



## Attendance Policy

**Date-** September 2016

**Review-** September 2017

**Review Framework:**

The policy will be reviewed annually (or sooner in the event of revised legislation or guidance)

Signed: Headteacher \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: Chair of Governors \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Values:

**'Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – 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 in both primary and secondary school'.**

### **School Attendance: Statutory guidance and departmental advice, DFE Aug 2013**

Veritas Primary Academy expects the highest attendance and punctuality from all pupils, at all times.

We support pupils and their families to ensure that excellent attendance is achieved.

## Overall Aims:

- To ensure that every child is safeguarded and their right to education is protected.
- To ensure the school attendance target is achieved, through rewards and incentives for good attendance and punctuality.
- To raise standards and ensure every child reaches their full educational potential, through a high level of school attendance and punctuality.
- To ensure all the stakeholders, governors, parents, pupils and staff receive regular communication, about the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- To keep accurate, up-to-date records and have a robust and rigorous system for analysing attendance.
- To identify causes of low attendance/punctuality with individuals, classes and groups of pupils and address them.
- To work with external agencies, in order to address barriers to attendance and overcome them.

## Rights and responsibilities for attendance/punctuality:

### The Legal Framework:

#### There are legal obligations on:

- The parent(s) to secure education for their children, whether at school or otherwise, to send them to school regularly once they are on the register.

#### Academies must ensure:

- Appropriate staff are able to provide evidence and reports sufficient for court purposes. This will include evidence of actions taken to address attendance-related issues as agreed with the LA.
- They comply with local protocols relating to any assessment that the LA is obliged to carry out relating to a pupil's non-attendance.

- Where a court grants a Parental Order the academy can make a financial contribution to the LA towards meeting the costs of implementing the PO, typically by contributing to the costs of parenting classes.
- Any penalty notice issued, or requests to the LA for these to be issued, comply with the local code of conduct, including the payment of all monies to go to the LA.
- They are able to provide the LA with the required information in cases where a penalty notice is not paid and prosecution has to be commenced.

### Senior Leadership Team (SLT):

- To be responsible for the overall management and implementation of the policy.
- To deal with parental requests for extended leave in line with Birmingham Local Authority policies and procedures.
- To consider the use of Penalty Notices, in line with Birmingham Local Authority policies and procedures.
- To lead on/take responsibility for attendance/punctuality, on a day-to-day basis, including liaising with/responding to parental enquiries.
- To oversee the analysis of/analyse weekly/termly/yearly data and respond to findings.
- To meet with the School Administrator to monitor the systems and structures, ensuring they are having an impact on pupil attendance and punctuality.
- To liaise with external agencies such as the Education Welfare Officer and make referrals where necessary.
- To ensure that rewards and incentives for attendance and punctuality are being used.
- Work with the teachers, to plan for the reintegration of pupils after long-term absence.
- To revise and amend the policy, as required.

### Office Manager (OM):

- To carry out and record the outcome of first day calls, when a child doesn't arrive at school when no reason has been received.
- To monitor weekly attendance data for their year groups.
- To check the school answer phone and take messages from parents/carers about pupil absence.
- To promptly inform the SLT if there are any concerns relating to attendance/punctuality
- To produce weekly/termly/yearly data for SLT as requested.
- To record reasons for absence and updating class registers.
- To implement the daily checking of SIMs registers after the morning and afternoon registration sessions.
- To contact parents/carers by letter if attendance drops below 90%.
- To maintain SIMs attendance records in line with this policy.
- To liaise with and report to with outside agencies such as the Education Welfare Service.
- To report to the Local Authority, as requested.
- To maintain clear communication with the SLT regarding attendance and punctuality within their year groups.
- To oversee the admission and induction of new pupils.

- To support SLT with the promotion good attendance and punctuality, through finding/organising incentives.
- To ensure staff are following the registration systems and structures in this policy.
- Inform parents of school procedures, when parents have failed to inform the school.

### Staff:

- To ensure quality first teaching every day with lessons that are well planned and resourced so that they challenge, inspire and meet their learners' needs.
- To keep accurate and up-to-date daily records of pupil attendance through the SIMs register system taking a formal register of all pupils twice a day at 8.55am and 1.15 pm.
- To regularly remind children and parents about the importance of good attendance.
- To follow up on pupil absence by ensuring reasons for absence are sought.
- Provide a welcoming and safe environment, which encourages attendance and promotes the best performance from children.
- Establish good and effective communication links with parents/carers and work collaboratively in meeting the child's needs.
- If required, to work collaboratively with other agencies to assist them in fulfilling their statutory duties, regarding for example, child protection
- Work with pupils and their families where attendance is a concern, identifying barriers to good attendance and working to overcome these.
- To promptly inform the SLT, of pupils who persist with poor attendance.
- To feed back to parents about pupil attendance and punctuality regularly and at Parents Evenings.

### Parents:

Children should only be kept at home if they have a serious illness or injury. If this is the case, parents should contact the school first thing. If a child has a minor illness e.g. mild headache, stomach aches etc. parents should inform the school and bring them in. If they don't get any better, school will contact parents straight away, to collect them. If pupils' have a dental, clinic or hospital appointment, parents should let the school know. Pupils' should be brought child back to school after appointments. **Pupils should miss as little time as possible.**

### Therefore, parents are expected to:

- **Ensure their child attends school and arrives on time every day.**
- Promote a good attitude to learning by ensuring their children attend school in the correct uniform and with the basic equipment required for lessons.
- Not arrange medical and dental appointments in school time wherever possible.
- Telephone to inform the school to on the first day of absence for their child.
- Provide a written explanation of absence, including dates of absence as soon as their child returns to school.
- Work in partnership with the school and other agencies in the best interests of their child; this includes informing the school about significant influences and changes in the child's life, which may impact on learning.

### **The Local Authority, through the Educational Welfare Service, is expected to:**

- Support the school in improving attendance, through whole school initiatives and individual pupil interventions.
- Work with families and other agencies to remove barriers to good attendance.
- Ensure that parents are informed of their responsibilities in relation to attendance.
- Uphold and enforce the law in respect of attendance, child employment, and involvement in entertainment and child protection.

### **Strategies for promoting/rewarding excellent attendance:**

#### **Aims:**

- To ensure good attendance and punctuality (above 97%) is regularly promoted and supported and remains high profile across school.
- To achieve high levels of attendance and punctuality (above 97%) through rewarding good attendance and punctuality.

#### **Weekly Assemblies**

Assemblies are held every week and classes with the highest attendance/punctuality receive 5 minutes additional playtime and an Attendance Award and a Certificate.

#### **Monthly School Newsletter**

Each month, the school newsletter is used to highlight the importance of good attendance and punctuality. It regularly includes sections reminding parents of our school attendance target and what that means in terms of number of days absent. It also includes information about any initiatives, which the school is using, to promote attendance and punctuality.

#### **Breakfast Club**

Daily Breakfast Club is available every day and offered free to pupil premium children. This supports parents by allowing them to drop their children off from 8.00 am ensuring they are on time for school. The club is supervised by three members of staff.

#### **The School Learning Environment**

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

#### **Staff Promoting Good Attendance**

It is important that teachers are regularly promoting good attendance with their classes. Good class attendance is attributed to good teaching and this is celebrated.

## End of Term Attendance Medals

Each child with 100% attendance receives an Attendance Medal at a special ceremony from the lead Governor for Attendance. The SLT and the Office Manager organise and lead on the end of term attendance incentives

## Sharing attendance data

Pupils are informed on a weekly basis of attendance/punctuality achievements. The class achieving the highest attendance/punctuality, and the number of pupils achieving 97% -100% attendance are shared in termly assemblies. **This develops healthy competition between year groups to improve attendance. It also engages the form teacher in conversation with their classes about attendance.**

## Parent/teacher consultation evenings

This provides an opportunity for form teachers to praise and recognise excellent attendance or share attendance concerns and discuss barriers to good attendance. Where necessary a target for improving attendance is set. The class teacher then monitors this. If there is no improvement in attendance/punctuality, the pupil is referred to the SLT.

## Monitoring and Recording Attendance & Punctuality

### Class Registers

Class registers are recorded using SIMs. The system ensures that no children are missed and that pupil information can be shared quickly and securely. Registers are 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 can be re-submitted in the case of a mistake or a pupil arriving after submission, but registers must be accurate and submitted at key times.

### Morning Register

Doors open at 8.45am and class registers remain open until 8:55am. At that point, the teacher may submit their final register and close down SIMs. The teacher may submit the register as many times as they wish before 8.55am (e.g. if a mistake has been made or a child has arrived slightly late) but at 8:55am the register must be correct and submitted.

From 9:00 am the school playground gates are closed. Parents must bring any children who are late to the office and sign them in as Late using our electronic sign in system. SIMs register will then be updated as well as fire evacuation registers. The children's names and classes are recorded in the 'Children Arriving Late' folder. This is to ensure that no children are missed on the register due to arriving in school late. Children arriving after 9:25am are recorded as 'L' (late after register closed) in the register.

The School Administrator officer then checks that the children who have arrived late have been marked '/' (present) in the class registers and corrects any mistakes or inputs codes for children who are known to be absent. The administrator then begins first day absence calls.

## Afternoon Register

Registers must be submitted by teaching staff straight after lunch before afternoon lessons commence. They should be by 1:20pm

## School Attendance Letters

The school sends out letters, to communicate with parents about attendance and punctuality. (Copies of all standard letter formats are included at the end of this document.)

## Punctuality

The SLT and the Office Manager monitor the punctuality folder regularly. This may involve speaking to parents directly, or via a phone call. Letters regarding the school's concern over lateness may also be sent; explain how much learning pupils are missing. If it does not improve, parents are invited in to school, to discuss the concerns with the SLT and plan a way forward. If lateness does not improve following the meeting, then the family will be referred to the ESW who will contact parents warning them that further action may be taken.

### IMPORTANT:

Child Protection and safeguarding concerns must be acted on immediately, in line with the school Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

## 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 SA follows this system:
- Phone parents' contact number(s).
- Repeat this during the first morning of absence if no response.
- Phone emergency contact number(s) to get an up-to-date contact number for the parent/carer and update the school system accordingly.
- SLT to speak to the parents at home time if they are at school to pick up other children.
- Speak to the parents face-to-face or by phone the next day and establish reasons for absence and update contact numbers.

The parent/carer is asked to provide a reason as to why the child is not in school. The absence reason is recorded next to the child's name on SIMs.

The Office Manager must establish a reason for every absence. No absence should be left on the system as an 'N' (no reason given) code. If we have not been able to contact parents after 2 days then the absence is recorded as 'O' (unauthorised).

## Attendance Meetings

The SLT monitor individuals, classes, year groups, different ethnic groups, SEN and FSM pupils. They identify patterns and trends in absence/punctuality, including persistent absence. The systems and structures are then followed, to improve attendance for these individuals or groups. Letters are sent out to parents whose children's attendance is below 90% and parents who are concerned about their child's attendance, are invited to work in partnership with the school.

### Extended Holidays

In line with Staffordshire Local Authority, 'Leave in term Time Guidance' and the 2013 Amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations, **leave for pupils during term time is not authorised under any circumstances.** The school recognises that taking children out of school may constitute a safeguarding risk and will make necessary enquiries, in order to be satisfied that the child is not at risk. The school may contact outside agencies in order to ensure that a visit is legitimate and safe for the child/children.

Head teachers may now only grant leave in term time where the circumstances are exceptional, for example:

- death of parent/carer or sibling of the pupil
- life threatening or critical illness of parent or sibling of the pupil
- parent/carer recuperation and convalescence from critical illness or surgery (leave request to be made within 6 months of recovery and medical evidence required)

Family emergencies need careful consideration. It is not always in the best interest of the child, nor appropriate for them to miss school for family emergencies that are being dealt with by adult family members. Being at school, friendships and support from staff can provide children with stability and care during difficult times. The routine of school can provide a safe and familiar background during times of uncertainty.

If you have exceptional circumstances, which have led you to request leave in term time for your child/children, please complete the required form, which you can obtain from the school office. The Executive Head or Head of School will then make a decision, on whether or not the leave can be lawfully authorised and will do so only if there is a genuine, exceptional and urgent reason for a child to be absent during term time.

### Penalty Notices

**If a child is taken out of school without the Head Teacher's authorisation, it will be recorded as unauthorised absence. This may lead to the issuing of a penalty notice and legal action being taken.**

#### Section 23(1) Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2007:

Penalty notices may be issued to the parent of pupils who have unauthorised absence from school. The amount of the penalty is £60.

- If this is not paid within 21 days the amount rises to £120.
- If not paid within 28 days the Local Authority will prosecute under section 444(1) unless it comes to our attention that the penalty notice had been issued in error.

#### Section 444(1) Education Act 1996:

"If you are the parent of a child of compulsory school age who fails to attend school regularly, you are guilty of an offence."

The court can fine each parent up to £1,000 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs and/or make a Parenting Order.

Please note that:

- Penalties and prosecutions are in respect of each parent for each child.
- Parent includes any person who is not a parent of the child but who has parental responsibility for the child (and applies whether or not that person lives with the child) or who has care of him/her.

**These prosecutions are criminal proceedings and could result in you having a criminal record.**