



# VYNERS SCHOOL

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

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### 1. AIMS

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

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every student 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.

Regular and punctual attendance at school is a legal requirement and is essential in order for students to maximise their chances of success. There is clear evidence showing strong links between excellent GCSE results and excellent school attendance.

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### 2. LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

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This policy meets the requirements of [Working Together To Improve School Attendance](#) (Department for Education (DfE), May 2022) 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.

This policy links to the following school policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- Data Protection

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### **3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

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#### **3.1 The Local Governing Body (hereafter LGB)**

The LGB 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 students
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

#### **3.3 The attendance officer**

The school attendance officer:

- Liaises closely with Form Tutors in checking that registers are completed accurately
- Ensures that the registers are available for scrutiny
- Is responsible for notifying the Local Authority School Attendance Support Team of persistent absence and working with them to support improvement
- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual student level
- Is responsible for notifying parents of student absence, when parents have not notified the school through the Keep Kids Safe system. Once morning registers are taken, students who are absent are highlighted and a text and or email is sent to parents to notify them that their child is not in school
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher / assistant headteacher / DSL
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- Reports on students with persistent absence to Year Leaders and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT)
- Sends out student absence letters as required on behalf of the Headteacher
- Provides general management information on student attendance as may be required by SLT or LBH
- Enters any manual registers onto SIMS accurately and promptly (including any attendance information for students offsite)
- Oversees the signing in / out process by students and to inform appropriate pastoral staff of any concerns
- Ensures that latecomers are correctly recorded in the attendance registers
- Liaises with the pastoral team to ensure the collection and dispatch of work for students who are absent from school due to long-term illness

### **3.4 Year Leaders and SLT**

- Monitors attendance data across the year group and at an individual student level
- Monitors the attendance of children categorised in vulnerable groups
- Reports concerns about attendance to the assistant headteacher responsible for attendance
- Works with attendance officer, tutors, family liaison officers and School Attendance Support Team to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues and records actions.

### **3.5 Class teachers:**

- Responsible for accurately recording attendance within lessons on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and saving this information on the management information system (SIMS).

### **3.6 Form tutors:**

- Are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information via SIMS.
- Will ensure that the registers are completed in accordance with the appropriate regulations
- Have a major role to play in encouraging students to be punctual and to attend school each day. They should alert the Year Leader attendance officer and family liaison officers of patterns in absence.
- Set C3 detentions where tutees arrive after the AM bell.
- Make welfare calls to students on Day 3 of absence

### **3.7 Parents/carers will:**

- Ensure good attendance; a minimum of 97% and above. Previous evidence suggests parents simply don't realise how few absences it takes to fall below this limit. To illustrate this, across a school year in England, local authority maintained schools must open for at least 380 sessions (190 days) during a school year. 3% equates to missing just 5 and a half days of school.
- Inform the school on each day of absence and give specific reason
- Parents should contact the school by telephone on 01895 234342 ext 4207 or by email to [attendance@vynersschool.org.uk](mailto:attendance@vynersschool.org.uk) or via EduLink before 8:50am to record a student's absence
- Discuss planned absences for medical appointments with the school two weeks in advance, where possible.
- Any requests for planned absences outside of medical appointments should be put in writing to the Headteacher with 2 weeks notice.

### **3.8 Students will:**

- Attend school every day on time
- Attend every lesson on time
- Unless absolutely necessary remain in every lesson for the duration of the lesson

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## **4. ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES**

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### **4.1 School Day:**

- The school day for students begins at 8.30am - please note, by 8:25am all students should be in tutor rooms
- Registration begins at 8.30am when the “registration bell” rings
- Students entering their tutorial room after the “registration bell” are late for school and will be given a C3 after school detention in line with the rewards and consequences system
- Afternoon attendance is recorded during lesson time at the start of period 4 by each child’s classroom teacher

### **4.2 Punctuality**

- All students are expected to be punctual to school (8.30 am) and to lessons
- Any student who is late to school must attend C3 detention in line with the Rewards and Consequences system
- Students arriving after the registration bell at 8.30am will be marked as late using an L code
- Students arriving 5 minutes or later to Period 1, 2 and 4, or late at all to Period 3 and 5 (there is no 5 minute leeway) must attend a C3 detention in line with the Rewards and Consequences system
- Any student arriving at school after the close of the register (9.50am) will be marked as U code (unauthorised absence), please note this is an absent mark for the morning session

### **4.3 Unplanned absence**

- Parents are asked to telephone school before the end of the tutorial period, 8.50 am to notify school of a child’s absence
- Where parents fail to make contact providing a reason for absence, the School Attendance Officer will send a message via a system called Keeping Kids Safe alerting the parent/carers that their child is not in school
- Absence due to illness will be marked as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.
- In some circumstances of repeated or prolonged absence, the school may ask the pupil’s parent/carers 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.
- 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.

### **4.4 Planned absence**

- Attending a medical or orthodontic appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the student’s parent/carers notifies the school in advance 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 student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

- Parents should notify the school in writing requesting leave of absence for all planned absences. The letter / email should be addressed to the headteacher.
- The student's parent/carer must apply for other types of term-time absence in writing 2 weeks prior to the requested time of absence. For further information regarding requests of term-time absences please see Section 5.

#### **4.5 Signing in and out**

- Students arriving at school after registration should sign in at Student Services.
- Students leaving before the end of the school day should sign out at Student Services.
- Students who have to leave the premises during the school day will be expected to bring a letter from their parents notifying the Attendance Officer of the reason.
- If there is no notification from the parent of the need to leave school students will not be permitted to leave the school site.

#### **4.6 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 family via the *keep kids safe* app. Where necessary, telephone or email contact will be made with the family to discuss issues related to attendance.
- Confirm whether the absence will be authorised or unauthorised.
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary.
- Update the school register with appropriate attendance coding.

#### **4.7 Reporting to parents**

The school will formally report to parents and carers on their child's attendance three times a year. This will be part of each child's progress report. Where a student's attendance falls below 90% (the persistence absence threshold) parents will be notified via a letter at the end of each term.

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## **5. AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE**

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### **5.1 Approval for term-time absence**

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

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as one off events that are unavoidable.

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 that cannot be arranged outside of school hours
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- Traveller students 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 student is attending educational provision.

Other possible 'exceptional circumstances' where the headteacher may grant term-time absence include:

- Funeral of a close relative
- Wedding of a parent or sibling
- Competing in sporting events (county or national level)
- Graduation ceremony of an immediate family member
- Filming (maximum 3 days)

Students in examination year groups are not automatically entitled to study leave once their courses are completed. Study leave is granted at the discretion of the school and once public examinations have started. In normal years, study leave has commenced from the May half term onwards.

The school will not approve requests for flexi-schooling.

## **5.2 Legal sanctions**

Vyners School will work closely with students and parents to improve attendance through school processes including the use of Individual Attendance Plans. Where necessary external agencies will be engaged to support the student, family and school. All efforts will be made to avoid any legal sanctions.

Where previous actions have not been successful or where parents have not engaged with support processes 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 student 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. There is no right of appeal by parents against a fixed penalty notice.

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## **6. SAFEGUARDING**

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Children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation - particularly county lines. Vyners School ensures that situations in which students are persistently absent from school are monitored by the safeguarding team and referred to external agencies such as Hillingdon Stronger Families where appropriate. Where students are already subject to key worker services, child in need plans or child protection plans the school works intensively with the relevant professionals to support the student in attending and reducing the risk of becoming a child missing education.

Children Missing Education (CME):

Vyners School follows guidance set out in Children Missing Education (2016). Where no reason for absence has been given for a child the following actions will be taken:

- a message through Keeping Kids Safe will be sent to parents requesting a notification of absence;
- when no response is received a phone call will be made to parents and other contacts provided to the school. If a child is LAC or subject to a child in need or child protection plan the social worker will be contacted;
- On the third day of absence further safeguarding checks will be initiated, including speaking with friends, emailing the student on their school account, a home welfare visit and contacting the schools of any siblings if known;
- where there are concerns that the child may be at significant risk of harm relevant referrals will be made to children's services and police involvement may be initiated;
- when a child has reached the threshold of 10 days missing from school with no contact a Child Missing Education referral will be made via the Stronger Families Hub.

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## 7. ATTENDANCE MONITORING AND SUPPORT

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The attendance officer at our school monitors student absence on a daily basis and will provide attendance reports to year leaders and the senior leadership team on a weekly basis. Through careful monitoring appropriate interventions will be applied including discussions with students and parents. Where appropriate students will be issued an Individual Attendance Plan. This aim is to identify and remove barriers to attending and support the student to improve attendance with clear strategies. This will be reviewed regularly in line with attendance data monitoring.

If a student's absence goes above 3 days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the student to discuss the reasons for this.

If a student's absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving the Hillingdon Borough School Support Team.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a student's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the student will be classified as a persistent absentee. Parents are notified in writing if their child's attendance drops below 90%.

All attendance data will be stored on SIMS with the exception of data that is extracted and shared for analytical purposes. This data will be stored on the schools' Google Drive and managed in line with the data protection policy.

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## 8. MONITORING OF POLICY ARRANGEMENTS

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This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum biennially by the assistant headteacher with oversight for attendance. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full LGB.

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### **Ratification by Local Governing Body**

**Ratification Date**      **June 2023**

**New Review Date:**      **June 2024**



## Appendix 1 - Attendance Codes

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

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised Absence</b>		
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

<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised Absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	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)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	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
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day