in**. If their arrival is **between 9.05am and 9.20am** it will be recorded as late - L code (Late before the close of register).

The Nursery School morning register will officially close at **9.20am**. All pupils arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the session - U code (Late after the close of register). This is categorised as an unauthorised absence for the session. Parents and carers will be contacted to discuss any patterns of late arrival.

The Nursery School afternoon sessions begin at **12.00pm**. The Nursery School register will be taken at **12.05pm**. All pupils arriving after this time are required to report to the main office with their parent or carer, **where the child will be signed in**. If their arrival is **between 12.05pm and 12.20pm** it will be recorded as late - L code (Late before the close of register).

The Nursery School afternoon register will officially close at 12.20pm. All pupils arriving after this time will be registered as code U (Late after the close of register) – this is categorized as an unauthorised absence for that session. Parents and carers will be contacted to discuss any patterns of lateness.

Nursery School pupils are expected to arrive on time for Nursery. Your child is late if they are not in Nursery by **9.05am or 12.05pm respectively**. If they arrive after the close of register at **9.20am or 12.20pm respectively**, this will result in an unauthorised absence being recorded for that session.

### Absences and absence requests:

Parents and carers are expected to inform the Nursery of any absences that occur due to illness. This should be done so by contacting the school office before 8.30am on the day of the illness. Parents and carers are expected to keep the Nursery updated of any continuation of illness. If a child is absent from Nursery and the Nursery have not been informed, this will activate the 'First day calling procedure' where parents and carers will be contacted by 9.30am (morning session) and 12.30pm (afternoon session) to request a reason for the absence.