

VICTORIA C of E INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

Committee	Pupils and Curriculum Committee
Date policy agreed	December 2016
Date policy to be reviewed	December 2017
Approved by Governing Body	December 2017
Frequency of Review	Annually
Location of electronic file	Governors/policyreview/current/ Attendance policy Dec 16

ATTENDANCE POLICY - VICTORIA C of E INFANT & NURSERY SCHOOL

At Victoria School, we want the whole school community – governors, staff, parents and pupils to be committed to high standards of attendance and punctuality.

Good attendance helps the children in this school community to maximise their learning. This policy will support us all to achieve high levels of attendance and punctuality.

Victoria School aims to encourage and assist all pupils to achieve excellent levels of attendance and punctuality as good school attendance assists children and young people to achieve.

It is the legal responsibility of parents to ensure their child is at school.

Section 7 of Education Act 1996 states

Duty of parents to secure education of children of compulsory school age.

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable –

(a) To his/her age, ability and aptitude, and

(b) To any special educational needs he/she may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise

Promoting Positive Attendance

We seek to actively promote outstanding attendance and award attendance certificates in assembly each term to those children who have had 100% attendance. The school works in partnership with the Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO) and parents to improve attendance for individuals and the whole school.

Monitoring

In accordance with our commitment to raising achievement through consistent attendance, Victoria School will focus on reducing any individual overall absence, particularly unauthorised absence and/or persistent absence through the monitoring of attendance registers.

Expectations

The responsibility for good attendance is shared between school, parents and pupils.

The School:

- Will provide a safe learning environment
- Will ensure that records of attendance are maintained according to Government legislation and guidance on a daily basis
- Will encourage good attendance and will investigate all unexplained and unjustified absence
- Staff will set a good example in matters of attendance and punctuality
- Will follow up all instances of poor attendance and punctuality
- Will keep parents informed of their child's attendance/punctuality record
- Will work closely with parents should attendance or punctuality give cause for concern

Parents:

- Are legally responsible for ensuring their child's regular and punctual attendance
- Are expected to ensure that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly dressed and equipped and in a fit condition to learn
- Will inform school on the first day of absence, of the reason for their child's absence from school
- Will avoid arranging family holidays during term time
- Will maintain regular communication with school staff where necessary
- Will ensure that school are informed of any changes of contact details

Pupils:

- All pupils are expected to attend school regularly and punctually
- Are expected to be ready to learn

Summer born EYFS Children

Please refer to the Admissions policy with regard to this matter. A meeting must be held with the Headteacher prior to starting school.

Attendance Registers

The School operates the SIMS computerised attendance programme.

The pupils' Registration Regulations 1956 (SI 1956 No.357) provide that there must be an attendance register for each class or form or group containing the names of all pupils in the class. It must be marked during the time set apart for registration in the time-table at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session.

Registers are computerised and must be completed by a member of the teaching staff. They are, on no account, to be marked by pupils. Registers must be sent electronically to the office in the morning by 8:45am and in the afternoon by 1.25pm. Registers will be checked weekly by the office to review attendance and check for any unauthorised absence. In the case of fire or evacuation, the office staff will bring out a print out of the registers and the signing in/out sheets for pupils.

Inspection of Registers

The Registration Regulations also provide that the registers of every school shall be available for inspection during school hours by H.M. Inspector and by persons authorised by the Secretary of State. They are also open to inspection by officers authorised by the authority, e.g. the Attendance Improvement Officer.

Lateness

Parents are asked to have their children in school by 8.25 am, when a bell will be rung, ready to start at 8.30 am the school gates will be locked at 8.35 am.

Any pupil arriving after 8.35 am and/or after the closure of the external playground should report to the school office.

Entries on the late sheet will be transferred to the computerised registration system by office staff to monitor lateness.

If the pupil's punctuality of attendance does not improve sufficiently, the pupil's case will be referred to the Head teacher in the first instance and then possibly to the Attendance Improvement Officer.

Checking on Absences

The school has a clear policy for chasing up absences. All unexplained absences are followed up by a series of reminders by the office. If no explanation is given the case may be referred to the Attendance Improvement Officer.

When a parent phones the office regarding an absence the reported absence sheet is completed. SIMS is regularly updated with this information by the attendance operator.

Absence

It is the responsibility of parents to inform the school of any absence. A letter must be sent to confirm any absence on the day the child returns.

Absence due to sickness

Parents are required to telephone the school office by 8:45am if their child is absent due to sickness. Parents do not need to telephone on every day of the period of absence, however a letter must be sent to confirm any absence on the day the child returns.

If your child has had diarrhoea or sickness they must not return to school for a period of 48 hours after the last episode. These are County guidelines and all parents must adhere to them.

Illness/Operations

The Headteacher and office should be informed prior to the absence if possible of children who are or will be absent in the following circumstances:

- Undergoing or about to undergo an operation
- Any long term sickness or problems
- Serious illness
- Contagious illnesses such as Rubella, Mumps, etc.

This list is not exhaustive – It is always better to let the Headteacher know of any concerns affecting the child or potentially other children.

Appointments

Parents are asked to notify the school by letter or telephone in advance if their child is to attend the dentist, doctor or for any other health related reason.

Holidays/Occasional Absence

The decision was taken in 2005 by all the Berkhamsted schools not to authorise holiday absence. This has been in place since September 2005.

Parents are most strongly urged to avoid taking family holidays during term time. Parents do not have the right to take their child out of school for such a holiday, and this is regularly explained to them. Should a parent decide nevertheless to go ahead with a holiday in term time it is essential they fill in a Leave of

Absence request form at least 3 weeks prior to the absence.

The holiday absence form will be used as evidence of the absence with the Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO). **Three weeks' notice must be given in order for the office to administer.** Parents will be given a copy of the Leave of Absence request form once it has been processed.

Very occasionally, holidays of more than two weeks to visit the Country of origin and family living overseas may be planned. Parents are urged to discuss with school staff, the most appropriate time of year and point in the child's educational career for this visit to take place. This will help minimise disruption to the child's progress at school.

The school does not provide work for children to do when taken out for holidays. Work will be provided for longer term sickness or ill health. We do suggest the child keeps a diary and reads each day on holiday.

Authorised/Unauthorised Absence

All applications for leave of absence are dealt with by the Head teacher.

All requests for absence for holidays will be signed by the Head teacher, although these will NOT be authorised except at the Head's discretion for compassionate reasons.

Absence can be authorised if:

- the pupil was absent with leave (defined as 'leave granted by any person authorised to do so by the governing body)
- the pupil was ill 'or prevented from attending by any unavoidable cause'
- there is a family bereavement
- the pupil is attending an approved off-site activity or is receiving special off-site tuition
- the pupil is attending a Pupil Referral Unit
- the pupil is involved in an exceptional special occasion (e.g. if a pupil is attending the graduation of an older sibling or funeral of a relative)

Absence should be unauthorised if:

- no explanation is forthcoming
- the school is dissatisfied with the explanation
- the pupil stays at home to mind the house or to look after family members
- the pupil is absent for unexceptional special occasions (e.g. a birthday)
- the pupil is away from school on a family holiday

Absence due to Modelling/Filming

Following Hertfordshire County Council's policy and depending on the child's individual circumstances the school, *at the Head's discretion, may* grant some days to pursue a modelling/filming task.

Strategies for Dealing with Persistent Absenteeism or Lateness

The Head will be informed about children who miss the odd day frequently, or are away for a few days without any notification or whose absences follow a pattern. The parents will be contacted and problems discussed. If there is no change, the AIO is informed. The same applies to continual lateness. The AIO has one site visit and two virtual visits every academic year as a matter of course and this provides a good opportunity to discuss overall trends and individual children.

Parents who fail to respond to requests by the school to send their children to school, or who take

unauthorised holidays during term time may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Fine by the Local Education Authority. The notices will be issued at the discretion of the Headteacher and will be applied to parents whose children have at least 15 sessions of unauthorised absence in the previous/and or current term. The fines will apply to cases where the parent/guardian is able but unwilling to ensure the attendance of the pupil. Fixed Penalty Notices will operate following the HCC Guidance for schools.

Absence Totals

The number of absences are to be totalled each term and the total for the year is included in annual reports, in line with DCSF absence form. There is also the opportunity for teachers to talk with parents at parent teacher consultations if they have concerns about absence or lateness building up.

Policy Review

This policy should be reviewed every two years or more often if changes need to be made in line with current practice. It will be reviewed by the Head teacher in liaison with the Governor's Curriculum Committee seeking the advice of the AIO as appropriate.

Appendix
Leave of absence form

Granted	Not Granted
---------	-------------

Berkhamsted Association of Schools

Victoria C of E Infant and Nursery School

Application for Leave of Absence

What is the purpose of this form?

As a parent or carer you should fill in this form if you are requesting to take your child out of school during term time. The completed form should be returned to the Headteacher at least 3 weeks before the start of the requested absence (except in the case of funerals).

Will permission be granted and will the absence be authorised?

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, and Amendments 2013, outline the conditions under which leave of absence may be granted. Regulation 7 prohibits a Headteacher from granting leave of absence to a pupil except where there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

The Governors, in conjunction with those from other Berkhamsted schools, have agreed the following 'special circumstances' which may be authorised by the Headteacher:

- * Family/carer trauma or funeral
- * Weddings – immediate family members (one day maximum)
- * Religious Festivals
- * Visits to new schools prior to relocation

Schools may decide whether or not to authorise leave of absence. Parents or carers should not expect such leave to be granted as of right. Permission will not be given if it is requested after the event has taken place.

We firmly believe that 100% attendance supports 100% education and would urge you to consider the impact of missed curriculum before requesting time out of school.

Child's Name Class

Date(s) of absence from to

I request leave of absence for the reason shown below:

.....
 My child is of statutory school age as of the date of the requested leave: Yes/No

I have other children at the following school(s) ;
 I will/will not (*please delete as applicable*) be requesting a leave of absence for the above children.

Parents Signature Date:.....

To be returned to the parent

Child's name Class

Date (s) of absence fromto..... (dates inclusive)

Your request for leave of absence has been granted/not been granted.

Signed:..... (Headteacher) Date:.....