



The Clere School

Attendance Policy

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Policy Statement

The Clere School is a values-led school. Our values of Respect, Integrity and Community are at the heart of everything we do.

We promote positive behaviour and attitudes based on mutual respect between all members of the school community, thus developing in our students: self-discipline, personal responsibility, high self-esteem and a pride in the school both inside and outside the classroom environment. A large part of this pride must reside in a high level of attendance and punctuality.

The Governing Body believes that high levels of student attendance support the aims of the school, safeguard the rights of students and are an essential prerequisite for effective teaching and learning.

The school believes and supports the following principal aims in respect of attendance:

- Promoting consensus about expected levels of attendance and high engagement and the responsibility of all stakeholders in achieving this.
- Providing clear guidance to all the appropriate stakeholder groups about those standards.
- A recognition that there is a link between the content and delivery of the school curriculum and the motivation and engagement of students. It is therefore important that work is stimulating and differentiated within the confines of the National Curriculum.
- The pastoral role of teachers is important in nurturing students and encouraging a greater participation and attendance at school; this includes punctuality to school and lessons.
- It is important to ensure consistency and fairness in the reward of good attendance.
- High attendance is an expectation; however, it should be recognised and acknowledged.

LEGISLATION AND STATUTORY GUIDANCE

This policy is based on advice from the Department for Education (DfE) on:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- Working together to improve school attendance August 2024

In addition, this policy should be read in conjunction with:

- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2014
- The Clere School Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- The Clere School Behaviour Management Policy
- Hampshire County Council guidance on:

- Children Missing Education
- Code of Conduct – Issuing penalty notices for unauthorised absence from schools
- Elective Home Education – advice to schools
- Requests for extended leave of absence or temporarily reside abroad
- Education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs
- Effective practice for school attendance/admissions for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children
- Placement of children outside their chronological year group
- Flexi schooling – advice to schools

AIM

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every student has access to a full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents/carers to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons. Regular attendance is defined as over 95%, our school target is 96% or above.

School attendance is subject to various education laws and The Clere School Attendance Policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education and Hampshire County Council. It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this policy sets out how, together, we will achieve this.

Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and attendance below 95%
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- Regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- Regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school, higher education and employment or training

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Governing Body

- The Governing Body will support the school in maintaining the highest levels of attendance that we expect;
- The Senior Leadership Team (SLT), in consultation with the Chair of Governors, will ensure that new Governors understand the expectations of good attendance and how the school goes about achieving this;
- The Governing Body will monitor the policy's effectiveness, holding the Headteacher to account for its implementation.

Staff

All staff are responsible for ensuring the policy is applied consistently and fairly:

- Staff will ensure that all registers are taken correctly and promptly at the beginning of each lesson;
- Tutors will monitor the attendance of the students in their tutor group and act accordingly to support students in increasing attendance and improving punctuality where needed;
- The Attendance Officer will oversee attendance and communicate necessary data and information with relevant staff and highlight any students of concern where intervention is required;
- Staff will ensure that all registers are amended where necessary, e.g. if a student arrives late;
- Promote and reward good attendance at appropriate opportunities;
- Liaise with the pastoral team on matters of attendance and punctuality and communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence.

Students

- Students are expected to take responsibility for their own attendance and punctuality in school.
- Students are expected to attend school every day and on time unless a genuine need or reason arises, e.g. they are ill or have an authorised absence.
- Students are expected to attend every lesson on time so as to ensure a smooth start and prevent a disruption to the learning of others;
- Take responsibility for registering with their tutor or at the reception desk if they arrive to school after tutor time. Students must also take responsibility for signing out at the reception desk if they are leaving school site during school hours.

Parents and Carers

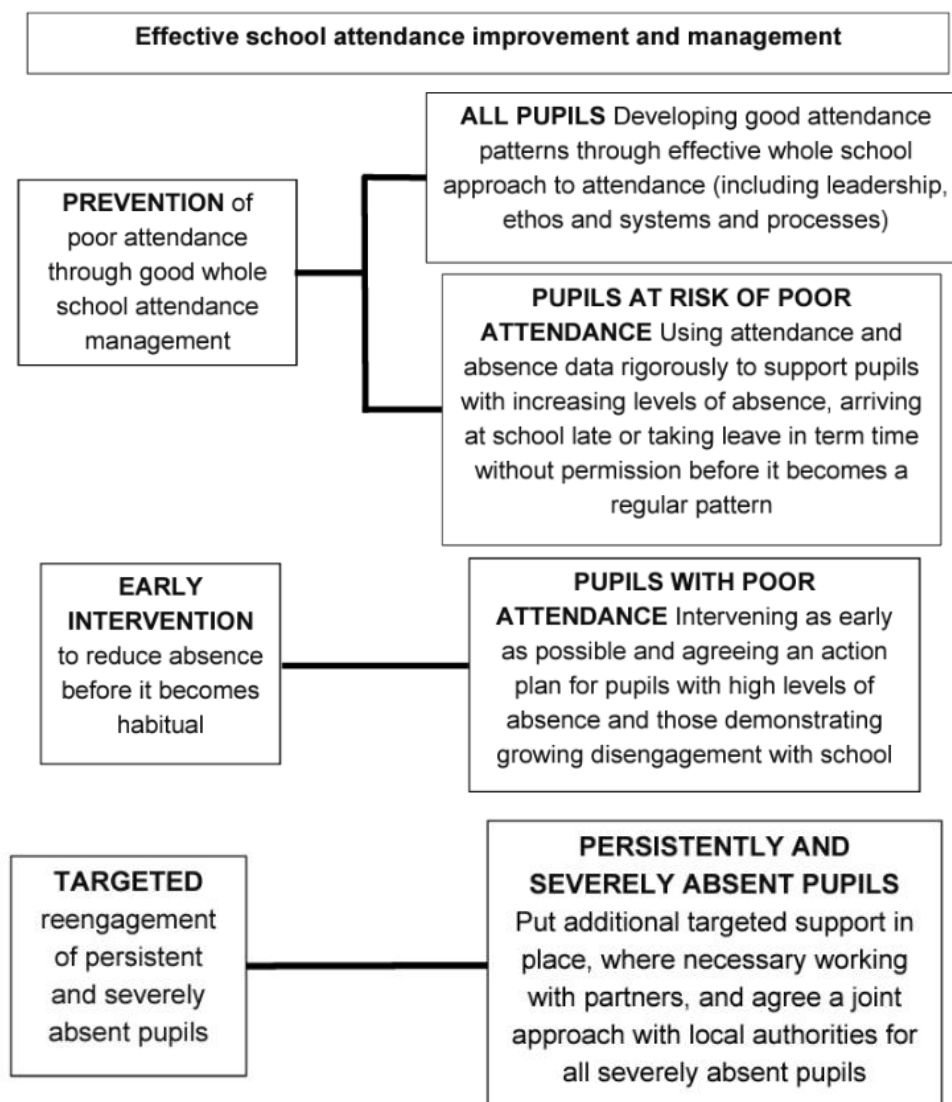
Parents/carers play a critical role in shaping student attitudes in school. The school will aim to keep parents/carers informed of any concerns around their child's attendance and will communicate with parents/carers in a range of ways which could include letters, Edulink, emails and phone calls. Parents/Carers will be expected to contact their tutor or head of year if they have any concerns.

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

Parents/Carers are expected to support their child by:

- Signing and actively engaging in the Home School Agreement;

- Supporting the school policy on attendance and punctuality;
- Notifying the school immediately if their child is going to be absent and any subsequent days, including providing any relevant evidence requested;
- Supporting their child by ensuring they are prepared for the day ahead to avoid their child being late to school;
- Discuss with the tutor/Head of Year any planned absences well in advance;
- Avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments;
- Only request for leave of absence if it is an exceptional circumstance.



Section A

Recording Attendance:

Legally, the register must be marked twice daily. This is once at the start of the school day in tutor at 8:40am and again for the afternoon session in Period 3 at 12:10pm

Lateness /Punctuality:

It is important to be on time at the start of the morning and afternoon school sessions and to all 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 can be embarrassing, leading to possible further absence.

- The school day begins at 8.40am and all **students are expected to be in school at this time**. Registers open at 8.40am and a student will receive a late mark 'L' if they arrive after this time. Morning (AM) registration will last for 30 minutes and finishes at 9.10am.
- The afternoon registration is taken at 12:10pm and all **students are expected to be on time**. Registers open at 12:10pm and a student will receive a late mark 'L' if they arrive after this time. Afternoon (PM) registration will last for 30 minutes and will close at 12.40pm
- 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 register close will be marked as unauthorised absence code 'U' in line with county and Department for Education (DfE) guidance. This mark shows them to be on site, but is legally recorded as an absence.
- If a student is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence coded 'M'. Please be advised, that where possible, doctors and dentist appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays – medical evidence may be requested to support that absence being authorised.

Students who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other students. On-going and repeated lateness is considered as **unauthorised absence and may be subject to legal action**. Further information can be found in Hampshire Local Authority Guidance.

Parents/carers of students 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/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 the Hampshire County Council may consider a penalty notice in accordance with Hampshire's Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices for non-attendance.

Punctuality to lessons:

Students are deemed as late if they arrive to lesson after the bell indicating the start of that lesson. A late mark is recorded on the register and these are reviewed by Pastoral staff each week. Sanctions will be given for persistent lateness.

Parents will be informed by a letter via Edulink. Further sanctions and discussion with parents/carers will take place for repeat offenders.

Section B

Procedures for Parents/Carers if your child is absent

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 the school as soon as possible on the first day of absence with the reason for absence (ideally before 8.40am). **A telephone call or email** is required for **every day** that your child is absent from school.
- Provide medical evidence where requested by the school (without this, the absence may be unauthorised).

If your child is absent, we will:

- Telephone or text you on the 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 Form Tutors, Heads of Year and/or Senior Leaders if absences persists.
- Refer the matter to the Hampshire's Attendance Legal Panels if absence is unauthorised and falls below the persistent absence level of 90%.

Third Day Absence:

If your child is not seen and contact has not been established with you or any of the named parent/carers after three days of absence, the school will attempt to contact other members of the family and a home visit will be carried out no later than by the end of the fifth day of absence.

Ten Days' Absence:

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any students without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carers, 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, so help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date contact number

Continued or Ongoing Absence:

If your child misses 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason, they are defined as **persistent absentees**. For some parents, 90% attendance may seem like an acceptable level of attendance. The reality is that 90% attendance means that your child will miss half a school day each week or 19 days of school during the year – that's nearly 4 school weeks.

Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in their 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. The Clere School monitors attendance of its student via its internal tracker. Evidence of interventions carried out to address and support low attendance will be monitored and this evidence used where and when necessary to take further action.

Section C

Request for Leave of Absence:

Amendments to school attendance regulations were updated and enforced from September 2022: **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 reasonably be scheduled at another time. **There are no rules on this** as circumstances vary from school to school and family to family. There is however, no legal entitlement for time off in school time to go on holiday **and in the vast majority of cases, holiday will not be authorised.** Parents/Carers wishing to apply for leave of absence need to fill in an application form available at the school reception 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's Code of Conduct, parent/carers will be issued with a fixed-penalty fine, or other legal action in accordance with the guidance provided.

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents/carers to not take students out during school time.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments where they cannot be arranged out of school hours;
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student and/or parent/carer belongs. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents/carers' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart;
- Traveller students travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school (leave of absence form completed) but it is not known whether the student is attending educational provision.

Section D

Understanding types of absence:

Students 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 absence from school after a parent/carer's request. This includes:
 - truancy before or during the school day;
 - absences which have not been explained;
 - sickness of a parent/carer, or other family member;
 - inadequate clothing for school;
 - child being used as a carer;
 - Problems with transport;
 - Non-urgent medical treatment;
 - School refusal or truancy;
 - Days off for birthdays, shopping trips, to look after siblings;
 - Family Holiday.

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

Absence through child participation in Public Performances, including theatre, film or TV work & 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. Any absence recorded as part of a child's participation in a public performance is recorded as C an authorised absence.

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

Parents/carers 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 Headteachers 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 are also at the discretion of the Headteacher and are not likely to be approved if it is a regular event, unless the sports club or association are providing an education tutor as part of their coaching.

Gypsy, Roma, Traveller, Showman and Showman families

Absence of a child from a Traveller or Boatman 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.

Section E

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 through a referral to Hampshire's Attendance Legal Panels where:

- 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 are for students of compulsory school age who are registered at a school:

- Parenting contracts set at Attendance Panel Meetings
- Parenting orders
- Penalty notices
- Education Supervision Orders
- Prosecution

Legal measures for absence taken when the Headteacher has declined parent/carers request for leave of absence

Where a student has unauthorised absence due to either:

1. Non-approval of a parent/carer's request for leave of absence or
2. A holiday that has been taken without permission.

and the unauthorised absence is for 10 or more sessions (5 days) in any 100 possible school sessions, then a penalty notice for non-attendance will be considered.

Where a child has **unauthorised absence**, the school must enforce Hampshire's Code of Conduct for issuing Penalty Notices 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 <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/attendance-guidance-for-parents/possible-penalties.htm>

The Code of Conduct states that:

Schools or Hampshire Local Authority may issue a penalty notice for any unauthorised absence where the student 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 (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/carers 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.

If a student's unauthorised absence meets any of the above criteria, 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 of unauthorised absence or lateness in any 10 week school period**
- 2. 1 or more sessions of unauthorised absence during a public exam, formal school assessment or 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 either via a letter, through the leave of absence request form, or through the school's attendance policy and website.

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 parent/carers** for each child.

N.B This could mean four penalty notices for a family with two siblings both with unauthorised absence for holiday i.e. one PN for each child to each parent.

Each penalty notice carries a fine of £80 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 £160 if paid within 28 days. If the fine remains unpaid, the 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.

Section F

School avoidance and moving schools

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 Form Tutor or Head of Year immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with school work, 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, your Head of Year may refer you to our Family Support Worker for some additional support or 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.

Be interested in what your child is doing in school, chat to them about the things they have learnt, what friends they have made and even what they had for lunch!

Leavers

If your child is leaving our school, parents/carers must:

Give the Head of Year and Attendance Officer comprehensive information about their plans, including any date of a move, 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 students 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.

Section G

Record preservation

School registers are legal documents. We will ensure compliance with attendance regulations by keeping attendance records for at least 3 years. Computer registers will be preserved as electronic back-ups.