

# SOUTH HAMS FEDERATION ATTENDANCE POLICY WITH ADDENDUM IN RELATION TO CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

Approved 21.09.20

Review September 2021

It is a government legal requirement that all children attend school for 190 days each academic year. The government requirement is 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. Our 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

**Addendum: Attendance in relation to coronavirus (COVID-19) during the 2020 to 2021 academic year** is detailed at the end of the Policy.

## **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/carers 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/carers when a child fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence

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- Encourage good attendance and punctuality through a system of reward and recognition;
- Regularly inform parents/carer of the % attendance of all pupils
- Inform parents/carers via a series of letters regarding their child's punctuality and poor attendance

## **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 School can start to arrive at school from 8.45am. The bell goes at 8.55am and children should be in their classrooms by 9:00am when the register is 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 the school office to register for the day.

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 is a late mark for that session. Should your child arrive 15 minutes after the register has closed your child will receive a U code, this is an unauthorised absence for that session and will affect your child's annual attendance.

If parents or carers have not informed the Admin Team of a reason for absence, an Administrator will phone or text parents or carers to ascertain the reason. Pupils' attendance will be monitored on a weekly basis.

## **Celebrating Achievements**

All children achieving maximum 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. We are also introducing a class award for the class with the highest attendance each week, to be awarded at Friday assemblies.

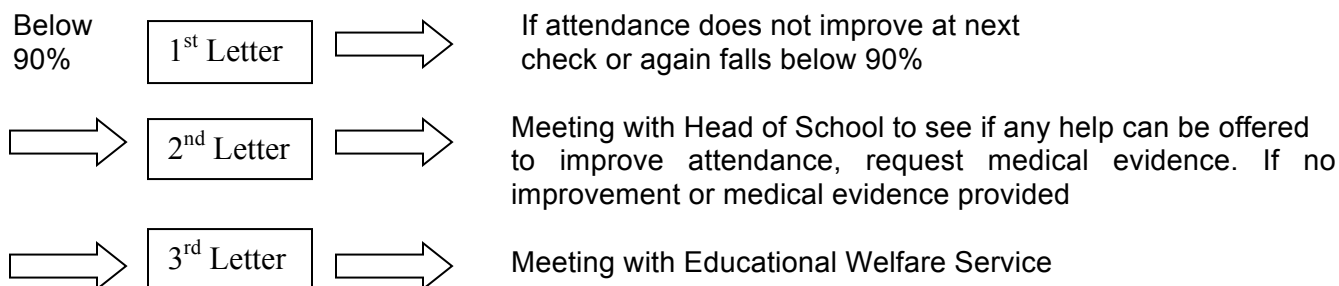
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## **Persistent Absenteeism (PA)**

When a pupil's attendance drops below 95% it becomes a concern at school. At 90% a child is considered a persistent Absentee (PA) and the following procedure will follow:



## **Children Missing Education**

Parents/carers 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 parents/carers intend to remove a child from school to be home educated a formal meeting with the parents/carers Head of School/Executive Head must take place. Then an Elective Home Education, (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 'Child Missing Education' (CME) 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. Parents/carers should note that only one penalty notice per parent/carer per child will be issued in any one year and a parent/carer will only get the option of two penalty notices within a four year period. Any other formal action would be a summons to a Magistrates Court.
- A Magistrates Summons could lead to a criminal record, a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a term of imprisonment for up to 3 months.

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- 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/carers 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'.

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 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/carer who is on leave from the armed forces

Extracurricular activity examinations – music, dance etc

When Traveller children go on the road with their parents/carers

- (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 90% 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.

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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/carers and the child. If a parent/carer 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/carers
- 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.

**Addendum: Attendance in relation to coronavirus (COVID-19) during the 2020 to 2021 academic year**

**Attendance Expectations**

From the start of the autumn term 2020 pupil attendance will be mandatory and the usual rules on attendance will apply, including:

- parents’/carers’ duty to ensure that their child of compulsory school age attends regularly at the school where the child is a registered pupil
- schools’ responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- the ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices, in line with local authorities’ codes of conduct

**Registers and Punctuality**

Punctuality from the start of the Autumn Term is still 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.

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Each school has implemented new staggered start times to enable social distancing whilst ensuring children receive their full day of education.

At Kingsbridge

8:40 am - Foundation Stage  
8:45 am - Year 1  
8:50 am - Year 2  
8:55 am - Year 3  
9.00 am - Year 4  
9:05 am - Year 5  
9:10 am - Year 6

Loddiswell Primary School

8:45 am – Class 1  
8:55 am – Class 2  
9:05 am – Class 3  
9:15 am – Class 4

At Malborough with South Huish Primary School

8:30 am - Class 4 & siblings  
8:40 am - Class 3 & siblings  
8:50 am - Class 2 & siblings  
9:00 am - Class 1 & siblings

Modbury Primary School

8:40 am - Year 5 & 6  
8:50 am - Year 3 & 4  
9:00 am - Year 1 & 2  
9:10 am - Foundation Stage

At Stokenham Primary School

8:30 am - Year 5 & 6  
8:40 am - Year 3 & 4  
8:50 am - Foundation Stage, Year 1 and Year 2  
9:00 am - Siblings  
9:05 am - Stokenham Pre-school and siblings  
9:10 am - Bus Children  
9:20 am - Merry Go Round Pre-school & siblings

**Not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)**

Although school attendance is mandatory from the start of the autumn term, there are some circumstances where pupils cannot attend school due to coronavirus (COVID-19).

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In line with the Secretary of State's expectation that no parent/carer will be penalised for following official public health advice for their child not to attend a given session, this non-attendance will not count as an absence (authorised or unauthorised).

## **Examples in which 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)' could apply**

In line with current legislation, and current guidance from PHE and DHSC, examples are as follows.

### **Pupils who are required to self-isolate as they, or a member of their household, has symptoms or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19)**

View [stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#)

Pupils who have symptoms should self-isolate and get a test.

If a pupil tests negative and if they feel well and no longer have symptoms similar to coronavirus (COVID-19), they can stop self-isolating and return to school.

If a pupil tests positive, they should continue to self-isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms. They should only return to school if they do not have symptoms other than a cough or loss of sense of smell or taste (anosmia). This is because a cough or anosmia can last for several weeks once the infection has gone.

If someone in the pupil's household has symptoms, the household should self-isolate and the member of their household should get a test.

If the member of the household tests negative, the pupil can stop self-isolating and can return to school.

If the household member tests positive, the pupil should continue self-isolating for the full 14 days from when the member of their household first had symptoms.

In all cases of self-isolation, schools should ask parents/carers to inform them immediately about the outcome of a test. Schools should not require evidence of negative test results or other medical evidence before admitting children or welcoming them back after a period of self-isolation.

### **Pupils who are required to self-isolate because they are a close contact of someone who has symptoms or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19)**

View [stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#) and [NHS test and trace](#) guidance.

Pupils may not have symptoms themselves but may be required to self-isolate if they are a close contact of someone with coronavirus (COVID-19).

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The NHS test and trace guidance states that a person should self-isolate for 14 days if they have had recent close contact with a person who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19). In the event of a confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) case in the school community, the local health protection team will provide advice on who this applies to, advising them to self-isolate for 14 days since they were last in close contact with the person that has tested positive when they were infectious.

## **Pupils who are required by legislation to self-isolate as part of a period of quarantine**

View guidance on [how to self-isolate when you travel to the UK](#).

As usual, parents/carers should plan their holidays within school breaks and avoid seeking permission to take their children out of school during term time. Families should also consider that their child may need to self-isolate following trips overseas that require a period of quarantine.

## **Pupils who are clinically extremely vulnerable in a future local lockdown scenario only**

View [guidance on shielding and protecting extremely vulnerable persons from Covid-19](#).

Shielding advice for all adults and children paused on 1 August 2020. This means that even the small number of pupils who will remain on the shielded patient list can return to school, as can those who have family members who are shielding.

If in future, rates of the disease rise in local areas, children still on the shielding list (or family members still on the shielding list) from that area, and that area only, may be contacted by the government and advised to stay at home and shield during the period where rates remain high. Families will receive a letter if they are required to shield again that parents/carers will be able to share with the school.

Schools should contact parent/carers of pupils who are shielding when measures in the local area are lifted and shielding is paused again, to set out the expectation that they can return to school.

## **Local lockdown**

If rates of the disease rise locally, schools may need to prevent some pupils from attending. Schools should follow PHE or DHSC guidance on what measures are necessary in the event of local lockdown.

## **Remote education**

If a child is not attending school due to circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19), schools should be able to immediately offer them access to remote education. Schools should keep a record of, and monitor engagement with this activity, but this does not need to be tracked in the attendance register.