



Valence Primary School **Attendance Policy 2017-2018**

Vision

At Valence Primary we aim to educate the whole child and to ensure children are happy, healthy and fulfil their potential in terms of the development of skills for life, social and moral values and academic success.

Rationale:

Poor attendance disadvantages children.

We aim to ensure that all children attend school regularly and on time to enable them to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available.

Regular, punctual attendance is valued and positively encouraged for all of our pupils.

Children whose attendance is good will be rewarded regularly.

Improved attendance and time keeping will be recognised.

Parents have a legal duty to make sure that children of compulsory school age attend school regularly.

Permitting unauthorised absence from school is an offence and parents may be reported to the education authority if problems cannot be resolved by agreement.

Attendance has a direct relationship with children's attainment.

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have.

Local authorities have a duty to establish, as far as it is possible to do so, the identity of children of compulsory school age who are missing education in their area.

Valence Primary school promotes the view that regular attendance is important to ensure the best possible outcomes for all of our children.

Aims:

To work in partnership with pupils, parents/carers and the Local Authority to:

Ensure systems are in place to monitor attendance effectively and to take any necessary action to ensure a child attends regularly.

To maintain and improve the overall attendance of children at school.

To improve children's attainment through good attendance.

To encourage parents to ensure that children arrive at school on time and are collected promptly at the end of the school day.

To make attendance a priority for all stakeholders associated with the school including governors.

Guidelines:

Parents can support regular school attendance by:

- Making sure their child leaves for school with plenty of time to arrive on time.
- Supporting and encouraging their child by attending parents evenings and other events.
- Contacting the school to discuss any concerns regarding their child's attendance.
- Working partnership with the school to resolve any issues that are impacting on their child's attendance.

Reasons for absence

Parents and carers are asked to contact the school by phone or in person on the morning of the first day of their child's absence from school and remain in contact with the school throughout the absence. It is the schools' and not the parents' responsibility to determine whether an absence is recorded as authorised or unauthorised. Every half a day of absence from school has to be classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. Authorised absence is where the head teacher has either given approval in advance for a child of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for absence. All other absences, including persistent lateness, must be treated as unauthorised.

In the majority of cases a parents' note explaining that a child was ill can be accepted without question or concern. In exceptional circumstances further evidence of a child's illness may be requested. However, schools can challenge parents' statements or seek additional evidence if they have any concerns regarding a child's attendance. It is good practice to have clear systems in place to escalate any concerns about high levels of absence due to illness, including agreements about accessing additional services in order to provide appropriate support, particularly for long term illness.

The types of scenarios when medical evidence may be requested include:

- Attendance is less than 90%.
- There are frequent odd days absences due to reported illness.
- The same reasons for absence are frequently repeated.
- Where there is a particular medical problems and school may need evidence to seek additional support/provide support.

There are dedicated phone numbers for parents to report absence/lateness.

Bonham Site 07864054254

St. George Site 07864052545

Authorised absences include:

Absence can only be authorised by a person designated to do so by the Headteacher. [see The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (SI No. 2006/1751) – Reg 7(1)].

Hospital appointments, emergency dentist appointments, clinic appointments (appointment cards / hospital letters to be produced to confirm date/time), sickness, religious holidays and funerals. Non urgent medical appointments should be arranged, if possible, outside the school day. Where this is not possible it is expected that pupils only miss part of the day.

Unauthorised absences include:

Birthdays, outings, head lice, shopping, accompanying family members, visiting relatives, buying shoes, haircuts, parent/s unwell, oversleeping, staying at home to avoid trips or sanctions.

Requests for leave of absence (exceptional circumstances)

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 have amended Regulation 7 of the 2006 Regulations to prohibit maintained schools from granting absences except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application. Family holidays are therefore not authorised during term time.

Procedure for requesting a planned absence

All leave of absence requests will be unauthorised unless the circumstances are exceptional. A parent/carer should complete an absence request form (available from the school office) and submit this to the Head teacher at least four weeks prior to the date required. There is a requirement that parent/carers provide evidence of the exceptional circumstance and may be required to meet with the Head teacher. The school will respond to the request within two weeks. If school is aware of any language difficulties that may preclude a request form being completed appropriate support will be offered.

Any holiday that has not been authorised by the Head will be classed as an unauthorised absence and a fine of £60 per child/per parent may be imposed by the Borough Attendance Team.

Response to absence

Throughout the year parents will be kept informed of school expectations and procedures through newsletters, website and parental meetings.

All parents will be notified of their child's attendance level. An annual figure will be provided in the yearly report.

If any child has not been registered or the school has not been notified about a child's absence, the Attendance Manager will contact the parent/carer on the first morning.

If the parent notifies the school of a child's reason for absence, but the child continues to be absent then an update check will be made by the school in the form of a phone call and medical evidence will be requested to support the absence.

If the child continues to be absent then the Attendance Manager will either write to the parent/ carer or consider a referral to the Local Authority Attendance Officer or the school nurse.

Whenever the school is unable to contact a parent or carer the case will be referred to the Borough Attendance Officer.

If an absence is unexplained the school will write to parents for an explanation. If no reason is forthcoming a phone call will be made.

Any absence considered not to be a justified reason will remain unauthorised.

A series of unauthorised absences will result in a meeting with the Attendance Manager.

Where children have persistent attendance problems the Attendance Manager will invite parents/ carers into school to a meeting. If there is no improvement in attendance a formal meeting will take place with the Head/the Attendance Manager /the Attendance Governor / the Local Authority Attendance Officer and further action (including Fixed Penalty Notices) will be considered. An action plan will be drawn up.

Punctuality

School starts at 8:50 am School doors are shut at 8.55 am.

Lateness is classed as any child coming into school between 8.55 am and 9:30 am

All children arriving after 8.55 am must report to the office where their parent/carer must complete an entry in the Late Book.

School finishes at 3.00 p.m. for Early Years, Key Stage 1 and 3.05 p.m. for Key Stage 2.

Where children have persistent lateness problems the Attendance Manager will invite the parent/carer into school to a meeting. If there is no improvement in punctuality a formal meeting will be held including the Head/ Local Authority Attendance Officer /the Attendance Manager/ Attendance Governor. Further action will be considered.

Weekly Attendance Rewards

Senior Leaders present an Attendance Cup and Attendance Teddy to the class with the highest attendance. The school publishes winning class attendance/punctuality figures on the website.

There is a visual display board to encourage direct competition within each year group. Updated weekly. The class with highest attendance will be receive 15 mins extra playtime.

Termly Attendance Rewards

Each child with 100% attendance will be presented with an award.

- One term with 100% will receive a bronze certificate and badge.
- Two terms with 100% will receive a silver certificate and badge.
- Three terms with 100% will receive a gold certificate a badge

Each child who reaches school attendance target will receive a certificate.

Yearly Attendance Rewards

All children with 100% attendance for a school year will be entered into a raffle and one child per school site will receive a prize.

Punctuality Rewards

Weekly: The class with highest punctuality will be receive 5 mins extra playtime.

Termly: 100% punctuality - individual pupils - certificate.

Yearly: Individual 100% certificate.

Procedures:

Registers

An accurate and consistent registration system is crucial both to provide a solid foundation for analysis of absence and to support any statutory interventions. The register is a legal document and must be kept accurately. Attendance registers will be kept in accordance with legal requirements, local authority guidelines and school regulations.

All class teachers complete electronic registers which are monitored by the Attendance Manager daily.

| Procedure | Person responsible |
|--|---------------------------|
| 1. Registers must be taken at the start of the morning session and afternoon session. | Teacher |
| 2. On each occasion the teacher must record whether a child was present or absent. | Teacher |
| 3. Pupils should only be marked present if they are known to be in the school when the register is called. | Teacher |
| 3. Spaces must not be left in the register | Teacher |
| 4. Codes and notes are added as appropriate. | Attendance Manager |
| 5. Ensuring pupils do not go missing from school during the school day and what to do if this happens. | SLT |

A log is kept of all children, daily, for whom no notification for absence has been received and of follow-up phone calls made to parents/carers. A log is also kept of all children who arrive/leave late.

After four episodes of lateness in a term a letter will be sent to parents/carers by the school with the aim of addressing the situation. If the situation does not improve the parents will be invited to a formal meeting with the Attendance Manager to discuss the child's school attendance, identify barriers to regular school attendance and agree a target and action plan to improve school attendance.

Any child with an attendance of less than 90% will have their reasons for absence monitored. If the situation does not improve the parents/carers will be invited to a meeting with the Attendance Manager.

All practices will be reviewed annually.

Monitoring and Evaluation.

Who is responsible for attendance issues in school?

* The School has an Attendance Manager with responsibility for attendance issues who works closely with the Head teacher and the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

*All registers will be checked and absences monitored on a regular basis.

* The Attendance Manager will analyse individual pupil data to identify quickly patterns of absence which cause concern and parents will be informed where there is a concern.

- All teaching and non-teaching staff have responsibility for attendance issues in school.
- Attendance matters are reviewed by the Head teacher and members of the senior management team.
- Attendance issues are reported at least termly to the Governing body.

Attendance figures are analysed termly by class, year group and whole school. This data is shared with the Governing Body. Governors will be invited to attend awards assemblies. Details are also shared with the LA Attendance Officer where actions are agreed.

We will challenge the attitude of those pupils and parents who give a low priority to attendance. Valence has a clear and escalating approach to intervention where there are concerns regarding school attendance. After we have attempted to address attendance issues with parents, and if there is no improvement the case will be escalated to the Local Authority.

Persistent Absences

Children with persistent absences will have their cases dealt with by the LA Attendance Officer and an action plan will be put in place to address the underlying reasons for the absence level. If actions do not lead to improved attendance this may result in escalation to fixed penalty notices.

School attendance, Safeguarding and Children Missing Education

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. School staff must follow the school's Child Protection Policy and procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.

Schools are required to make the local authority aware of every registered pupil who fails to attend school regularly and any children who have been absent from school, where the absence has been treated as unauthorised for a continuous period of not less than 10 school days. The Local Authority provides further information and guidance on children missing from education, emphasising the link between poor school attendance and safeguarding concerns.

The Attendance Manager and the Designated Safeguarding Lead should work closely to manage risks, ensure appropriate multi-agency engagement where necessary, so that children receive the appropriate level of early help or statutory intervention to ensure they attend school regularly.

SEN and Looked after children.

This group of vulnerable children remain a high priority and their attendance is closely monitored in liaison with the LA. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Child Protection Policy.

Date approved by Governing Body: Autumn 2017