

Merriott and Haselbury Plucknett Federation

	Name of Policy	Attendance Policy	
	Approved Date	March 2018	
	Next Review Date	March 2020	

Ethos Statement

Recognising the historic foundation of both schools, the federated board will ensure that the schools aim to serve their communities by providing an education of the highest possible quality.

The federated board recognises the community distinctiveness of Merriott First School and the importance of working in close partnership with parents and the community to ensure that its pupils grow into confident and responsible citizens in their own communities and the wider world.

The federated board will preserve and develop the religious character of Haselbury Plucknett Church of England First School in accordance with the principles of the Church of England and in partnership with the Church at parish and diocese level. It encourages an understanding of the meaning and significance of faith, and promotes Christian values through the experience it offers to all of its pupils.

This policy should be taken as part of the overall strategy of the Federation and operated within the context of our vision, aims and values.

Rationale:

Good habits which are established early in life continue into adulthood and help to develop good working routines and relationships which in turn lead to personal success and self-esteem. Regular attendance at school underpins success in all areas of the curriculum. This policy is in line with other schools in the area and reflects county and national policy. All pupils should achieve at least 96% attendance, with the aim of 100%.

Actions:

In order to achieve this we will:

- Reward good attendance
- Liaise with partner schools
- Regularly raise awareness via newsletter/website

Roles and Responsibilities

All staff:

- Sensitively promote importance of regular attendance
- Provide good role models in terms of punctuality

In addition – Office staff:

- Contact parents/carers if no call received
- Create letters where attendance is of concern

In addition - Teaching staff:

- Record absences accurately
- Liaise with Parent Support Advisor if appropriate
- Contact parents/carers if pupils are unwell
- Monitor patterns of attendance and report to Headteacher

In addition – Headteacher:

- Action any requests for holiday during term time – unauthorised unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- Liaise with Outside Agencies and other local schools
- Contact parents/carers using standard letter if attendance is a concern
- Monitor pupil lateness

Governors:

- Monitor the impact of the policy and review every two years
- Monitor the impact of the policy through the evidence in the termly Headteacher’s report and review annually

Parents/Carers:

- Contact school by close of registration by 9.30 am on the first day of illness/absence
- Avoid holidays during the term
- Ensure pupils arrive on time at 8.55 am
- Provide medical evidence of absence if required

Pupils:

- Make every effort to maintain a good attendance record in order to achieve their potential
- Arrive at school on time

Persistent Absence – 10% of absence for any reason

Persistent Absentee (PA) children are those who have reached/missed the following number of sessions authorised and unauthorised by the end of each half term. Each day consists of two sessions.

Term 1: up to October break at least 7 sessions (3.5 days absence in this academic year)

Term 2: up to Christmas at least 14 sessions (7 days absence in this academic year)

Term 3: up to Feb break at least 20 sessions (10 days absence in this academic year)

Term 4: up to Easter at least 25 sessions (12.5 days absence in this academic year)

Term 5: up to May break at least 31 sessions (15.5 days absence in this academic year)

Term 6: to end of July at least 38 sessions (19 days absence in this academic year)

For any pupil who has missed a targeted number of sessions medical evidence will need to be provided for any absence.

Compliance with Somerset County Council’s Penalty Notice Code of Conduct

The Welfare Officer for the school is Sarah McEvansoneya, whose contact details are available from the school office.

At Merriott and Haselbury first schools, we try our very best to ensure that every student is successful. It is well known that attainment is linked with attendance and all statistics show that students who attend regularly not only enjoy school life to the full but attain higher grades than those who don’t attend regularly.

Parents are legally responsible for the regular attendance of their child and the Authority will take appropriate legal action in response to cases of poor attendance. This may include us as a school requesting:

- Education Welfare Referral
- Fixed Penalty Notice (£60.00 fine per child per parent or carer),
- Warning of a Penalty Notice
- Court Action for failure to secure regular school attendance.

Penalties may be requested and served to each parent/carers per child:

- where the pupil's absence, perhaps within a rolling academic year, has not been authorised by the school
- where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first five days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion (The parents must have been notified by the school at the time of the exclusion of this and the days to which it applies).
- where term-time leave of absence has not been authorised (authorised leave of absence to take family holidays can be granted by the school in exceptional circumstances).

Our expected level of a child's attendance at any point in the year is at least 96%. If parents take unauthorised absence – 10 consecutive sessions (5 days) and the child's attendance is below the expected level of 96% then the school may ask the Local Authority to issue a penalty notice.

The Local Authority will issue families with a penalty fine of £60 per pupil, per parent where any child is absent from school for 10 consecutive unauthorised sessions (5 days). This means that in the future, families can expect a fine of £60 per pupil, per parent for taking a holiday of a week or more. Please note these fines go to the Local Authority and not to the school. Children who are absent from school with illness for a week or more will not be fined and whilst in the majority of cases we will take a parent's word regarding illness, where there are concerns regarding the length of absence, legitimacy or frequency is questioned then medical evidence will be sought to support the need for absence e.g. prescription, medicine label, appointment card, screen print from the surgery – please note we are not asking for a Doctor's certificate.

Children who have 10 or more unauthorised absences in any 12 week period may receive a warning penalty notice from the Local Authority. Children who receive a notice will be expected to attend school for a given number of weeks without any further absences – otherwise a penalty fine will be incurred. Where a penalty warning notice is issued any illness absence must be accompanied by some form of medical proof.

There may be exceptional circumstances where leave is granted and these can be put in writing to the school. Where a family's children attend more than one school then these circumstances will be discussed with the other school and if required, advice sought from the Local Authority. Additional evidence may be asked for.

The Merriott and Haselbury Federation also take lateness very seriously. Persistent lateness can become a problem, as vital information with regards to school work is usually given out at the beginning of lessons. Students arriving late can miss this which may have a negative effect on attainment. We do have a legal obligation to close the register after the first 20 minutes of morning and afternoon sessions. If your child is late by less than 20 minutes they will be given a late mark. If lateness becomes an issue, further action will be taken.

If a child is more than 20 minutes late for morning or afternoon sessions he/she will legally be considered as absent for part of that morning or afternoon session. Regular lateness of more than 20 minutes may therefore also result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued by the Authority and/or further legal action.