

Ham Dingle Primary School



Attendance Policy

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The school is committed to Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, and expects all staff to share this commitment.

Introduction

“Regular attendance at school is crucial in raising standards of education and in ensuring every child can meet their full potential. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

The Government expects:

- *Schools and Local Authorities to
 - *Reduce absence including persistent absence*
 - *Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled*
 - *Act early to address any patterns of absence.**

- *Parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend early and ensure that all pupils are punctual to their lessons and attend school regularly.”*

Department for Education – Advice on School Attendance updated August 2020 (www.education.gov.uk)

The Importance of Regular Attendance

Learning and Lifeskills:

Any absence affects the pattern of a child’s schooling, and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil’s absence disrupts teaching routines and may affect the learning of other pupils in the class. Attendance and punctuality is also an important lifeskill for their future as adults, creating good first impressions and positive worklife habits.

Safeguarding:

In some circumstances, children may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone’s responsibility, and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child also encompasses:

- Attendance
- Children Missing in Education
- Child Protection
- Behaviour Management

- Health and Safety
- Anti-bullying

It is very important, therefore, that parents/carers ensure that their children attend school regularly, and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

What the law says about School Attendance

All children of compulsory school age (between 5 and 16) must receive a full-time education. Section 434 (1,3,4 & 6) and section 458 (4 & 5) of the Education Act 1996 says: "If a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly, without reasonable justification, then his/her parent is guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted".

Children are required to attend school for 190 days (380 sessions) in any single academic year (September-July).

The school expects all children to attend every day that the school is open and on time for registration. Absence that falls below 90% is categorised by the Government as persistent absence.

Parents/Carers' Responsibilities

Parents/carers are legally responsible for ensuring their child's regular and punctual attendance at school.

Parents/carers must ensure that the school has accurate information regarding all those with parental responsibility for their child.

Parents/carers are responsible for immediately informing the school of the reason for their child's absence.

Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child is punctual and in school at the start of the school day. Our school day starts at 9.00 am, doors are opened at 8.50 am and children should be in class by 9.00 am. (Please see Appendix 4 for changes to timings of day due to COVID 19.)

Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring all appointments take place outside school hours whenever possible. Appointments for dentists, GPs, opticians and practice nurses should be booked outside school hours. In order to authorise absence, it is helpful if the school has copies of proof of appointments

Parents/carers should not allow their children to remain at home for minor complaints or illnesses. If they are well enough to be up and about at home, or playing outside, then they are well enough to be in school. (Please see Appendix 3 for Public Health England Guidelines.)

Children's responsibilities

Children must ensure that they attend school every day and on time. Doors close promptly at 9.00, if pupils arrive after 9.00, they must report to the school office. Parents of children who arrive late on 6 occasions in a half term will be invited to a meeting with the Attendance Officer/DSL. (Please see Appendix 4 for changes to timings of day due to COVID 19.)

Teaching Staff Responsibilities

All teaching staff must complete a register of attendance by 9.15 am for morning sessions and by 1.40 for afternoon sessions. In the case of system failure, staff should advise the School Office, and if necessary complete paper registers. Registration is a legal requirement. Any discrepancies (i.e. present in the morning but not the afternoon at registration) should be reported to the Attendance Officer/DSL as a matter of urgency. (Please see Appendix 4 for changes to timings of day due to COVID 19.)

If a child is absent long-term and receiving hospital/outreach support, teaching staff must provide appropriate work as requested by the Head of School.

If children are out of school, e.g. on a school trip or visit, it is essential that a register or list of the children is taken. The Admin Office must be advised of children who are going to be out of school. This is an essential requirement.

Senior Leadership Team Responsibilities

Members of the Leadership Team will ensure regular attendance has a high profile across the school, and celebrate and reward pupils with accumulative 97% to 100% attendance both in a school term and in a school year.

The Leadership Team will ensure that all parents are aware that the school does not authorise extended leave of absence during school term time. (We do not refer to holiday only leave of absence in term time).

The Leadership Team will consult with the Admin Office regarding attendance concerns, support Admin Office Staff in discharging their responsibilities regarding attendance and, if necessary, remind teaching staff of their responsibilities.

The Head of School has the responsibility of overseeing attendance issues and regularly liaising with the Attendance Officer/DSL and Admin Staff regarding attendance.

Attendance of the whole school and identified groups is a standing item on the weekly Senior Leadership Meeting agenda.

Admin Office Responsibilities

The School Business Manager will track, monitor, analyse and report trends in pupil attendance and punctuality. They will co-ordinate strategies for improving attendance and punctuality.

The Attendance Officer, will monitor daily attendance and absence, look for patterns of absence and take swift action where there is a concern about a child's attendance.

The Attendance Officer will ensure that children who arrive after the gates are closed at 9:00 am are recorded as 'late', and that parents/carers sign their child in, giving the reasons for their lateness.

The Attendance Office will ensure that online registration has been completed by class teachers by 9.15 am and 1.40pm when registers close. Registers will be scrutinised by the Attendance Officer and the correct codes for absence added.

If a child is absent with no reason given by the parent/carer, the Attendance Officer will telephone the parent/carer after 9:15 am. If the parent/carer does not report a reason for absence, or is not contactable, the absence will be recorded as O (unauthorised) in the first instance. The absence will remain unauthorised unless the parent provides an acceptable reason for the child's absence. In the event that the school is unable to make contact with a parent/carer, a safe and well check visit may be carried out by a member of the Safeguarding team. (Please see Appendix 4 for changes to timings of day due to COVID 19.)

Attendance Trigger Points

If a child's attendance falls below 96%, the Attendance Officer will inform the child's parent/carer by letter to make them aware of the situation and a copy of their attendance data will be provided. Their subsequent attendance will be closely monitored.

Should a child's attendance fall below 93% the parent/carer will be informed by letter of the situation. From this point absences may no longer be authorised without proof from a medical practitioner. Parents/carers may be called in for a meeting about their child's attendance, and a parental/ school agreement contract may be drawn up.

Once a child's attendance falls to or below 90%, further contact will be made with parents and carers, inviting them to a meeting with the Head of School or DSL. Should a child's attendance deteriorate further, a referral may be made to Education Investigation Service (EIS).

If children are late on 6 occasions within a half term, parents/cares are also invited to a meeting in school in order to discuss the reasons for lateness, and for appropriate support to be provided. If there is no improvement, the decision may then be taken to remove the privilege of authorised absence, and the late will then be recorded as an unauthorised absence. This will also be communicated to parents and cares in writing, along with the date that this will commence. Persistent lateness is not acceptable and may result in a referral to the EIS.

If a child is absent for 20 consecutive days, they may lose their place at Ham Dingle.

Such cases are immediately referred to the Education Investigation Service who will establish the reason for this absence and may instruct the school to remove the child from the roll. If the child has not been admitted to another school, this will be treated as a 'Child Missing in Education' and will be referred to Safeguarding services.

Attendance Daily Procedures

- School Doors closed at 9:00am
- Late arrivals (9:00am and beyond) recorded via electronic sign in system
- Lunches are ordered for any late arrivals by the Attendance Officer
- Checks are made for each class to check children are actually absent
- First Day Absence/follow-up on previous absence phone calls are then made and registers are updated electronically.

(Please see Appendix 4 for changes to timings of day due to COVID 19.)

Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Share weekly class attendance on the Friday Flyer
- Reward good or improving attendance through certificates and pupil prizes
- Report to you swiftly when your child's attendance and/or punctuality rate is a cause for concern.

Understanding Types of Absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school as either **Authorised** or **Unauthorised**. This is why the reason for any absence is required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as illness, hospital appointments or treatment, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable circumstances.

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 Education Investigation Service becoming involved and using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

Unauthorised absences include:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily

- truancy during the school day
- Parents/carers keeping children at home because of a problem in school
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark (after 9:15am)
- shopping, looking after other children, birthdays
- day trips and holidays

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend due to problems in school or issues with other children, please contact school immediately so that staff can resolve the issues and avoid your child's attendance being affected.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when their attendance is below 90%. Absence at this level causes considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed immediately of this by letter. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully. Should there be no improvement in their attendance, parents/carers will be invited in to discuss the way forward with the DSL and Head of School and will be subject to an action plan. Any absence which meets the criteria for a referral to the Education Investigation Service will be referred promptly.

Absence Procedures

If your child is absent, you must:

- Contact school as soon as possible on the first day of absence. The school office is open from 7.30am and parents/carers are responsible for telephoning before 8.50 am to inform the school of their child's absence either by
 - a) speaking in person or
 - b) leaving a message on the answerphone .
- Appointment cards or hospital letters are required if the absence is due to a medical problem.

Telephone numbers: There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so it is important that school holds current contact numbers at all times. Please help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have at least two up-to-date contact numbers. Please advise the school office if your contact details change.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and also vital information from their class teacher. Pupils arriving late also disrupts lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

At Ham Dingle, pupils are welcomed into school at 8.50 am. Gates and classroom doors are closed at 9:00 am . Formal lessons start at 9:00 am and we expect your child to be in class by that time.

Registers are closed at 9.15am and your child will be marked as absent if they are not in class by that time.

Children arriving late, after 9:00 am, must enter school via the main front door, and report to the school office where they will need to be signed in by the accompanying adult. The Attendance Officer will then mark them in the register as 'late but present' (L).

At 9.15 am and 1.40 pm the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark. It will mean they have an unauthorised absence (U). If the problem persists it could result in a referral to the Education Investigation Service. (Please see Appendix 4 for changes to timings of day due to COVID 19.)

Illness

We understand that, from time to time, children are ill and are not able to be at school. As a result, where a pattern of absence for minor complaints or illnesses is evident (10 sessions over a term – not including notifiable illnesses which require children to stay at home), parents will be invited to a meeting with the DSL and Head of School.

Parents will be informed that, from this point, absences will not be authorised without proof from a medical practitioner, e.g. copies of prescriptions, appointment cards, hospital letters or medication labels.

School Closures

The academic year is 190 days. Schools in the United Learning Academy Trust are required to have an additional 8 days that are used for staff training. These are often called INSET (In Service Training) days. These days are not part of the 190 days, which is every child's free entitlement and schools endeavour to schedule these to minimise inconvenience to parents and carers.

The Head of School will make every effort to ensure that the school remains open for 190 day. However, in some circumstances, e.g. severe weather, the school may have to close. The Head of School must always consider the health, safety and welfare of every person, who uses the school site, pupils, staff, parents, volunteers and visitors. If at any point, use of the school building would be detrimental to a

person or persons health, safety and welfare, then the Head of School must close part or all of the school.

Leave of Absence in Term Time

Taking leave of absence (previously referred to as holiday) in term time will affect child's schooling as much as any other absence, and we expect parents/carers to help us by not taking children away in school time.

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on 'holiday'. **Please note that in September 2013, the Government** stated that schools must adhere to the following principle: *no leave for holidays will be authorised in term time.*

Headteachers, therefore, **cannot** grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Where the circumstances are considered to be exceptional, and leave is granted, the Head of School will determine the number of school days a child may be away from school.

Education Investigation Service (EIS)

The Education Investigation Service (EIS) is responsible for ensuring that parents meet the legal obligations in respect of their child's education and in doing so they may issue penalty fines or take legal proceedings to ensure that parents do so.

The Headteacher and Governing Body of each school have a responsibility to inform the EIS when a child's attendance becomes a matter of concern and to support the EIS in the actions that they may take.

The Headteacher and Governing Body of each school have a responsibility to inform EIS if parents choose to homeschool their children or if there is a concern that a child is missing in education.

Contact address: els@dudley.gov.uk

Exceptional Circumstances:

Absence during term time for holidays is not considered an exceptional circumstance.

Absence for a bereavement of a close family member is usually considered an exceptional circumstance but for the funeral service only, not extended leave.

Absence for important religious observances may be taken into account but only for the ceremony and travelling time, not extended leave.

If parents wish to request an absence from school during term time, the following steps must be followed:

- School must be informed in writing of the intention to take Leave of Absence in term time at least 15 days before the planned absence, by completing a request form available at the school office. The form asks parents and carers to state clearly the dates that the absence will start, the date it finishes, how many school days in total and the date that school can expect children to be

back in school plus the reason for the request. (If the leave is to go abroad copies of flight details may also be requested.)

- If parents/carers state their intention to take the leave of absence regardless, they will be advised that there will be an automatic referral to EIS if it meets the criteria. They should then expect contact from the service, and sanctions may be issued.
- If parents/carers then take the leave of absence (which has not been authorised), or if school have reason to believe that leave of absence has been taken without prior discussion, notification or authorisation, or that school has been given an incorrect reason for the absence, a call will be made to home telephone numbers and a referral will be made to EIS. Sanctions may then be issued.

Vulnerable Pupils

All Staff are made aware of the following pupils and there may be action plans in place to support these children's attendance:

- Gypsy, Roma and Travellers
- Asylum Seekers and Refugees
- Looked After Children (CLA)
- Children with a Child Protection Plan
- Pupils with Special Educational Needs
- Pupils eligible for Pupil Premium Grant entitlement
- Young Carers

Children Missing in Education

School aged children have the right to receive an appropriate education and the vast majority of children do so. However, there are a number of ways a child fails to access the school system. At Ham Dingle we are proactive in ensuring that children are not lost to education. When families inform us of relocation, all relevant information in regard to destination, forwarding addresses, new schools etc is sought. Where parents do not inform us of relocation and we have reason to believe that they no longer reside at the registered address, we will inform the EIS. Where school considers the situation to be an emergency, Children's Services will be informed immediately.

Absconding Children

When children leave the school premises without permission, the following will be put into place:

- Inform a Senior Leader
- Contact the parents/carers

- Contact the Police
- Instigate a search

Rewards and Incentives for High Attendance

Daily

Each class has a goal: to spell out the words PERFECT ATTENDANCE.

Each day the class has 100% attendance, they can add a letter. When the class spells 'Perfect Attendance', the class gets to celebrate and will receive a reward.

Weekly

- An attendance display is set up in the hall showing the weekly whole school attendance and attendance figures for individual classes at Ham Dingle.
- The attendance figures for all of the classes are announced in the VIP assembly and on the Friday Flyer.
- Each week the class with the highest attendance is awarded an extra 5 minutes breaktime.

Termly

- Pupils who achieve 100% attendance will receive a pencil or button badge.
- Pupils who achieve 97%+ attendance are awarded certificates

Annually

- 100% Attendance Badges and certificates are awarded to those children who have been in school every day.

School Targets

The attendance target for Ham Dingle is 100%.

The school has additional targets set by United Learning Multi Academy Trust and every pupil has an important part to play in helping us meet these targets.

Throughout the school year, we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

Summary

The school community has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend school.

All staff at Ham Dingle are committed to working with parents and pupils to ensure the highest levels of attendance are achieved, and that every child's welfare and life opportunities are promoted.

APPENDIX 1

Attendance Codes

Code	Description
-	Attendance not required
#	Planned whole or partial school closure
*	Not yet marked
/	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT dual registered)
C	Other authorised circumstances/Leave of Absence authorised by school.
D	Dual registration (attends elsewhere)
E	Excluded (no alternative provision)
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed)/in excess of the period determined by the Headteacher
H	Family holiday (agreed)
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental)
J	Interview
L	Late (before registers closed)
M	Medical/Dental appointments
N	No reason yet provided for absence
O	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity
R	Religious observance
S	Study leave
T	Traveller absence
U	Late (after registers closed)
V	Educational visit or trip
W	Work experience
X	Non-compulsory school age absence
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
Z	Pupil not on roll

Changes to Codes during COVID 19

X	Covid Related
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APPENDIX 2

Parent Information

CATEGORY BAND	LEVELS	ACTION
DARK GREEN BAND	Attendance / Punctuality 100%	Excellent attendance/punctuality will be celebrated.
GREEN BAND	Attendance / Punctuality 99.9% to 96%	Good attendance/punctuality will be celebrated.
YELLOW BAND 'BEGINNING TO CAUSE CONCERN'	Attendance/ Punctuality 95.9% to 93%	<p>BEGINNING TO CAUSE CONCERN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents will receive a letter highlighting their child's low attendance/punctuality and asking for improvement to bring their child's attendance/punctuality to above 96%. Parents may be called in for a meeting about their child's low attendance/ punctuality.
ORANGE BAND 'SERIOUS CONCERNS OVER ATTENDANCE'	Attendance/ Punctuality 92.9% to 90%	<p>SERIOUS CONCERNS OVER ATTENDANCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents will be called in for a meeting about their child's low attendance/ punctuality to identify reasons and discuss the effect of the absence on their child's progress. A parental/school agreement/contract will be drawn up to improve attendance/ punctuality. <p>A FIXED PENALTY NOTICE MAY BE ISSUED.</p>
RED BAND 'PUPIL IDENTIFIED AS PERSISTENTLY ABSENT AND IN A HIGH RISK GROUP'	Attendance / Punctuality BELOW 90%	<p>PUPIL IDENTIFIED AS PERSISTENTLY ABSENT AND IS IN A HIGH RISK GROUP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your child is classed as 'Persistently Absent'. An Early Help Assessment (EHA) may be drawn up to include all relevant agencies required to improve attendance/punctuality e.g. Social Services, Educational Welfare, Family Support Service, Health Services, Police, etc. <p>A FIXED PENALTY NOTICE MAY BE ISSUED.</p>



Ham Dingle Primary Pupil Attendance Policy.

1. Get up early and come to school so that you don't miss out on important learning and exciting experiences, and you can win prizes and rewards.
2. Remember, school starts at 8.50: Ten minutes to nine.
3. Only take time off school if you are really poorly. You can still come to school with a cough and a cold.
4. Ask your parents or carers to ring school to let us know the reason you are not at school, and bring a letter when you come back. Your teacher will worry if you are away and they don't know why.
5. Don't go on holiday during school time as you will miss lots of learning.
6. Be organised and responsible- help to get your uniform, bags, PE kits, packed lunch and any money ready the night before.
7. If you are worried about anything and don't want to come to school, talk to an adult in school that you trust and they will help you solve the problem.
8. Ask your parents and carers to make dentist or doctor appointments after school or during school holidays.
9. There may be consequences for your parents or carers if you don't come to school regularly.
10. Help our school to exceed our target of 97%. 90% attendance means that 20 days learning has been lost, 85% means 1 month's learning has been lost.

APPENDIX 3

Condition	Absence Advised	Length of absence from school	Comments
Headache, Ear ache, Stomach ache	No	None	Paracetamol and fluids should be adequate. Seek medical advice if persists or is unusually severe
High temperature	No	None	If a rash is present, seek medical advice from GP or NHS Direct before attending school. A high temperature can be draining and the child may not feel well enough to attend
Coughs and colds	No	None	
Sore throat and tonsillitis	No	None	
Head lice	No	None	
Warts and varrucae	No	None	Varrucae should be covered with a waterproof plaster
Conjunctivitis	No	None	Encourage the child not to touch their eye and to wash hands frequently
Flu	Yes	Until recovered	Flu is highly infectious and can be dangerous to the vulnerable. Flu vaccine is available to certain cohorts
Diarrhoea and vomiting caused by infection	Yes	Until 48 hours after the last symptom	Most cases will be caused by viruses such as norovirus. Other infections are less common, but may require longer absence
Scabies	Yes	After the first treatment	Everyone living in the same household will need to be treated at the same time
Impetigo	Yes	Until lesions have healed or 48 hours after starting antibiotics	
Measles	Yes	Must be absent for four days after the rash has appeared	Measles is highly infectious and can be dangerous to vulnerable adults and children who haven't been vaccinated. Measles can be prevented through the MMR vaccine
Chickenpox	Yes	Until the vesicles have dried over	
German measles	Yes	Must be absent for at least 4 days after the rash has appeared	German measles (Rubella) can be prevented through the MMR vaccine
Mumps	Yes	Must be absent until 5 days after the swelling started	Mumps can be prevented through the MMR vaccine
Whooping cough	Yes	Until the child has taken 5 days of antibiotics or if not taking antibiotics, 21 days	Whooping cough can be prevented by vaccine
TB	Yes if pulmonary	Not all types of TB are infectious	Local Health Protection team will be able to advise
Scarlet fever	Yes	Until 24 hours after taking first dose of antibiotics or 2 weeks after symptoms started (if child not taking antibiotics)	
Slapped cheek	No (<i>only infectious before symptoms appear</i>)		Anyone who is pregnant or has a weakened immune system and have been near someone with slapped cheek syndrome should tell their midwife or GP.
Hand, foot and mouth	Yes	Until child feels well enough to attend school	Not to be confused with foot and mouth disease (a different disease that affects farm animals).

Appendix 4

Attendance Daily Procedures during COVID 19 period

- School gates open at 8:45 till 9:15am for staggered arrival (Year 5 & 6 to arrive by 9am).
- School gates close at 9:15am and children enter the building via the school office after this time.
- Teachers check and close class registers by 9:25am
- Record late arrivals (9:25am and beyond) in the appropriate log within the school office
- All late arrivals are transferred to the dinner register and lunches are ordered
- All late arrivals are transferred to SIMS and a First Day Absence Report/ evacuation report is collated.
- Checks are made for each class to check children are absent
- First Day Absence/follow-up on previous absence phone calls are then made and registers are updated electronically.
- Teachers need to take afternoon registers, check and close them 10 minutes after the start of each Year group pm sessions, due to staggered lunchtimes.
- School gates open at 3pm till 3:30pm for staggered dismissal (Year 5 and 6 to leave at 3:30pm).

If a child is absent with no reason given by the parent/carer, the Attendance Officer will telephone the parent/carer after 9:25 am. If the parent/carer does not report a reason for absence, or is not contactable, the absence will be recorded as O (unauthorised) in the first instance. The absence will remain unauthorised unless the parent provides an acceptable reason for the child's absence. In the event that the school is unable to make contact with a parent/carer, a safe and well check visit may be carried out by a member of the Safeguarding team.