

Attendance Procedures

Viewley Hill Academy 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.

We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents.

We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance, and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, bullying, SEND support, pastoral support, and the effective use of resources such as pupil premium – can have on improving pupil attendance.

We are committed to promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits by ensuring equality and fairness for all by working collaboratively with other agencies. We will endeavour to build strong relationships with families.

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.

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2022) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE (2022) 'Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2022'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2023) 'Providing remote education'

Notifying the school about absence

Good attendance is expected for all our children unless there is an acceptable explanation for the absence.

Illness and 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.

Where regular absence occurs due to reasons of illness or where the school spot a pattern of illness, absence will be challenged. Support can be offered via a referral to the School Health Service that can give advice on managing illnesses and expected lengths of absence.

Punctuality and Registration

At Viewley Hill Academy the school day starts at 8:50am (with the exception of Nursery) and by this time all children are expected to be in their classrooms ready for the class register to be taken. Doors are open from 8:40am in Key Stage 1 and 8:45am in Key Stage 2 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/carer 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.

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 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). The PSA 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.

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.

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/carer.

Working with parents to improve attendance

The school will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them.

The school will ensure that parents are aware of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and to facilitate their child's legal right to a full-time education – parents will be made aware that this means their child must attend school every day that it is open, save for in certain circumstances, e.g. sickness or absences that have been authorised by the headteacher in advance. The school will regularly inform parents about their child's levels of attendance, absence and punctuality, and will ensure that parents are aware of the benefits that regular attendance at school can have for their child educationally, socially and developmentally.

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.

If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, the attendance officer will work collaboratively with the pupil and their parents to improve attendance by addressing the specific barriers that prevent the pupil from being able to attend school regularly. The school will always take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for pupil absence and will approach families to offer support rather than immediately reach for punitive approaches.

Information sharing between parents, schools, the community and the local authority is therefore crucial to ensure that these children are kept safe and are receiving the education they are entitled to. In accordance with DfE Statutory guidance, Children Missing Education (Sept 2016) the Local Authority has effective tracking and enquiry systems in place and an appointed named person to whom schools, other agencies and the public can make referrals regarding children who they believe are missing from education. Joint reasonable enquiries

can then be made as quickly as possible by schools and the LA. Joint working arrangements are also in place with agencies and services such as, Housing, Health, the Police, and other local authorities

Missing from Education – Middlesbrough Procedures

<https://www.middlesbrough.gov.uk/schools-and-education/exclusions-and-children-missing-education/children-missing-education/>

Louise Tennant

On/Off Rolling 01642 727877

Email: cme@middlesbrough.gov.uk

What 'children missing education' means

All children of compulsory school age, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an efficient, full time education which is suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. 'Children missing education' are those who are not registered at a school, not receiving a suitable education otherwise (i.e. Elective Home Education or alternative provision), are not regularly attending the school where they are a registered pupil or cease attending and/or their whereabouts or destination school is unknown. These children can be at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation and in later life becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training).

Definitions

Absence:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending school for any reason

Authorised absence:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency

Unauthorised absence:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

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.

These procedures will be reviewed annually as part of the LGB monitoring cycle, but is complementary to the overall Trust Attendance Policy.

Latest Review: Summer 2024

Next Review: Summer 2025

Signed:



Head Teacher

Chair of Governors