



# Attendance Policy

## Our Vision

We want Virginia Primary School to be a community of happy, confident, motivated lifelong learners. We want our children to be successful citizens who value themselves and each other. Therefore, we are continually striving to ensure that we nurture, challenge and enable each and every one to be the very best they can be in all areas of school life.

## Rights Respecting School

We are a Right Respecting School and this policy supports the following articles from the United Nations on the Convention on the Rights of a Child:

- Article 15 – every child has the right to meet with other children and to join groups and organisations.
- Article 28 – every child has the right to an education
- Article 29 – education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities.

**Policy Created: April 2016**

**Policy Updated: Sept 2020**

**Policy Renewal frequency: Annual**

**Policy Renewal Date: Sept 2021**

## Rationale

We believe in giving every child in our care the widest educational opportunities in order for them to be happy and successful citizens. Attending school on time every day is very important for the following reasons:

- For pupils to build on prior learning and not have gaps in learning
- For pupils to feel that they are fully included and have access to all areas of learning
- For pupils to develop strong friendships and good relationships
- For pupils to develop good habits which will stand them in good stead in the future
- It is the legal responsibility for a child's parent/carer to ensure that they attend school on time, every day

**This policy defines the different types of absences and the procedures we follow when recording absence.**

## Authorised Absence

This is when the parent/carer tells the school that their child is absent for a specific reason.

- Illness – the school should be informed by phone call from the parent/carer before school starts on the first morning of absence. We should be told how many days the pupil is expected to be absent for. If the pupil is absent for more than five days, we require medical evidence e.g. medical certificates, GP letters, hospital letters etc.
- COVID 19 – Shielding/self-isolation/ diagnosed- if a child displays symptoms of COVID this will need to be reported to school immediately and the child will be expected to self-isolate for 10 days and be advised to take a test. The absence will be marked x and be tracked. If family members display symptoms or have a positive diagnosis this will need to be reported as well as the child will need to self-isolate for 14 days.
- Medical/dental appointments – it is important to minimise having these appointments during school time as much as possible. Please try and ensure routine appointments take place during the school holidays. However, if your child needs to go for an appointment during the school day please come in and tell us the day before and bring the appointment card/letter. A child will be expected to miss as little of the day as possible for a routine appointment.
- Religious holidays – pupils are allowed to be absent in order to celebrate a religious holiday. Christian holidays fall within Britain's national holidays. In order to minimise the disruption of our Muslim pupil's education, the school follows the LBTH guidelines of using two days of our holiday allocation for pupils to celebrate Eid.
- Interview or exam – occasionally pupils may need to attend interviews or exams, perhaps for secondary school admissions. Please could you inform the school in advance if this is the case.

If you require your child to be absent from school because of exceptional circumstances, please talk to the head teacher.

Please note: **if your child is well enough to be in school, they are well enough to take part in all learning.** This includes swimming and PE unless they have a specific medical condition or injury that means it would be painful/unsafe for them to take part.

## Unauthorised Absence

If a child is absent from school and no reason has been given, this is an unauthorised absence and the following procedure will take place:

- If a pupil is not in school, the office staff will phone the parent in the morning. If this happens more than three times in a month, the head teacher will contact the family to arrange a meeting to see what support maybe needed. This will be followed up by letter to agree how to resolve the issue.
- If the situation remains unresolved and the pupil continues to have regular days of unauthorised absence, the Tower Hamlets Attendance and Welfare Service will become involved.
- If a child has more than 20 consecutive days of unauthorised absence, they will be removed from the school role. This means that they may lose their place at school.
- Virginia Primary School has adopted the Tower Hamlets policy regarding extended leave and we do not authorise it. However, all parents and carers are asked to complete an extended leave form should they choose to take leave during school time.

The attendance welfare officer meets regularly with the office staff to monitor attendance and will inform the head teacher if there are families causing concern.

### **Nursery Attendance**

Nursery is non-statutory schooling. However, we expect high levels of attendance for nursery children as we believe that this not only gives them an excellent start to their education but also fosters good habits. It is very difficult for children to settle if they are not attending regularly. Therefore, if your child's attendance falls below 80% and you have not given us good reason for this (backed up by medical evidence if appropriate) then your child will be taken off roll.

### **Punctuality**

Arriving at school on time is very important as pupils learning starts at 8.55. If a child is late they miss an important part of their learning – guided reading takes place for the whole school at this time, and if they are late it is very disruptive for the rest of their group. Remember, if your child is late by just over 10 minutes a day that adds up to an hour of learning time missed each week!

For those coming from further away, we understand London traffic can be difficult and unpredictable so it is necessary to leave lots of time. To make things easier, the playground is supervised from 8.30 each morning which means that your child can arrive earlier if you think the traffic is better then.

The office staff or class teachers will inform the head teacher if there are children who are persistently late and it is having an impact on their learning. The head teacher will invite the parent/carer in to discuss the matter and provide support. If the situation is not resolved then the AWA will become involved.

### **Penalty Notice Scheme Protocol**

In September 2012, the governing body adopted the Tower Hamlets Penalty Notice Scheme Protocol. This means that should parents take unauthorised leave during term time they will be referred to the AWA who may issue a penalty notice requiring the parents to pay up to £120 per child for the period of absence. Penalty notices can also be issued for frequent lateness. Further details of the penalty notice scheme can be obtained from the school office.

### **Celebrating Good Attendance and Punctuality**

We recognise and praise children who are consistently punctual and have 100% attendance each term.

- Assembly – presentation of individual and class certificates each term at our attendance and achievement assembly (parents and carers invited).
- Attendance and punctuality table in weekly newsletter.
- Termly prize (a class trip) for the class with the highest attendance and punctuality.