



**Villa Real School**  
*together we achieve*

# Attendance Policy

## 2025

Responsibility: Samantha Dawson

Date: February 2025

Signed and Adopted by the Governing Body:

Chair of Governors

Date: 07.02.25

Date to be reviewed: February 2026

## **INTRODUCTION**

Villa Real School seeks to ensure that all of its pupils/ students receive an education which maximises opportunities for each pupil/ student to realise his/her true potential. The school will strive to provide a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils/ students want to be and are keen and ready to learn within a culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.

Regular school attendance plays a vital role in a child's wellbeing and their education, ensuring that their current learning needs are being met but also building their future ability to learn.

As attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all pupils' / students', improving attendance is everyone's business, a concerted effort across all teaching and non-teaching staff in school, the governing body, the local authority, and other local partners.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, the school and partners will work with pupils/ students and parents/ carers to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.

Specific roles and responsibilities have been published in the [Working Together to improve school attendance statutory](#).

We recognise the link between regular attendance and the well-being, development and achievement of our pupils/ students. We expect everyone to attend every session they are able to, to benefit from the learning and pastoral opportunities and support we offer.

Communication is vital to ensure we are able to work with our parents/ carers and pupils/ students to support attendance.

We ask that parents/ carers check that the contact details, address and emergency contact information held by the school are up-to-date and that any amends are communicated to school as soon as possible as it is extremely important school can contact parents/ carers in an emergency, keep parents/ carers informed of events and progress or discuss any concerns at the earliest opportunity.

### **The school day**

The school day is from 9.20 until 3.20. The majority of pupils/ students at Villa Real are brought in by school transport. Parents/ carers bringing their own child in are politely requested to follow directions from the staff onsite, to ensure the safety of all staff and children.

Registration is 9.20am The register will close at 9.50. Pupils/ students must be in school to be marked present, otherwise another appropriate code will be used (Attendance codes appended). Pupils arriving late for registration, but before the register has closed will be recorded as late (L code).

Pupils who are not present before the register closes but attend during the session will be recorded as a U code unless the reason means another code is more appropriate. The U code is an unauthorised absence.

Arriving late to school can be disruptive and unsettling to the child and the rest of their class. Parents/ carers should contact the Deputy Headteacher or classteacher if there are any issues which are affecting a pupil/ student's ability to attend school on time.

**If your child is late for school:**

All children arriving late at school will be asked the reason for their lateness and this will be recorded on CPOMS.

**If a child is late (after registers close) for school on a number of occasions**

A letter will be sent home from school to parents/carers to say their child's punctuality is causing some concern. An appointment with the Deputy Head will be offered to discuss ways that the School can offer support in finding a way to improve attendance. If this is caused by a transport/taxi issue this matter will be raised with our Health and Safety manager to intercede with DCC Transport team.

**If the school continues to have concerns about a child's punctuality**

A letter will be sent home from school with a specific appointment with the Headteacher or Deputy Head for a 'planning meeting'. This will aim to address any issues which may be behind this pattern of poor punctuality.

**Term dates and planned training days**

Term dates and training dates can be found on the school website, or by contacting the school office.

**Leave of Absence in Term Time**

Headteachers are expected to restrict leave of absence in term-time to the specific circumstances in [regulation 11 of the School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#). There is discretion to consider exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts, circumstances and background behind the request. Permission must be requested in advance by a parent/ carer the pupil/ student normally lives with, requesting in writing to the Headteacher and in her absence the Deputy Headteacher.

Where a leave of absence is granted, the Headteacher will determine the number of days a pupil/ student can be away from school.

A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher's discretion. If an application is not made for leave then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised regardless of circumstance.

**The DfE have stated that generally they do not consider the need or desire for a holiday or other absence for leisure or recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.**

### **On the first day of absence**

If a pupil/ student is ill or is absent for any reason, parents/ carers are asked to phone the School Office giving a reason for their child's absence. If a pupil/ student is absent from school and there is no phone call from home, then school will phone home to inform parents/ carers that their child is not in school and enquire about a reason why.

Appointments should be made outside of school time where possible. If this is not possible, the child should miss the minimum amount of school time necessary. If they are well enough to come back to school following the appointment, they should do.

### **Periods of extended absence**

If pupils are absent for a long period of time e.g. post operation then class staff, SENCO and Deputy Headteacher would liaise with the family to access the most appropriate package of home education, if the pupil is well enough.

### **No reason for absence provided**

If a pupil/student's absence continues beyond 3 days, then parents/ carers are requested to notify the School to update them. If a phone call is not received, then the School will contact home to verify the absence.

If the School receives no reason for any absence, then an unauthorised absence will be recorded. Continued absenteeism and unauthorised absences could result in further action such as referral to the Attendance Improvement Team to consider a supportive visit or meeting, or enforcement action and possibly a fixed penalty notice (this includes unauthorised absences accrued through leave of absence taken during term time).

### **Absence authorisation**

The High Court has confirmed that the Headteacher authorises absences. In some circumstances, the school may request that parents/ carers provide medical evidence to support absences.

We want to support all our pupils/ students to ensure they can access their education and will take a support first approach. This will sometimes require

communications and conversations to better understand the circumstances which may lead to absence.

### **Promoting good attendance and punctuality**

Attendance percentages will be shared with parents/ carers at termly parent/ carers' evenings, Care Team Meetings (CTMs) and also annual reports to parents/ carers will contain a record of individual pupil/ students' attendance. The School routinely sends home attendance certificates for those parents/ carers who request them.

### **Attendance data**

We will use data we have such as whole school, year group, class and individual pupil level to analyse for patterns of absence which may require some support to improve.

We will also consider different cohorts such as all pupils/ students, those who have free school meals, pupil premium, children who have a social worker or children in care etc., to identify where additional support may be required.

We will use the information to inform what we do to support and aid discussions between staff, pupils/ students and families.

We will monitor the data to understand the impact of what we do.

We will communicate information to third parties such as social workers, SEND caseworkers, staff and the LA Attendance Improvement Team where we feel that this will support a family. This could be through Team Around the Family meetings (TAFs), CTMs, EHCP Reviews, Attendance Support Meetings or Early Help Referrals.

### **Absence concerns**

Parents/ carers may identify concerns about school attendance early if there is a change in a child's attitude to school or in their willingness to attend. If this is the case, concerns should be shared with school so people can work together to ensure that school attendance does not decline. The earlier concerns are identified and shared, the quicker they may be resolved.

### **Persistent absence**

If attendance falls below 90% without legitimate reason such as a hospital admission, the DfE classifies these pupils/ students as Persistent Absentees. When attendance falls below 90%, the following actions will be taken;

- 1- Letter home informing parents/ carers of attendance figures and offering support
- 2- If after 1 month, attendance has not improved, parents/ carers will be invited into school to discuss attendance
- 3- If after a further month there is no improvement, a multi-agency meeting will be called to implement an action plan, including the Attendance Improvement Team. An Attendance Agreement will be drawn up with clear targets for families and school to achieve. This agreement may include referrals to other agencies such as LDCAMHS or Early Help for further support.
- 4- If still no improvement after 1 month, the case will be referred to the Attendance Improvement team who may start legal proceedings.

### **Severe absence**

Pupils/ students who miss 50% or more of their sessions at school are severely absent.

Where a child reaches this point, there will already be a multi-agency team involved. School will continue to support the family to access education through alternative routes. Where the absence is due to health concerns, regular updates from key medical professionals will be required to support the absence. Families may be offered a member of staff to work with a child at home, or a referral to an Alternative Provision if this is appropriate.

### **National framework for penalty notices and other legal intervention**

To improve consistency of practice across the country, there is a national framework for penalty notices. At the point where there are 10 unauthorised absence sessions recorded in any 10 school-week period, schools must consider if:

- further support is appropriate.
- support is appropriate but is not being engaged with.
- support is appropriate but is not improving attendance.
- support is not needed, such as in cases of term-time leave of absence.

If support is appropriate, this should continue.

If support is appropriate but is not improving attendance or is not being engaged with, then a referral for consideration of legal intervention should be made to the local authority. This can include, but is not limited to a Notice to Improve, an application for an Education Supervision Order, Penalty Notice or Offence investigation Interview (PACE caution).

If support is not appropriate, such as where a holiday in term-time has taken place, a referral for a penalty notice will be made. ([DCC - Penalty Notice Code of Conduct](#))

Penalty notices offer the opportunity to deal with an irregular attendance offence without the need to go to court. Penalty notices are issued at a rate of £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

There is an escalation policy which means that if a second notice is issued within a three-year period, the second notice will only be payable at the rate of £160. Further offences will not be eligible for the offer of a penalty notice and parents/ carers may be prosecuted in court. ([DCC - Penalty Notice Leaflet](#))

If penalty notices are not paid then a prosecution for the original irregular attendance offence will take place.

If convicted at court under section 444 of the Education Act for failing to secure the regular attendance of a registered pupil/ student at school, a parent/ carer may be fined up to £1000 for each offence.

If there is evidence that a parent/ carer knowingly failed to secure the attendance and there is no reasonable justification for this, they can be: fined up to £2,500 and/or face up to 3 months in prison; be subject to probation supervision or have a curfew imposed as maximum sentences.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Governing Body:**

As part of our school approach to maintaining high attendance, the Governing Body will:

- Ensure that the importance of attendance is made clear by promoting the relevant school policies and guidance directed to parents/ carers and staff.
- Annually review the School's Attendance Policy and ensure that all provisions are in place to allow school staff, parents/carers, and pupils/students to implement the policy effectively.
- Ensure that the School is implementing effective means of recording attendance and organising that data, including for pupils/students who are educated off site.

### **School Leadership Team:**

As part of our school approach to maintaining high attendance, the Senior Management Team will:

- Be active in their approach to promoting good attendance with pupils/ students and their parents/ carers.
- Ensure the School's teaching and learning experiences encourage

regular attendance and that pupils/ students are taught the value of high attendance for their own progression and achievement.

- Liaise with the Governing Body to monitor the implementation of the policy and its effectiveness, with annual review of full policy.
- Ensure that all staff are up to date with the School's attendance policy and that staff are fully trained to recognise and deal with attendance issues.
- Ensure Government legislation on attendance is complied with and that the leadership team are up to date with any legislation changes and how to implement them.
- Nominate or appoint a Senior Manager to take responsibility for overseeing and monitoring attendance provision and that this person has sufficient time and resources to give to the job.
- Ensure that systems to record and report attendance data are in place and working effectively.

### **Teachers and support staff:**

As part of our school approach to maintaining high attendance, the teachers and support staff will:

- Be active in their approach to promoting good attendance with pupils/ students and their parents/ carers.
- Ensure the School's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that pupils/ students are taught the value of high attendance for their own progression and achievement.
- Ensure the senior manager responsible for overseeing attendance and any other relevant personnel are kept fully aware of and up to date with any concerns relating to pupils/ students that may impact on their attendance.
- Ensure compliance with regulation and guidance on attendance.
- Work professionally with parents/ carers, pupils/ students and relevant agencies to secure improvements in attendance via appropriate support or enforcement measures.
- Ensure understanding and are following the correct systems for recording attendance and that attendance is taken each lesson and session.

### **Parents/ Carers:**

As part of our School approach to maintaining high attendance, we expect that parents/ carers will:

- Engage with their children's education – support their learning and take an interest in what they have been doing at school.
- Promote the value of good education and the importance of regular school attendance at home.



- Follow the procedures outlined in this policy regarding absences, ill health, medical or dental appointments, leave of absences in term time and punctuality.
- Do everything they can to prevent unnecessary school absences.
- Keep the School informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance and work with staff in resolving any issues that may be having an impact on their child.
- Enforce a regular routine at home in terms of homework, bedtime etc. so that the child is used to consistency and the School becomes part of that routine. It is vital that the child receives the same messages at home as they do at school about the importance of attendance.

**This policy is to be read alongside the following:**

- Child Protection Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour Policy

**APPENDIX 1**

**Villa Real Attendance Codes**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Type</b>
/ \	Present at the school / morning \ afternoon	Present Mark
B	Attending any other approved educational activity - Alternative Provision not arranged through the approved framework	Present Mark
D	Dual registered at another school - Attending Sheffield Inclusion Centre - Attending Alternative Provision at another school site - Chapel House / Becton Outreach / CAMHS Lodges - Hospital education - Education at a secure / residential site - Off-site direction / managed move	Present Mark
E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made	Authorised Absence
G	Holiday not granted by the school or Term Time Leave not granted by the school	Unauthorised Absence
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Authorised Absence
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution	Authorised Absence
K	Attending education provision arranged by the Local Authority - Home Tutoring - Approved Framework for Alternative Provision - Blended Learning	Present Mark
L	Late arrival before the registers have closed	Present Mark
M	Attended a medical appointment	Authorised Absence
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Unauthorised Mark
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	Unauthorised Absence
P	Participating in a sporting activity not school related.	Present Mark
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements (this is not related to transport. Please ask before using)	Not expected to attend
R	Religious Observance	Authorised Absence
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination. Must be used sparingly with revision opportunities in school.	Authorised Absence
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes, and the pupil has attended for at least 200 sessions in preceding 12 months.	Authorised Absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Unauthorised Absence

V	Attending an Educational Trip or Visit	Present Mark
W	Attending Work Experience	Present Mark
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school	Not expected to attend
Z	Prospective or previous pupil not on admission register	Not expected to attend
<b>The Y code: Unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause, is broken down into the following sub codes to provide better differentiation of the reason:</b>		
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available	Not expected to attend
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel	Not expected to attend
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed. For example, this may be due to damage or teacher strikes.	Not expected to attend
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed. For example, extreme weather, damage, no hot water, or heating.	Not expected to attend
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention. For example, in police detention, remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or detained under a sentence of detention.	Not expected to attend
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law. contrary to or prohibited by any guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease.	Not expected to attend
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause. For example, an emergency has prevented the pupil from attending. The unavoidable cause must be something that affects the pupil, not just the parent.	Not expected to attend
<b>The C code: Authorised Absence is broken down into the following sub codes to provide better differentiation of the reason:</b>		
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances. Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days a pupil can be absent from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the school's discretion.	Authorised Absence
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.	Authorised Absence
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable.	Authorised Absence

## APPENDIX 2

The school and all partners will work together to:

### EXPECT

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.



### MONITOR

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.



### LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.



### FACILITATE SUPPORT

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.



### FORMALISE SUPPORT

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.



### ENFORCE

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

## **Expect**

We all want the best for pupils and therefore aspire to have the highest attendance possible for each individual to allow them to access the education on offer to them in a culture they feel safe, part of the community and where they want to be.

## **Monitor**

Attendance is monitored weekly by the Deputy Head. Where concerns start to be raised, the class teacher or Key Stage Lead will contact home first. If more support is needed, the Deputy Head will invite the family in for an attendance meeting.

## **Listening to and understanding barriers to attendance**

As a school, we want to work with families to support you in ensuring your child has good attendance. Meetings can be carried out in person, virtually or at the home to support individual circumstances. Please tell your child's teacher in the first instance if you have any worries or need any help.

## **Facilitate support**

Pupils who have below 90% are considered to be persistent absentees. At VRS we understand that, due to the medical and social needs of our pupils, they can have a lot of medical appointments. If a pupils attendance drops below 80%, a letter will be sent out with a copy of the attendance record. This may be followed up by phone calls and an invitation to a meeting to discuss how we can improve attendance.

If a pupil's attendance drops below 50% they are considered severely absent. In this case families will be referred to further external support, and as a team we will look to support the family further.

## **Formalise support**

Where families fail to engage in support, this support may be formalised through an attendance contract. This would include involvement through the Local Authority Attendance Improvement Team.

## **Enforce**

Where attendance continues to be a concern, referral may be made for statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupils right to an education.

## APPENDIX 3

# If your child needs time off school

Does your child have a health related appointment that cannot be changed?

Send proof of appointment - paper or electronic. This will be retained unless otherwise requested.

Medical absence with proof will be authorised.

Is your child too ill to attend school?

Telephone school between 8.30 and 9.00

School will decide if absence is authorised or unauthorised. If the pupil has a high absence rate this will be unauthorised.

IS there another reason to request absence from school?

Put the request for absence in writing, including dates and reasons, to the Head Teacher for a decision.

Is this a holiday?

Yes

Holidays will not be authorised and will be referred to the Local Authority Attendance Team.

No

School will decide if absence is authorised or unauthorised. If the pupil has a high absence rate this will be unauthorised.

## APPENDIX 4

### Attendance Key Contacts

Please find the details of those with overall responsibility for attendance, attendance support and attendance improvement within our school below.

Name	Role	Contact details
Jill Bowe	Head Teacher	01207 503651
Samantha Dawson	Senior Attendance Champion/ Deputy Head	
Natalie Fitzpatrick	Assistant HT, EYFS/ KS1 Lead	
Jamie Coram	KS2 Lead	
Alan Granton	KS3 Lead	
Pam Monaghan	Governor with responsibility for attendance	

If a pupil is going to be absent from school the person who should be informed is: **Zoe Yule, Attendance Officer 01207 503651**

If a pupil, parent or family is having difficulty with attending school and requires advice, help or support then they can contact:

Name	Role/ type of help	Contact details
Samantha Dawson	Deputy Head	01207 503651
Natalie Fitzpatrick	Assistant Head – support with wellbeing	
Alex Morris	SENCo – support with provision	
Damien Dimmick	Assistant SENCo – Parental Engagement	

### Help and Support

Where help or support is needed with attendance the sooner school know about this, the quicker people can work together to support with this. Where needed this can involve other services to make sure that pupils and their families get the right support, at the right time from the right people.

### Children Missing from Education

If pupils whereabouts are not known following enquiries schools can legally remove pupils from the admission register (the school roll) after 20 school days of unauthorised absence. It is **vital that parents keep school informed of any change of details** and regularly update them if details change. Pupils place in schools are at risk if whereabouts are not known. Children Missing from Education must be reported to the Local Authority and the matter may be treat as a safeguarding issue.