



Veryan Church of England School

Policy for Pupil Attendance & Absence

Introduction:

The law defines compulsory school age as between 5 and 16 years old. It is the responsibility of the Parents, Local Education Authority and Veryan Church of England School to secure education for these children, as well as providing a welcoming atmosphere that makes pupils feel safe and valued. We give priority to ensuring high attendance by all pupils.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

The Role of Parents:

Parents have a legal duty to make sure their child/ren attends school regularly and that their children arrive at school on time (8.45am in time for start of school session at 9.00am) and are collected from school on time (3.15pm or as soon as clubs finish). It is the parent's responsibility to ring and inform school by 9.15am why a pupil is absent and to provide any further information that the school needs. If no message has been received by 9.30am the school will phone the pupil's parent for confirmation of absence and reason.

Registers:

The class teacher will record attendance of the child at the start of the morning and the afternoon sessions. If the child fails to attend regularly or attendance level falls below 90%, the parent will be informed by letter and invited for a meeting with the headteacher.

The register is a legal document and may be used as evidence in court. Procedures for completing the register are as follows:

- Complete the register in ink
- Not mark a pupil present unless the pupil is in the room when the register is called
- Not leave any spaces in the register
- Make any changes to the register clearly distinguishing between the original entry and the correction
- Not allow pupils to mark the register
- Mark pupils who are present a.m. and p.m.
- Mark pupils who are absent as O and use the absence codes in the front of the register if reason is known.
- Mark pupils who arrive late, after the register has been taken at 9am mark as L.
- Mark pupils who arrive after 9.15am, when the register is closed, as U.

Authorised Absence:

Only the school can authorise an absence. An absence is not automatically classed as 'authorised' because it is covered by a written or verbal note from the parent; this is at the Headteacher's discretion and will take into account any number of previous pupil absences and reasons given for the absences. An absence may be authorised by the school when a parent/guardian contacts the school and the Headteacher is satisfied with details of the absence. The authorised codes that Veryan School use in the register are as follows:

| | |
|-----|--|
| / \ | Present |
| | / am |
| | \ pm |
| B | Education off site |
| C | Other authorised circumstances |
| D | Dual registration |
| E | Excluded (No alternative provision made) |
| F | Extended Family Holiday (agreed) |
| G | Family Holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement) |
| H | Family Holiday (agreed) |
| I | Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments) |
| J | Interview |
| L | Late (before registration closed) |
| M | Medical/Dental appointments |
| N | No reason yet provided for absence |
| O | Unauthorised Absence (not covered by any other code/description) |
| P | Approved sporting activity |
| R | Religious observance |
| S | Study leave |
| T | Traveller absence |
| U | Late (after registration closed) |
| V | Educational visit or trip |
| W | Work experience |
| X | Non-compulsory school-age absence |
| Y | Forced and Partial Closure |
| Z | Pupil not on roll |
| # | School closed to pupils |

Unauthorised Absence:

Her Majesty's Inspectors define unauthorised absence as:

“Absence from school for any period as a result of a premeditated or spontaneous act by the pupil or parent or both. This includes parentally condoned absence.” (Education Observed, No 13)

Parentally condoned absences including absences when:

- a parent gives in to a pupil who wants to stay at home
- a parent is ill
- a parent is using the pupil as a childminder
- a pupil is supporting other members of the family
- work patterns, for example shift work, make it difficult for the family to ensure the child attends school
- a parent wants company
- it is the pupil's birthday
- a parent does not care whether the pupil attends school
- a parent has taken the pupil shopping
- a parent cannot control the pupil
- a parent has taken the pupil to the hairdresser
- a pupil is in paid work
- a parent is hostile towards the school or towards education in general
- a parent distrusts authority
- a parent is using the pupil as an interpreter

Late Attendance:

The register is taken at 9.00am, the start of the school day. A child will be marked in the register as late if they arrive after 9.00am and the register has been taken. If any child arrives later than 15 minutes after the start of school ie 9.15am, they will be marked in the register as U - late after registration closed. This will count as an unauthorised absence. If a child is frequently late, the parents will be contacted by the school. Repeated lateness does affect a pupil's education as much as poor attendance.

Collection of Children:

It is parents' responsibility to ensure that their child/ren are collected promptly from school as soon as the school day or after school clubs finish, when the school is no longer responsible for their supervision. Parents are responsible for making proper arrangements for the collection of their child/ren from school promptly at the allocated time by a responsible adult or designated person and for informing the school of these arrangements and personnel. Parents must inform school if their child is to be collected by another parent or relative/friend or is to walk home unaccompanied. Any child not collected by 3.30 will be placed in the schools After School Club. Parents will need to sign their child 'out' on collection and will be liable for any fee incurred for the care provided.

Family Holiday requests and extended absence during term time:

Regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 allows Headteachers to authorise absences for family holidays during term time. However, **parents have no right to assume that absences will be authorised. The law states that you do not have the right to take your child out of school for holidays during term time.** Whenever possible, parents should take their holidays during the school breaks. If this is not possible, the Headteacher may authorise up to ten school days in one school year for family holidays during term time, **however this is not an entitlement.** When a request for absence due to a family holiday is made, the Headteacher will consider individual circumstances and other forms of absence eg sickness, will also be taken into consideration.

To make a request for absence during term time, the parent must make a request to the Headteacher in writing no later than 3 weeks prior to the required absence date. In cases where the current attendance percentage for the pupil is low, the Headteacher may discuss the issue with the Chair of Governors, prior to making a decision. The decision made will be communicated to parents in writing within 7 days.

Any permission given for an extended holiday, will be on the understanding that the parent agrees to support the pupil in completion of a study pack provided by the class teacher during their absence, and that this work is brought to school on their child's return.

Any absence taken without prior agreement will be marked as unauthorised, this will appear on pupils end of term and end of year report. It is also reported to the Education Welfare Officer and local Authority.

Parents are encouraged not to request a leave of absence for Y2 and Y6 pupils prior to SATs.

The Local Education Authority works with us to reduce the numbers of children missing school because of holidays taken in term time and we can refuse parents' requests to take their child/ren out of school.

- Any child who has 20 absences (10 days) or more unauthorised absence in one school year will automatically be referred to the Education Welfare Office who could initiate court proceedings against the parent, if deemed necessary.

- If a pupil is taken on holiday after their holiday request has been refused, this will also be reported to the Education Welfare Officer.

Medical Appointments:

Parents are requested to make medical appointments, (ie Dentist/optician etc) out of school hours. Where this is not possible, they are requested to opt for appointment times at the start or end of the day so that pupils do not miss a whole day of school.

90% Attendance is equivalent to missing half a day of school every week, and it is very difficult to make up any lost learning time. This level of absence also has an impact on the learning of other children in the class, as the staff time and school resources needed to help them catch up is diverted away from the other children in the class.

School Procedures for Dealing with Pupil Absence:

Under The Education (School Attendance Targets, England) Regulations 2005, Section 3, the governing body of Veryan School are required to set a target to reduce pupil absence from school.

Our procedure for ensuring all children are safe and attend school is as follows:

- If a pupil is absent without explanation, we will contact the parents as soon as possible, on the first day by 9.30am.
- If a pupil is absent for three days without an explanation, we will write to the parents. We will keep a copy of the letter and record the date it was posted.
- On return to school following any absence parents need to provide a letter of explanation.
- If a pupil returns from absence without a letter or explanation, we will write to the parents asking why the pupil was absent.
- We will date and initial notes from parents, records of telephone calls and medical certificates. We will store these in a secure place, as they may contain sensitive information.
- If an explanation for absence is not satisfactory, or if the absence continues, we will invite the parents to school to discuss any difficulties that are preventing the pupil from attending. We will do this as soon as possible, so that the problem is tackled early.
- If a child is repeatedly late, we will contact the parents. Repeated lateness can affect a pupil's education as much as poor attendance.
- We will update our absence records each week to detect short but frequent absences.
- The Headteacher will meet with the Education Welfare Officer once a term to discuss pupil absence and identify where intervention is required.

Equality and Diversity:

The School is aware of and sympathetic to the potential individual needs of all of our stakeholders. These unique needs may be due to a wide range of circumstances of a long or short duration. We will endeavour to accommodate these to ensure an inclusive approach by promoting positive images and all children will be given equal opportunities regardless of religion, disability, age, gender, race and sexual orientation. No one will be discriminated against (See Equality Scheme)

Consultation with Stakeholders:

This policy has been discussed with staff, pupil representatives on the School Council, parents and Governors. Feedback has been considered and amendments made to take account of the views of these stakeholder groups where practical.

The Governing Body:

Regular reports are made to the governors on the attendance of pupils and trends over time.

This policy will be reviewed every three years or in the light of changes to legal requirements.

Date: _____

Signed: _____ Head Teacher

_____ Chair of Governors