



Attendance Policy

At The Victory Primary School we believe that regular attendance at school is essential if children are to benefit from their school care. Optimum levels of attendance can only be fully achieved when responsibility is accepted and shared by all concerned: pupils, parents, school staff, governors, Portsmouth City Council and the local community.

1. The Law

The law states that all pupils of compulsory school age (5-16) should attend school regularly and punctually to obtain the maximum benefit from their education.

1.2. Parents

The 1996 Education Act Section 7 states that it is the duty of parents to secure education of children of compulsory school age. The Act (section 576) also defines "parent" to include:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not, and
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person, and
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person.

Having care of a child or young person means that a person who the child lives with and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child, is considered to be a parent in education law.

1.3 Completing the register

Registers are legal documents that may be used in evidence where parents are being prosecuted for attendance offences. They are retained in school for a period of three years. The governing body are legally responsible for the attendance register and must register with the Data Protection Registrar under the Data Protection Act 1998

In the register children will be entered under their legal name, i.e. the name on their birth certificate or as changed by deed poll, their known as name may be shown on the register in brackets.

Registers at The Victory Primary School are completed using the SIMS system. See appendix 1 for a copy of the SIMS codes.

2.1 Lateness

- If children are late (after 8:55 am) and they should be brought to the school office and parents are asked to provide an explanation for their child's lateness.
- Any child who arrives after 9:25 a.m. is considered to be late after the register has closed. This is recorded in the register as an unauthorised absence.
- If a child is regularly late for school teachers and administrative staff should inform the headteacher.
- The headteacher will monitor lateness and will arrange for an appropriate member of staff to contact parents to address the problem.

- It is a parent's responsibility to ensure their child is collected between 3:15 (KS1) and 3:20 (KS2) pm.

2.2 Communication

- Parents have a duty to inform school of reasons for absence, however school will text or phone parents/carers if we have not been give a reason for absence on the first day of absence.
- Reasons for absence are recorded on the Absence Register sheets and transferred onto computer by the Attendance Officers. All letters from parents regarding absence should be sent to the school office which are then passed to the Attendance Officer in the learning Mentors Office.
- Parents are asked to provide an explanation of absence by telephone or text on the first day of absence, followed by a further correspondence, preferably in writing when the child returns to school. If medical evidence has been requested by school, parents will need to give this to the school office on the child's return to school.

3.Absences.

3.1 If a pupil of compulsory school age is absent, the register must show whether this was authorised or unauthorised.

- Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for absence. Parents are expected to complete a Leave Of Absence Form (LOAF available from the school office) for all absences other than sickness. (See appendix 2)
- **All other absences must be treated as unauthorised.**

Children who have 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence over a term may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) warning. This gives parents a time frame to improve attendance. Should attendance not improve in that time frame they may be issued with a FPN.

3.2 Authorised absence

The Department for Education (DfE) points out that it is the school which authorises an absence and that a note containing an unacceptable explanation for an absence does not allow it to be treated as authorised.

Parents may not authorise absence, only schools can do this. If school feels a child has too many authorised absences we will inform the parents that future absences may not be authorised without additional assurances or evidence that the absences were unavoidable.

See appendix 3 for further details on authorised absence.

3.3 Unauthorised absence

Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) (Education Observed, 13) offer the following definition of unauthorised absence:

"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."

See appendix 4 for circumstances that may lead to parentally condoned absence.

3.4 Removing pupils from roll.

When a pupil leaves The Victory Primary School they will not be removed from the school roll until they have been accepted onto the roll of another school or until we have authorisation from the Attendance and Monitoring Service (PCC) to remove the child from the school roll. School will make

all reasonable attempts to locate the child. School will enter the children details on the school 2 school data base (S2S)

3.5 Suspected changes of address

When it is suspected that a family has moved away from the area without notifying the school, the school need to make all reasonable attempts to locate the family. The CME Officer at PCC will be notified in writing of the missing child and what attempts school have made to locate the child and their family. The child can then be removed from the school roll after a period of 4 weeks and their name placed on the school to school (S2S) site for missing children.

Leave of Absence in term time

Since new legislation came into force in September 2013, schools are now only able to grant leave of absence under "exceptional circumstances". Crucially, the guidance adds that this leave is "unlikely to be approved for the purposes of a family holiday". All requests will be considered on an individual basis. If leave of absence is granted the number of days away from school will be determined by the headteacher. All leave of absence is at the discretion of the headteacher.

The request for leave should be made on a LOAF (appendix 2) by the parent with day to day care of the child. Parents who take children out of school on an unauthorised holiday may be issued with an FPN.

3.7 Extended absence abroad

Only in exceptional circumstances can leave be granted by the headteacher who will make further enquiries before making a decision as to whether the circumstances are exceptional or not. Children who go on an extended absence abroad must complete a LOAF form and indicate an intended return date. Any children who do not return to school on the specified return date may be removed from the school roll.

4.1 The role of the school

Whilst the Headteacher is the only person in school who can authorise absence it is recognised that other members of staff also play a vital role in following up absence. When a child is absent without explanation school will endeavour to contact the parent as soon as possible. Notes, records of telephone calls and medical certificates will be placed in the register by class teachers and then kept in individual pupil's files in a locked filing cabinet.

School may request that absences reported by parents for illness and medical reasons are supported with medical evidence; this can be through the Minor Ailments scheme or from the GP or hospital. This is particularly relevant when the child/ren have attendance of less than 93%.

School will monitor the attendance of all pupils and work with the framework of the Education Act 1996 to improve attendance. The school attendance and pastoral staff will work closely together to identify children at risk of becoming persistent absentees (PAs) and will offer support to parents and children as appropriate.

4.2 The role of the parent

Whatever efforts are made by the school, it is ultimately the parents' responsibility to see that their child attends school regularly and punctually. If parental support is not forthcoming, strategies to encourage good attendance may fail.

It is the parents' responsibility to inform school of the reason for a child's absence as promptly as possible and to provide any further information which may be required. For any absence other than sickness a LOAF form must be completed. Parents are expected to attend meetings with school and relevant outside agencies in relation to their child's attendance and take an active role in improving their child's attendance. Where children have individual targets for attendance parents are expected to work with school and outside agencies.

5.1 Referrals for non-attendance

School employ an Attendance Officer who works in school 2 days a week. The role of the Attendance Officer is to work with school staff and parents to improve attendance and punctuality in school.

The Attendance Officer will:

- Write to parents explaining concerns over level of attendance under 93%.
- Carry out home visits with regard to poor attendance.
- Arrange meetings in school with parents,
- Liaise with other services, and sets attendance targets for pupils in liaison with school and the family.
- Signpost family /child to appropriate school staff to carry out work with families.
- Inform the CME Officer at the Attendance and Monitoring Service if a child has been absent for 10 or more unauthorised consecutive days of school.
- Consider whether legal action with regard to a child's irregular attendance is appropriate.
- Analyse attendance data for patterns of irregular attendance.

6. Rewards for good attendance

Class teachers constantly praise children for good attendance and this will also be highlighted in assemblies. The attendance cup will be awarded weekly to the class with the best attendance the previous week, as long as that attendance is over 95%. Attendance will also be celebrated on the attendance board outside the school hall and classes with 100% attendance will have a non-uniform day as a reward. Parents are actively encouraged to celebrate good attendance with their children. Children who achieve 100% attendance in a term receive a certificate in assembly.

Letters are sent home to parents congratulating them on this good attendance and each child will receive an appropriate attendance reward.

At The Victory Primary School we believe good attendance is vital for our children to gain the maximum from their time in school. We aim to work collaboratively with all involved parties for the benefit of all of our children.

At any time school may reward good attendance in other ways and may hold specific attendance drives to promote good attendance at school. These will always be clearly communicated to children and parents.

Appendix 1 – SIMS codes

| | |
|---|---|
| / | Present (am) |
| \ | Present (pm) |
| # | School closed for all pupils |
| - | All should attend no mark recorded |
| B | Educated off site (supervised) |
| C | Other authorised circumstances including authorised leave of absence. |
| D | Dual registration (attending other establishment) |
| E | Excluded |
| G | Family holiday (not agreed or days in excess) |
| H | Agreed family holiday |
| I | Illness (not med/dental appointment) |
| J | Interview |
| L | Late (before register closed) |
| M | Medical/ dental appointment |
| N | No reason yet provided |
| O | Unauthorised absences (not covered by any other code) |
| P | Approved sporting activity |
| R | Religious observance |
| S | Study leave |
| T | Traveller absence |
| U | Late (after register closed) |
| V | Educational visit |
| W | Work experience |
| X | Non compulsory school age absence |
| Y | Enforced closure |
| Z | Pupil not on roll |

LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

To be completed by Parent/Carer/Guardian
 (one form to be completed for each child)

| | |
|----------------|---------------------------|
| Name of Pupil: | National Curriculum Year: |
| School: | Group/Class/Tutor Group: |

Your request will be considered by the Headteacher. Please note all requests will be judged on an individual basis but any leave of absence can only be approved in exceptional circumstances.

| |
|--|
| Dates for Requested Leave of absence: From To |
| Please give brief reasons for your request for the leave of absence. |
| Signature(s)..... Date: |
| NAME:..... |

To be completed by School

Your request for leave of absence has/has not* been approved for the following reason(s):
**delete as appropriate*

Headteacher's Signature:..... Date:

| | | | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|----------|
| The code placed in the register will be: (please circle relevant code) | C | G | H | O | P | R |
| Performance (licence required) /Exceptional circumstances | Unauthorised Leave of absence | Authorised Leave of absence | Unauthorised (other reason) | Approved sporting activity | Religious observance | |

For office use
 Attendance record :

Appendix 3 – authorised absences

An absence may be counted as authorised if a child is absent:

- When prevented from attending by sickness
- On a day set aside for religious observance
- If the school is not within walking distance (3 miles) of the child’s home and no suitable arrangements have been made for his or her transport to and from school, boarding accommodation or enabling him or her to become a registered pupil at a school nearer to his or her home.
- On approved work experience
- Participating in a public performance
- Leave of absence approved by the Headteacher on completion of a LOAF

Furthermore school may “reasonably exercise discretion to grant leave” for:

- Absence following the death of a close member of the child’s family.

Appendix 4 – unauthorised absences

Circumstances that may lead to parentally condoned absences include:

- The child’s father/ mother/ carer being ill
- A pupil being used as a child minder
- A pupil being used to support members of the family
- Family work patterns
- A parent’s desire for company
- Indulging a child who wants to stay at home
- A child’s birthday
- Apathy on the part of the parents
- Buying clothes
- A parent’s inability to control the child
- Hairdressing appointments
- Child used as an interpreter
- Uneasy relationships with an institution representing authority.
- Leave of absence without the authorisation of the Headteacher

A copy of this Attendance Policy is available for parent on the school web site or can be requested from the school office.

June 2014

Signed Headteacher

Chairman of Governors

Review Date

June 2017