



Vernham Dean Gillum's Church of England Primary School Attendance Policy

Policy Consultation and Review

This Attendance Policy is published on the Vernham Dean Gillum's Primary School website and is available on request from the school office.

The policy has been developed in line with current statutory guidance including **Working Together to Improve School Attendance (Department for Education, 2024)** and reflects the expectations placed on schools, governing bodies and local authorities to promote excellent attendance and reduce absence.

Parents and carers are informed about this policy when their child joins Vernham Dean Gillum's Primary School and through regular communication such as newsletters, the school website and other parent communications.

We recognise the expertise our staff develop through their daily work supporting pupils and families with attendance. Staff are therefore encouraged to contribute to the development, implementation and review of this policy to ensure it remains effective and responsive to the needs of our school community.

The Governing Body monitors attendance regularly and reviews the effectiveness of this policy to ensure that appropriate support and intervention are in place where attendance concerns arise.

This policy will be reviewed **annually by the Governing Body**, or sooner if required due to changes in legislation or statutory guidance.

Last reviewed by the Governing Body: **19th March 2026**

Next scheduled review: **March 2027**

Signed: 
Mr Ian Hickman Executive Headteacher

Signed: 
Mr Paul Nicoll - Chair of Governors

1. Introduction / Aim

At **Vernham Dean Gillum's Primary School**, we believe that regular school attendance is essential for children to achieve their full potential. We value the attendance of every pupil and recognise that missing school can have a significant impact on a child's learning, wellbeing and future opportunities.

[Research](#) from the Department for Education shows that even short periods of absence can have a negative impact on a child's educational outcomes. For children to take full advantage of the opportunities provided by the school, it is vital that they attend school every day and arrive on time unless the reason for absence is unavoidable.

We recognise that good attendance is closely linked to pupils feeling safe, supported and valued within the school community. We are committed to creating a culture where every pupil feels a strong sense of belonging and where barriers to attendance are identified and addressed at the earliest opportunity. We will always seek to work in partnership with families and other services to understand and remove obstacles to attendance before considering formal enforcement action. Our attendance policy aims to:

- Promote high levels of attendance and punctuality across the school
- Ensure that attendance is monitored effectively and patterns of absence are identified early
- Support pupils and families where attendance difficulties arise
- Provide a clear framework for responding to absence
- Promote strong partnerships between school, families and external agencies where appropriate
- Ensure parents understand their legal responsibility to ensure their child attends school regularly

At **Vernham Dean Gillum's Primary School**, we are committed to providing a high-quality education for all pupils. To benefit fully from this, pupils must attend school regularly and be ready to learn.

Parents and pupils play an important role in making our school successful. Every child has the right to access the education to which they are entitled, and parents and staff share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent attendance and punctuality.

Attendance is a whole-school responsibility. This policy works alongside other key school policies including:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Admissions Policy

This policy also reflects relevant legislation including the **Human Rights Act 1998**, the **Equality Act 2010**, and the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child**.

2. Legal Framework

This policy meets the requirements of the [Working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#).

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability, and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

The government expects all schools and local authorities to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence.
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Act early to address patterns of absence.

Parents are expected to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.

In accordance with the Education Act 1996, we will work with parents and carers and the Local Authority to ensure that parents and carers are supported to secure education for children of compulsory school age. Where required, we will formalise support and where necessary, work with the LA to use legal measures.

A "Parent" is defined as:

- Any natural parent, whether married or not.
- Any parent who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility as defined in the Children Act (1989) for a child or young person.
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

At Vernham Dean Gillum's Primary School, we believe that improving school attendance is everyone's business. It is a shared responsibility by governors/trustees, all school staff, parents, pupils, the wider school community and multi-agency partners. We aim to always work in partnership with our parents.

Working together to improve school attendance states this should include the name and contact details of:

Role	Name	Contact Details
Senior Attendance Lead / Champion	Mr Ian Hickman (Executive Headteacher) and Mrs Holly Bulpitt (Head of School)	adminoffice@vernhamdeangillums.hants.sch.uk 01264 737241
Attendance Officer	Miss Nikki Pauk (Admin Officer)	adminoffice@vernhamdeangillums.hants.sch.uk 01264 737241
Named Governor / Trustee for Attendance		adminoffice@vernhamdeangillums.hants.sch.uk 01264 737241

The Governors of Vernham Dean Gillum's Primary School recognises the importance of school attendance and promotes it through the school's ethos and across its policies. They may take an active role in attendance improvement by:

- Setting high expectations of all leaders, staff, pupils, and parents so that children attend school every day and are safeguarded.
- Identifying a member of the Governing Body/Trustee to lead on attendance matters and ensuring that there is a named Senior Manager to lead on attendance.
- Prioritising attendance in strategies, such as raising attainment, behaviour and combatting bullying, special educational needs and disabilities, wellbeing, and safeguarding.
- Ensuring school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties by rigorously evaluating the effectiveness of the school's attendance procedures so that consistent attendance support is provided for all pupils.
- Ensuring the schools' attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent attendance support is provided for pupils who require it most by prioritising the staff and resources needed. This includes ensuring schools engage and work effectively with the local authority School Attendance Support Team and wider local partners and services.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data, discussing, challenging trends, and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Ensuring high aspirations are maintained for all pupils and processes for support are adapted to the individual needs of pupils including those with long term illnesses, special educational needs and disabilities, pupils with a social worker, those pupils under the Virtual School and pupils from cohorts with historically lower attendance such as those eligible for free school meals.
- Ensuring all school staff receive adequate training on attendance and that relevant staff have access to opportunities to share and learn from good practice in other schools.
- Ensuring that attendance data is shared with the Local Authority or Department for Education in line with statutory reporting deadlines.
- Reviewing the school's Attendance Policy on at least an annual basis, ensuring that the required resources are available to fully implement the policy, which is published and publicised regularly so that it is easily accessible to pupils, parents and staff.

The Senior Management Team at Vernham Dean Gillum's Primary School will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents.
- Form and maintain positive relationships with pupils and parents.

- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance, with good teaching and learning experiences, with a whole school culture that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve.
- Make sure all teaching and non-teaching staff know the importance of good attendance, are consistent in their communication with pupils and parents, and receive the training and professional development they need.
- Have a clear school attendance policy which all staff, pupils and parents understand. Monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed annually.
- Ensure the school have accurate, complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence.
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.
- Ensure that there is a named Senior Attendance Champion to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resource.
- Attend the termly school attendance supporting meetings with the local authority, focusing on those pupils with severe absence, making sure a regularly reviewed plan is in place.

All staff at Vernham Dean Gillum's Primary School will:

- Ensure that all children are registered accurately
- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents.
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents.
- Contribute to a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve.
- Know the importance of good attendance, are consistent in their communication with pupils and parents, and receive the training and professional development they need
- Liaise with Attendance Leaders on matters of attendance and punctuality
- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence.

The member of staff responsible for attendance will work to further develop relationships with families to bring about improved attendance. This may involve seeking multi-agency support by following the procedures set out in our Safeguarding Policy.

Vernham Dean Gillum's Primary School requests that parents:

- Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress.
- Ensure their child has regular attendance at school.
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment.
- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return, following this with a note wherever possible.
- Avoid unnecessary absences; for example, by making medical and dental appointments for outside of school hours.
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties with any aspect of their schoolwork or home and family life.
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance.
- Support the school by becoming involved in their child's education, forming a positive relationship with school, and acknowledging the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home.
- Maintain effective routines at home to support good attendance.
- Attend all meetings requested to discuss attendance issues.

Further information can be found at: [Attendance guidance for parents | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](https://www.hants.gov.uk/attendance-guidance-for-parents)

Pupils will:

- Be aware of the school's attendance policy and when and where they are required to attend. This will be communicated to them by school staff and parents / carers.
- Speak to their class teacher or another member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance.
- Attend all lessons ready to learn, with the appropriate learning tools requested and on time for the class.
- Follow the school procedure if they arrive late. This will help the school to monitor attendance and keep accurate records for the child's individual attendance. This is also vital for health and safety in the event of a school evacuation.

4. Categorising Absence and Attendance

When marking our registers, we will apply the national codes as outlined and regulated by the Department for Education guidance to accurately record and report attendance.

4.1 Leave of Absence

Since September 2013, changes to Government regulations and guidance mean that Headteachers can no longer authorise leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. Generally, the DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance. Leave of absence should not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours. All absences associated with a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation during term time will be marked as unauthorised within the register. Any parents known to have removed their child from school for the sole purpose of a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation may be referred to the Local Authority and be issued with a penalty notice fine or referred to the Local Authority to consider prosecution.

We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are times where a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child due to 'exceptional circumstances'. At Vernham Dean Gillum's Primary School the Headteacher will consider requests for absence in line with national attendance guidance and the individual circumstances of each case. Vernham Dean Gillum's Primary School will respond to all applications for leave of absence in writing.

Parents wishing to apply for leave of absence during term time must apply in writing to the Headteacher at least a month before the planned leave (see Appendix 2). If a written request for leave of absence is not completed and the leave is taken without a request being submitted, the leave will not be considered by the Headteacher, and it will be marked as unauthorised. Vernham Dean Gillum's Primary School will treat each application individually and discuss with you the circumstances of the application if required before a decision is made. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised.

A penalty notice request or a referral for prosecution may be submitted to the Local Authority should: -

- The parent fails to submit a leave of absence request in advance of taking the leave.
- An application for a leave of absence is not agreed by the Headteacher but is still taken.
- A longer period is taken more than the agreed number of days.

When absence is granted by the Headteacher, the parents will need to agree a date of return. If a pupil fails to return on the expected date and contact is not received from, or made with the parents, school will seek advice from the Local Authority. This could result in possible children missing from education procedures being instigated.

The 1996 Education Act also sets out the circumstances in which a pupil has not failed to attend school regularly and therefore the parent has not committed an offence. 4.2, 4.3, 4.4 are examples of these. The full list is in the Appendix 6.

4.2 Medical Appointments and absence due to illness

Parents should try to make appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where appointments during school time are unavoidable, we ask that parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment wherever possible. The pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. In most circumstances, a child should not miss a whole day at school for an appointment. If a pupil must attend a medical appointment during the school day, the parent must provide proof of the appointment to the school. The parent should collect their child from the school office and sign them out using the electronic signing in / out system]. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

In some circumstances, where a pupil's absence due to illness becomes frequent or prolonged, the school may request medical evidence to support the absence so that appropriate support can be provided.

Where a child has an emerging a pattern of non-attendance, we will discuss the reasons for absence with the child's parent. We will invite parents to attend a support meeting as an appropriate early intervention strategy. As part of this support, we may seek consent from parents and the pupil as appropriate to make a referral to the School Nursing Team and/or to liaise with the child's healthcare professional.

Where a pupil has a verified and chronic health condition, we will aim to work with parents to ensure children have access to education and provide appropriate support in line with [Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school](#) and Hampshire policies regarding supporting children with health issues, [Behaviour and attendance resources for schools | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](#). We will also consider whether an Individual Healthcare Plan is required.

4.3 Pupil Absence for the purposes of Religious Observance

Vernham Dean Gillum's Primary School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that, on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and is recognised as such by a relevant religious authority. Where this occurs, the school will consider either authorising the pupil absence or making special leave for religious observance. Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance> page 86

4.4 Parent travelling for occupational purposes

The pupil is a mobile child and their parent(s) is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. A mobile child is a child of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode and whose parent(s) is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place.

To ensure we can effectively support all our pupils, we ask that parents:

- Advise the school of their forthcoming travelling patterns as soon as these are known and before they happen; and
- Inform the school regarding proposed return dates.

4.5 Unauthorised Absence

Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and it is accepted as such by the school. The Headteacher will consider requests for absence in line with national attendance guidance and the individual circumstances of each case. Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include but are not limited to:

- A pupil's/family member's birthday.
- Shopping for uniforms.
- Arrangements or appointments for cutting the pupil's hair.
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes.
- An unwillingness to attend school, or inability to attend owing to inadequate personal/family organisation.
- A refusal to attend school on health grounds but where the pupil is considered well enough to attend.
- Absences taken without the authorisation of the school.

5. Our Procedures

5.1 Register Keeping and Recording

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended by 2016 regulations, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

For the purpose of this policy, the school defines: "Absence" as:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed.
- Not attending school for any reason.

"Regular" attendance as:

- Attendance at every session the school is open to pupils unless their absence has been authorised.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.55am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.55am and will be kept open until 9.10am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.00pm and will be kept open until 1.10pm.

Registers are legal records and all schools must preserve every entry in the attendance or admission register for 6 years from the date the data was entered. As the attendance register is a record of the pupils present at the time it was taken, the register should only routinely be amended where the reason for absence cannot be established at the time it is taken and it is subsequently necessary to correct the entry. Where amendments are made, all schools must ensure the register shows the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date on which the amendment was made, and the name of the person who made the amendment. On each occasion the register is taken the appropriate national attendance and absence code must be entered for every pupil (of both compulsory and non-compulsory school age) whose name is listed in the admission register at the time. The codes enable schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a

consistent way and are used to collect statistics. The data helps schools, local authorities, and the government gain a greater understanding of the delivery of education and the level of, and reason for, absence.

Reporting to parents

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels and parents have access to their child's attendance record through the Arbor app. An end of year attendance report is sent to parents.

5.2 Late Arrival at School

At Vernham Dean Gillum's Primary School all pupils are expected to arrive on time for every day of the school year. The school day begins at 8.55am. We advise all parents to ensure their child is on site prior to this, school opens at 8:45am. The school register will be taken at 8:55am. All pupils arriving after this time are required to report to the main office with their parents, who will be expected to sign their child into the electronic signing in / out system and provide a reason for their absence. If their arrival is before 9.10am it will be recorded as late - L code (Late before the close of register).

The school register will officially close at 9.10am. All pupils arriving on or after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the session - U code (Late after the close of register). This is categorised as an unauthorised absence for the session (the school day has a morning and an afternoon session). Parents will be contacted to discuss any patterns of late arrival. Repeated arrival after the close of registration will result in appropriate interventions being instigated and may also result in a penalty notice being issued or prosecution.

If a child needs support to transition from home to school in the morning, then this will be supported by school in an appropriate way.

5.3 Expected absence procedure for parents:

A parent has a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly. If a child is unavoidably absent from school parents are expected to ring the school office on 01264 737241 or email the school office on adminoffice@vernhamdeangillums.hants.sch.uk on the morning of the first day of absence and on each subsequent day, identifying the reason for absence and the expected date of return. If no contact is received, then absence protocols will be instigated.

If a child is absent, we will:

- Telephone you after close of register at 9.10am if we have not heard from you and where no reason for absence is known.
- If there is still no contact made from the pupil's parents / carers, a further telephone call home will be made again that morning. If no response can be gained, the child's named emergency contact will be telephoned.
- If school cannot contact a parent a home visit may be carried out.

For further information, see our Safeguarding Policy.

In certain circumstances the school may also:

- Visit the home of the pupil.
- Write to the parents of a pupil to highlight attendance or punctuality issues.
- Invite parents to discuss how school can support the family to make improvement.
- Refer to Inclusion Support Service for support, guidance, and advice.
- Refer to the Local Authority for joint enquiries to be made to establish the whereabouts of the child through [Inclusion Support Service \(ISS\) | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](#) and [Behaviour and attendance resources for schools | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](#)
- Refer to the Local Authority to consider issuing a penalty notice or to consider prosecution when all other interventions have failed, or an unauthorised leave of absence has been taken.
- Refer the matter to an appropriate external agency for multi-agency support, such as implementing a Family Support Plan or consulting with the Children's Social Care or the police, where there are safeguarding concerns.

5.4 Attendance Rewards & Interventions

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between our school, parents and our children. The Home/School agreement contains details of how we will work with parents and our expectations of what parents will need to do to ensure their child achieves good attendance.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Monitor school attendance each term
- Formally report to parents annually on how their child is performing in school and what their attendance and punctuality rate is
- Celebrate good attendance and punctuality
- Monitor the attendance and punctuality of each child and speak with parents at Parents Evening if individual attendance falls below 90% or lateness to school is having a detrimental impact on the child or others in the child's class
- Send follow up letters where attendance and punctuality do not show signs of improvement
- Arrange face to face meetings with parents when the attendance continues to be below the 90% expectation

Monitor and Analyse attendance

The Vernham Dean Gillum's Primary School will:

- Monitor and analyse weekly attendance patterns and trends and deliver intervention and support in a targeted way to pupils and families. This should go beyond headline attendance percentages and should look at individual pupils, cohorts and year groups (including their punctuality) across the school.
- Use this analysis to facilitate discussions with teachers, pupils, parents and leaders (including any special educational needs coordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads).
- Undertake frequent individual level analysis to identify the pupils who need support and focus staff efforts on developing targeted actions for those cases.
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full year data to identify patterns and trends. This should include analysis of pupils and cohorts and identifying patterns in uses of certain codes, days of poor attendance and where appropriate, subjects which have low lesson attendance.
- Benchmark attendance data (at whole school, year group and cohort level) against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement.
- Devise specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data.
- Monitor in the data the impact of school wide attendance efforts, including any specific strategies implemented. The findings should then be used to evaluate approaches or inform future strategies.
- Provide data and reports to support the work of the board or Governing Body and local authority when appropriate.

At Vernham Dean Gillum's Primary School we will investigate any pupils who are on track to be persistently absent (PA) and will not wait until attendance is below 90%.

"Persistent absenteeism" (PA) as:

- Missing 10% or more of schooling across the year for any reason.

"Severe absence" (SA) as:

- Missing 50% or more of schooling across the year for any reason.

5.5 Attendance Support and Escalation Pathway

Vernham Dean Gillum's Primary School follows a staged approach to supporting and improving attendance. The school will prioritise early support for pupils and families and will work in partnership with parents to address barriers to attendance wherever possible.

Stage 1 - Universal Support

Good attendance is promoted for all pupils through:

- a welcoming and inclusive school environment
- positive relationships between staff, pupils and families
- high quality teaching and learning
- clear communication with parents about attendance expectations
- recognition and celebration of good attendance and punctuality

Attendance data is regularly monitored to identify any emerging concerns.

Stage 2 - Early Intervention

Where attendance begins to decline or patterns of absence are identified, the school may:

- contact parents to discuss concerns
- monitor attendance more closely
- provide advice and guidance to families
- offer practical support where appropriate

The aim at this stage is to identify barriers early and prevent further absence.

Stage 3 - Targeted Support

Where attendance concerns continue, the school may implement targeted support which may include:

- inviting parents to attend an attendance meeting
- developing an individual attendance support plan
- involving appropriate school staff such as the SENDCo or pastoral staff
- referring to external services where appropriate

The support plan will be regularly reviewed to monitor progress.

Stage 4 - Formal Intervention

If attendance does not improve despite the support offered, the school may refer the case to the Local Authority for further action.

This may include consideration of legal intervention in line with national guidance.

5.5 Support Systems

At Vernham Dean Gillum's Primary School we recognise that poor attendance can be an indication of difficulties in a family's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents are encouraged to inform school of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and/or behaviour in school, for example: bereavement, divorce/separation, emerging health concerns. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

We also recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance. The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance based on the individual needs and circumstances of the child.

Strategies we may use to support you include:

- Individualised morning transition into school
- Reduced hours timetable
- Support from our Emotional Literacy Support Assistant
- Support using cognitive behaviour approaches

To plan the correct support, we will always invite parents and sometimes pupils (depending on their age) to attend a meeting to discuss the concerns and devise a plan to support the child's regular attendance. Support offered to families will be child-centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils.

5.6 Persistent Absence, Severe Absence and the use of legal interventions

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when their attendance drops to 90% and below for any reason. Over a full academic year this would be 38 sessions (19 days). Absence at this level could cause considerable damage to a child's educational outcomes.

A pupil becomes a 'severe absentee' (SA) when their attendance drops to 50% and below for any reason. Over a full academic year this would be 190 sessions (95 days). Absence at this level is causing considerable damage to a child's educational outcomes.

If a pupil's attendance continues to decline and support offered by the school has not resulted in sustained improvement, the school may consider requesting further intervention from the Local Authority.

The school will always seek to work with families to remove barriers to attendance before considering legal intervention.

However, where a child's attendance continues to be a concern and parents do not engage with the support offered, the school may refer the matter to the Local Authority for consideration of legal action.

Legal interventions available to the Local Authority may include:

- Issuing a Penalty Notice
- Applying for an Education Supervision Order
- Prosecuting parents under Section 444 of the [Education Act 1996](#)

Failure to secure regular school attendance is an offence under the Education Act 1996.

Parents found guilty of this offence may face:

- A fine of up to £1,000 under Section 444(1), or
- A fine of up to £2,500 and/or up to three months' imprisonment under Section 444(1A) where the offence is considered more serious.

Legal action will normally only be considered after appropriate support has been offered to families and where attendance continues to be a concern.

6. Related Policies

To underpin the values and ethos of our school and our intent to ensure that pupils at our school attend school regularly and reach their full potential, the following policies are integral to this approach:

- Safeguarding including child protection.
- Medical needs.
- Admissions.
- Anti-bullying.
- Special educational needs.
- Teaching and learning.
- Behaviour

7. Statutory Framework

This policy has been devised in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

- [Working together to improve school attendance, DfE](#)
- [School attendance parental responsibility measures, DfE](#)
- [Children missing education, DfE](#)
- [Keeping children safe in education, DfE](#)
- [Working together to safeguard children, DfE](#)

8. Appendices

Appendix 1: Example leave of absence request form

Request to authorise absence from school due to exceptional circumstances

Schools are only able to authorise absence from school in exceptional circumstances. In making a request for an authorised absence from school you will need to explain why the circumstances are exceptional. Please note: There is no general right to authorised absence for a family holiday. If you take your child out of school without permission the absence will be unauthorised, and the local authority will consider legal action.

You are advised not to make any arrangements until your request has been considered.

Section A - to the headteacher, I wish to apply for

Child's Name: _____ Class: _____

To be authorised as absent from school (please include dates and time):

From _____ to _____ (inclusive dates)

If your child has siblings that are also applying for a leave of absence, please enter their name and school below:

Child's name(s): _____ School(s): _____

Section B - Please explain why you are applying for an authorised absence and the circumstances which make your **application exceptional**; and therefore, the leave cannot be taken within the normal 13 weeks holiday your child has from school. If you are requesting authorisation to attend a specific event please confirm the date of the event and explain your travel arrangements. If you require additional space, please continue on the other side of the page

Section C - I am the parent/carer with whom the pupil normally resides. The information I have given on this form is correct.

Signature (parent/carer): _____ Date: _____

Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 have been amended (as of 1 September 2013) to prohibit the proprietor (headteacher) of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

Section D - for school use only.

Tick as appropriate.

Request approved for ___ number of days from the dates and times _____

A personal discussion with you is requested. Please contact: _____

Request not approved as the circumstances are not considered to constitute an exceptional reason and/or the impact of this absence will affect your child's educational progress.

PLEASE NOTE: This leave of absence form serves as a Warning to parent/carer. Any unauthorised absence during this period may be subject to a Penalty Notice OR may result in a prosecution if two previous penalty notices have been issued in a rolling three-year period

A Penalty Notice may be issued per parent/carer, per child (i.e. if two parents have two children this may result in four Penalty Notices – two Penalty Notices per parent).

Headteacher: _____ Date: _____

Current attendance rate: _____

Continuation of section B (if required):

Appendix 2: Example reply to leave of absence request

Dear Parent's name,

Re: Absence during term time - Child Name (Child DOB)

Thank you for your application for absence in term time for Child's name. Whilst we appreciate your circumstances, Vernham Dean Gillum's Primary School do not approve any absences during term time unless they are due to exceptional circumstances as per the guidance from the Department of Education.

The rationale behind this decision is that the Government has provided evidence that satisfactory progress at school is highly dependent on attendance. Vernham Dean Gillum's Primary School works closely with the Inclusion Support Service and if you choose to take your child out of school for the above unauthorised leave, we will notify the local authority and further action including legal action may be considered.

Please note that such a Penalty is issued to each parent for each child taken out of school. Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with the [national framework for attendance enforcement](#) introduced in 2024. Parents have a duty to ensure their child's regular attendance at school and failure to do so is an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

I have noted the dates that Child Name will be absent from Vernham Dean Gillum's Primary School, Dates of leave and the registers will be marked with the G code (unauthorised family holiday) for this period.

If you would like to discuss the matter further, please contact the school on 01264 737241

Yours sincerely



Mr Ian Hickman
Executive Headteacher

Appendix 3: Attendance Policy Quick Guide for Parents

Attendance Policy Quick Guide for Parents

We aim for all pupils to achieve the highest possible level of attendance and encourage pupils to attend school every day unless they are genuinely unable to do so.

You can support your child to have excellent attendance by taking these steps:

- Ensure your child arrives on time for school every day and is ready to learn. Arriving after registration is recorded as an unauthorised absence. Pupils must be in school by 8:55 am.
- If your child appears to be only slightly unwell, send them in to school. We have staff who will contact you if their condition deteriorates.
- Book any medical appointments outside of school hours. If this is unavoidable, please book for as late in the afternoon as possible and inform the school of appointments in advance.
- Supply a copy of the appointment card or hospital letter if your child has an appointment during school hours.

Being in school is important to your child's academic achievement, wellbeing, and wider development. There is evidence to suggest that regular school attendance is a key mechanism in supporting children and young people's educational, economic and social outcomes. Schools can facilitate positive peer relationships, which contributes to better mental health and wellbeing.

Attendance at school is crucial to prepare young people for a successful transition into adulthood, and to support their longer-term economic and social participation in society. There is also evidence that students with the highest attendance throughout their time in school gain the best GCSE and A-level results - this includes primary school attendance.

If your child becomes reluctant to go to school or you need help, please contact the school immediately; we are more likely to be able to work together to solve any problems if we act early.

Attendance Ladder



On the day' absences: what should I do if my child is not 'fit' to go into school?

On each day your child is unfit to come to school, please report this absence. You can ring the school office on 01264 737241 or email the school office on adminoffice@vernhamdeangillums.hants.sch.uk to let us know. In the message you must leave your child's full name, their class and give the specific reason for absence. The information you give will be recorded on our official register.

Leave of Absence

There may be exceptional circumstances where you need to request a leave of absence for your child. Please use our 'Leave of absence request' form to make these types of requests. The form should be submitted in advance of the leave of absence, via the school office. You will receive a letter in response, to advise if the request has been granted or declined.

Punctuality

Pupils are expected to arrive on time for school in the morning and for every lesson during the day. Your child is late to school if they are not in the classroom by 8:55 am.

The Government remains very clear that no child should miss school apart from in exceptional circumstances and schools must continue to take steps to reduce absence to support children's attainment. I hope we can count on your support in this matter.

Please contact the school office if you require any support with ensuring your child's regular school attendance.

Appendix 4: New Government Attendance Rules for Families

Penalty Notices are issued by the Local Authority in accordance with national guidance issued by the Department for Education.

A Penalty Notice may be issued where:

- A child has been taken out of school for an unauthorised term-time leave of absence
- There is persistent late arrival after the close of registration
- A pupil has a pattern of unauthorised absence
- Parents fail to engage with attendance support offered by the school

Under the national framework for penalty notices introduced in 2024:

First Offence (within a 3-year period)

- £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days
- £160 if paid within 28 days

Second Offence (within 3 years)

- £160 per parent, per child payable within 28 days

Third Offence (within 3 years)

- The Local Authority is likely to consider prosecution through the Magistrates' Court.

Penalty Notices are issued per parent, per child. For example, if two parents take two children out of school without authorisation, this may result in four penalty notices.

Failure to pay a Penalty Notice may result in prosecution for the original offence of failing to ensure regular school attendance.

The school will always seek to work with families to remove barriers to attendance before considering enforcement action.

Appendix 5: Attendance codes

The following codes are taken from Working Together to Improve School Attendance

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 approved by the school. Schools must also record the nature of the approved educational activity.	Examples of nature of activity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attending taster days at school / college • Attending courses at school / college • Attending unregistered alternative provision arrange by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered.
K	Attending education provision arranged by the Local Authority. Schools must also record the nature of the provision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attending courses at school / college • Attending unregistered alternative provision such as home tutoring
P	Sporting activity	The pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is a sporting activity
V	Educational visit or trip	An educational visit or trip arranged by or on behalf of the school and supervised by a member of school staff.
W	Attending work experience	The pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is work experience provided under the arrangements made by a local authority or the school as part of the pupil's education.

Code	Definition	Scenario
Absent – leave of absence		
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances. Generally a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstances.	Schools must judge each application individually considering the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind each request. Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days a pupil can be absent from school.
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.	All schools can grant leaves of absence for pupils to undertake employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours.
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable	All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs.
E	Excluded	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made.
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	The pupil is unable to attend due to illness (both physical and mental health related). Schools should advise parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness.
J1	Interview	Attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution.
M	Medical appointment	Attending a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	The pupil is absent on a day that is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body the parent(s) belong to.

S	Study leave	Studying for a public examination. Must be used sparingly with revision opportunities in school.
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	The pupil is a mobile child and their parent(s) is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them.
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil is not required to attend school.	

Code	Definition	Scenario
Absent - unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements	This is linked to transport not other access arrangements
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available.	The school is not within walking distance of the pupil's home and the transport to and from the school that is normally provided for the pupil by the school or local authority is not available.
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel	
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed.	
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed.	Adverse weather
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention.	In police detention, remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or detained under a sentence of detention.
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law	
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	An emergency has prevented the pupil from attending. The unavoidable cause must be something that affects the pupil, not just the parent.

Code	Definition	Scenario
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Holiday not granted by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with the code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	Where no reason for the absence is established or the school is not satisfied with the reason given
U	Arrival after registration	A pupil has arrived late after the register has closed but before the end of the session.

Code	Definition	Scenario
Administrative Codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	To enable schools to set up registers in advance of pupils joining the school to ease administration burdens.
#	Planned whole school closure	Whole school closure due to half-term / bank holiday / INSET day / use of whole school as polling station