

Attendance and punctuality are critically important at Victoria Park Academy – every child has a right to their full educational entitlement. Evidence proves a direct link between attendance and attainment, and we see this in our own outcomes.

We recognise some of the barriers families face to achieve good attendance and punctuality and so we are committed to a range of support and challenge mechanisms and partnership work with the Local Authority to ensure every child receives an equal opportunity.

This document aims to highlight the importance of punctuality and attendance and set out the strategies we will use to achieve this.

Attendance at Victoria Park Academy is everybody’s business, but the best points of contact for families are: Your class teacher, **Ms Hussain** (School office – Attendance Officer), **Ms Blackstock** (Assistant Headteacher for Pastoral and Attendance), **Mrs Mahal** (Safeguarding lead), **Vicky Clarke** (EWO), **Dawn Thompson**, **Adam Thompson** (Home liaison)

What good attendance looks like (and why it is so important):

100%				Perfect!
98%	4 days			Impressive
96%	7 days	1.5 weeks	35 lessons	Good
95%	9 days	2 weeks	50 lessons	Nearly there
94%	11 days	2+ weeks	55 lessons	Needs to improve
90%	20 days	4 weeks	100 lessons	Concerns (Persistent Absence)
85%	30 days	6 weeks	150 lessons	Serious concerns
80%	35 days	7 weeks	175 lessons	(Severe Absence) procedures

The impact of being on time:

If a child is late every day by...	...a child would lose approximately:	This is the equivalent of: *
5 minutes	3.5 days	18 lessons
10 minutes	7 days	35 lessons
15 minutes	10 days	50 lessons
20 minutes	14.5 days	73 lessons
30 minutes	22 days	110 lessons

*The lessons at the start of the day are usually scheduled for early reading/phonics and targeted intervention teaching and so form an important part of a child’s progress and education.

Strategies to support and to improve attendance and punctuality:

Available support for improving Attendance and Punctuality at Victoria Park Academy	Challenge for continued poor attendance and punctuality (as per School Policy, Sandwell LA and the Department for Education Guidance and legislation)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breakfast club provision (in school) • Pupil mentoring • Free School Meal support • External referrals • Support for wraparound care • Nurture intervention schedule • Meet and greet arrangements • Postcards, recognition for improvement • Parental/family support (routines) • Sandwell Early Help Partnership • Attendance contracts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parental contact letters • Attendance contracts • Home visits • Requests for medical evidence to authorise absence • Telephone calls home • Face-to-face meetings with school leaders • Sandwell Attendance Service Referral • Attendance and Prosecution service referral (and fines)

Reporting absences: The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.50 or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office on **0121 558 8701** and selecting option 2, or using the facility on ParentMail.

Children with temperatures under 38 degrees or only mild illness should still come in to school for teachers to monitor in class.

Lateness: School starts at 8.50am and the register is taken before 9.00am. If a child arrives at school after the start of the school day but within 30 minutes, they will need to be signed in electronically by their parents via the online screen in the school office and will be registered as 'late'; this is not an unauthorised absence and the child is counted as present for the morning session. Lateness beyond 30 minutes will be counted as an absence. This will be an unauthorised absence unless parents/carers provide the school with an acceptable reason. Three or more lates within a week, or significant repeated incidents will trigger a targeted letter from the designated leader. Continued poor punctuality will be invited in to discuss appropriate support and challenge available from school leadership.

Authorised and unauthorised absences:

We will not authorise absence due to: ● Lateness ● Other family members' appointments ● Transport difficulties ● Holidays in term time

We are able to authorise (at the Headteacher's discretion) absence due to: ● Illness or medical treatment ● Education in a setting other than school (this would be pre-arranged and agreed with the school) ● Days of religious observance ● Exceptional circumstances

Leave of absences (LOA) – holidays and planned absences during term time: Headteachers have no discretion to grant leave of absence during term time unless there are genuinely exceptional circumstances. Any requests for a term time leave of absence will need to:

1. **Schedule a first meeting with Ms Blackstock or Mr Reed and provide information about the trip**
2. **Attend a second meeting with Ms Blackstock or Mr Reed to complete the Sandwell LOA referral form**

Penalty notices: When a leave of absence is taken and the school has not authorised the absence because the reasons are not considered 'exceptional', the school will request that the Local Authority issues a Penalty Notice. In considering whether to do so, the school will consult the latest advice given from the LA. If the absence meets the threshold in this document, the school will request that a Penalty Notice is issued.

Family contact and process for support:

Families should report absence to school as described above.

If a child is absent and school hasn't received a message then families will be contacted by telephone by the school office. If a family cannot be reached this will be followed up by a text message or a home visit.

All children's attendance is monitored weekly and should remain above 96%. If it falls below this the following sequence of support and challenge will be triggered:

If attendance falls below 94% (or 10 days)	A school warning letter will be sent, highlighting the absence and outlining the importance and impact of consistent attendance. In some cases, a home visit may also be necessary to check children are safe and well.
If attendance falls below 91% (or 15 days)	A second school warning letter will be sent, this time requesting either a phone call or a face-to-face meeting with a school attendance lead. In some cases a attendance contract may be co-created, and options for targeted support explored. In some case, home visits may occur and medical evidence may be required to authorise all further illness related absences.
If attendance falls below 90% (or 20 days)	A formal meeting between the family, Attendance Lead and member of the School Senior Leadership Team will meet to complete an attendance contract, agree a programme of support and challenge and set a review period to monitor improvement.
If attendance remains below 90% without improvement	If the terms of the Attendance contract is not met during the evaluation period, or there is no clear improvement, the school will complete a referral to Sandwell Local Authority Attendance Service.