



Victoria Primary School

Attendance Policy

2023

This policy should be read with the;

- Child Protection Policy
- Admissions Procedures
 - ABC for parents

Vision Statement

An inclusive, imaginative and inspiring Learning Community where everyone can be safe, healthy, happy and successful together.

Victoria Primary School Attendance Policy

Introduction:

Regular school attendance is crucial in raising standards in education and ensuring that every child can have full access to the school curriculum and reach their potential. Victoria Primary School will strive to promote an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance and where each pupil will feel valued and secure. By failing to attend school regularly, pupils diminish the value of education provided for them. It affects their ability to achieve their full potential and of developing social skills. Frequent lateness also has a dramatic effect on a child's education. A child who is late for school finds it more difficult to settle that day and will miss vital work which then has to be caught up. Lateness also disrupts lessons for the teacher and the rest of the children in class.

Aims of this policy:

1. To improve/maintain the overall attendance of pupils at Victoria Primary School.
2. To work in partnership with parents to establish good attendance patterns.
3. To develop a framework that defines roles and responsibilities in relation to attendance.
4. To provide advice, support and guidance to parents/guardians and pupils.
5. To develop a positive reward system to encourage good attendance.
6. To keep parents informed about their child's attendance and punctuality.
7. To promote good relationships with the Education Welfare Service.



Roles and Responsibilities

The Board of Governors

- Ensure that school attendance is placed as an agenda item at each meeting
- Review school attendance figures and targets

The Principal

- To be responsible for the overall management and implementation of the policy
- To deal with parental requests for extended leave in line with Education Authority policies and procedures
- To prepare attendance reports for the Board of Governors
- To appoint an attendance officer to input data and contact parents
- To meet with the attendance officer regularly to monitor attendance
- To ensure that rewards for attendance are issued
- To issue a letter of concern to parents regarding attendance (appendix 1)
- To issue a warning letter to parents regarding a potential referral (appendix 2)
- To issue a notification letter to parents if a referral needs to be made (appendix 3)
- To liaise with the Educational Welfare Service
- To revise and amend the policy with the SLT/Board of Governors

Teaching Staff

- To keep accurate and up to date daily records of pupil attendance on SIMS
- To regularly remind children and parents about the importance of good attendance
- To follow up on pupil absence by issuing work missed
- To feedback to parents about pupil attendance and punctuality at parent appointments

Attendance Officer

(this role is undertaken by the school secretary)

- To input school attendance data on SIMS from teacher class registers
- To check the school answerphone and take messages from parents regarding absences
- To carry out and record first day calls when a child doesn't arrive in school when no reason has been received
- To contact parents by letter following 3 instances of lateness (appendix 4)
- To inform teachers of any reasons for absences
- To liaise with the Principal regularly

Role of Parent

Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child shall receive efficient full time education suitable to age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs they may have either by regular school attendance or otherwise.

If a child is registered in school, their parent has a legal duty to ensure that they regularly attend that school.

It is a parents' responsibility to inform the school of the reason for a pupil's absence on the first day of absence. This should be confirmed with a written note when the pupil returns

to school. If the absence is likely to be prolonged this information should be provided to enable the school to assist with homework or any other necessary arrangements which may be required.

Pupils are expected to be in school at 9am for registration and the beginning of classes. It is the responsibility of the parents to ensure that their child is punctual. Lateness is recorded on pupil attendance records.

If your child appears reluctant to attend school, please discuss the matter promptly with the class teacher or Principal to ensure that both you and your child receive the maximum support available.

Role of Pupils

Each pupil is expected to attend school every day.

Children should ensure they arrive on time.

Children should ensure that any notes from parents are delivered to the class teacher.

Promoting and Rewarding Good Attendance

Aims:

- To ensure good attendance and punctuality (above 95%) is regularly promoted and supported and remains high profile across the school.
- To achieve high levels of attendance and punctuality (above 95%) through rewarding good attendance and punctuality.

Attendance Assemblies

Celebrating attendance assemblies are held during Achievement Assembly at the end of each term. Children receive a Bronze Award for the Autumn term, a Silver Award for 100% attendance for the Autumn and Spring terms and a Gold award for 100% attendance for all 3 terms.

End of Year attendance award

Children who have received 100% attendance for all 3 terms and have received a Gold certificate at the end of May will also be able to win a prize if the attendance remained 100% by the end of June.

Principal's Post

Regular reminders about attendance are issued through the weekly school newsletter. This includes reminding parents of our school attendance target and what that means in terms of the number of days absent.

The school learning environment

A welcoming organised learning environment, which supports and celebrates its learners, is a key factor in ensuring children enjoy school and attend regularly. All staff ensure that their learning environments are a high quality. Regular, rigorous environmental audits are carried out by the SLT to ensure this.

Monitoring and Recording Attendance and Punctuality

Class Registers

Pupil attendance is recorded by teachers in class on SIMS. The registers are then checked by the attendance monitor at 9.15am to input attendance codes on the school system.

SIMS is the only way of recording pupil attendance and must be completed accurately. This is the responsibility of whichever member of staff has been directed to take the register for that session.

Registers must be accurate and be kept **twice** daily.

Morning Register

Class registers remain open until 9.15am. At that point, the attendance officer makes checks.

From 9am the school playground gates are closed and children arriving after this time must come in by the main entrance and record their names in the late book. Children arriving after 9.15am will be recorded as late in the register.

The attendance officer checks that the children who have arrived late have been marked present in the register and corrects any mistakes or inputs codes for children who are known to be absent. The attendance officer then begins first day absence calls.

Afternoon Register

Registers must be taken by teaching staff straight after lunch before afternoon lessons commence. Registers must be completed by 1pm.

Late Book

The school playground gates close at 9am. Children arriving after this time must enter the school through the main entrance where their names are recorded in the late book.

Children are given a late (but present for the session) mark until 9.15am. Children arriving after this time are marked late in the register and may miss their present mark. Once a child has received 3 late codes in any one school year they are sent a letter regarding the school's concern over this lateness which explains how much they are missing.

Punctuality will then be monitored and if it does not improve, parents will be invited in to school to discuss concerns and plan a way forward.

Family Holidays during term time

Victoria Primary School discourages holidays during term time due to the impact they have on pupils' learning. Family holidays taken during term time will be categorised as an unauthorised absence. Only in exceptional circumstances will a holiday be authorised.

Register Boxes

Every class has a register box which is kept in the main school office. The box should be collected by the teacher in the morning and by the Child of the Day after lunch. Register boxes **must** be returned to the office after morning registration session by the Child of the Day.

The purpose of the register boxes is to allow good communication between the class teacher and the school office. The register boxes include the following:

- Paper Registers (for fire safety, dinners, milk etc)
- Letters/notes from parents regarding absences
- Money for educational visits, break etc
- Letters or leaflets for pupils and parents for teachers to distribute

School Attendance Letters

Letters are sent out by the school to communicate with parents about attendance and punctuality. Copies of all standard letter formats are included at the end of this document.

Monitoring first day absence

If a child is absent from school and the school has not received a phone call or other message from the parent/carer a first day absence call will be made. The Attendance Officer follows this system:

1. Phone the parent contact number.
2. Repeat this during the first morning of absence in the case of no response.
3. Phone emergency contact number to get an up to date contact number for the parents and update the school system accordingly.
4. Speak to the parents to establish reasons for absence.

These calls are made by the attendance officer following the submission of class registers at 9.15am. The parent is contacted and asked to provide a reason as to why their child is not in school. The reason is recorded next to the child's name on the first day of absence.

Attendance meetings

The SLT meet monthly to monitor attendance. They identify children whose attendance is below 90%. The systems and structures are then followed to improve attendance for those individuals. Letters are sent out to parents whose children's attendance is below 85%.

Education Welfare Service

The Education Authority (EA) through the Education Welfare Service (EWS) have a legal duty to make sure that parents meet their responsibility towards their children's' education.

If a pupil's absence causes concern, or if their attendance falls below 80%, they will be referred to the EWS, if appropriate. EWS will support staff and parents in developing and implementing strategies to address or improve school attendance.

This document is freely available to the entire school community and is available on the school website. It will be reviewed on a regular basis.

Signed – Chair of Governors: 

Signed – Principal: 

Date: 13th April 2021

Review Date: 2023

LETTER OF CONCERN

(to be copied on letter headed paper)

Dear Parent

The Senior Leadership Team has carried out a monitoring exercise on pupil absences this week. Your child's attendance has dropped to % and has been flagged up for concern. Please keep an eye on their absences and try to improve this percentage.

If no improvement is made by the next monitoring exercise, then you will be advised of the new attendance rate and may be invited into school to discuss how we can work together to support your child improve their attendance.

Please take a moment to look at the attached table to see how much school your child has missed with this attendance percentage.

Yours sincerely

S Weir

POTENTIAL REFERRAL WARNING

Dear Parent

The Educational Welfare Officer has been to visit school today to monitor pupil absences. attendance has dropped to % and has been flagged up for concern. Please keep an eye on their absences and try to improve this percentage.

The Education Welfare Officer visits school on a regular basis and is now monitoring your child's attendance. If no improvement is made by the next visit, then she may be in contact with you.

Please take a moment to look at the attached table to see how much school your child has missed with this attendance percentage.

Yours sincerely

S Weir

NOTIFICATION OF REFERRAL

Dear Parent

The Educational Welfare Officer has been in school again today to monitor absences. She has identified your child as a cause for concern as their attendance has fallen to % . She has now asked for your child to be referred to the Educational Welfare Service and will be in contact with you to discuss how to improve his attendance.

In the meantime, please take a look at the attached table to see how much school your child has missed with this attendance rate and please try to increase the attendance percentage and aim to get your child to school every day.

Yours sincerely

S Weir

CONCERN ABOUT PUNCTUALITY

Dear Parent

Following a check of our attendance records, we have noticed that your child has now been late to school on 3 occasions. Please remember that school starts at 9am and pupils who arrive late in school miss important information about their learning for the day.

Please work with your child to improve their punctuality. If you are having difficulty getting your child to school, please contact their class teacher who will try to support you with the issue. We will continue to monitor attendance on a weekly basis and hope to see no further instances of lateness.

Late marks in the register will affect your child's attendance rate. Please be advised that any attendance rates dropping below 90% will be monitored by our Senior Leadership Team and may be referred to the Educational Welfare Officer.

Thank you for your support with this matter.