



The Governors of

Herons Dale Primary  
School

have adopted the following policy:

## Attendance

**Reviewed by:** Isabel Robson

**Date:** February 2017

**Ratified by Governors:**

**Review Date:** February 2018

# Attendance Policy

## **Introduction**

Hérons Dale School is a Special Primary School in Shoreham which caters for pupils with a diverse range of needs, including PMLD, SLD, MLD and ASD.

We are committed to providing a stimulating learning environment in which all our children can feel happy, valued, safe, secure and confident.

We expect all members of the school community to be prepared to experience new things and take on new challenges, to produce their best work and behaviour at all times and, where possible, to be aware of the needs and feelings of others.

## **Rationale and Aims**

At Herons Dale School we strive to ensure that pupils experience bespoke opportunities which cater specifically to meet their needs and to facilitate holistic progress.

The Department for Education stipulate that *'pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less'*. DfE, School Attendance, Guidance, November 2016.

In accordance with government expectations, Herons Dale School wishes to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled; and,
- Act early to address patterns of absence.

Hérons Dale School also supports government expectations of parents:

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

## **Promoting Attendance**

Hérons Dale School wishes to promote the best level of attendance achievable by our students. Ideally all students should achieve a good level of attendance (over 95%) with as many achieving 100% as possible.

Within our school we recognise that:

- Some pupils have significant medical conditions that make it unlikely they will achieve attendance at this level. The school does not consider it appropriate or beneficial for pupils who are unwell to attend school.
- Sometimes pupils are unhappy about attending school. Families may be going through unsettled times that can make regular school attendance difficult. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents or carers and their child at an early stage.
- Due to the nature of some pupils' needs it may only be possible to arrange holidays during term time, to facilitate our pupils and their families having quality time away from the stresses that crowds can induce etc.

## Attendance Policy

Hérons Dale School is committed to working with families to ensure that maximum attendance is achieved wherever possible and that in circumstances where attendance is less than is desirable; we will work together with you to move towards improved attendance.

The school will celebrate the achievement of students who have good attendance (above 95%) through internal school rewards such as certificates.

### **Information**

The people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Isabel Robson, Headteacher

Teresa O'Connell, Deputy Head

Each half day absence (defined as a session) from school has to be recorded by staff at the school as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. It is therefore a requirement that we receive information regarding the reason for every absence.

**Authorised absences** are mornings, afternoons or whole days away from school for reasons such as illness, medical appointments or leave which has been approved by the Headteacher. Wherever possible, medical appointments should be arranged outside of school hours, although we appreciate that this is not always achievable.

**Unauthorised absences** are mornings, afternoons or whole days away from school for reasons other than the above. These are an offence by the parent or carer and include:

- Keeping students off school without a good reason
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Students who arrive too late at school to get a mark
- Taking holidays that have not been approved by the school in advance

**Should a pupil accrue 10 sessions of unauthorised absence a fixed Penalty Notice may be requested.**

### **Procedures**

The school will monitor the attendance and punctuality of all pupils, following the procedures outlined below:

- Pupils may arrive on site from 8:30am.
- Pupils must be handed directly into the care of a member of their class staff.
- Pupils are expected to be on site by 8:45am.
- Registers are marked by 9.15 a.m. and pupils will receive a late mark if arriving after this time (with the exception of pupils for whom there is an alternative arrival/departure arrangement linked to their SEN)

## Attendance Policy

- At 9:45 the registers will be closed. Pupils arriving after this time will be marked in the register as on site but will receive an unauthorised absence for the morning session. 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 and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence.
- Parents and carers are expected to telephone school staff on the day that their child is not able to come to school and any subsequent days that their child is absent.
- School staff will telephone home when we have not heard from parents or carers on the first day of a student's absence.
- Parents and carers are expected to inform staff verbally or by note of prior appointments e.g. medical. Pupils are encouraged to attend school before and/or after medical appointments where practical in order to access as much of the school day as possible.
- Any requests for exceptional leave should be made using the appropriate form or by letter to the Headteacher. Forms are available from the school office and on the school website.
- Absence monitoring letters will be sent home for pupils whose attendance falls below 90%.
- Parents and carers will be invited to a meeting in cases where there has been no improvement in a pupil's attendance or punctuality. All cases will be treated on an individual basis, taking into account personal circumstances.

### **Absence Requests**

Term Time leave may be granted in exceptional circumstances on an individual basis but arrangements should not be made without the school's prior agreement. The Headteacher may authorise absence in exceptional circumstances only. These might include:

- Leave granted on compassionate grounds for sudden unexpected incidents e.g. when a family member dies or is very ill.
- Special 'one off' family events such as weddings, funerals and other occasional celebrations (but not just because it is a pupil's birthday).
- Family holidays to accommodate the individual needs of our pupils e.g. when going on holiday at busy periods could be extremely traumatic to a pupil's wellbeing.

The Headteacher will take into account whether requested absence will fall before and during assessment periods or examinations, whether a pupil's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence and whether a pupil's attendance rate is already below 90% or will fall below that level as a result of leave and may not grant leave if this is the case.

## Attendance Policy

Taking leave without permission is 'unauthorised' absence. If you think the Headteacher's decision not to authorise the absence is unreasonable you have the right to make representations to the Chair of Governors, but the final decision over any action to be taken lies with the Head teacher and the LA.

### Targets

In May 2016 the DfE published National statistics which gave a National Average attendance for primary schools of 96.4%.

The table below outlines Herons Dale School's attendance information for the academic year 2015/16.

<b>Academic Year 15/16</b>	
<b>01/09/2015 to 31/08/2016</b>	<b>%</b>
Attendances	91.66
Authorised Absences	7.39
Unauthorised Absences	0.96
Possible Attendance	

The school has adopted the following attendance targets for 16/17:

- Overall whole school attendance to be 93% or better
- There will be no gaps between vulnerable groups and their peers' attendance.

*Please do not hesitate to contact us for any additional information  
or with any queries you may have.  
We thank you for working with us to promote good attendance for  
all of our pupils.*