



Attendance Policy

Date the policy came into effect	September 2021
Date of next policy review	September 2023
Name of person responsible for this policy	Mr Chris Fulton

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.

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.

Covid-19 Addendum

In light of Covid-19, the school's attendance policy may require interim changes to support pupil well-being during a period of school closure or class closure as a result of isolation and advice from the PHA. These changes are highlighted below:

1. Full School Closure

If the school is closed, at the direction of The Department of Education, teachers will be required to ensure that pupils interact with remote learning on a daily basis, however, taking into account family life at home.

Teachers will make regular contact with parents / carers via SeeSaw, phone calls and e-mails during a period of school closure to ensure that regular attendance is being evidenced and that work set is being completed.

If a teacher believes that regular school work is not being completed and that this is an attendance issue the teacher will raise this with the pastoral lead.

The pastoral lead will then communicate the concerns to the parent and, if necessary, provide as much support from school as possible, including providing key worker provision if applicable.

If further support is required, a referral to EWS will be made by the school.

2. Class Closure

If the class is closed, as a result of guidance from PHA, teachers will be required to ensure that pupils interact with remote learning on a daily basis, however, taking into account family life at home.

Teachers will make regular contact with parents / carers via SeeSaw, phone calls and e-mails during a period of school closure to ensure that regular attendance is being evidenced and that work set is being completed.

If a teacher believes that regular school work is not being completed and that this is an attendance issue the teacher will raise this with the pastoral lead.

The pastoral lead will then communicate the concerns to the parent and, if necessary, provide as much support from school as possible, including providing key worker provision if applicable.

If further support is required, a referral to EWS will be made by the school.