



# Attendance Policy

<b>Date the policy came into effect</b>	<b>September 2023</b>
<b>Date of next policy review</b>	<b>September 2026</b>
<b>Name of person responsible for this policy</b>	<b>Mr Chris Fulton</b>

## **PUPIL 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.

### **Aims**

1. To improve/maintain the overall attendance of pupils at Victoria Primary School.
2. To develop a framework that defines roles and responsibilities in relation to attendance.
3. To provide advice, support and guidance to parents/guardians and pupils.
4. To promote good relationships with the Education Welfare Service.

### **Role of the School**

The Principal has overall responsibility for school attendance; school staff should bring any concerns regarding school attendance to his/her attention.

The Board of Governors provide support by reviewing school attendance figures and targets and ensuring it is placed as an agenda item at each meeting. School attendance forms part of the Principal's report at each full board meeting.

Teaching staff regularly monitor the attendance and punctuality of pupils by ensuring that attendance is recorded at the beginning of morning and afternoon registration sessions – this is recorded via SIMS (School Information Management system) and all teachers have access to this.

Victoria Primary School is committed to working with parents/guardians to encourage regular and punctual attendance.

### **Role of Parent/Guardian**

Parents/guardians have a legal duty to ensure their child of compulsory school age 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/guardian has a legal duty to ensure that they regularly attend that school.

It is a parent's/guardian's 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. Doors will open at 8:50am for pupils from Primary 1 – Primary 7.

Pupils will be supervised in their classrooms by classroom assistants or class teachers until 9.00am. Children should not arrive into the playground before 8:50am.

Parents should note that there will be no supervision on the playground before 8:50am. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure that your child is punctual.

Lateness is recorded at registration and on your child's attendance record. 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 maximum support.

### **Role of Pupils**

Each pupil at Victoria Primary School must attend school punctually and regularly. If you have been absent from school, a written note from a parent/guardian must be provided to your teacher when you return.

### **Absence Procedures**

Parents and carers should contact school, via the telephone, on the first morning of a child's absence informing school that the child will be absent from school and the reason why.

Following this, all parents/carers are required to inform the school in writing providing a clear reason for any absence. This should be provided by school upon the child's return.

### **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.

### **Rewarding Positive Attendance**

As a school we will have an annual attendance action plan which will outline measure for rewarding positive attendance – normally 100% attendance. These rewards will be flexible in their approach, however, may include certificates, small prizes, extra playtime etc. Our Youth Governors will be consulted on rewards on a regular basis.

## **Procedures for Managing Non-attendance**

The school will formally monitor attendance on a bi-monthly basis. At that point in time, any parents / carers of a pupil who has accumulated an absence figure of less than 90% from the beginning of the academic year will receive a written confirmation of this.

Within this letter, the school will be asking the parents to give assurances that they will fully support the school with regards to improving their child's attendance. Discretion may be used by the Principal if a known medical issue / family circumstances is the cause of low attendance. These letters will be sent out by the school's pastoral lead.

If it is clear that the absence from school is solely as a result of a medical issue, this letter of concern may not be issued, however, the attendance of the child will still be discussed with the Education Welfare Officer.

On a termly basis, each child's termly attendance is written in the child's homework planner on the attendance page.

As a school, we will be reporting attendance using the Department of Education Tier System. These are outlined below along with guidance from the Department of Education:

Tier 1a - pupils with "Regular Attendance" missing 0% - 4.9% of school (< 1 day per month). Universal strategies should be used by schools to encourage good attendance for all pupils.

Tier 2 – pupils recognised with "Chronic Attendance", missing 10% - 19.9% (2-3 days per month). At this level, schools would introduce interventions such as action planning for the pupil, mentoring or personalised early outreach to the pupil. Schools should be engaging with their EWO through school audits and identifying at an early stage, children and young people experiencing school related attendance difficulties. If schools are considering a wide range of data to help inform what preventative measures would be helpful, then there is a good chance that issues can be addressed before they escalate.

Tier 3 - pupils recognised as "Severe Chronic Attendance", missing 20% or more of school. At this level, we recommend specific interventions implemented by EWS in conjunction with the school, which may include interagency work and / or court action.

## **Procedures for Managing Lateness**

As outlined above, school starts for pupils at 9:00am. Doors open at 8:50am for pupils to enter and go to their classrooms. At this point they will be supervised by a classroom assistant or the class teacher. It is extremely important for pupils to arrive at school on time. If a pupil arrives into school late, after 9:00am, the pupil will receive a late mark and the number of minutes late is recorded on the School Information Management System (SIMS).

As with managing attendance, lateness information will be reviewed on a bi-monthly basis. The accumulated total of minutes late will be reviewed on a bi-monthly basis. Cases of lateness will be reviewed on a case by case basis. Parents of pupils with persistent lateness will be contacted via letter to inform them of this.

In an effort to reward punctuality, the school operates a stamp based system in each child's homework planner. Our Punctuality Praise stamps are awarded to children who arrive into school on time.

### **Education Welfare Service**

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

If a pupil's absence causes concern, or if their attendance falls below 85% and there is also a concern, 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.