

SOUTH HAMS FEDERATION

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Approved 25.09.17

Review September 2018

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 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 9.30am.
- 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. (Copies of all letters are enclosed at the back of the policy).

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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 Loddiswell should be ready to cross the road from 8.50 to go straight to their classrooms, the bell will ring at 9am and the registers taken; the register will then be closed, this is a legal requirement.

A child arriving after 9am will need to be accompanied across the road and into school past reception

All children at: 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 but before 9.15am 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 but before 9.30am will need to be accompanied by a parent or carer to school via Reception.

The child's name and registration class will then 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.

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

Other reasons for absence

From time to time children need to be absent from school for other reasons such as medical appointments.

Such absences usually **only take up part of a day**. School should be informed of such absences in writing in advance, with accompanying documents and children should be brought in to school for morning registration and back to school straight after the appointment.

Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours. If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment.

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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.

- Parents / carers keeping children off school unnecessarily;
- Truancy before or during the school day;
- Absences which have never been properly explained;
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.

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.

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.

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;

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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.

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 Law and School Attendance above) against the child's parents/carers.

Unauthorised absences can be acquired when;

1. Leave has been requested, but the circumstances are such that the school is unable to authorise the leave (and the leave is still taken anyway).
2. Leave is not requested and/or the school has grounds to believe that the child has been taken out of school for an avoidable reason (example – a family holiday, buying uniform, looking after a sibling). Sometimes, there have been occasions when schools have been notified that the pupil is sick, but the school discovers or reasonably believes that the reason given for the absence is not genuine.
3. A child continually arrives late after the registration period has closed.
4. The Executive Headteacher/Head of School has the authority to unauthorise any absence that they feel is avoidable.

The Law and 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'.

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

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If you would like to request 'leave' to be considered for authorisation due to exceptional circumstances, please request, complete and return an S2 form to the school. Any application for leave must only be in exceptional circumstances by completing an application for leave of absence form, which can be obtained from the school office or down-loaded from this policy. ([S2 Form – Click Here](#)).

Should you choose to take your child out of school without the authorisation of the school, then Parental Responsibility Measures could be instigated (see The Law and school attendance).

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 during a special assembly.

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Date

Dear <<Name >>

Persistent Absence - Green Letter

NAME OF YOUNG PERSON:
DATE OF BIRTH:
ATTENDANCE PERCENTAGE:

I am writing to express our concern over your child's low level of attendance, our records show that your child's attendance falls below the acceptable level allowed for our school.

You will be aware that regular and punctual attendance at school is vital so that pupils are able to take full advantage of the opportunities available to them. Additionally, it is a parent's responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly and punctually.

We therefore request that you meet your child's class teacher on <<**Date**>> at <<**Time**>> to discuss the matter.

I have attached a copy of your child's attendance record for you information. It may be helpful to have looked at the pattern of absence and the reasons for it ahead of the meeting.

Your child's teacher will want to work with you to try and resolve the matter as working together is often the most effective way of making progress in improving both your child's attendance and their learning.

Please confirm your attendance at this meeting by contacting the school on <<**School Contact Details**>> on receipt of this letter.

Yours sincerely

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Dear <<Name >>

Persistent Absence - Amber Letter

NAME OF YOUNG PERSON:
DATE OF BIRTH:
ATTENDANCE PERCENTAGE:

Following our previous letter advising you of your child's low level of attendance, our records show that your child's attendance still falls below the acceptable level allowed for our school.

If he/she has a medical condition the school should be aware of please inform them as soon as possible, providing some medical evidence for the school file.

To date the school has accepted your explanations for absences without asking for any evidence and has recorded the absences as "authorised" However as his/her level of attendance is below 90%, further absences will not be authorised without evidence.

In Future if he/she is absent from school due to illness the absence will not be authorised unless one of the following is provided.

- a) Dated and signed appointment card.
- b) Letter from the GP
- c) A copy of a prescription relating to the illness

I must make you aware at this stage that if your child's attendance does not improve with immediate effect, then the school has to advise the Education Welfare Service which could lead to possible legal proceedings. The purpose of this meeting is to help you to address any issues so that this can be avoided.

Yours sincerely

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Dear <<Name >>

Persistent Absence - Red Letter

**NAME OF YOUNG PERSON:
DATE OF BIRTH:
ATTENDANCE PERCENTAGE:**

As a result of continuing low attendance, your child is now considered to fall into the category of a Persistent Absentee as designated by the criteria laid down by the Department for Children, Schools and Families.

The matter has now had to be referred to the Education Welfare Service, who will monitor attendance and will be looking for immediate and significant improvement. To assist you in achieving this, the <<HeadTeacher Name >> would like to meet and agree a plan of action which will meet this aim on <<Date>> at <<Time>>. The Education Welfare Officer, <<Name >> may also be present at this meeting.

Please confirm your attendance at this meeting by contacting the school on <<School Contact Details>> on receipt of this letter.

Yours sincerely