



Believe, Achieve, Succeed

Attendance Policy

Responsibility for this policy lies with (Headteacher, Full Governing Body or Finance & Premises Committee)	Full Governing Board
Policy approved date	November 2025
Policy due for review every three unless updating is required	November 2026

Designated Senior Lead for Attendance: Mr Tinney
School Attendance Officer: Mrs Sandhu
Other attendance/pastoral contacts: All office staff

Contact details: 0208 997 6734
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Information for Parents

As a school, we aim to:

- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance and good time keeping for all children and groups of children
- Maintain an attendance rate of a minimum of 96.4%
- Maintain a low rate of persistent (Between 90% and 50% attendance) and severe (Less than 50% attendance) absenteeism.
- Maintain parents' and pupils' awareness of the importance of regular attendance
- Maintain good time keeping

Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and poor attendance
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- Regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- Regular attenders settle into High school more easily

Poor attenders are also more likely to:

- Have behaviour problems
- Be involved with crime as perpetrators or victims
- Have worse or more poorly paid employment opportunities

As a parent or carer you are expected to:

- Ensure your child attends school regularly; attending each day the school is open for pupils, unless there is an authorised reason to be absent. Only the school can authorise an absence and will not do so unless the reason provided is satisfactory
- Absence should only happen when:
 - a) Your child is significantly/symptomatically ill and therefore unfit to attend school. There should be observable symptoms; 'feeling unwell' is not enough for the school to authorise an absence
 - b) If there is an unavoidable/unforeseen reason or circumstance which is causing a difficulty
- Telephone on the first morning of any absence to provide us the reason and tell us when the child is likely to return to school
- Keep us updated by telephone or email everyday of your child's absence
- Arrange all non-emergency medical appointments out of school hours or during school holidays
- Provide medical verification for any absence claimed as illness directly before or after a school holiday
- Provide medical evidence for frequent absence claimed as illness
- Make sure we always have your current contact numbers; this includes all telephone numbers, child minders and emergency contact details
- Ensure that you have alternative arrangements in place to get your child to school if you are unable to do so for any reason i.e. illness or emergencies. Parental illness is not a legally acceptable reason for a child to miss school

As a school we shall:

- Follow up unexplained absences by phone calls texts, email and letters as necessary. For safeguarding reasons home visits may also be made by school staff or the Local Authority School Attendance Officer in certain circumstances
- Remind parents of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in our newsletters, the school brochure, open evenings, Home-School Agreement and in pupil reports
- Publish attendance data on the school website
- Acknowledge and reward good attendance and punctuality
- Publish your child's attendance rate on her/his annual school report
- Inform a child's social worker of any unauthorised absences
- We may invite you to participate in an Early Help and Assessment Plan (EHAP)
- You may be invited to agree an Attendance Contract.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) consider to be vulnerable or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- Identify pupils who need support from wider partners as quickly as possible and make the necessary referrals.
- Let you know if we have concerns regarding your child's attendance and punctuality either verbally or by email or letter. If attendance does not improve or reasons provided for absence are unsatisfactory you may be invited to a meeting. The school will outline what the concerns are, what the attendance expectations for your child are, how we expect us to move forward together and what actions will follow. You may be asked to agree to a 'Parenting Agreement/Contract'. A referral may also be made to the borough's School Attendance Service. Where attendance concerns persist, the school will escalate the matter to the Borough Court Officer – this includes unauthorised absence due to significant lateness.

Medical Conditions

If your child has a documented medical condition, we will wish to discuss this with you. We will devise a care plan with you to support your child in school; this might also require us to refer to the school Nursing Team or on occasion contact your GP/health professional. The school will consider whether additional support from external partners (including the local authority or health services) would be appropriate, and make referrals in a timely manner, working together with those services to deliver any subsequent support. In some cases, this may include a referral for Alternative Provision.

Authorised Absence

Some absences are allowed by law and are known as "authorised absences". We realise that there are occasional, unavoidable circumstances that may cause your child to be absent such as a sudden bereavement in your immediate family or a family crisis. If this happens please let us know right away and we will deal with the matter sympathetically. Following such incidents parents are expected to make any necessary arrangements for their child to return to school as soon as possible (ideally the next day). Parents must apply in writing to the Headteacher if the absence for this reason is likely to be more than a day or two. Please note that in some circumstances you may be asked for evidence/documentation to substantiate the reason for the absence.

Unauthorised Absence

There are times when children are absent for reasons which are not acceptable to the school. These are known as "unauthorised absences" and they are an offence in law. Examples of unauthorised absence are:

- Waiting for a delivery or repair
- Taking a relative to, or collecting them from, the airport or train station
- Going for a family day out, going shopping or sleeping in after a late night
- Taking a day off or coming in late for your child's birthday or other unrecognised family or cultural celebration
- Term time holiday/cheap flights
- Parent or carer illness (other than in an accepted emergency)
- Where there is no explanation for an absence, or where the reason for the absence is considered unsatisfactory
- Leave extended beyond the agreed dates of an approved absence (such as taking an extra day off after a day of approved religious observance)

Unauthorised Absences are reported to the Local Authority. The School Attendance Service may contact you where unauthorised absence continues to be a problem and will work in partnership with your family and the school to improve matters. **Please be aware that unauthorised absence could result in a Fixed Penalty (fine) or other legal action *as stated in this document under Penalty Notices*. Sanctions for continued, unauthorised absence include warnings, penalty notices (fines), prosecution in the magistrate's court or an education supervision order through the family proceedings court.**

Persistent Absence

Once a child's attendance falls to 90%, he/she is automatically defined by the Department for Education (DfE) as a Persistent Absentee, regardless of the reason for the absence/s. Such low attendance is well below our expectations and the school will work in partnership with your family and the Local Authority to improve matters. In these circumstances parents or carers will be invited in for a meeting and may be asked to agree to a 'Parenting Agreement/Contract' with the school as a way of measuring improvement. Persistent Absence is a serious problem for children. Much of the work they miss when they are off school is never made up; these gaps in their learning leave children at a considerable disadvantage for the remainder of their school career. Statistics show a direct link between poor attendance and under-achievement.

Severely Absent

When a child's attendance falls below 50%, they are termed **Severely Absent**. This scenario presents a severe problem for pupils. Much of the work they miss when they are off school is never made up, these gaps in their learning leave children at a considerable disadvantage for the remainder of their school career. Statistics show a direct link between poor attendance and under-achievement, particularly at GCSE. Such low attendance is well below our expectations and as such, the school will work in partnership with the parent, the Local Authority, and other external partners to support parents to improve matters. In such cases, parents will be offered an Early Help Assessment and might be invited to agree a Parenting Attendance Contract with the school or the Local Authority as a way of managing improvement.

Absence around school holiday periods

Absence claimed as illness before or after a school holiday must be reported on the first day of absence and medical evidence, dated during the term time absence, must be provided. Evidence dated after the school absence may not be accepted. If the evidence provided is not considered satisfactory your child's absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Absence for any other reason, that has not been previously agreed, will be recorded as unauthorised. Please be reminded that any unauthorised absence may attract a fixed penalty notice (fine).

Exceptional Leave - Term Time Leave of Absence

The 2024 Department of Education document - Working together to improve school attendance, makes it clear that a Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time for holidays; that only in **exceptional, documented** circumstances can leave be allowed. We are always concerned about the amount of school time pupils miss as a result of term time leave. There is **no entitlement** to time off during term time. You must receive explicit permission from the school for the requested leave before taking your child out of school; simply informing us of the absence does not make it an authorised absence. Leave of absence is only granted in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the Headteacher in accordance with the school policy as agreed by the governing body.

It is our policy:

- Only in an exceptional circumstance will term time leave be allowed. All leave is granted at the Headteacher's discretion. Parents or carers wishing to apply for leave of absence need to fill in an application form well in advance, and before booking tickets or making travel arrangements (forms are available at the school office). If you have any questions about exceptional leave, or have any difficulty understanding the form, you are encouraged to make an appointment with the School Attendance Officer.
- If a child goes abroad during a school holiday period, parents or carers must make definite arrangements so that they return in good time for school re-opening ([Term dates](#))
- If a child is not present at the beginning of a school term, we cannot guarantee that a place will remain available on their return to school. If you experience delays in returning from a trip within the UK or

abroad for any reason, the school will require documentary evidence and proof of your original return dates, i.e. tickets or an official travel plan showing intent to return on time.

- If term time leave is taken without prior permission from the school, the absence will be unauthorised and you may be liable for a fixed penalty (fine) in line with the local authority Fines protocol. Where a child's whereabouts cannot be established he/she may be regarded a 'Child Missing Education'. In certain instances the child may also risk losing their school place.

Please remember that absence for any reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in his/her learning. A good understanding of the work and good progress can only take place when the child is in the classroom regularly and on time.

Penalty Notices

- School will issue a fine when a child has missed 10 or more sessions (equivalent to 5 days) for unauthorised reasons.
- These 10 sessions must be within a rolling period of 10 school weeks. These sessions do not have to be consecutive.
- **Penalty fines** - As of August 2024, these will be £80 if paid within 21 days and £160 if paid within 28 days.
- **Repeat offences** - If a parent receives a second fine for the same child within any *three-year period*, it will be charged at the higher rate of £160.
- Each Parent can receive a maximum of two fines per child within this period.
- **Prosecution:** If a parent is prosecuted and attends court due to their child's non-attendance, they could face a fine of up to £2,500.

Punctuality

Good punctuality is a prerequisite of good learning and shows a respectful partnership between the pupil, their family and the school. The first session of the school day is vital to a settled atmosphere, good organisation and a thorough understanding of the day's learning expectations.

- Morning registration is at 8:55am. This is the time your child must be in the line in the playground. You need to ensure your child is coming through the school gate by 8:50am. The morning line up gives children and parents an opportunity to socialise and for the children to gain a deeper sense of community and belonging.
- Late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class and often embarrassing for your child. Habitual lateness can encourage the view that poor punctuality is acceptable behaviour, which may impact your child's future work ethic and employment opportunities. Parents and carers remain responsible for their child's punctuality throughout their time at Vicar's Green Primary School. **We take the view there are no late children, only late parents.**
- Registers close at 9:30am. Arrival (particularly if the lateness is frequent/persistent) after the close of registration will be marked as unauthorised absence code ('U'), in line with DfE guidance.
- Arrival after the close of registration, where there is not an acceptable reason, such as a medical appointment, will be marked as a missed session; unauthorised absence code 'U' in line with the DfE guidance. The U code has the value of an unauthorised absence. When late arrivals are frequent or persistent, we will want to discuss this with you to assess what support or guidance you or your child may need. A referral may also be made to the Local Authority Attendance Service and or other external partners for additional support and monitoring.
- All lateness is recorded daily. The number of minutes late and the reason for lateness if known will also be recorded. This information can be made available to the courts in the form of a report, should a prosecution be the outcome of repeated lateness.
- It is school policy that all children below Year 6 must be brought into the playground by a person of 16 years or over.

Collection from school

Please collect your child promptly at the end of the school day or at the end of an agreed after-school activity.

- If your child is not collected more than 15 minutes after the end of the school day, and no one is available, the school will place your child into the third party after-school club and provide the parent or carer with the bill.

- If your child attends an after-school club run by school staff and they are collected late on more than two occasions they will no longer be permitted to attend the club.
- Where late collection is persistent and/or significantly late, the school is obliged to take any uncollected pupil to a place of safety (often a police station) and may share concerns with other agencies including Ealing Children’s Integrated Response Service (formally Social Services).
- It is school policy that all children below Year 6 must be collected by a person of 16 years or over.
- To encourage independence and transition into high school, pupils in Year 6 will be allowed to walk back on their own, from the Summer Term, provided written consent has been received from the parents.
- If you have arranged for someone else to collect your child from school, who does not regularly do so, please ensure that you inform the teacher/teaching assistant when you bring them to school in the morning, or call the school office by 3:00pm. We will not allow your child to leave school with an adult who is not their parent/carer if we are not sure that they have your permission to collect your child.

Leavers

If your child is leaving our school (other than at the end of Year 6 to go to High School) parents are asked to:

- Provide as much notice as possible.
- Fill in a Leavers Form providing comprehensive information about the expected leaving date, any new address and contact information, who your child will be living with, the name and address of your child’s new school and start date (forms are available at the school office)
- If your child has not yet been allocated a new school place you must provide information of school applications and inform us of your child’s new school name and address as soon as it is known so that we may forward their files.

When pupils leave and we do not have information about where they have gone, then they are considered to be a ‘Child Missing Education’. This means that the Local Authority has a legal duty to carry out investigations, which will include liaising with Ealing Children’s Integrated Services (formerly Social Services), the Police and other agencies/services to try and locate your child. By giving us the above information, these investigations can be avoided.

Withdrawals

Parents who remain resident locally can only withdraw their children from school if they have a confirmed start date at another school or are undertaking the education of their child at home (Home Education). If you do plan to home educate your child you must fill in a Leaver’s form and return it to the school office, giving as much notice as possible before the child’s last day with us. Pupils must remain registered at school until such conditions are satisfied.

Legal Note

Parents have a legal duty to ensure efficient and full time attendance at school of registered pupils (Education Act 1996). This is the legal requirement. This policy is based on the law and on Best Practice guidance produced by the DfE and the Local Authority. The School Attendance Service aims to work with schools and families to promote good attendance and avoid legal action. However, in some cases parents are prosecuted (taken to court) or have to pay a Fixed Penalty (fine).

We value your support in helping us to maintain the high standards to which we always aspire.

“Every day counts and Every Child Matters!”

Signed by:

Headteacher: **Date:**

Chair of Governors: **Date:**