Victory Primary school

Victory for all !

Attendance policy

January 2026

Aims

It is the legal requirement that all children attend school for 190 days and that we monitor attendance and punctuality.

Victory Primary School is committed to promoting high levels of pupil achievement and we believe that every child has the right to be educated. Regular attendance at school plays an important part in helping each pupil to develop their full potential, therefore we strive to ensure that all pupils attend school every day and on time, when school is in session, (as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so). Poor attendance can also lead to children forming poor relationships with other children; and decrease children's confidence to attempt new work, learn alongside others and create long lasting relationships.

The school relies on the commitment from the parents to enable their child to attend regularly and work in partnership with the school to achieve the best for their child. If there are any problems which may obstruct a child attending school, we ask that parents recognise this and act upon this immediately.

As a key task, the Governors and staff of Victory Primary School routinely monitor children's attendance. As irregular attendance undermines the educational process and may lead to educational disadvantages, children's absences will therefore be cautiously investigated and unjustified absence will not be accepted. The Head Teacher is very much involved and request regular up-dates in relation to the school attendance. The school works with the Link Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to ensure that all pupils maintain good attendance and punctuality.

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence

Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled

Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

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

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

3.4 Class teachers

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

3.5 School office staff

School office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

- Ascertain the reason
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken
- Seek clarification from the headteacher to identify whether the absence is justified and therefore should be authorised –

- Identify the correct code to use before entering it on to the school's electronic register, or management information system which is used to download data to the School Census.

3.6 Education Welfare Officer Duties

The Education Welfare Officer has the statutory responsibility for monitoring the attendance of all pupils who attend schools within the London Borough of Southwark. All schools receive the support of an allocated officer.

The aim of the service is to identify personal and/or social issues that may affect the attendance, progress and well-being of children and young people. The service works alongside schools and a variety of agencies to support families to overcome such difficulties to ensure children and young people are able to access their education provision.

Education Welfare Officer actions, this may include: -

- Home visits
- Multi-agency meetings
- Sign posting to supportive agencies e.g. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, Social Services and Family Group Conference Service.
- Fast Track to Prosecution

3.7 Parents/Carers

- Their child attends school
- Their child arrives at school punctually
- Their child is appropriately dressed and properly equipped for the day
- They contact school on their child's first day of absence, advising of the reasons for absence.
- They take their children on holiday during the school holidays only.

3.8 Pupils

- Attend school regularly
- Arrive on time
- Be prepared for the school day
- To inform a member of staff of any problems they are experiencing which may impinge on their ability to attend school regularly.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

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

Pupils must arrive in school by their designated time on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken within 10 minutes after the designated arrival time. The register for the second session will be taken within 10 minutes after lunchtime has ended.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.30 or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

When a child is absent, the class teacher will record the absence in the register. As part of our Safeguarding Procedures, the school office will endeavour to contact the parent or carer and other emergency contacts if no message has been received regarding the reason for the absence to check on the safety of the child.

- Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours.
- An appointment card or verification by the doctor/ dentist/hospital is required.
- If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment.

- If your child is absent due to vomiting, they should not return to school for the next 24 hours after the last bout of sickness. This is to reduce the risk of infection to other children and adults at school.
- 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 doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.
- For more than three days of absence the school require a written explanation of why the child was absent. The school office will request this if it is not produced.
- Medical certificates are required for absence greater than five days. Unless the Education Welfare Officer instructs the school to request one sooner.
- 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 pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. Parents may be asked for proof of the appointment.

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. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

Pupils arriving after these times must enter school by the main entrance and report to reception where their name and reason for lateness will be recorded. The pupil will be marked as late before registration has closed (Code 'L'). The register will close 10 minutes after the designated time of arrival. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (Code 'U') This national code counts as an unauthorised absence.

Frequent lateness is disruptive to learning, both for the child concerned and the class. This will be discussed with parents at open evenings and may be referred to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO). Frequent or regular lateness can provide grounds for prosecution or the issue of a Penalty Notice.

4.5 Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by contacting the parent on the first day of absence.

Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary

Identify whether the absence is approved or not

Identify the correct attendance code to use

4.6 Reporting to parents

Information about your child's attendance is recorded termly on children's report card / end of year reports.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion.

- The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils 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 pupil is attending educational provision

Request for Leave of Absence

The following request for leave may be automatically be unauthorised: -

- Holidays in term time (unless circumstances are deemed by the Headteacher to be exceptional)
- Leave of absence requested at the start of an academic year – being absent for the first two weeks of an academic year can be detrimental to your child settling into their new class, meeting their new teacher and making relationships.
- Leave of absence leading up to Yr1 Phonics Screening Tests, Yr 2, Y6 SATs – this is a time where children are consolidating their learning in preparation for the end of key stage national tests

5.2 Reducing persistent absence

Explain your school's procedures for targeting unauthorised absence. For example – meetings, letters, closer monitoring.

100-96%	**Excellent** – Well done! This will help all aspects of your child's progress and life in school. This will give them a good start in life and supports a positive work ethic.
94-95%	**Average** – Strive to build on this. Work with parents to continue to promote full attendance to move to 96%+
85-93%	**Poor** – Absence is now affecting attainment and progress at school. School contact parent directly to seek ways of working together to improve attendance
Below 85%	**Unacceptable** – Absence is causing serious concern. It is affecting attainment and progress and is disrupting the child's learning. Meetings between home and school to share strategies for improvement will be called. If improvement is not achieved a referral is made to the Attendance Service - Education Welfare Officer [EWO]

5.3 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year

- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Explain your school's strategies for rewarding and improving attendance.

See the DfE's guidance for ideas.

7. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer at our school monitors pupil absence on a regular basis.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).

If the pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school each day their child is ill, state it here.

If a pupil's absence goes below 95%, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this.

If a pupil's absence continue to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

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 school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

Explain how your school collects and stores attendance data, and how it may be used for internal purposes. For example, to:

- Track the attendance of individual pupils
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum [insert frequency] by [name/job title of individual]. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Safeguarding policy
- Positive Behaviour Management Policy

Reviewed January 2026

Next review January 2028

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

Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)

For the school year 2021 to 2022, a new category has been added to record instances -

when a pupil is 'not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)'. See this addendum for further information, including advice on the application of code X. Code X: not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19) (This code is not counted as an absence in the school census)

This code is used to record sessions where the pupil's travel to or presence at school would conflict with:

- 35.guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) from Public Health England or the Department of Health and Social Care12 or
- 36.any legislation (or instruments such as statutory directions) relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19).

Schools should also continue to use code X to record when a pupil not of compulsory school age is not expected to attend as detailed below.

Administrative Codes

The following codes are not counted as a possible attendance in the School Census.

Code X: Not required to be in school

This code is used to record sessions that non-compulsory school age children are not expected to attend.

Code Y: Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

This code can be used where a pupil is unable to attend because:

- 37. The school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause; or
- 38. The transport provided by the school or a local authority is not available and where the pupil's home is not within walking distance; or
- 39. A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school.

This code can also be used where a pupil is unable to attend because:

- 40. The pupil is in custody; detained for a period of less than four months. If the school has evidence from the place of custody that the pupil is attending educational activities then they can record those sessions as code B (present at approved educational activity).

This code is collected in the School Census for statistical purposes.

Code Z: Pupil not on admission register

This code is available to enable schools to set up registers in advance of pupils joining the school to ease administration burdens. Schools must put pupils on the

admission register from the first day that the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school.

Code #: Planned whole or partial school closure

This code should be used for whole or partial school closures that are known or planned in advance such as: between terms; half terms; occasional days (for example, bank holidays); weekends (where it is required by the management information system); up to five non-educational days to be used for curriculum planning/training; and use of schools as polling stations.