



Nine Acres
Primary School

Articulate,
Passionate, Persuasive & Positively
influencing the world around us.

Nine Acres Community Primary School, South View, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 1QP

www.nineacrespri.iow.sch.uk 01983 522984 Headteacher: Miss R McDonald BA Hons PGCE QTS NPQSL

Attendance Policy

Nine Acres Primary School

Approved By:	<i>M. Uli</i>
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STRIVING FOR EXCELLENCE

1. Introduction / Aim

At Nine Acres Community Primary School, we believe regular attendance is essential for children to reach their full potential. Missing lessons can lead to gaps in learning and may expose children to wider risks.

Evidence shows that even a single day of absence can reduce a child's chances of achieving good academic outcomes, affecting future opportunities. The school works in partnership with families to identify and address attendance issues promptly.

This policy provides guidance for staff, parents, pupils, and governors to:

- Promote the highest levels of attendance and punctuality to support achievement.
- Recognise the role of all staff in encouraging good attendance.
- Monitor and respond to absences effectively.
- Ensure parents understand their legal responsibilities and that all children access the education they are entitled to.

Attendance is a shared responsibility and should be considered alongside policies on safeguarding, anti-bullying, behaviour, and inclusive learning. This policy is informed by the **Human Rights Act 1998**, the **Equality Act 2010**, and the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child**.

2. Legal Framework

Section 7 of the **Education Act 1996** states that parents have a legal duty to ensure that children of compulsory school age receive an efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude, and any special educational needs they may have. This can be achieved through regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A child becomes of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their fifth birthday. A child remains of compulsory school age until 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 the full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Act early to address patterns of absence.

Parents are expected to fulfil their legal responsibility by ensuring that children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.

In accordance with the **Education Act 1996**, the school will work in partnership with parents, carers, and the Local Authority to ensure that children receive the education to which they are entitled. Where necessary, support will be offered to families to improve attendance. If concerns continue, this support may be formalised and, where required, the school will work with the Local Authority to consider appropriate legal measures.

For the purposes of attendance legislation, a “**parent**” is defined as:

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

3. Roles and Responsibilities

At Nine Acres Community Primary School, we believe that improving school attendance is everyone's business. That it is a shared responsibility by governors, all school staff, parents, pupils, and the wider school community.

ROLE	NAME	CONTACT DETAILS
Senior Attendance Lead	Gemma Barbour (Deputy Headteacher)	Tel: 01983 522984 Email: office@nineacrespri.co.uk
Attendance Leader	Kate Hussey (Family Liaison Office)	Tel: 01983 522984 Email: office@nineacrespri.co.uk
Named Governor/ Trustee	Lisa Vis (Governor)	Tel: 01983 522984 Email: office@nineacrespri.co.uk

The Local Governing Board of Nine Acres Community Primary School recognises the importance of good attendance and promotes it through the school's ethos and policies. Governors take an active role in improving school attendance by:

- Setting high expectations for leaders, staff, pupils, and parents to ensure children attend school regularly and are safeguarded from harm.
- Appointing a named governor to lead on attendance matters and ensuring that there is a designated senior leader responsible for attendance.
- Ensuring school leaders fulfil their statutory duties by regularly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's attendance procedures and ensuring consistent support is provided for all pupils.
- Ensuring the school works effectively with the Local Authority Attendance Team and other local partners to address barriers to attendance.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data, identifying trends, and challenging school leaders to focus improvement efforts on pupils or groups who need additional support.
- Maintaining high aspirations for all pupils and ensuring support processes are adapted to meet individual needs, including those of pupils with long-term illnesses, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), pupils with a social worker, and groups with historically lower attendance, such as those eligible for free school meals.
- Ensuring that all staff receive appropriate training on attendance and that relevant staff have opportunities to share and learn from good practice in other schools.
- Ensuring attendance data is shared with the Local Authority and the Department for Education as required and within the required timescales.
- Reviewing the school's Attendance Policy at least annually and ensuring appropriate resources are available for its full implementation.

The Senior Leadership Team

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will:

- Promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and parents.
- Build and maintain positive relationships with pupils and families.
- Ensure a whole-school approach that promotes good attendance through high-quality teaching and learning experiences that encourage pupils to attend and succeed.
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure it is reviewed annually.
- Ensure all staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and receive appropriate training to address attendance concerns.
- Ensure compliance with relevant legislation and regulations.
- Appoint a senior leader responsible for attendance and allocate sufficient time and resources to the role.
- Submit attendance data to the Local Authority and the Department for Education as required and on time.
- Report attendance information and related issues to governors termly and to the lead attendance governor on a half-termly basis.
- Ensure systems are in place to report, record, and monitor attendance for all pupils, including those educated off-site.
- Ensure attendance data is collected and analysed regularly to identify patterns and causes of absence.

- Use data to inform strategies and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.
- Develop a multi-agency approach to support pupils and families where attendance concerns arise.
- Maintain clear documentation of interventions in line with Local Authority requirements in case legal proceedings become necessary.
- Ensure that Pupil Premium funding is used appropriately to support pupils with irregular attendance.

All School Staff

All staff at Nine Acres Community Primary School will:

- Promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents.
- Build positive relationships with pupils and families.
- Support the whole-school approach to promoting good attendance through engaging teaching and learning.
- Comply with attendance regulations and relevant legislation.
- Follow school procedures for recording and monitoring attendance, including for pupils educated off-site.
- Ensure registers are completed accurately and on time.
- Contribute to the evaluation of attendance strategies and interventions.
- Work collaboratively with external agencies where appropriate to improve attendance and support pupils and families.

Attendance Lead

The member of staff responsible for attendance will work closely with families and external agencies to improve attendance and remove barriers to learning. Their responsibilities include:

- Monitoring and analysing pupil attendance data.
- Holding bi-weekly attendance meetings with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and other relevant staff.
- Implementing strategies to promote excellent whole-school attendance.
- Leading targeted interventions to address poor attendance.
- Managing individual pupil attendance case files.
- Coordinating support plans for pupils causing concern, including initiating Early Help Assessments or parenting contracts where appropriate.
- Ensuring first-day contact procedures are followed when a child is absent without notification.
- Leading whole-school attendance initiatives such as reward schemes and attendance assemblies.
- Referring pupils and families to appropriate external support services when necessary.

Parents and Carers

Nine Acres Community Primary School expects parents and carers to:

- Take an active interest in their child's education and progress.
- Ensure their child attends school regularly and arrives on time each day.
- Notify the school as soon as possible if their child is unable to attend and provide a reason for the absence.
- Work in partnership with the school to address any attendance concerns.

Pupils

Pupils at Nine Acres Community Primary School are expected to:

- Attend school regularly and arrive on time each day.
- Attend meetings arranged to discuss attendance where appropriate.

- Be aware of the school's attendance expectations and understand when and where they are required to attend.
- Speak to their class teacher or another trusted member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home that may affect their attendance.
- Attend lessons ready to learn, with the appropriate equipment and materials.
- Provide a note from their parent or carer to explain any absence, where required.
- Follow the school's procedures if they arrive late, ensuring that their attendance is recorded accurately.

4. Categorising Absence and Attendance

Nine Acres Community Primary School records attendance using the national codes set out by the Department for Education to ensure accurate monitoring and reporting.

4.1 Leave of Absence

Since September 2013, Head teachers may only authorise leave of absence in **exceptional circumstances**. Holiday absences during term time without exceptional reasons will be recorded as **unauthorised**. Parents who remove their child from school solely for holidays may be referred to the Local Authority and issued a **penalty notice or considered for prosecution**.

Application process:

- Parents must apply in writing to the Head teacher at least **one month before the planned leave**.
- Each application is considered individually, and the school will discuss circumstances before a decision is made.
- Retrospective requests will **not be considered**; absences without prior approval will be marked unauthorised.

Penalty notices or prosecution may occur if:

- No request is submitted in advance.
- Leave is taken despite refusal.
- Leave exceeds the agreed number of days.

Fines under Isle of Wight Council:

- £60 per parent, rising to £120 if unpaid within 21 days.
- Second fine within three years: £160.
- Failure to pay within 28 days may result in court action.
- Persistent absences (three or more in three years) may lead to court action rather than fines.

When leave is authorised, parents must agree on a **return date**. If a pupil does not return on the agreed date and no contact is made, the school will seek advice from the Local Authority, which may trigger **Children Missing Education procedures**.

4.2 Medical Appointments and Illness

Parents should **schedule appointments outside school hours** wherever possible. When appointments during school are unavoidable:

- Notify the school in advance.
- Pupils should only be out for the **minimum time necessary**.
- Children must be signed out and collected by a parent/carers; pupils may **not leave unaccompanied**.

Illness:

- Absences reported following school procedures will usually be authorised without medical evidence.
- If there are concerns about authenticity, the school may request evidence (e.g., prescription, appointment card).
- Unauthorised absences will be recorded if evidence is not satisfactory.

Patterns of non-attendance:

- Parents will be invited to **Education Support Meetings** as an early intervention strategy.
- With consent, the school may liaise with the **School Nursing Team** or the child's healthcare professional.
- For verified chronic health conditions, the school will work with parents to ensure continued access to education, following the **Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy** and Isle of Wight Council guidance.
- An **Individual Healthcare Plan** may be developed where appropriate.

4.3 Pupil Absence for Religious Observance

Nine Acres Community Primary School recognises the multi-faith nature of British society. Where religious festivals fall outside school holidays or weekends, and are recognised by a relevant religious authority, the school may **authorise absence** or grant **special leave** for religious observance.

Parents are asked to **give advance notice** of such absences to the school.

4.4 Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller (GRT) Pupils

GRT pupils are among the lowest achieving groups nationally, though some achieve very well. Educational attainment can be influenced by complex social and cultural factors. Schools and local authorities can improve life chances through:

- High expectations for all pupils, regardless of background.
- An inclusive culture welcoming all communities.
- Strong engagement with parents.

In line with **Section 444(6) of the Education Act 1996**, the school will **authorise absence** for pupils of no fixed abode when:

- The parent's trade or business requires travel.
- The child attends school as regularly as the nature of the trade allows.
- For children aged six and above, they have made at least 200 attendances in the previous 12 months.

Parents are responsible for ensuring their child receives suitable education while away from school.

Base school arrangements:

- Nine Acres Community Primary School is considered the pupil's base school if it is where the child normally attends when not travelling.
- Children may register temporarily at another school while travelling, but their place at Nine Acres will be kept open.

Parent responsibilities:

- Advise the school of planned travel **in advance**.
- Inform the school of proposed return dates.

4.5 Unauthorised Absence

Absences will only be authorised if parents provide a **satisfactory explanation** accepted by the school. The **Head teacher has discretion** to authorise absences.

Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include, but are not limited to:

- A pupil's or family member's birthday.
- Shopping for uniforms.
- Haircuts or other personal appointments.
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET or other purposes.
- Unwillingness to attend school, or poor family organisation.
- Refusal to attend school on health grounds when the pupil is considered well enough.
- Holidays taken without prior authorisation.

5. Our Procedures

Nine Acres Community Primary School implements the following procedures to support good attendance:

- Maintain accurate registration and attendance records.
- Keep detailed daily records of absence and lateness.
- Monitor attendance data systematically.
- Communicate attendance procedures/expectations to staff, governors, parents/carers, and pupils.
- Follow up on absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not contacted the school, including phone calls **before 09:00**.
- Inform parents/carers about what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Discourage unnecessary absences, such as holidays during term time.
- Work with parents/carers to improve individual pupil attendance and punctuality.
- Refer pupils with ongoing attendance concerns to the Education and Inclusion Service if school interventions are unsuccessful.
- Report attendance statistics to the Local Authority and Department for Education as required.
- Ensure all staff raise attendance or punctuality concerns with the Head teacher.

5.1 Register Keeping and Recording

In line with **The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006**, amended in 2016, schools must take registers **twice daily**: at the start of the morning session and during the afternoon session. Registers must record whether a pupil is:

- Present
- Absent
- Present at an approved educational activity
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Definitions for this policy:

- **Absence:**
 - Arrival after the register has closed
 - Not attending school for any reason
- **Regular attendance:**
 - Attendance at every session unless absence is authorised

- **Authorised absence:**
 - Sickness leave granted by the school
 - Medical or dental appointments that cannot be arranged outside school hours
 - Religious or cultural observances approved by the school
 - Family emergencies or other unavoidable causes
- **Unauthorised absence:**
 - Absences without a satisfactory explanation
 - Truancy before or during the school day
 - Arrival after the register has closed without reason
 - Shopping, birthday celebrations, or caring for others
 - Day trips or holidays in term time without prior authorisation
 - Leaving school during the day without valid reason

5.2 Late Arrival at School

All pupils at Nine Acres Community Primary School are expected to arrive on time. The school day begins at:

- **08:30** – KS2
- **08:45** – EYFS, Year 1, and Year 2

Registers are taken at **08:45**. Pupils arriving after this time must report to the main office with their parents, who will sign in and provide a reason for the late arrival.

- **08:45–09:15:** Recorded as **Late (L code – before close of register)**
- **From 09:15 onwards:** Recorded as **Unauthorised absence (U code – after close of register)**

Parents will be contacted regarding patterns of lateness. Persistent late arrival may result in interventions, penalty notices, or legal action.

Note: L and U codes are also applied if a pupil arrives late for the **afternoon session**.

5.3 Expected Absence Procedure for Parents

Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their child attends school regularly. If a child is absent:

1. **Contact the school** by phone on the first day of absence and each subsequent day, providing the reason and expected return date.
2. If no contact is received:
 - First-day calling procedures are activated for pupils not in school after 09:15.
 - A follow-up call is made; if still no response, the emergency contact is called.
 - If concerns persist, a **home visit** may be conducted.

Further actions may include:

- Writing to parents to highlight attendance or punctuality issues.
- Inviting parents to discuss support strategies.
- Referring to the Education Inclusion Service for guidance.
- Referring to the Local Authority for enquiries under the **Isle of Wight Children Missing Education (CME) Policy**.
- Considering penalty notices or legal proceedings if absences remain unauthorised.
- In cases of safeguarding concerns, involving external agencies such as Family Support, Children's Social Care, or the police.

5.4 Attendance Rewards and Interventions

Nine Acres Community Primary School aims to maintain **attendance above 97%**.

Rewards:

- Weekly rewards for the class with the highest attendance.
- Certificates for pupils with **100% attendance at the end of the year**.

Interventions for low attendance:

- Contact parents to identify and support any barriers to attendance.
- If no improvement, follow school procedures in conjunction with the **Educational Welfare Officer**.
- Interventions may include home visits, letters highlighting attendance concerns and legal consequences, or referral to court proceedings.

5.5 Support Systems

Nine Acres Community Primary School recognises that poor attendance can indicate challenges in a child's home or school life, such as bereavement, family separation, or health issues. Parents are encouraged to inform the school of any circumstances that may affect attendance or behaviour to enable early support.

Some pupils may need additional support to achieve good attendance. Strategies include:

- **Contacting the school:** Daily communication when a child is absent or refusing school allows the school to provide support, such as meetings with the child, discussions with parents, or home visits.
- **Isle of Wight Council support:** The Council's Attendance Officer can work with families to improve attendance positively.

Support plans are always **child-centred**, developed in discussion and agreement with parents and pupils, and reviewed regularly.

5.6 Persistent and Severe Absence & Legal Interventions

- A **Persistent Absentee (PA)** is a pupil with attendance **90% or below** (38 sessions/19 days per year), which can significantly harm educational progress.
- A **Severe Absentee (SA)** is a pupil with attendance **50% or below** (90 sessions/45 days per year), causing serious educational disadvantage.

All pupils' attendance is monitored to identify emerging PA or SA concerns. Interventions are implemented promptly, and referrals may be made to external agencies for targeted support.

If parents do not engage and attendance remains unsatisfactory, the school may request the **Local Authority** to pursue legal action, including:

- Penalty notices
- Education Supervision Orders
- Prosecution through the Magistrates' Court

Legal consequences under the Education Act 1996:

- Section 444(1): Maximum fine £1,000
- Section 444(1a): Maximum fine £2,500 or up to 3 months imprisonment

5.7 Reduced Timetables

All pupils have a **right to full-time education**, and the school is committed to providing it. In **exceptional circumstances**, a **temporary reduced timetable** may be implemented to meet a pupil's individual needs, but only:

- Where it is **safe and appropriate**
- With written agreement from parents/carers and, where relevant, professionals working with the family
- As part of a **comprehensive support plan**
- With a **time limit**, after which full-time attendance or alternative provision is expected

Reduced timetables are **never used to manage behaviour** and are reviewed regularly in partnership with the child, parents, and professionals. The **Education & Inclusion Service** is notified of all reduced timetables per Isle of Wight Council guidance.

6. Deletions from the Register

Nine Acres Community Primary School will add or remove pupils from the school roll in accordance with Pupil Registration Regulations.

- In most cases, departures are planned in advance with parents.
- The school will collect information about the pupil's next school and/or address to reduce the risk of a child becoming Missing from Education (CME).
- All removals from the roll are reported to the Education & Inclusion Service on or before the date of removal, following Isle of Wight Council CME procedures.

Home Education:

- A pupil may only be de-registered for home education when the school receives written confirmation from parents of their intention to educate the child outside school.
- The Education & Inclusion Service will be informed of the removal from roll.

Unknown whereabouts:

- The school follows the Isle of Wight Council CME Policy and will work with the Council to establish the child's location if their whereabouts are unknown.

7. Related Policies

The following policies support the school's commitment to high attendance and pupil wellbeing:

- Safeguarding, including child protection
- Supporting Children with Medical Conditions
- Admissions
- Anti-bullying
- Behaviour
- Special Educational Needs

8. Statutory Framework

This policy has been developed in line with statutory guidance and legislation, including:

- Working together to improve school attendance, DfE, September 2023
- 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 2018

