

# Attendance Policy

| Date    | Amendment  | Approval |
|---------|--|----------|
| 1.9.15  | Change of close of registration from 9:30am to 9:10am; removal of references to teachers collecting notes explaining absence; change of persistent absence level from 85% to 90% (changes to legislation Sept 2015); change of attendance assembly to end of week; | FGB      |
| 23.1.18 | Complete review; update language to make more accessible and update letters to reflect current practice;   | FGB      |
| 14.7.21 | Policy Review  | FGB      |

## **1. REPSONSIBILITIES**

Our attendance policy aims to safeguard our children and their education by ensuring they attend school regularly and when they are unable to attend, we are aware of the reason. Securing good levels of attendance is therefore a priority for us. School staff, governors, parents and children all have a role to play in ensuring good attendance but we can only do this by having good communication in place between us and by working together to overcome and difficulties or barriers to attendance.

Within this policy we will refer to parent/ carer. By this we mean:

- Any person who is a natural parent of the child
- Any person who has parental responsibility for the child
- Any person who has day to day care of the child, that is they live with and take care of the child

### **Parents/carers responsibilities**

- To support the school in their efforts to encourage good levels of attendance by not taking holidays in term time. (Please see section on holidays in term time for more information.)
- To notify the school before 9am, in person or 24 hour answerphone, on each day of absence with the reason for their child's absence
- To ensure that their child attends on time each day
- To avoid making dental or non-urgent medical appointments during the school day

### **Children's responsibilities**

- To attend school each day that they are well enough
- To arrive at school on time

### **School responsibilities**

- To monitor and track levels of attendance for all pupils
- To reward good attendance and punctuality regularly
- To offer support to parents and children who may be having difficulties that are preventing attendance or punctual arrival to school, making referrals to other agencies where necessary
- To take steps to enforce attendance were necessary by referral to the School Attendance Officer and the local authority

### **Governor responsibilities**

- To ensure that school has effective systems and procedures in place to achieve good attendance and punctuality for all children
- To support the school staff in taking steps to enforce school attendance by for example attendance at Attendance Case Conferences.

## **2. NOTIFYING THE SCHOOL ABOUT ABSENCE**

100% attendance is expected for all our children unless there is an acceptable explanation for the absence. There are two types of absence, these are:

- Authorised absence – the school knows the reason for absence and approves it
- Unauthorised absence – the school either does not know the reason for absence or the reason given is not acceptable

Parents are responsible for notifying the school of the reason for absence on each day the child is absent. Only the school can decide on the basis of the information they receive whether an absence is authorised or

unauthorised. Please note that giving a reason for absence does not automatically mean that the absence is authorised. Unauthorised absence can lead to intervention from our Attendance Officer and formal attendance procedures.

### **3. PERSISTENT ABSENCE**

Persistent absence is a term referred to by the government for any child who has less than 90% attendance no matter what the reason for the absence. Persistent absence is measured on a half termly basis and you will receive a letter from school if your child has an attendance in this category. Schools are expected to take measures to prevent persistent absence. In some cases it may be necessary to hold an Attendance Case Conference to begin formal procedures to bring about an improvement in attendance.

### **4. ILLNESS ABSENCE**

We recognise that sometimes children are ill and cannot attend school for this reason. If this is the case parents should contact the school in person, over the phone or by email to tell us about the reason for absence. Not all illnesses require absence from school however; minor illnesses can be dealt with in school as can prescribed medicines that require 4 doses daily. A child having head lice should be treated as soon as possible but it does not require an absence from school.

Where regular absence occurs due to reasons of illness or where the school spot a pattern of illness, absence will be challenged. Parents will be asked to provide medical evidence such as an appointment card or prescription in order that the school can consider whether to authorise the absence. Support can be offered via a referral to the School Health Service that can give advice on managing illnesses and expected lengths of absence. The school, with parents' permission, can write to the child's GP to receive advice on whether the illness warrants the amount of absence.

### **5. HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME**

National regulations that changed in 2013 state that headteachers may not grant leave of absence in term time except in exceptional circumstances. We strongly advise that any holiday in term time should be avoided due to the impact on the child of the lost learning time. If parents still wish to apply for a leave of absence these forms can be requested from the school office.

All leave of absence requests should be made prior to a holiday being booked. Where a parent/ carer feels that exceptional circumstances apply they must detail this on the form and return to school at least two school weeks before the leave is taken. Parent/ carer applications will be replied to in writing within two working weeks of receipt and notification given as to whether the absence will be authorised or unauthorised.

In the likely event that absence is unauthorised the school reserves the right to refer to the local authority for a penalty notice fine to be issued for the absence. Penalty notice fines are £60 per parent per child and payable within 21 days after which the fine doubles to £120 per parent per child.

### **6. PUNCTUALITY & REGISTRATION**

At Viewley Hill Academy the school day starts at 8:50am and by this time all children are expected to be in their classrooms ready for the class register to be taken. Door are open from 8:40am and parents are welcome to drop their children off at school anytime from 8:40 to 8:50am or earlier if the child attends the breakfast club.

The school register is taken by the class teacher twice a day in line with the regulations that govern the marking of the register. Registers will close at 9:20am and 1:20pm. Should a child arrive between 8:50 and 9:20am they will need to be brought into the main reception by a parent/carers and a reason for late arrival provided. The child will then be escorted to their classroom by a member of staff. A late 'L' code will be

entered into the register with the reason provided by parent/ carer. Should a child arrive to school after 9:20am/1:20pm, they will be given a 'U' code which means unauthorised absence.

We actively discourage late arrival at school due to the impact it can have on both the individual child and the rest of the class. Arriving late to school can be embarrassing for the child and also disruptive to the rest of the class if the teacher has to spend time with the child who is late instead of with the rest of the class.

## **7. SCHOOL ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES**

The Headteacher is ultimately responsible for the school achieving good levels of attendance and at least in line with national averages of 96%. All school staff have a responsibility for promoting and encouraging good levels of attendance and are therefore alert to emerging patterns of late arrival and absence. The school takes a variety of steps to achieve good levels of attendance. For example:

### **➤ First Day Calling**

The school operates a first day calling system whereby all parents/ carers of children who are absent without reason are telephoned and the reason for absence discussed and recorded. Where no answer is received from the first contact telephone numbers, and where it is possible an answerphone message will be left and the parent/ carer requested to call the school back as soon as possible. It is our policy to have at least two contact names and telephone numbers for each child on our roll. Known contacts for the child will be tried throughout the day in an effort to discuss the reason for absence and know the child's whereabouts. Where concerns arise due the lack of contact from parents/ carers or due to the nature of the reason provided, a home visit may be made by our Parent Support Advisor (PSA), Mrs Moore. Mrs Moore will also make home visits at parents' request to discuss attendance concerns or where no reason has been provided for the second day of continuous absence.

The school will contact the local authority and make a Child Missing Education referral if the whereabouts of the child cannot be established.

### **➤ Monitoring Levels of Attendance**

The attendance of all children under 96% will be monitored regularly (every 2 weeks) by the **Assistant Head Teacher**, School Attendance Officer and PSA. Parents will be sent letters each half term informing them if their child's attendance has fallen below 96%. If attendance has improved then letters of congratulation will be sent. Children are also rewarded on a half termly basis for achieving excellent attendance and punctuality (100% attendance with no late marks).

If attendance remains a concern, parents/carers may be invited to attend an attendance meeting in school with the PSA and Attendance Officer to discuss the reasons for absence and agree a plan to improve attendance levels.

Home visits are also made by the Attendance Officer and PSA where attendance is a concern. These can be with or without notice to the parent/carers.

Following the period of the support plan, a date will be agreed to review the attendance of the child. If attendance has improved this will be noted in terms of a telephone call, home visit or letter home congratulating the parent on the improvement. If attendance remains a concern or where attendance is below 90%, formal attendance procedures may be taken. This will commence with the issue of a warning letter to parents/carers and then an invitation to an Attendance Case Conference. If the child's attendance does not improve following this intervention, parents/ carers may be issued with a penalty notice fine or prosecuted in the magistrate's court for failing to secure the regular attendance of their child.

Irregular attendance of a compulsory school age child is an offence under the Education Act 1996. The school hope to work with parents and children to avoid taking steps to enforce attendance however they will do so if it is clear the required improvements have not been made.

➤ **Attendance Officer**

The role of our Attendance Officer is to track patterns of absence, persistent absence and late arrival to school. In doing so they may make telephone calls, send letters home to parents/ carers, make home visits, hold meetings to discuss attendance and put into place improvement plans. The Attendance Officer will work with parents/ carers and children to remove any difficulties that may be preventing good attendance or punctuality. They will also start formal attendance procedures where appropriate and, on behalf of the school, ask the local authority to issue fines to parents/ carers for unauthorised absence including unauthorised holiday absence.

➤ **Rewarding good attendance**

Every **week** attendance is discussed in assembly and the classes with attendance over 96% will get a letter of VIEWLEY. When they have collected all of these then a class reward will be offered to spend as they wish. The class with the best attendance in EYFS/ KS1 or KS2 will then get an extra playtime.

Every **half term**, excellent attendance and punctuality is rewarded with a special treat for those children that have achieved 100% attendance with no late marks.

Every **term**, children who have achieved the school target of 96.5% or higher and with no more than 1 late mark are also rewarded with a treat.

## Appendices

### Viewley Hill Absence and Punctuality Procedures

|               | What is done   | Leading to  |
|---------------|--|---|
| Daily         | Register check;<br>Parents of absent children contacted; if not contactable by telephone, a home visit may be made and a card put through the door;<br>Late reports completed; parents contacted where necessary;                                      | Letters generated;<br>Home visits;<br>Meetings in school;   |
| Weekly        | Class attendance calculated;<br>School attendance calculated: celebration boards updated;  | Attendance shared; with children;<br>Extra playtime   |
| Every 2 weeks | Under 96%, under 90% and under 85% reports run and interrogated;<br>Trends in absence identified.<br>Tracking of focus pupils updated and further actions as necessary;<br>Punctuality analysed- late 2 or more times in the two weeks being analysed. | Telephone Calls Home<br>Letters generated;<br>Home visits;<br>Meetings in school;<br>Well done phone calls/letters; |
| Half termly   | Punctuality analysed – late 2 or more times in half term identified  | Letters sent;   |
| Half Termly   | 100% attendance and punctuality reward   |   |
| Termly        | 96% Attendance reward  |   |
| Annually      | 100% annual attendance reward  |   |

**Letters** – template letters set out below are adapted where appropriate to include relevant information to the family concerned.

| Absence             |  |
|---------------------|--|
| Telephone Contact A | Complete form  |
| Letter A            | Sent initially when attendance begins to be noticed.   |
| Telephone Contact B | Complete form, set targets and set 8 week monitoring.  |
| Letter B            | Sent when attendance is not improving above 95% or there are other concerns regarding patterns of absence. Discuss with HT. From this point, no further absence will be authorised without evidence being presented to explain the reason for absence. |
| Contact form        | Complete form during meeting   |
| Warning Letter      | Sent when attendance has not improved following intervention from school and attendance officer. Warns that legal proceedings may be initiated.  |
| ACC Invite          | Sent when no improvements made and legal proceedings are to be initiated.  |
| Review ACC          | Sent following monitoring period to review progress.   |

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| Review ACC Outcome | Sent if improvements have been made and no further action to be taken. |
|--------------------|--|

| Punctuality    |  |
|----------------|--|
| Telephone Call | Telephone Call every two weeks to children who have been late more than 2 or more times in the 10 day period.                          |
| Letter         | Sent out in final week of each half term to every child who has not improved their attendance. Minutes late is included in the letter. |

LETTER A: ATTENDANCE CONCERN

[[date]]

Dear [[addressee]]

I am writing to express my concern regarding [[firstname]]'s level of attendance at school which is currently [[percent]].

PLEASE EXPLAIN WHAT IS OF CONCERN: TREND/ INTERRUPTED WEEKS

As a parent/carer you are legally responsible to ensure the regular attendance of your child and failure to do so is an offence under the Education Act 1996. Whilst I realise that sometimes absence is unavoidable, regular school attendance is essential for your child's education and social development. Sometimes parents are unaware of the impact of just a few sessions absence on attendance levels and therefore I am bringing this to your attention.

I would request that you do all you can to ensure that [[firstname]] attends school on a regular basis. If you feel that you would benefit from some advice or support, please contact the school so that we can work with you to help overcome anything that may be preventing regular school attendance.

Yours sincerely

Claire Scaife

Assistant Headteacher



LETTER B: ATTENDANCE CONCERN - MEETING

Date

Dear

I am writing to advise you that despite previous correspondence, .....’s attendance remains unsatisfactory.

It is the duty of those with parental responsibility to secure the regular attendance of their child at school. Failure to do so is an offence under the Education Act 1996.

In order that we may resolve any difficulties preventing regular attendance, I am inviting you to attend a meeting in school along with our Parent Support Adviser, Mrs Moore.

The meeting will take place at school on ..... at .....am/pm. The purpose of the meeting is to put together a plan to support and improve .....’s school attendance.

It is very important that you attend this meeting however if you are unable to do so please contact Mrs Moore on 01642 591053 so we can make alternative arrangements.

Yours sincerely

Claire Scaife

Assistant Headteacher

WARNING LETTER

DATE

Dear Parent

I note that the attendance at                      School of                      has continued to be unsatisfactory. I must bring to your notice that under the Education Act, 1996, it is the duty of the person(s) with parental responsibility to secure regular attendance of their children at school. This means that they must be in attendance every time the school is open, unless they are prevented from doing so by reason of genuine illness or any unavoidable cause.

Since September to date, out of a possible                      school weeks,                      has so far only attended unbroken weeks. As you will appreciate this is a situation which is far from satisfactory

If                      continues to attend school irregularly without good cause, it will be necessary for more formal action which may result in the Education Department taking legal proceedings under the Act.

I sincerely hope that you will take steps to ensure                      's regular attendance at school and therefore make the need for further action unnecessary.

Yours sincerely

Anne-Marie Cartwright  
Attendance Officer  
Viewley Hill Academy

Parent/carers name

Address

POSTCODE

ACC INVITE LETTER

DATE

Dear

I note that the attendance at School of has continued to be unsatisfactory, I must bring to your notice that under the Education Act, 1996, it is the duty of the person(s) with parental responsibility to secure regular attendance of their children at school. This means that they must be in attendance every time the school is open, unless they are prevented from doing so by reason of genuine illness or any unavoidable cause.

As you will appreciate this is a matter, which is far from satisfactory. As a result it is necessary to call an Attendance Case Conference at on at the school to discuss with you 's poor attendance.

If continues to attend school irregularly without good cause, it will be necessary for more formal action, which may result in the Education Department taking legal proceedings under the Act.

I sincerely hope that you will immediately take steps to ensure 's regular attendance from now on, which will then make the need for further action unnecessary.

Yours sincerely

Anne-Marie Cartwright  
Attendance Officer  
Viewley Hill Academy

Parent/carer name

Address

POSTCODE

DATE

Dear

As you know the attendance at \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ has been unsatisfactory. I must remind you that under the Education Act, 1996, it is the duty of the person(s) with parental responsibility to secure regular attendance of their children at school. This means that they must be in attendance every time the school is open, unless they are prevented from doing so by reason of genuine illness or any unavoidable cause.

As you are aware an Attendance Case Conference took place on \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ to discuss with you 's poor attendance at school. Unfortunately, you did not attend on this date and as this matter is extremely serious and cannot continue, it is essential that we meet together to discuss it as quickly as possible

A Review Meeting has been arranged for \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_ 2018 at the school and as you will appreciate, your attendance at this meeting is vital if this matter is to be resolved.

In the meantime I will call to see you at home on \_\_\_\_\_, to discuss this matter further. This visit will provide the opportunity to talk through any difficulties or problems you may be experiencing which are affecting \_\_\_\_\_ 's school attendance.

\_\_\_\_\_ 's attendance will need to demonstrate a substantial and sustained improvement with no unauthorised absence recorded, as failure to do so could result in the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notice.

If \_\_\_\_\_ is absent from school due to illness, he will need to see his G.P and medical confirmation of the necessity for absence be obtained, which the school will require in order that the absence may be authorised.

If \_\_\_\_\_ continues to attend school irregularly without good cause, it will be necessary for more formal action, which may result in the Education Department taking legal proceedings under the Act.

I sincerely hope that I can rely upon your co-operation and that you will immediately take steps to ensure \_\_\_\_\_ 's regular attendance.

Yours sincerely

Anne-Marie Cartwright  
Attendance Officer  
Viewley Hill Academy

Parents/carers name

Address

POSTCODE

REVIEW ACC OUTCOME LETTER

Dear

As you know the attendance at \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ has been unsatisfactory. I must remind you that under the Education Act, 1996, it is the duty of the person(s) with parental responsibility to secure regular attendance of their children at school. This means that they must be in attendance every time the school is open, unless they are prevented from doing so by reason of genuine illness or any unavoidable cause.

As you are aware an Attendance Case Conference took place on \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ to discuss with you \_\_\_\_\_'s poor attendance at school. Unfortunately, you did not attend on this date.

The outcome of the meeting was that no further reviews are to be arranged, however \_\_\_\_\_'s attendance will need to demonstrate a substantial and sustained improvement with no unauthorised absence recorded, as failure to do so will result in legal action being instituted

In the meantime \_\_\_\_\_, the Education Welfare Officer will call to see you at \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_, to discuss this matter further. This visit will provide the opportunity to talk through any difficulties or problems you may be experiencing which are affecting \_\_\_\_\_'s school attendance.

If \_\_\_\_\_ is absent from school due to illness, he/she will need to see his/her G.P and medical confirmation of the necessity for absence be obtained, which the school will require in order that the absence may be authorised.

If \_\_\_\_\_ continues to attend school irregularly without good cause, it will be necessary for more formal action, which may result in the Education Department taking legal proceedings under the Act.

I sincerely hope that I can rely upon your co-operation and that you will immediately take steps to ensure \_\_\_\_\_'s regular attendance.

Yours sincerely,

Anne-Marie Cartwright

Attendance Officer

Viewley Hill Academy

Parent/ carers name

Address

POSTCODE

## Punctuality Weekly Letter

DATE

It has been noted during our weekly attendance review that .....was late for school last week on .....occasions and missed .....hours of education.

Children who arrive late are greatly disadvantaged because they miss starting the day with their peers and the beginning of lessons. Their teacher will not always be able to re-explain work.

It is essential that you ensure your child arrives at school on time to prevent disruption to your child's own learning and that of others. From 8:50am, children begin responding to the teacher's marking from the previous day, preparing for their maths lesson with a start of the day activity, reading independently or reading with the teacher. Being late means that they start the day trying to catch up and this is often unsettling.

Any child who arrives to school after the gates have closed will receive a late mark in the class register with the amount of time that they are late being recorded. If a child arrives to school after 9:20am this will affect their attendance rate percentage as they were absent at registration. May I remind you that it is your legal duty as a parent, to ensure that your child attends school punctually each school day. Repeated unauthorised absences will be investigated by an Attendance Officer and can lead to legal action being taken.

If you are experiencing difficulties with punctuality and would like to talk to me or Mrs Moore about supporting getting ..... to school on time, we would welcome the opportunity of meeting with you to discuss this.

Yours sincerely

Kate Barkley  
Headteacher

PUNCTUALITY HALF  
TERMLY LETTER

DATE

Dear

The Attendance and Exclusion Team has a legal duty to check school registers and enforce the law relating to school attendance.

During a register check at Viewley Hill Academy, it was noted that despite a telephone conversation and an offer of support, punctuality is still of concern. Since our last contact, your child has arrived late for school on occasions which equates to minutes late.

It is extremely important that your child arrives at school on time. They are missing the start of the school day when learning is taking place. Arriving late can not only be detrimental to your child, but disruptive to other children and the class teacher.

May I remind you that it is your legal duty as a parent, to ensure that your child attends school punctually each school day. Any instance of your child arriving after the close of registration is classed as an unauthorised absence. Repeated unauthorised absences will be investigated by an Attendance Officer and can lead to legal action being taken.

If you feel that your child is having any problems in school, please do not hesitate to contact Mrs Moore, the Parent Support Advisor, or myself. It is important to resolve these problems to give your child a better start in life by supporting them in school and helping them achieve their full academic potential.

Yours sincerely

Kate Barkley  
Headteacher