

# Vernon Primary School



## Attendance Policy

### **Rationale**

Good attendance and punctuality is essential if pupils are to take full advantage of school and gain the appropriate skills to equip them for life. It is also important to ensure that our most vulnerable pupils are given the same opportunities, which may mean extra support in certain cases.

The school aims to ensure good attendance and punctuality by operating an attendance policy within which staff, pupils, parent(s)/carer(s), local community and the Education Welfare Service can work in partnership. The school will monitor attendance and punctuality and ensure quick and early intervention if a problem is identified.

All staff will encourage good attendance and punctuality and will liaise with home and partner agencies if this is appropriate. Good attendance and good punctuality will be seen as an achievement in their own right and be recognised as such by the school. The attendance policy is based on the premise of equal opportunities for all, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

### **Aims**

- To improve the quality of school life.
- To create a culture in which good attendance and punctuality is 'normality'.
- To demonstrate to pupils, parent(s)/carer(s) and staff that the school values good attendance and punctuality and to recognise that good regular attendance and punctuality are achievements in themselves.
- To be consistent in implementation, both in terms of rewards and sanctions.
- To value the individual and be socially and educationally inclusive.

### **Objectives**

- To involve the children more in their school attendance and punctuality.
- To improve communication with parent(s)/carer(s) about regular school attendance and punctuality.
- All school staff to continue to take responsibility for children's attendance and punctuality.
- To recognise the important role of class teachers and learning mentors in promoting and monitoring good attendance and punctuality.
- To ensure time and organisation within the school to enable the AIMS and OBJECTIVES to be met.

### **Targets**

- To have an effective means of collecting and monitoring attendance and punctuality information.
- To maximise the percentage of children achieving attendance of 96% or above.
- To reduce absence percentage each year .
- To reduce 'Late' percentage each year.
- To continuously improve school attendance by agreeing new targets.
- To ensure that such data is available and used effectively by school managers and staff in conjunction with the EWO.

- To agree specific targets for individuals, groups, years and the whole school where appropriate in a context of all known relevant factors and record these in the School Attendance Plan.
- To target resources and implement where most appropriate and to undertake this within a reasonable time frame.
- To keep parent(s)/carer(s), pupils and governors informed of policy and practice.
- To ensure that the school is aware of government targets which may have been set for some

**The Headteacher will:**

- Monitor the attendance and punctuality throughout the school
- Support and initiate actions and interventions aimed at meeting or improving overall attendance and/or punctuality.
- Raise the level of attendance and punctuality of those children identified as being at risk.
- Be responsible for the welfare of children in school

**The Pastoral Manager will:**

- Support the Headteacher in her responsibility of the welfare of children in school.

**The Business Manager will:**

- Monitor the attendance and punctuality situations of individual children.

**Governors will:**

- Monitor attendance and action being taken to promote good attendance on behalf of the Governing Body

**Informing Stakeholders**

**Parent(s)/carer(s) will be advised of our policy on attendance:**

- When their children first start at our school
- Home school contracts
- Through newsletters
- At parent(s)/carer(s) evenings
- On the school website
- In the school prospectus

**Children will be advised of our policy on attendance:**

- In assemblies
- In the classroom
- During appropriate areas of the curriculum.

**Procedure**

- Children are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year, unless there is a good reason for absence. There are two types of absence:
  - Authorised (where the school approves pupil absence)
  - Unauthorised (where the school will not approve absence)
- It is expected that parent(s)/carer(s) will provide an explanation by 9.30 a.m. if their child is absent, on the first day the absence occurs. This can be by telephone or personally at the office or by appointment.
- If contact, explaining the child's absence, fails to be made by parent(s)/carer(s), then the school will contact the home by telephone on the initial day, following this with a home visit if no contact is made. This visit will be made by a member of the Pastoral Team to ensure the child's wellbeing. This contact is recorded in the attendance log and the class register folder.

- The school will keep in regular contact with parents/carers during an absence until their child's return to school. This helps us to work in partnership with parents/carers to ensure a positive return to school can be made at the earliest opportunity.
- The head teacher will regularly remind parent(s)/carer(s) of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Class teachers will regularly remind their class of the importance of good attendance and punctuality. Each teacher will find relevant ways to promote good attendance in their class.
- Year groups with the best attendance each week will be recognised and rewarded in the school's newsletter.
- Children with 100% attendance will be rewarded by the school and awards will be presented at the end of each term and the school year.

### **Identification & Referral**

(Agreed by the PDA (Poynton, Disley, Adlington) learning community September 2017)

- If attendance is below 90% a fixed penalty may be initiated having taken into account exceptional circumstances.
- Evidence of medical appointments may be requested.
- No holidays will be authorised. (Other exceptional circumstances may apply.)
- If, during two consecutive half terms, a child has more than 10 session's unauthorised absence (5 days), a fixed penalty notice may be initiated having taken into account exceptional circumstances.
- (NB Late after register closes at 9.30am = 1 unauthorised session absence)
- Identification of poor attendance or punctuality is made by the Class Teacher, School Business Manager or Pastoral Manager.
- Concerns are passed to the Headteacher/Pastoral Manager, who is the person responsible for contacting parent(s)/carer(s)
- Person responsible will contact parent(s)/carer(s) with an Attendance Letter, there will then be four weeks of monitoring the young persons attendance.
- If there is no improvement, at this point, Attendance Letter 2 will be sent and parent(s)/carer(s) will be invited in for a meeting with the school's Headteacher and/or Pastoral Manager. At this meeting an action plan will be drawn up with a target for attendance. This meeting will go ahead with or without the attendance of parent(s)/carer(s).
- After four weeks' monitoring, the school will inform parent(s)/carer(s) of a further meeting with the school's Headteacher or referral to the Education Welfare Service.
- If attendance has improved over the four weeks, the school will continue to monitor attendance. Letters to recognise the improvement will be sent to parents/carers
- If attendance continues to be poor the school will refer to the Education Welfare Service and a final warning letter will be sent to parent(s)/carer(s).

### **Completing the Register**

- The twice-daily requirement to register pupils is perceived as an opportunity for the school to receive young people formally from home, and serve as an introduction to the session.
- The marking of registers will be given high importance at all times within each classroom.
- Incomplete or inaccurate registers are unacceptable for several reasons. Registers provide the daily record of the attendance of all pupils; they are legal documents **that may be required in a court of law**, for example as evidence in prosecutions for non-attendance at school.
- Registers are marked electronically on the Schools Information Management System, SIMS.
- If manual registers are required they are to be marked in ink. Any alterations should be visible and explained. Correcting fluid products may not be used.
- The register should be marked using the symbols advised by DfE and Cheshire East Council. The agreed symbols can be found in the class register folder.

## Lateness

School begins at 8.50 am and all pupils are expected to be in line for this time. Registration will begin at 9.00 am and registers close at 9.30 am. Up until this time pupils are given a late code.

**Arrivals after close of register at 9.30 am are given an unauthorised code = 1 unauthorised session. Persistent lateness after close of register may be referred to the Local Authority for possible legal action.**

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of others.

## Absence due to illness

Parents and carers are expected to provide a full explanation for any absence due to illness or a medical condition. Any child who accumulates 20 absences attributed to medical appointments or illness in an academic year may be required to provide evidence of illness such as a doctor's appointment card or a copy of prescription details for any further absences. Parents and carers will be invited to a meeting with the head teacher to discuss how the school can help to improve attendance levels. If requested, failure to produce medical evidence to support an absence will mean the absence will automatically be unauthorised.

## Authorised Term-time Leave of Absence

The school will fully implement amendments in The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 from 1st September 2013. **The head teacher will not grant any leave of absence during term time. (Other exceptional circumstances may apply.)** Parent(s)/carer(s) will be advised not to book holidays during term time. Leave of absence in term time will not be authorised unless there are exceptional circumstances. The head teacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted due to exceptional circumstances. A child who is absent longer than 10 days after an agreed return date, can legally be removed from the school roll and may be liable to prosecution.

In considering whether or not to authorise leave of absence, the school will consider each case individually. The school will not authorise leave of absence during any examination periods.

## Leave of Absence Procedure

- A request must be made at least four weeks prior to the first day of absence being requested. Some exceptional circumstances may not allow for this and this will be taken into consideration.
- Requests must be made on the leave of absence form available from the school office
- Parents/carers are required to attend a meeting with the Head teacher to explain their exceptional circumstances and present evidence of the circumstances.
- Parents/carers will be notified of the school's decision on the returning copy of the request form. An accompanying letter from the Head teacher detailing the reasons for the decision will also be sent.
- The school will consider issuing a fixed penalty notice for any leave of absence taken without authorisation from the school.
- If a fixed penalty notice is issued this is the timeline for the penalties

## Cheshire East Penalties for unauthorised absence.

Timeline	One Child	Two Children
Paid within 21 days	£60 per parent	£60 per child=£120 per parent
After 21 days and before 28	£120 per parent	£120 per child = £240 per parent
After 28 days	Parents will be summoned to appear before the magistrates' Court on the grounds they have failed to secure their child's regular attendance.	Parents will be summoned to appear before the magistrates' Court on the grounds they have failed to secure their child's regular attendance.

**What can parent(s)/carer(s) do to help?**

- Let the school know as soon as possible why their child is away.
- Send a note when their child returns to school.
- Try to make appointments outside school time.
- Do not allow their child to have time off school unless it is really necessary.

**If a parent(s)/carer(s) is worried about their child’s attendance at school what can they do?**

- Talk to their child; it may be something simple
- Talk to the head teacher and staff at the school
- Talk to the school’s Pastoral Manager
- Talk to the School Nurse
- Talk to the Education Welfare Service

A parent/carer may contact the Education Welfare Officer, who will work with them and the school to resolve the situation.

Vernon Primary School has taken into account the fact that Cheshire is an ethnically diverse community. Our practice safeguards against disadvantaging any sections of the community. Improving the performance of underachieving pupils is a key priority in our Strategic School Development Plan.

**The school aims to have ALL children attending regularly and punctually to ensure the best possible educational outcomes for each child.**

Under the Equality Act 2010 we have a duty not to discriminate against people on the basis of their age, disability, gender, gender identity, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation. We believe that this policy is in line with the Equality Act 2010 as it is fair, it does not prioritise or disadvantage any pupil and it helps to promote equality at this school.

**Chair of Governors :** .....

**Date:** September 2018

**Date to be reviewed:** September 2019