

VOYAGE LEARNING CAMPUS



ATTENDANCE POLICY

This policy was adopted by the Senior Leadership Team

Date adopted:

1st February 2024

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "R. Johnson", is written over the signature line.

Next review due:

February 2026

1. Statement of Principles

At the VLC we work to enable all of our young people to achieve more than they believe is possible. We understand that good attendance is key to this. Many of our students join us with a history of low school attendance for a range of reasons; we are committed to creating a safe nurturing, holistic learning environment which supports them to engage with learning and to be able to attend regularly.

2. Aims of the policy:

This policy aims to:

- Outline the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders in ensuring high levels of attendance
- Detail how we will seek to reduce persistent and severe unauthorised absence
- Explain how attendance is recorded and monitored by the school, including how we will follow up unexplained absences

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The management committee

The management committee is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Holding the principal to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The principal

The principal is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to the management committee
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual students
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The phase leaders

The leaders of phases 1, 2 and 3 are responsible for:

- Leading attendance across their phase, evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis to devise specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Ensuring that there are calls and meetings with parents/carers to discuss attendance issues
- Planning targeted intervention and support to students and families

3.4 The family liaison officer Phase 2 /Engagement workers Phase 1 plus Phase lead/Phase lead – Phase 3

The family liaison officer/Engagement workers/Phase lead is responsible for:

- Informing the social worker if a child who has a child in need (CiN) or Safeguarding plan when the child is absent from school
- Making contact with parents/carers and students when attendance concerns arise and offering support/strategies where appropriate
- Working as part of multi-professional teams to support children and families when attendance is one aspect of wider support plan needed
- Working with education welfare officers
- Advising the principal when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The family liaison office is Tania Phillips and can be contacted via tania.phillips@voyagelearningcampus.org.uk

- Making visits to the home if we have not had contact explaining why a child is absent or if we have safeguarding concerns about a child

Absence process – Administrators to contact first contact if no absence explanation has been given. If no response or message left, second contact to be contacted if no response third contact to be contacted.

If no response can be gained from the above. Risk assessment to be applied as below on the first day of absence:

Group A – Student has CIN plan or CP – social worker to be contacted via phone or email to raise the lack of contact and raise the safety concern.

Group B – No social worker however the Phase lead/FLO have concerns regarding safeguarding. For example a lone parent and child etc. Decide if a home visit is required on the day/evening by Phase lead/FLO/engagement worker.

Group C - No safeguarding concerns – Phase lead to leave a message requesting an email or call during the evening to let us know the young person etc is safe. Follow up in the morning with absence process again.

Consider within the above: if the school has not been contacted; but the parent has cancelled the taxi with Apple directly – therefore the parent is aware of the absence.

3.5 Class teachers/form tutors

Class teachers/form tutors are responsible for promoting high levels of attendance with their students, maintaining regular contact with parents/carers and other professionals (e.g. CAMHS) as appropriate.

3.6 School admin staff

School admin staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on CPOMS, ensuring that registers are then accurately marked
- Alert the phase leader to any absences so that they can be followed up

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every timetabled session on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before they are due in on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all students onto this register. We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every student is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a student is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a student is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

4.2 Unplanned absence

Parents/carers must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the **first day** of an unplanned absence as soon as practically possible by calling the school. If their child has transport to get to school, they should also call to cancel the taxi.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the student's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the student's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

The student's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

4.4 Following up unexplained absence

Where any student we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the student's emergency contacts, the school may make a home visit or contact a social worker if they are working with family.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, further safeguarding measures will be taken, including a possibly referral to Front Door.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The principal will only grant a leave of absence to a student during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the principal's discretion, including the length of time the student is authorised to be absent for.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart)
- Traveller students travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the student is attending educational provision

6. Attendance monitoring

6.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual student level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

6.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify students or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these students and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

6.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to [class teachers/form tutors], and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with students and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

6.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a student misses 10% or more of school and severe absence is where a student misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of students who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Add anything else that is part of your strategy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment

R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day