

SOUTH HAMS FEDERATION

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Approved 24.09.18

Review September 2019

It is a government legal requirement that all children attend school for 190 days. It is a government requirement that we monitor attendance and apply the legal requirement.

The South Hams Federation is striving to achieve our goal of 98% attendance; it is our policy that no child's attendance should fall below 98% in order for this happen.

The South Hams Federation recognises that good attendance is central to raising standards and pupil attainment.

This policy is written with the above statement in mind and this policy underpins our school ethos to:

- Support pupils and their parents/carers in our establishment of the highest possible level of attendance and punctuality;
- Promote children's welfare and safeguarding;
- Ensure every pupil has access to a full time education which they are entitled to;
- Ensure that pupils succeed and realise their full potential whilst at school;
- Make parents/carers aware of their legal responsibilities.

School Life

School education lays the vital foundations of a child's life. Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. Parents, carers and school staff should work in partnership in making education a success and ensuring that all children have a full and equal access to all that the school has to offer. As a Federation we will encourage parents/carers to ensure that their child achieves maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly. As parents it is their responsibility that their child arrives at school and returns home safely.

Expectations

We expect that all pupils will:

- Attend school every day;
- Attend school punctually;
- Attend appropriately prepared for the day (ie; pe kit, reading packs, etc).

We expect that parents/carers will:

- Ensure regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities;
- Ensure that their child arrives at school punctually and prepared for the school day;
- Ensure that they contact the school daily of any absence, before 9.45am.
- Notify school immediately of any changes to emergency contact details.

We expect the school will:

- Keep regular and accurate records of AM and PM attendance and punctuality; monitor individual child's attendance and punctuality;
- Contact parents when a child fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence;
- Encourage good attendance and punctuality through a system of reward and recognition;
- Regularly inform parents of the % attendance of all pupils;
- Inform parents/carers via a series of letters regarding their child's punctuality and poor attendance.

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Registers, Punctuality and Lateness

Punctuality to school is crucial. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. It is paramount therefore that all pupils arrive at school on time.

All children at Kingsbridge can start to arrive at school from 08:45; they should be in their classrooms by 9:00am when the bell rings and the registers taken; the register will then be closed, this is a legal requirement. A child arriving after 9.00am will need to be accompanied by a parent or carer to school via Reception.

All children at: Loddiswell, Malborough with South Huish and Modbury Schools should be in the playground at 8:45am ready to come into school at 8.55am. The bell will ring at 8.55am, by this time the children should have said their goodbyes and be lined up with their class in the correct place. The children will be collected by their class teacher and taken into school where the register will be taken at 9:00am; the register will then be closed, this is a legal requirement. A child arriving after 9.00am will need to be accompanied by a parent or carer to school via Reception.

All children at Stokenham School should be in the playground at 9:00am ready to come into school at 9:10am. The bell will ring at 9:10am by this time the children should have said their goodbyes and be lined up with their class in the correct place. The children will be collected by their class teacher and taken into school where the register will be taken at 9:15am; the register will then be closed, this is a legal requirement. A child arriving after 9.15am will need to be accompanied by a parent or carer to school via Reception.

If your child arrives within 15 minutes of the registers being closed their name and registration class will be logged in a late book along with the reason and time; your child will then receive an L code, which means your child has received a late mark for that session. Should your child arrive after 15 minutes after the register has closed your child will receive a U code, this equates to an unauthorised absence for that session and will affect your child's annual attendance.

If parents have not informed the Admin Team of a reason for absence, an Administrator will phone or text parents to ascertain the reason.

The attendance team will monitor all pupils' attendance on a weekly basis.

Celebrating Achievements

All children achieving 100% attendance at the end of each academic year will be rewarded for their valuable efforts. They will each receive a certificate signed by the Executive Headteacher/Head of School during a special assembly.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year **for whatever reason**. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to a child's education and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We as a school monitor all absences and the reasons given thoroughly. Any child that has reached PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark; is given priority and we will seek to take action immediately.

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The Education Welfare Officer will be notified in the following circumstances:

- Unauthorised absence by a pupil of more than 10 half day sessions (in aggregate) in any one term.
- Attendance of less than 90% by any pupil.
- Where action taken at school level has failed to improve attendance / punctuality for a particular pupil.
- Parents are to inform the school in writing if a child is removed from a roll. Details of the new school should be provided, if applicable.
- If a child leaves a school to be home educated, then an EHE Pupil Safeguarding form must be completed and returned to the Professional lead for Elective Home Education.
- When a child moves from school and no notification is received from another school, the 'old' school should complete a (CME) 'Child Missing Education' referral form and return it to the ONE Data Team, SCOMIS.

The Law and School Attendance

The 1996 Education Act (s7) places a legal responsibility upon parents/carers to ensure that their child fully attends the school at which they are registered. This means that your child must attend school every day and on time (unless as parents/carers you can prove that the absence was with the authorisation of the school or that it was unavoidable).

If your child has unauthorised absences then the school can make a request to the Local Education Authority (through the Education Welfare Service) to instigate Parental Responsibility Measures. If you have Parental Responsibility, this could mean receiving any of the following:

- A Penalty Notice. Should a Penalty Notice be issued, one notice will be issued to each parent/carer for each child involved. Currently, each Penalty Notice is for £60 if paid within the first 21 days, this increases to £120 if paid between the 22nd and 28th day. If a Penalty Notice goes unpaid after 28 days, then a Magistrates Summons will be issued. Also, if a Penalty Notice has already been issued within the previous 2 years then the Local Authority will proceed straight to Magistrates Summons.
- A Magistrates Summons that could lead to a criminal record, a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a term of imprisonment for up to 3 months.
- Education Supervision Order (ESO). The Children Act 1989 allows the Local Education Authority to apply to the Family Proceedings Court for an ESO for any child of compulsory school age, whom it is felt, is not being properly educated. The intention behind the ESO is to support parents in fulfilling their legal responsibilities. The ESO is only suitable where the child and the parents/carers are willing to co-operate with the process. If the application for an order is successful the ESO will last for one year, but may be extended for up to 3 years. A Supervising Officer will be appointed by the Court. The role of the Supervisor is to work with the child and family to ensure that an appropriate education is received.

Requests for Term Time Absence

As of September 2013, an amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration)(England) Regulations 2006 came in to force and greater clarity was introduced to the issue of schools authorising absence requests. These changes reinforced the Government's view that every minute of every school day is vital and that pupils should only be granted authorised absences by the school in 'exceptional circumstances'.

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A family holiday is not considered by the Government to be an 'exceptional circumstance' and therefore may not be authorised by the school.

If you would like to request 'leave' to be considered for authorisation due to exceptional circumstances, please request, complete and return an L5 form (formerly the S2 form) to the school.

Authorised Absences

All absences must be explained by a parent/carer. The school will then decide whether or not it will authorise the absence.

Acceptable reasons for the authorisation of absences may be:

Genuine illness (see 1 below)

Unavoidable medical / dental appointments (See 2 below)

Days of religious observance

Seeing a parent who is on leave from the armed forces

External examinations

When Traveller children go on the road with their parents

(1) Illness Medical evidence may be requested where a child has been absent for 5 days or more due to illness or has had 20 sessions of absence in a six month period, OR where a child's attendance is below 98% and/or the child is regularly away from school due to illness. Failure to provide evidence when requested may result in the school recording the absence as unauthorised.

(2) Unavoidable medical appointments All routine (non emergency) appointments should be made, whenever possible, outside of school hours. Parents/carers should provide evidence of an appointment made during the school day. Failure to provide such evidence may result in the school recording the absence as unauthorised.

Whilst any child may be off school because of illness, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems regarding attendance are best sorted out between the school, parents and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school then we will work with that family to understand the root of the problem.

Unauthorised Absences

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and or legal proceedings.

Other examples of absence from school that will not be authorised:

Any type of shopping

Looking after siblings or unwell parents

Minding the house

Birthdays

Resting after a late night

Relatives visiting or visiting relatives

When are Absences unauthorised

Schools are required to notify the Local Education Authority if a student has unauthorised absences. If the Local Education Authority believes the absences to be avoidable then it can initiate Parental Responsibility Measures (see The Law and School Attendance) against the child's parents/carers.