

10 October 2022

Dear Parent/Carer

The Havant Federation of Schools includes the secondary schools of Hayling, Warblington, Crookhorn, Oaklands, Cowplain, Horndean, Park, Havant Academy, Purbrook, Prospect School and The Key Education Centre. As a group of schools, we work together closely, and we share good practice for the benefit of all the young people who live in the Havant area. The Chairs of Governors and Headteachers from the Federation have devised joint statements to clarify their position with parents and carers about three key issues that schools increasingly encounter. All statements recognise that all schools want to work to develop respectful relationships which result in a happier and safer society. These statements have been created to make it clear to parents/carers how the schools will respond in such circumstances.

The first statement refers to **social media and the use of mobile phones**. The use of modern-day technology particularly using mobile phones and social networking means that we are more connected as a community than we have ever been before. This communication contributes to greater safety for our young people. As with all forms of technologies there are some drawbacks and disadvantages. The statement makes it clear how schools will respond to issues related to social media and the use of mobile phones.

The second statement refers to **relational conflict and bullying**. As young people grow up and move through adolescence they form and develop friendships with numerous other students and as they move into the latter part of schooling, they settle into friendships that are more definite and even in some instances last a lifetime. At certain times in this adolescence period some students do fall out with their friends and in some instances, bullying does occur in our schools. This statement defines the difference between relational conflict and bullying and sets out how schools will deal with these issues when they arise.

The third statement outlines clearly the **expectations** that the schools have of a young person's behaviour and the systems that are in place to support respectful behaviours. In this statement the importance of 95% attendance is highlighted as being one that is a minimum for a child's education to not be unduly affected. The appendix gives further detail about attendance and the law.

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We hope that these statements are useful and that the information makes it clear how schools will support the child as well as indicate to parents/carers how they can support their child at home and in the wider community. Experience indicates that when school and home work in partnership issues are resolved more quickly, usually with a successful outcome. Each school has a code of conduct that explains how it works with their stakeholders.

During the first term all students in the Federation will receive an assembly on Relationships, Bullying and Attendance, this supports the joint statements that are issued.

We ask that parents/carers support the school when dealing with these issues. As a group of schools, we will always work with our young people to ensure that they are well equipped with the academic and social skills to be responsible citizens in the future.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Anders".

Christopher Anders
Headteacher

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ella Capaldi".

Ella Capaldi
Head of School



**Statement from the Governing Bodies and Headteachers
from the Havant Federation of Schools
MOBILE PHONES AND SOCIAL NETWORKING**

We all recognise that respectful relationships result in a happier and safer society. The use of modern day technology particularly through the use of **mobile phones and social networking** means that we are more connected as a community than we have ever been before. This communication contributes to greater safety for our young people. As with all forms of technologies there are some drawbacks and disadvantages. As a group of schools there are occasions when we often find ourselves in compromising situations that have arisen when the technology is not used appropriately. In response to this, the Chairs of Governors and Headteachers from the Federation of Schools in the Havant Area have devised this Joint Statement to clarify their position with parents and carers and to ask for your support in this matter.

Below are just two examples of the issues faced by schools and we are asking you to support us so that our students and local community remain safe and that the Havant Area is seen as a pleasant place to live and grow up in.

Situation 1

Social Media issues which start when a child is in the care of parents/carers but which then impacts on the smooth running of the school because what has been posted causes upset and offence to other students.

Social networking has many positive attributes and uses. Social networking is a way of life for our young people and for the majority of adults. Through our education programme and e-safety briefings students are regularly reminded of the advantages and the hidden dangers of using these sites. Increasingly some students and on occasions parents use these sites to try to settle friendship issues that have arisen both in school and the local community. All schools have Anti-Bullying Policies and support mechanisms and where necessary the Police may be informed and involved about any ongoing issues. Often, when social networking is used inappropriately in 'friendship' situations the school is expected to solve the problems. As you would appreciate this is very difficult to achieve. We would ask that parents/carers support us by discouraging the use of social media for such purposes and recognise that should it be used inappropriately the school does not have the legal position to solve the issues.

Equally, we would advise any parent/carer of a child who is being bullied or on the receiving end of unkind comments NOT to post anything on social media as adult involvement rarely solves the issue and is often regarded as antagonistic or even threatening to the minor on the receiving end. Parents/carers are encouraged to seek advice from the school or the police if they are concerned about derogatory comments which have been posted about their child.

We would like to respectfully remind all parents to be aware of unseen consequences that may arise when they post pictures or information about their own or other children on social media. Parents are asked to ensure that their children are aware of this too and that activities or social network sites that students access will form part of their digital footprint and may jeopardise any future opportunities that they wish to apply for.

Situation 2

When a student uses their mobile phone to contact parents/carers during the school day about a situation that has arisen in school.

It is very upsetting for any parent to hear their child report an issue which they have perceived has occurred in school but there are always two sides to any situation and schools are best placed to establish the facts. We would ask parents/carers to respect our guidelines which are that students should not make contact via mobile phone during the school day. If a child does contact a parent it is more helpful for the parent to contact the school for further details before any conclusions are reached. A fairly minor situation which could have been resolved by the school over the course of the day can sometimes become a major issue because a parent has received a one-sided version of events and has chosen to react to what their child is telling them before being given all of the facts. We would ask parents to trust the judgement of the school and abide and support the schools in the restricted use of mobile phones during the school day.

We are grateful to all our parents/carers for supporting us with the appropriate use of mobile phones and social networking.



Statement from the Governing Bodies and Headteachers from the Havant Federation of Schools RELATIONAL CONFLICT AND BULLYING

The main function of schools is for students to learn and make progress. At the same time schools have a key role to play in conjunction with the students and parents to develop respectful behaviours. As young people grow up and move through adolescence they form and develop friendships with numerous other students and as they move into the latter part of schooling they settle into friendships that are more definite and even in some instances last a lifetime.

In the early years of secondary education students have the opportunity to meet children from other junior schools and they mix with many more students. At this time for some students there can be **relational conflict**, ie times when students do not get on socially which can result in such behaviours as name calling, pushing each other, taking each other's property and ignoring someone deliberately. This kind of behaviour is common amongst younger students and as they get older it becomes less frequent and less of a problem. **Bullying** is something that happens in all schools but it is very different from **relational conflict** and it is less common. **All the schools in the Federation work to prevent bullying. Bullying is more serious than relational conflict and is defined by the Anti-Bullying Alliance as the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. It can happen face to face or online. Bullying can be physical, emotional or psychological.** Social media whilst it has many merits also provides an avenue for relational conflict and if it continues from the same person(s) bullying occurs, this often happens outside the parameters of the school day.

All schools in the Federation work tirelessly to develop respectful behaviours and comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010. We foster equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it and we foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

All schools in the Federation work tirelessly to develop respectful behaviours with all our students and we are grateful for the support we receive from parents/carers when trying to enforce high standards and expectations. Increasingly we have experienced some parents expecting schools to deal with and solve all relational conflicts that occur not only in school, but those that occur at weekends and in holidays and on social media. It is very difficult for schools to act as the mediators in these instances, schools will sanction behaviours according to their Behaviour Policies when it is right to do so.

We would be grateful if parents could assist us and consider the following points when they are faced with behavioural issues regarding their children. This would help all schools to focus the majority of their work on the learning and progress of the young people. It is important to state that at all times we will promote respectful behaviours and respond to serious incidents.

- Is the behaviour that your child is experiencing relational conflict or bullying? Is it the same person(s), has it been carrying on for a while and is your child being overly affected by it? This would be the time to contact the child's school following the recommended pathways which might include the child's Form Tutor, Head of Year/House, Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator.
- If the behaviours are more of a relational conflict then listen to your child and discuss with them how they might approach the next day when they meet the student(s). They could also be encouraged to talk to their Form Tutor or Class Teacher in the first instance. It can often be the case that students fall out with each other one day and the next day they are friends. It is advisable that parents/carers do not contact the school at this time and allow the child to work through it. This also allows them to build the skills to deal with the conflict and the resilience to recognise when behaviours are serious.
- All schools work closely with outside agencies that include the Police to try to resolve 'bullying'. We all work in partnership to try to resolve what can be very complex and difficult cases especially when it involves social media. On occasions the issues have been fuelled by many parties and in some instances parents/carers. In these situations schools and outside agencies cannot always resolve the situation to everyone's satisfaction and any sanctions that are used with the parties are at the discretion of the school. Parents/Carers should realise that it is not helpful for them to insist that the school takes action and under data protection they are not obliged to report on sanctions used on other students.



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RELATIONAL CONFLICT AND BULLYING**

- At times, in the course of investigating friendship issues or bullying, it is established that the student reporting the issue has also been at fault. If this is the case, we must pursue appropriate action for all parties and need parents to accept our judgements rather than to question them. Part of the learning process for young people is to have consistent messages from home and school and that they must accept responsibility for their actions.
- We are aware that parents/carers can become impatient and want a specific outcome immediately. Parents must realise that investigations take time if they are to be done properly and we respectfully ask that parents are mindful of this. When the outcome is not what parents/carers wanted there is the tendency for parents/carers to complain further to other agencies. Parents/Carers are asked to engage with the school to resolve the issues together and to recognise that sometimes this takes longer than expected.

All the schools in the Havant Federation want our young people to develop into confident, resilient and respectful citizens of the future. It is important that we all work together to achieve this and we strongly ask parents/carers to support us and follow the procedures that are outlined in this document. Where it is necessary parents/carers will be referred to this document when it is clear that the support for what we are trying to achieve is not forthcoming. We are very grateful for the vast majority of parents/carers who support the schools in what they are trying to achieve with regards to young people's behaviour and relationships.



Statement from the Governing Bodies and Headteachers from the Havant Federation of Schools STANDARDS, EXPECTATION AND ATTENDANCE

The main function of schools is for students to learn and make progress. At the same time schools have a key role to play in conjunction with the parents to ensure that all our young people develop behaviours that are safe and respectful ensuring that they can contribute to society in a meaningful and lawful manner. All of the schools expect the young people to arrive at school each day safely, ready to learn and respecting their fellow students and the Teachers and staff who support them on a daily basis. We also expect our young people to act safely and respectfully in their school and local environment and be excellent role models for themselves, their school and their parents/carers.

Although they will be very similar, each of the schools have their own code of conduct for behaviours, systems and routines in the classroom and around their building and site. The young people are made aware of the expectations and standards and are expected to comply to ensure that all are respectful and clearly focused on behaviour that allows learning to take place and for the individual to make progress. We want it to be the norm that young people do not adversely affect the learning of others.

Each of the schools also have systems to reward young people and equally there are sanctions that schools will apply when a young person does not conform to the standards that are set. These can include catching up on missed work, detentions, studying away from their normal class or similar activities that are designed for the young person to think, consider their behaviours and amend in order to comply with the school's expectations.

If students' behaviours are extreme or persistently go against the expectations of the school a Headteacher will consider a fixed suspension or permanent exclusion. Prior to this they may have used an internal pre-suspension. The schools also operate a Federation Inclusion system for young people who present persistent challenging behaviours. In this instance a young person will be expected to attend another school for a fixed period where they will remain in the host school's pre-suspension room. When the Federation Inclusion is used it is the expected norm that the child adjusts their behaviour in order to return to the home school. This system has worked positively and has reduced fixed-term suspensions which would otherwise appear on the child's record. Schools do have the legal right to make the decision about where a child's education will take place and we would expect parents/carers to support us at such times.

Each school has strategies and interventions to support children in amending their behaviours and some schools may be in a position to offer support for the family or to make an Early Help Hub referral in order to access such support. It is often the partnership and communication between professionals and parents/carers which is required for these measures to be successful and for students to actively engage.

This statement asks for the support of parents in managing young people's behaviour for the benefit of all concerned. Young people correct their behaviours for the better when all involved work together to set the high standards and expectations. Each school will deal with substance misuse including vaping or dealing and any possession and use of dangerous articles as very serious matters. Schools will refer any incidents related to drug dealing, knife crime or carrying an offensive weapon to the police.

All schools in their work equally emphasise the **importance of high and regular attendance.** If young people are not in school they are not learning and this really affects the progress of a child. **95% as a minimum and above is an acceptable level for a child's progress not to be adversely affected.** A 90% attendance rate results in 18 days of lost education, with 29 days lost at 85% and with 80% equating to a half-term of learning missed. We ask parents/carers to think about the importance of good attendance (95%+) and encourage their child to attend every day unless they are clearly very unwell. We also ask parents/carers to refrain from taking their children out of school for holidays as these are not authorised. Equally, if pupils are in school they are safe and not in danger of being exploited by other members of the public.

All the schools in the Havant Federation want our young people to develop into confident, resilient and respectful citizens of the future. It is important that we all work together to achieve this and we strongly ask parents/carers to support us and support the procedures of behaviour management and good attendance that are outlined in this document. Where it is necessary parents/carers will be referred to this document when it is clear that the support for what we are trying to achieve is not forthcoming. We are very grateful for the vast majority of parents/carers who support the schools in what they are trying to achieve with regards to young people's behaviour and attendance.

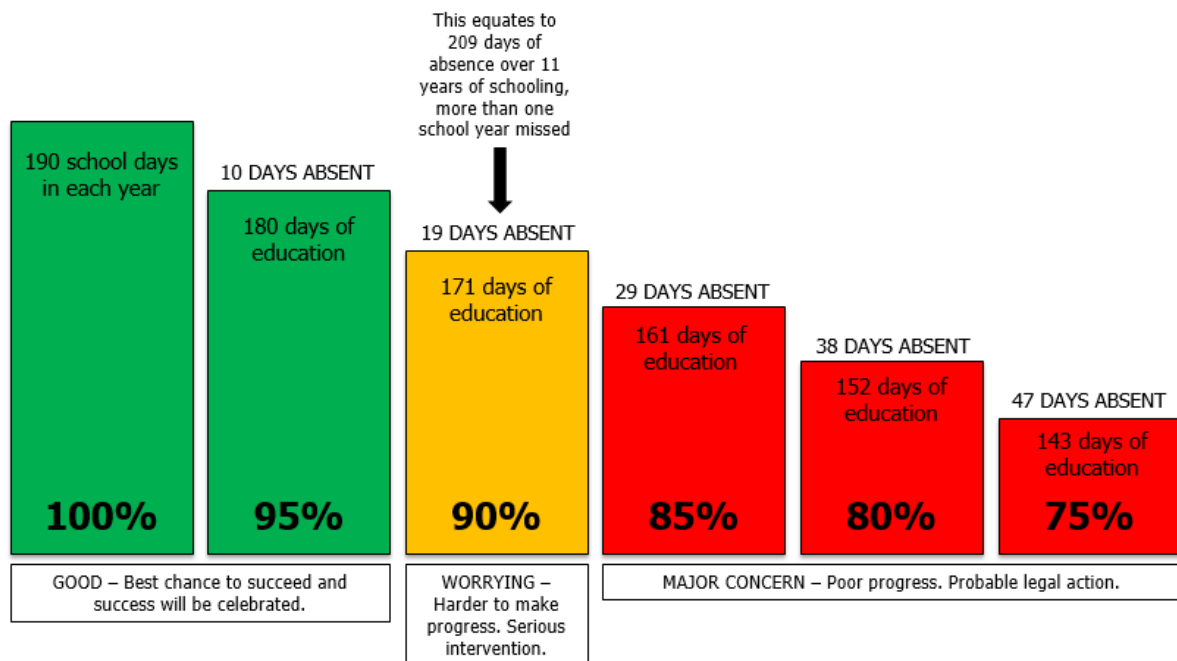
**Statement from the Governing Bodies and Headteachers within the Havant
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APPENDIX**

Attendance

Excellent and regular attendance is essential for a child's education to be successful. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that their child attends school. We thank those parents who ensure that the attendance is above 95%. Absence from school should only occur in the extreme of circumstances and holidays taken in term time will not be authorised.

What is excellent attendance?

The graph clearly shows what all schools expect in terms of excellent attendance. 90% attendance is not good enough; it needs to be 95% and above.



How does attendance affect progress?

Attendance below 95% can adversely affect the academic progress of your child and limit their social development as they have reduced access to activities that promote this.

There is a direct correlation between excellent attendance and student outcomes. Those students who have 95% and better attendance make significantly positive progress. Those students with under 95% attendance do not make as much progress as those with similar abilities across the country while those with 80% attendance make significantly less progress than those of similar ability across the country. There are always exceptions to this but overall the statistics really reinforce and clearly show that attendance matters. If a child is not in school, they are not learning and can get left behind.

How can you encourage good attendance?

- **Expect your child to go to school and ensure that your child knows this.**
- **Ask your child about their day at school and talk about what they might be doing in the future at school.**
- **Approach the school earlier rather than later if you have issues with attendance.**
- **If your child's attendance could be attributed to emotional wellbeing, please contact a member of the pastoral team who can refer to appropriate support.**

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Attendance Information:

Holidays

Holidays in term time will not be authorised. Requests for absence may be authorised if there are exceptional circumstances but the length of time authorised is likely to be limited. Parents of students found to have been on holiday when either authorisation had not been granted or permission not sought will be liable to prosecution. The onus will be on parents to prove that the child(ren) were not on holiday. No form of absence immediately before or after a school holiday or a family holiday will be authorised unless evidence is provided of genuine and exceptional reasons for absence. Unauthorised absence could result in prosecution.

Requests for absence in exceptional circumstances

The decision to authorise an absence due to exceptional circumstances will be based on the individual facts and circumstances and considered on a case by case basis by the Headteacher. Where an exceptional circumstance forms part of a longer absence, only the exceptional circumstance element will be authorised.

Examples of circumstances that would be considered on a case by case basis include weddings and funerals of close family members.

Absence for religious observance would be considered in line with The Education Act 1996 S444(3c) which defines, 'any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his/her parent belongs'.

In addition, absence to participate in sporting or creative activities operating at a high standard of achievement would be considered but authorised absence would be limited within any school year and documentary evidence, such as a licence, would be required.

Absence for illness

Hampshire County Council guidance states if your child has no temperature but has a cough, cold, headache, earache then as with adults, the medical advice is to give them paracetamol and send them to school. We will always contact you if your child's condition worsens or if we believe their illness is contagious such as chicken pox, vomiting, etc. Please refer to the school attendance policy or the school website for further information.

If your child has been ill in the night and has had broken sleep, please consider sending them into school in the afternoon with a note. Your child may feel better and they will have the chance to attend some lessons, find out about homework and learning missed and to join their friends.

Ongoing medical absence

Please note regulations for schools give the Headteacher the right to consider whether to accept the parent/carers position with regard to medical absence – and may decide to unauthorise these absences. For ongoing conditions that prevent a student attending school, it will be necessary for us to request medical evidence advising that the student is unfit to attend. This must also state how long this will be for. Please note that the Education Act 1996 places the responsibility on parents/carers to provide medical evidence when requested by the school.

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We monitor each student's attendance very closely, and especially those who are at risk of falling into this category. When a student's attendance falls below 95% the following actions will ensue:

- Stage 1 – Letter home notifying parent/carer that their child's attendance has dropped below 95% and is a concern.
- Stage 2 – Formal letter from school expressing our continued concern that a student's attendance has not improved.
- Stage 3 – Formal letter requiring that parent/carer provides medical evidence to support absence related to illness and advising that absences will be unauthorised unless evidence is provided.
- Stage 4 - Parent/carer invited for a formal meeting at the school. Attendance voluntary parenting contract signed (or offer and rejection recorded) – Penalty Warning given verbally.
- Stage 5 – Formal letter sent if parent/carer fails to attend a formal meeting on two consecutive occasions. Letter advises that a FPN or Legal Team referral will be made if attendance does not improve.
- Stage 6 – Formal letter to parent/carer advising that a referral has been made to the Attendance Legal Panel or Fixed Penalty Notice given.

At every stage it is imperative that parents/carers ensure that there are good lines of communication with the school. The school will endeavour to support, advise and provide strategies for parents/carers who are willing to engage.

Please contact the school to request assistance if required. Appointments can be made with Form Tutors, Class Teachers, pastoral staff, attendance officers, family support workers and education healthcare workers as available in each school. Parenting advice and support may be available.

Punctuality

Missed registration will be regarded as unauthorised absence and relevant legal proceedings may ensue.

Further Information and Advice

Hampshire County Council – Behaviour and attendance guidance for parents/carers can be found online at <https://www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/behaviour-attendance-parents#step-6>

Hampshire County Council information for Penalty Notices for non-attendance at school: Advice for parents and carers can be found online at <https://documents.hants.gov.uk/code-of-conduct-issuing-penalty-notices-for-unauthorised-absence-from-schools.pdf>

All Hampshire advice is available via their website: www3.hants.gov.uk

If you would like further clarification, please contact your child's school.