



# The Cowplain School

**Work hard. Enjoy learning. Achieve highly.**

## Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Adopted: Autumn 2023

Review date: Autumn 2024

### **Section 1**

#### **1.1 Aims of the Policy**

This policy aims to:

- Explain what our expectations are for attendance
- Support students to attend school regularly and attend school on time
- Make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including students, parents, teachers and trustees
- Develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks
- Provide support, advice and guidance to parents and students
- Develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data
- Implement a system of rewards and sanctions for attendance
- Meet the DFE Working together to improve school attendance September 22 guidance

#### **1.2 Rationale**

Good attendance is essential to ensure that students benefit from the maximum number of learning opportunities. Students who attend regularly get more from their education, take part in a wider range of activities, achieve better examination results relative to their ability and find better employment than those who do not attend regularly. Therefore, it is the joint responsibility of those who work in the school and the parents to make sure that each child attends as often as possible. In addition, we must work to ensure that students arrive in school and at lessons on time and that all timetabled activities begin on time.

It is the school's duty to consistently strive to achieve a goal of all students attending school every day. Every opportunity will be used to convey to students and their parents the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

The Trustees and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) of The Cowplain School are committed to maintaining high levels of attendance at school and will support school staff, parents and students in doing so.

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on academy trusts to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

Schools should:

1. Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence
2. Ensure every child has access to full-time education
3. Act early to address patterns of absence.

Parents must perform their legal duty by ensuring children of compulsory school age who are registered to a school attend regularly. All students must be punctual to their lessons.

### **1.3 What is good attendance?**

We expect students to have no more than nine days off in an academic year. Good attendance is any absence fewer than this figure. At The Cowplain School we listen, understand, emphasise and support but we will not tolerate poor attendance. We believe that high levels of attendance are in everyone's best interest and helps students feel safe, keep healthy and be successful.

## **Section 2**

### **2.1 Promoting good attendance and punctuality**

To encourage high attendance levels the school will:

- Ensure the school is welcoming and every student feels a sense of belonging
- Ensure efficient and consistent practice in addressing attendance issues by having clear roles and responsibilities
- Recognising excellent student attendance
- Very closely monitor the attendance of all students and specific groups of students, i.e. SEND
- Keep accurate records of attendance
- Notify parents where we have concerns about absences as soon as possible
- Work with appropriate agencies to minimise extended absence
- Review any requests for absence, taking into account any exceptional circumstances, in line with the leave of absence process detailed on the school website under: The School Day/Attendance
- Ensure all staff play an active role in the promotion of attendance
- Promote attendance through a planned programme of tutor, Pastoral Team, Attendance Team and SLT input, e.g. allocated time in tutor period, assemblies and student interviews
- Emphasise to students the link between high levels of attendance with academic success and employability
- Sanction poor attendance using penalty notices or other legal interventions, should this prove necessary

### **2.2 Strategic approach to attendance**

The Cowplain School adopts the 5 Foundations of Effective Attendance Practice framework, this is modelled on the work of Professor Katherine Weare (Framework for Promoting Well-Being and Responding to Mental Health in Schools). The emphasis is on developing a school culture and climate which builds a sense of connectedness and belonging to ensure all students can attend school and thrive. The approach ensures we prioritise building solid working relationships with students, and parents, prior to escalation. The staged approach we follow ensures we identify triggers early that can lead to poor attendance issues such as mental health issues, lack of trust, communication and relationship breakdowns and the possible lack of networking opportunities both internal (in-school) and external (external agencies).



**5 Foundations Of Effective  
Attendance Practice**

### **2.2.1 Aims of the 5 Foundations strategy**

- Increase school attendance and reduce persistent absence to meet set targets.
- Ensure attendance is well managed within the school, with the appropriate level of resources allocated.
- Enable the school to make informed use of attendance data to target interventions appropriately, focusing on the key demographic groups highlighted in the 2022 DfE School Attendance Guidance

### **2.2.2 Objectives**

- Create an ethos within the school in which good attendance is recognised as the norm and every student aims for excellent attendance.
- Make attendance and punctuality a priority
- Set focused targets to improve individual attendance and whole school attendance levels
- Embed the 5 Foundations of Effective Attendance Practice framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks with respect to promoting attendance and punctuality
- Record and monitor attendance and absenteeism and apply appropriate strategies to minimise absenteeism
- Develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing relevant attendance data
- Provide support, advice and guidance to; parents and students and develop mutual co-operation between home and school in encouraging good attendance and in addressing identified attendance issues
- Demonstrate, using praise and recognition, that the school appreciates that good attendance and punctuality are achievements in themselves

The main aim of the framework is to ensure the school promotes a culture of good attendance and celebrates success. Ultimately, the framework will ensure there is a culture of feeling safe and school being a place where students want to be.

Positive health and emotional well-being are key factors in improving social development, school attendance and educational achievement. The 5 Foundations of Effective Attendance Practice model promotes, and supports, a whole school approach to mental health and emotional well-being; ensuring SEMH support remains a key driver in improving attendance for all students.

Each Foundation is supported by 5 Key Performance Indicators, these are used to ensure the school can embed the Foundations framework and understand the strategic direction regarding attendance improvement. Each year the school will use the 5 Foundations self-assessment tool to understand what works well and identify what we need to do even better. We then follow the 5 Foundations school improvement process to implement the attendance plan and ultimately improve the lives of the students and families we work with.

### 2.2.3 5 Foundations



The school has a fully embedded ethos in which excellent school attendance is expected, developed and nurtured. The escalated approach to supporting attendance is built on foundations of belonging and connectedness.



The approach to improving attendance is built on clear policies, systems and processes. This ensures continuous and sustainable improvement drives attendance practice. The attendance policy is understood by all stakeholders and allows the school to set, and maintain, high expectations to improve the culture of attendance.



The school prioritises developing a team of attendance experts, with a shared vision and core purpose. The Attendance Leader delivers bespoke training to support all staff to fully understand their role in improving attendance. External partnerships support attendance improvements through a multi-disciplinary approach for identified students and families.



Data information and analysis direct resources proactively towards key demographic groups and identified individuals. The expert use of data analysis informs decision making at all levels. The attendance process ensures the Attendance Leader understands the reason for attendance concerns, these barriers can then be successfully supported and removed.

Connecting and belonging drives the school approach to supporting attendance. All staff are supported to understand 'deeper roots' regarding poor attendance concerns. The school has developed, and embedded, an effective rewards system to further drive attendance improvements and celebrate success.

## 2.2.4. DfE: Working Together to Improve Attendance

In September 2022 the DfE: Working Together to Improve Attendance paper replaced previous guidance on school attendance except for statutory guidance for parental responsibility measures. The Secretary of State has committed to it becoming statutory when parliamentary time allows.

The table below identifies how the 5 Foundations of Effective Attendance Practice will underpin the DfE 2022 paper.

DFE Summary of Expectations	 Foundation 1 Whole School Thinking Culture & Climate	 Foundation 2 Sustained Policies, Systems and Processes	 Foundation 3 Professional Learning Staff Development	 Foundation 4 Implement Targeted Programmes And Intervention	 Foundation 5 Connect Appropriately With Approaches To Behaviour Management
Develop a whole-school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Have a school attendance policy		✓			
Have day-to-day processes to follow up absence	✓	✓	✓		
Monitor and analyse data to identify those that need support		✓	✓	✓	
Engage with families, understand barriers to attendance and work together to remove them	✓			✓	✓
Provide additional support for pupils with medical conditions or SEND			✓	✓	✓
Share information and work collaboratively with others	✓	✓	✓	✓	
A new focus on persistent and severe absence		✓	✓	✓	✓
Find out what the DfE expects from other stakeholders		✓	✓	✓	

## Section 3

### Roles and Responsibilities

To achieve the aims and objectives of the 5 Foundations of Effective Attendance Practice, all stakeholders have a responsibilities to support good attendance.

#### 3.1 The Cowplain School staff and trustees

- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefit of high attendance
- Build strong relationships with our families and students, listen to and understand the barriers to attendance and work with families and students to remove these

- Monitor and analyse attendance data to identify students and cohorts that require support with their attendance
- Contact home where patterns of school attendance are causing concerns
- Reward good and improving attendance
- Register students accurately within the first five minutes of a student entering a classroom. Legally the register must be marked twice daily; this occurs at 8.30am and at 12.20pm
- Ensure that truancy and non-attendance is followed up and treated as a safeguarding concern
- Work with the Local Authority to take legal measures should attendance not improve
- Create individual support plans for students who are struggling to attend
- Work with external agencies to help support students when required
- Meet and greet your child at the school gate to encourage a positive start to their school day

### **3.2 Responsibilities of students**

- Attend every day unless they are ill or have an authorised absence
- Arrive in school on time
- Go to all their registrations and lessons on time
- Take responsibility for registering at the Reception Desk if they are late or are leaving the school site during school hours

### **3.3 Responsibilities of parents**

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

- Inform the school before 8.30am if their child will not be attending school by contacting the attendance line on 023 9261 2020 or emailing [attendance@cowplainschool.co.uk](mailto:attendance@cowplainschool.co.uk). If no reason is provided by parents for absences it is considered a safeguarding concern and will be treated seriously
- Make a request for leave of absence following Hampshire County Council guidelines
- Support the school with their child in aiming for full attendance each year
- Avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments
- Only request leave of absence if it is for exceptional circumstance
- Inform the school if there is anything that would prevent their child from achieving high attendance as early support/intervention is essential
- Engage with the school when attendance is a concern, agreeing to a Voluntary Parental Contract, when deemed necessary by the school
- If a child is leaving the school (other than when leaving at the end of Year 11, on the last Friday of June each year) parents are asked to give the school comprehensive information about their plans, including the date of any move, new address and telephone numbers, the child's new school and the start date when known. If students leave and the school does not have the above information, the child is considered to be a child missing in education and we will follow Hampshire County Council's child missing in education guidance

Unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and it has been accepted by the school, absence will not be authorised. Please view the list of responsibilities and expectations regarding parents. Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:

- A child's/family member's birthday
- Shopping for uniform

- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET or other purposes
- "Couldn't get up"
- Illness where the student is considered well enough to attend school without medical authority and in the absence of a communicable disease
- Leave during term time taken without authorisation of the school

### **Section 3**

#### **3.1 Recording attendance**

Registration will take place at the beginning of each lesson. This will be done electronically, using SIMS. Where it is not possible for this to take place, for example where a supply teacher is in charge, a hard copy of the register will be issued which must be sent to the Reception Office without delay. Legally the register must be marked twice daily; this occurs at 8.30am and at 12.10pm.

#### **3.2 Lateness/punctuality**

A student arriving after 9.00am without valid reason will be marked as an unauthorised absence for the morning session which will have a direct impact on their attendance.

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

- The school day begins at 8.30am and all students are expected to be in school at this time. Morning registration is at 8.30am, it closes at 9.00am
- All lateness is recorded daily. This information will be required by the courts, should a prosecution for non-attendance or lateness be necessary
- Arrival after the close of registration will be marked as unauthorised absence and coded U in line with Hampshire County Council and Department of Education guidance. This mark shows the student 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. Where possible, doctors and dentists appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays.
- Ongoing and repeated lateness is considered as unauthorised absence and will be subject to legal action (see Section 7 for further detail).
- If a student arrives late on more than one occasion in a week then school sanction will be issued.

Students who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other students. Ongoing and repeated lateness is considered as unauthorised absence and will be subject to legal action (see Section 6 for further detail).

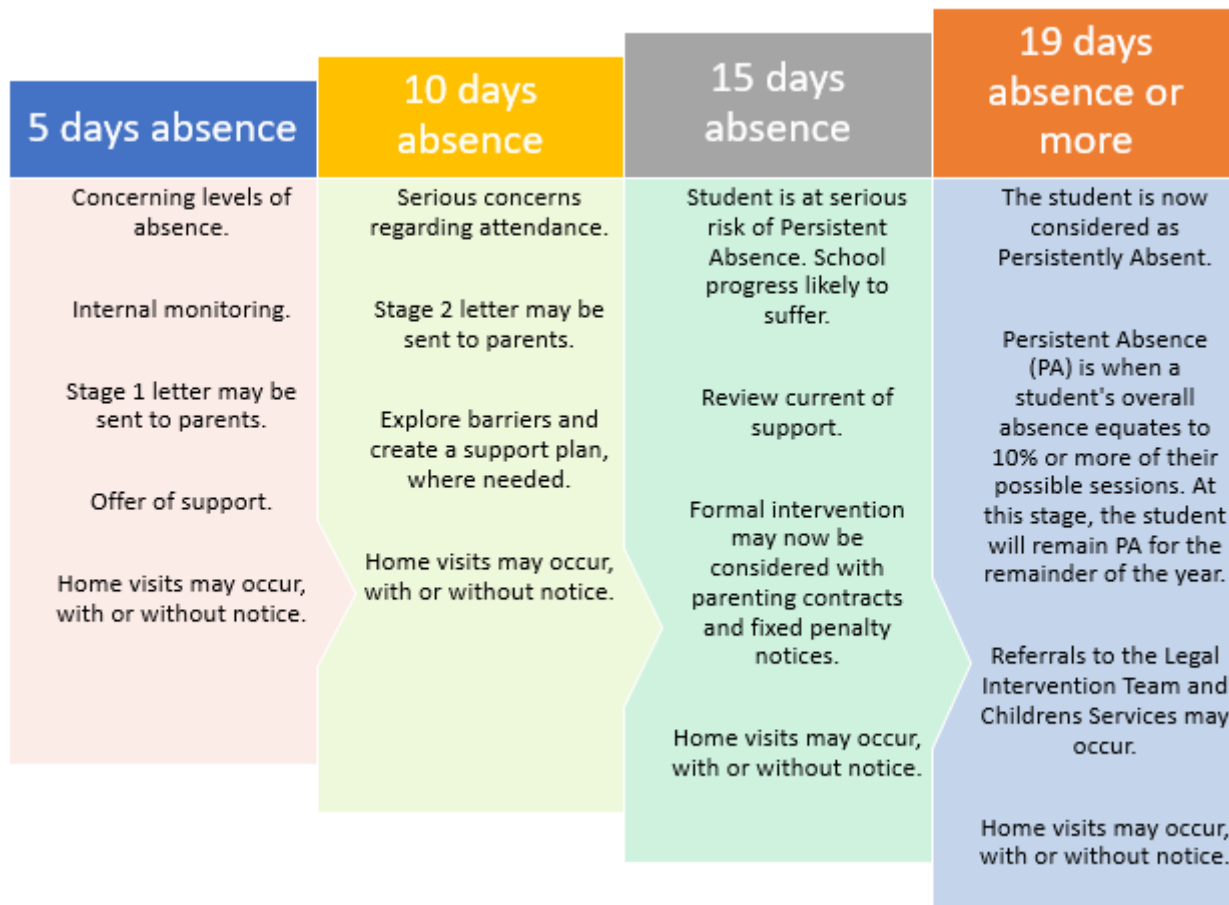
Some students working in the Resilience Centre begin the day at 8.00am and registration closes at 8.30am. These students are subject to the same expectations in terms of punctuality as students in the rest of the school. Ongoing and repeated lateness is considered as unauthorised absence and will be subject to legal action.

Parents 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 will be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem and support offered. Should lateness be an ongoing issue the school reserves the right to code as an unauthorised absence which will further reduce individual attendance.



### 3.4 Attendance Support Map

We will always support students during each stage of our Attendance Support Map. If there is lack of engagement, or concerns regarding the reason for absence, we will follow the Attendance Map to ensure we prioritise a students' learning and right to education.



## Section 4

### 4.1 School day to day processes for managing attendance

The Cowplain School will take the following measures to help manage you child's attendance.

- First day calling. Telephone or text the parent, guardian or carer on the day of the absence if no contact has been made – the school has a duty to ensure the child's safety as well as their regular school attendance.
- Make home visits if we have been unable to contact home or are concerned about a student.
- Invite parents into school to discuss the situation with the with appropriate staff, if absences persist.
- Refer the matter to the Hampshire County Council's Legal Intervention Team, or issue a fixed penalty notice, if absence is unauthorised and reaches threshold.
- Refer the matter to the Hampshire County Council's Medical Team, if continued absence is as a result of an ongoing medical condition that precludes the student from attending school.
- If we are unable to establish why a student has not attended school we will follow The child missing in education (CME) procedures as set down by Hampshire County Council guidance.



- Make all reasonable enquiries to establish contact with parents and the child, including making enquiries to known friends and wider family.
- Inform parents of attendance concerns in writing.

## **4.2 Continued or ongoing absence**

If a child misses 19 days/38 sessions or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason, they are defined as persistent absentees. Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in their learning. Research shows these gaps affect attainment when attendance falls below 9 days absent. As such, the school monitors all absence thoroughly and all attendance data is shared with the local authority and the Department for Education. If a child has had absence and their attendance reaches persistent absence, the school will intervene and, depending on the reasons for the absence, will:

- Ask parents to sign a voluntary parent contract to support good attendance.
- Decide with the parent/carer whether a referral for external support would be helpful.
- Issue a fixed penalty notice.

## **4.3 Child leaves site without permission**

In the event of a student leaving the school site without permission parents will be contacted immediately. Should the school be unable to contact an adult with parental responsibility the police will be contacted to inform of a missing child.

The school will ensure that if the police have been contacted follow up calls to parents will be made to confirm the child is safe.

## **Section 5**

### **Requesting time off school**

#### **5.1 Holidays**

Amendments to school attendance regulations were updated and enforced from September 2013: The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations state that Principals may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

It is important to note that Principals 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 term-time to go on holiday and, in the majority of cases, holidays will not be authorised.

Parents wishing to apply for leave of absence need to fill in an application form, available on the school website or Reception, in advance and before making any travel arrangements.

If term-time leave is taken without prior permission from the school the absence will be unauthorised and, if the number of sessions absent hits the thresholds set down in Hampshire County Council's Code of Conduct, parents will be issued with a fixed penalty fine or other legal action in accordance with the code (see Section 7 for detail).

Taking holidays in term-time will affect a child's schooling as much as any other absence and the school expects parental support by not taking children out during school time.

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

Parents of a child performer can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a performance. Parents must contact the Attendance team to discuss the nature and frequency of the work, whether the child has a valid performance licence and whether education will be provided by the employer during any future leave of absence. It is, however, down to the Principal's discretion as to whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs.

## **5.3 Absence through competing at regional, county or national level for sport**

Parents 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 Principal's discretion as to whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Permission for a child to leave school early or arrive late to attend coaching and training sessions is also at the discretion of the Principal and is not likely to be approved if it is a regular event, unless the sports club or association is providing an education tutor as part of their coaching.

## **5.4 Gypsy, Roma, Traveller and Showman families**

Absence of a child from a Traveller family that has left the area may be authorised if the absence is for work purposes only and it is believed that the family intends to return. Students must have attended 200 sessions in a rolling 12-month period to be able to request leave for work purposes. 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, coded T. Distance learning packs for Traveller children are not an alternative to attendance at school.

## **Section 6**

### **6.1 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's request. See section 3.3 for examples of absence that would be considered unauthorised. The school reserves the right to decide on an appropriate attendance code to use for the records.

## **Section 7**

### **7.1 Penalty Notices and other legal measures**

In education law, parents 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.

Hampshire schools and Hampshire County Council will use the full range of legal measures to secure good attendance. The following legal measures will be used for students of compulsory school age who are registered at a school:

- Parenting contracts set at Education Planning Meetings
- Parenting Orders
- Fixed Penalty Notices
- Education Supervision Orders
- Prosecution

## **7.2 Using Penalty Notices**

Where a child has unauthorised absence, the school must enforce Hampshire County Council's Code of Conduct, issuing Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence from schools or follow its guidance on other legal measures for non-attendance. The Code of Conduct is a statutory document which ensures that powers for legal sanctions are applied consistently and fairly across all schools and their families within the authority. Information about the Hampshire County Council Code of Conduct can be found: <https://www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/legalintervention/measures>

This Code of Conduct states that schools or Hampshire County Council will 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 before the close of register (coded L), but the school has clearly communicated that they will categorise as unauthorised any further lateness, and where the threshold of 10 sessions (five days) has been met.

Unless the issuing of a Penalty Notice would conflict with other intervention strategies in place or other sanctions already being processed. Penalty Notices will only be issued, following recommendation from the Principal.

If a child'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 Penalty Notice is issued for:

- 10 sessions of unauthorised absence or lateness in any 10 week school period

This includes where a student has unauthorised absence due to either:

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

Parents will be warned of the likelihood of a Penalty Notice being issued for unauthorised absence via a letter, through the leave of absence request form or through the school's attendance policy and website. The Penalty Notice is a fine issued to each parent/carer who condoned (or was responsible for the child) during the period of unauthorised absence for which the fine has been issued. For each case of unauthorised absence, the school or Hampshire County Council will decide whether a Penalty Notice is issued to one or more parents for each child. NB: This could mean four Penalty Notices for a family with two

siblings, both with unauthorised absence for holiday, i.e. one Penalty Notice for each child to each parent.

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

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

For further information please visit Hampshire County Council's website at:

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/behaviour-attendance-parents#:~:text=By%20law%2C%20all%20children%20of,suitable%2C%20full%2Dtime%20education>.

## **Section 8**

### **8.1 What support can parents access through the school to support attendance**

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, or there are other circumstances that will impact school attendance 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. We will do our best to support you and your child and the earlier we are aware of the reason for the non-attendance the more successful our interventions are. Some of our interventions include:

- Individual Attendance Support Plan
- Early Help Hub referral
- In school support groups
- Mental Health Support Team referral
- CAMHS Referral
- Home visits
- Pupils with acute attendance concerns may be supported in our Emotional School Based Avoidance Unit

If you need to speak to us regarding anything to do with school attendance then please contact either your child's Tutor, Head of Year, or contact our attendance team by phoning the school office on 023 9261 2020 or email [attendance@cowplainschool.co.uk](mailto:attendance@cowplainschool.co.uk). The SLT responsible for the strategic response to attendance at The Cowplain School is Jon Peters. At Cowplain we take a whole school approach to attendance and so you may also be contacted by any of our staff including SLT, teachers, Head of Year's and your child's tutor. For more information about how to support your child's attendance, please read our guide to good attendance;

<http://www.cowplainschool.co.uk/media/2085/the-cowplain-school-attendance-guide.pdf>

## Relevant legislation

- The Education Act 1996
- The Children Act 1989
- The Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Sentencing Act 2020
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and subsequent amendments)
- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007

<b>Date Reviewed:</b>	Autumn 2023	<b>Reviewed by:</b>	JPS	<b>Review:</b>	Autumn 2024
<b>Summary of changes made:</b>	Policy rewrite				