




Victoria Academies Trust  
Attendance Policy

Date of last review	October 2023	Review Period	Bi-Annual
Date of Next Review	October 2025	AC or Board Approved	Board
Type of Policy	Trust	Signed (chair)	

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Attendance Policy</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>The importance of good attendance</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Section 1: Roles &amp; Responsibilities</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<i>The Academy Council</i> .....	3
<i>The Headteacher</i> .....	3
<i>The Designated senior leader responsible for attendance</i> .....	3
<i>The Education Welfare Officer</i> .....	4
<i>The School Attendance officer</i> .....	4
<i>The School office staff</i> .....	4
<i>Class teachers and support staff</i> .....	4
<i>Parents/carers</i> .....	4
<i>The Pupils</i> .....	5
<b>Section 2: Registration</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<i>Registration</i> .....	5
<i>Lateness and punctuality</i> .....	5
<i>Attendance register</i> .....	5
<b>Section 3: Pupil Absence</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<i>Unplanned absence</i> .....	6
<i>Planned absence</i> .....	6
<i>Following up unexplained absence</i> .....	6
<i>Implement our school's first day absence procedure</i> .....	6
<i>Identify whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised</i> .....	7
<i>Request for leave of absence in term time</i> .....	7
<i>Children Missing in Education</i> .....	7
<i>Absence for participation in a performance</i> .....	7
<i>Absence for participation in a sporting event</i> .....	7
<b>Section 4: Promote and monitor attendance</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<i>Strategies to manage and promote regular attendance</i> .....	8
<i>Attendance monitoring</i> .....	8
<b>Section 5: Analysing attendance</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Section 6: Reducing persistent and severe absence</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>Appendices</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<i>Appendix 1: Attendance Codes</i> .....	10
<i>Appendix 2: Legislation and Guidance</i> .....	11

## Attendance Policy

### The importance of good attendance

**The Academy** seeks to ensure that all its pupils receive an education which enables them to maximise opportunities to reach their full potential. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex,

both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families; improving attendance is everyone's business. Research shows there is evidence of a strong link between good attendance and increased attainment. Pupils who regularly attend school make much better progress both socially and academically. Regular attendance enables pupils to adapt better to routines, schoolwork, and friendship groups. Therefore, those pupils will have a positive experience of learning and a more successful transition from primary to secondary and beyond to further education and training.

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school. Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

### **School Staff that Support Attendance in**

The **Academy** strategic leader for attendance is  
The **Academy** attendance officer is

### **Devonshire Infant and Junior**

Mrs E Waldron  
Mrs G Nagra Inf Miss M Stevens Jun

Please contact the attendance officer on a day-to-day basis when your child is absent or for any queries regarding attendance.

The **Academy** parent support advisor/safeguarding & pastoral lead is | Mrs P Chahal

## **Section 1: Roles & Responsibilities**

### **The Academy Council**

The Academy Council 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
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy and ensure the policy is reviewed annually.

### **The Headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school and ensuring its publication on the school's website
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing penalty notices, where necessary

### **The Designated senior leader responsible for attendance**

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes

- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

### **The Education Welfare Officer**

The Trust EWO will:

- Support in fulfilling their responsibilities in relation to improving attendance.
- Attend meetings with the **Academy** to identify children with irregular school attendance and develop strategies to ensure that all children can attend school regularly.
- Support the school in promoting attendance by providing advice, guidance and creation of action plans in relation to working together to improve attendance.
- Review referrals from school to address matters of poor school attendance when Early help and intervention has failed to improve attendance
- Carry out home visits and school meetings with parents to challenge barriers to poor attendance

### **The School Attendance officer**

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher and designated senior leader (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

### **The School office staff**

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Record messages and communication sent via ParentMail

### **Class teachers and support staff**

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

Communicate with parents via Dojo/class charts

### **Parents/carers**

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time for every lesson timetabled
- Contact **School by 9am** on the first day of absence to inform school of the reason and when the child is expected to return. Contact the school every day of absence.
- Understand their responsibility to keep the **Academy** up to date with at least 2 emergency contact details as required by the Children Missing Education requirements and in line with the latest Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Impress on their children the importance of regular school attendance by keeping absences to a minimum and ensuring that children are only out of school when they are too sick to attend.
- Establish effective communication with the **Academy** and swiftly address any worries their children may have about coming to school so that we can work together to resolve this.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Attend any meetings called by **Academy** and partner agencies to discuss attendance.

## **The Pupils**

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time
- make sure you have everything you need for the following day
- Go to bed and be well rested to be able to enjoy your day
- get up in good time to attend school

## **Section 2: Registration**

### **Registration**

The school day start time is 8.45am when our doors open.

These will close at 8.55

Any pupils arriving after these times should report to the school office so that they can be given a late mark; pupils arriving after 8:55am should be accompanied by a parent to be signed in via the online screen in the reception area so that a reason for lateness can be given; the number of minutes late is recorded in order to measure the impact of lost education due to late arrival.

The class register will close at 9:25am

School day end time is 3:15pm infants 3.20pm Junior .

### **Lateness and punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Persistent lateness will result targeted letters from the designated Attendance Lead or an invitation to discuss appropriate support and challenge available from school leadership.

### **Attendance register**

We will keep an attendance register twice a day, and place all pupils 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 pupil 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 pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

### **Section 3: Pupil Absence**

Parents are expected to inform school of the reason for absences. However, it is school that makes the decision whether to authorise or unauthorised the absence. School will make this decision based on the information available to them. Parents are encouraged to provide as much information as possible and information such as appointment cards, medication or application for leave of absence will assist school in making this decision.

Re-occurring unauthorised absence will be referred to the School Attendance Support Service and this can lead to legal interventions and a formal assessment.

#### **Unplanned absence**

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office on **t:0121 558 1652/1654** and selecting option 2, or using the facility on ParentMail.

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 pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a prescription, appointment card or letter, text 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.

#### **Planned absence**

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

YOU CAN CONTACT THE OFFICE ON 0121 558 1652/1654 OR [OFFICE@DEVINFACADEMY.ORG.UK](mailto:OFFICE@DEVINFACADEMY.ORG.UK) OR  
[OFFICE@DEVJUNACADEMY.ORG.UK](mailto:OFFICE@DEVJUNACADEMY.ORG.UK)

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

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

#### **Following up unexplained absence**

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

#### **Implement our school's first day absence procedure**

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason by 10am. All absence reasons are logged on SIMS (School Information Management System)
- If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may send follow up texts and ParentMail messages in order to make contact.
- Where there is a significant Safeguarding concerns, school staff or the Trust EWO may attempt to visit the child and family at recorded home addresses.

### **Identify whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised**

The academy will:

- Identify the correct attendance code (see Appendix 1) 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.

### **Request for leave of absence in term time**

The Academy has adopted the Local Authority code of conduct in respect of leave of absence in term time. All parents who wish to take their child out of school for any reason (other than medical reasons) should complete a leave of absence request form obtained from the school office and submitted at least 2 weeks before departure. If parents proceed with the leave of absence in term time, Devonshire Infant and Junior may refer to the Local Authority for a penalty notice. Penalty notices may be issued due to the deliberate taking of leave of absence in term time without or against school permission (where it can be demonstrated that the parent/carer understood that permission had not or would not be given)

### **Children Missing in Education**

The **Academies** have also adopted the Local Authority Policies on Children Missing Education, Elective Home Education. Click link to find DfE guidance regarding [Children Missing in Education](#).

If a child is absent (unexplained) for at least 5 consecutive days, the Trust EWO will be notified. A home visit may be carried out. If the absence continues for a total of 10 days, the family will be referred as a Child Missing in Education case for the Local Authority.

The **Academy** also follows Local Authority guidance in relation to coding absence for families who travel as part of their culture.

### **Absence for participation in a performance**

In these instances, the **Academy** will follow Local Authority's guidance and by-laws, working in partnership with the Local Authority Attendance Service to ensure that any performance absence is within the parameters of the law.

### **Absence for participation in a sporting event**

In these instances, the **Academy** will follow Local Authority's guidance and by-laws, working in partnership with the Local Authority Attendance Service to ensure that any sporting event absence is within the parameters of the law.

### **We acknowledge and follow guidance from The National Strategies, Department for Children, Schools and families:**

On days when a pupil from a Gypsy, Roma or Traveller family is known to be out of area, due to the family travelling, and is not in educational provision, then the school can use the letter code T to record the absence. Parents/ carers should make sure they let the school know in advance when they are going to be travelling, and when they expect to return, so that attendance and absence are recorded accurately.

On days when pupils, including those from Gypsy, Roma or Traveller families, are absent for other reasons (whether travelling or not), schools should use the appropriate code to record that absence. If the reason for a pupil's absence is not known, it must be recorded as unauthorised absence.

## Section 4: Promote and monitor attendance

### Strategies to manage and promote regular attendance

The Academy will:

- Keep parents updated on the **Academy's** overall attendance and individual pupil's attendance via letters home, newsletters, social media and school/academy website.
- Follow the DfE and Government guidance in relation to school attendance.
- Follow Public Health guidance should any local lockdowns or outbreaks in school occur.
- Report to parents how their child is achieving in school and how their child's attendance is impacting on this via regular parent evenings.
- Build positive relationships between home and school that can be the foundation of good attendance. The link between attendance, attainment and wider wellbeing will be discussed with parents.
- Utilise attendance data, analysing patterns and trends to target attendance and punctuality improvement across pupil cohorts or individual pupils, to reduce persistent or severe absence from school.
- Account for and consider the specific needs of pupils and their families where there may be other barriers to attendance (medical conditions or special educational needs and disabilities) and provide support to overcome these barriers. (e. g. Early Help or other wider partners)
- Support pupils back into school following a length or unavoidable period of absence and provide support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- Monitor individual students' attendance to:
  - a) Celebrate good and improved school attendance
  - b) Notify parents when we are worried about their child's attendance by following the procedure below.

### Attendance monitoring

The academy will:

- Produce daily and weekly summary reports and share with the school DSL and dedicated senior leaders.
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Hold regular attendance and punctuality strategy meetings where actions from previous meetings are monitored, and any newly arising patterns or issues are identified to target for challenge or support.
- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils 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

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The academy will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the Academy Council.

## Section 5: Analysing attendance

The academy will analyse its attendance and absence data regularly to support identification of vulnerable pupils or groups of pupils that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families.



It will also look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and use this information to develop strategies to address these patterns.

### **Section 6: Reducing persistent and severe absence**

Persistent absence is defined as when a pupil misses **10% or more** of school, and severe absence as when a pupil misses **50% or more** of school.

The academy will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils 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

Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility. The Attendance Policy has a direct link to safeguarding policy; the behaviour policy; anti-bullying strategies and the Health and Safety Policy.

**IN SITUATIONS WHERE ALL OTHER STRATEGIES HAVE FAILED TO IMPROVE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE, THE TRUST EWO WILL REFER THE PUPIL TO THE LOCAL AUTHORITY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE SERVICE UNDER SECTION 444(1) AND 444(1A) OF THE EDUCATION ACT 1996 AND THE CHILDREN ACT 1989, WHICH MAY RESULT IN A FINE UP TO £2,500; A PARENTING ORDER; A COMMUNITY ORDER; OR A CUSTODIAL SENTENCE. CONSIDERATION WILL ALSO BE GIVEN TO THE ISSUING OF A PENALTY NOTICE IN CASE OF UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE WHERE APPROPRIATE AND/OR A PARENTING CONTRACT OR EDUCATION SUPERVISION ORDER.**

## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

Code	Description	Meaning
/	Present AM	Present
\	Present PM	Present
L	Late (before registers closed) marked as present	Present
J	Approved education activity as pupil is attending interview	Approved Education Activity
P	Approved education activity as pupil is attending an approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
V	Approved education activity as pupil is away on an educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Approved education activity as pupil is attending work experience	Approved Education Activity
I	Authorised absence due to illness (do not use for medical or dental appointments)	Authorised absence
M	Authorised absence due to medical / dental appointments	Authorised absence
R	Authorised absence due to religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Authorised absence due to study leave	Authorised absence
T	Authorised absence due to traveller absence	Authorised absence
H	Authorised absence due to agreed family holiday	Authorised absence
E	Authorised absence as pupil is excluded, with no alternative provision made	Authorised absence
C	Authorised absence as pupil is absent due to other authorised circumstances	Authorised absence
B	Approved education activity as pupil being educated off site (not dual registration)	Authorised absence
G	Unauthorised absence as pupil is on a family holiday (not agreed) or is taking days in excess of an agreed family holiday	Unauthorised absence
U	Unauthorised absence as pupil arrived after registers closed	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence as pupil missed sessions for an unauthorised absence not covered by any other code / description	Unauthorised absence
N	Unauthorised absence as pupil missed sessions for a reason that has not yet been provided	Unauthorised absence
D	Dual registered (at another establishment) - not counted in possible attendances	Not counted in possible attendance
X	Non-compulsory school age absence - not counted in possible attendances	Not counted in possible attendance
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances - not counted in possible attendances	Not counted in possible attendance
Z	Pupil not yet on roll - not counted in possible attendances (not collected in school census)	Not counted in possible attendance
#	Planned whole or partial school closure - not counted in possible attendances (not collected in school census)	Not counted in possible attendance

## **Appendix 2: Legislation and Guidance**

This policy meets the requirements of the <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance> from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-responsibility-measures-for-behaviour-and-attendance>. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

[The Education Act 2002](#)

[The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)

[The Education Regulations 2006](#)

[The Education Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold