

VICTORIA PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL



Attendance Policy

Date	Policy Reviewed	Added to Website
September 2017	September 2017	
September 2018	September 2018	November 2018
September 2020	September 2020	September 2020
September 2022	September 2022	September 2022
September 2024	September 2024	September 2024

Attendance Policy

Introduction

Regular school attendance is crucial in raising standards in education and ensuring that every child can have full access to the school curriculum and reach their potential.

Victoria Park Primary School strives to promote an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance and where each pupil will feel valued and secure.

We believe that each individual will succeed through experiencing

- *a caring ethos, within which all pupils feel accepted, respected and loved as individuals*
- *a broad, balanced and challenging curriculum addressing the educational needs of pupils of all abilities*
- *an enriching programme of extra curricular activities and educational visits*
- *a happy and challenging atmosphere encouraging success in a stimulating learning environment*
- *innovative teaching and the development of thinking skills and mental strategies*
- *a natural and positive partnership between school, home, church and the wider community*
- *respect for other traditions, values and beliefs within the context of inclusion and diversity*

Aims

1. To improve/maintain the overall attendance of pupils at Victoria Park PS.
2. To develop a framework that defines roles and responsibilities in relation to attendance.
3. To provide advice, support and guidance to parents/guardians and pupils.
4. To promote good relationships with Education Welfare Service. (EWS)

Role of the School

- The Principal at Victoria Park has overall responsibility for school attendance; class teachers should bring any concerns regarding school attendance to her attention.
- The Board of Governors provide support by reviewing school attendance figures and targets and ensuring it is placed as an agenda item at meetings on a regular basis.
- Teaching staff regularly monitor the attendance and punctuality of pupils by ensuring that attendance is recorded at the beginning of morning and afternoon registration using Sims attendance.
- To enable our school to record and monitor attendance in a consistent way we will adhere to the guidance provided in the Department of Education Circular 2017/15.
- Victoria Park PS is committed to working with parents to encourage regular and punctual attendance.

Role of Parent/Guardian

Parents have a legal duty to ensure:

Every child of compulsory school age shall receive efficient full time education suitable to age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular school attendance or otherwise.

(Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986)

It is a parent/guardian's responsibility to inform the school of the reason for a pupil's absence on the first day of absence when possible. This should be confirmed with a written note when the pupil returns to school. If the absence is likely to be prolonged, this information should be provided to enable the school to assist with homework or any other necessary arrangements which may be required.

Pupils are expected to be in school at 9am. for registration and the beginning of classes. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that their child is punctual. Lateness is recorded at registration and recorded on each child's attendance record. If a child appears reluctant to attend school, the parent should discuss the matter promptly with the class teacher or Principal to ensure that both parent and child receive maximum support.

Absence Procedures.

Absences are recorded daily using Sims. A child is recorded as absent using the code N (No reason yet provided for absence) until such times as the school is notified by the parent as to the reason for the absence either through a phone call or a letter of explanation. If this explanation is not given the code will change to D (No reason provided for absence).

Lateness is also recorded and the time of the child's late arrival is noted in the comments section of Sims Attendance.

All staff are aware of the complete list of absence codes to be used in accordance with the DENI directive.

Encouraging Good Attendance

Victoria Park Primary School takes a number of measures to encourage good attendance.

- Children are awarded certificates and rewards / vouchers in assembly to recognise 100% attendance.
- The importance of good attendance is talked about positively in class and school assemblies.
- The school encourages parents to maintain contact during a period of absence or during times of family difficulties / personal situations / anxieties within the child's life and will endeavour to provide appropriate support, where possible.
- School will refer / draw upon advice or support from external agencies if this is felt to be of benefit to family circumstances.
- The school's Family Support worker will visit the family home to advice and support in any ways possible.
- Information, new publications and leaflets referring to Attendance, received from DE or EA are distributed to all parents when relevant.
- The principal issues reminders throughout the year in the monthly newsletter of the importance of attendance and how it impacts on pupils' success and educational achievement.

Family holidays during Term Time

Victoria Park discourages holidays during term time due to the impact they have on pupils' learning. Family holidays taken during term time will be categorised Unauthorised Family holiday ([not agreed])

End of Year Reports

It is the policy of Victoria Park Primary School to record the overall end of year percentage and the number of "lates" recorded for the academic year on each child's pupil profile report issued to parents in June of each year.

Procedures for Managing Non-attendance

Monthly reports of attendance from SIMS are monitored and concerns are raised with the parents. The principal issues a letter from school to all pupils below 85% attendance to encourage improvement, to seek medical advice if a medical complaint is evident and to inform the school of this.

If no medical / reasonable report is provided to school and improvement is not evident, the principal will make contact by telephone and / or issue a letter informing parents that a referral to the EWS will therefore be made.

The Principal will then forward a referral on individual cases to the EWS.

Education Welfare Service

Regional Education Authorities through the EWS have a legal responsibility to make sure that parents meet their responsibility towards their children's education. Regular attendance is an essential requirement for educational progress and success. Where attendance difficulties exist or a pupil's attendance falls below 85%, EWS will support staff and parents in developing and implementing strategies to address or improve school attendance.