

**VERULAM SCHOOL**



**Attendance Policy**

**2019**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Reviewed byHR Committee |  27/06/19 |
| Review Period | 3 Yearly |
| Date of Next Review | June 2022 |
| P A RamseyHeadmaster | J ActonChair of Governors |

**1 OUR BELIEF**

**At Verulam School we believe that excellent attendance is an essential part of a successful school career and accordingly we attach great importance to promoting high levels of regular attendance by all our pupils.**

**Our target for attendance is 97% and we become concerned when students fall below 95%. The DfE regards students achieving less than 90% as persistent absentees.**

**We believe that it is vital for the School to work closely with its pupils, their parents and carers to ensure high standards of attendance and punctuality. Each party has to undertake its responsibilities seriously.**

**1.1 The school will:**

* publish league tables regularly to promote good attendance.
* keep clear and accurate records of attendance
* follow up all absences promptly
* encourage regular attendance and communicate its importance to pupils
* work closely with parents to ensure regular attendance
* work closely with our Home School Attendance officer in monitoring attendance and supporting reluctant attendees
* promote the importance of punctuality for pupils both to school and to individual lessons
* provide parents with information on their child’s attendance on a regular basis
* provide termly reward trips for boys with outstanding attendance
* not authorise absence for holidays except for circumstances judged as exceptional by the Headteacher
* warn parents that they are at risk of legal action / fines where attendance continues to be unsatisfactory
* When appropriate the Penalty Notice Process will be instigated for unauthorised absences (See appendix A)

**1.2 The pupils will:**

* ensure that they attend regularly and on time during all aspects of school life
* accept responsibility for being punctual at registrations and all lessons
* keep to the agreed procedures for signing in on occasions when they have missed registration

**1.3 Parents will:**

* ensure that their children arrive at school correctly dressed and properly equipped to learn.
* be responsible for their child's regular and punctual attendance at school
* be responsible for informing the school of the reason for an absence as soon as possible by telephoning the absence line on the first day of absence. Detailed guidance on absence procedures is distributed to parents annually.
* request of the school any absences known about in advance in writing, giving as much notice as possible.
* Request leave of absence in only the most exceptional circumstances – not family holidays.
* be responsible for arranging all medical/dental appointments outside school hours whenever possible.

**2 STATUTORY FRAMEWORK**

The Education Act, 1996, requires parents to ensure that their child, if of compulsory school age, attends regularly at the school where he/she is a registered pupil. The period of school age is defined as “Until the last Friday of June in the academic year when the pupil becomes 16.”

**The school is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. Only if the school is satisfied as to the validity of the explanation offered by the letter/message will the absence be authorised.**

**3 REGISTRATION**

3.1 Registers will be called at 8.40am and 1.40pm. After this time pupils will be marked as late.

3.2 Arrival after 9.05 am or 1.45pm will not be authorised by the school until a legitimate reason has been confirmed by the boy's parents.

If the school does not accept the reason being given for a late arrival under these circumstances, the absence will be counted as an unauthorised.

3.4 Absences will be authorised on receipt of a satisfactory explanation from home.

3.5 Attendance at supervised educational activities such as Work Experience or Sports Activities will be recorded as **"Approved Educational Activity"** and will count as present.

**4 REGISTER-KEEPING**

4.1 The form tutor is responsible for completing the register at each session. When absence is unexplained we will contact home.

4.2 The attendance team is responsible for compiling data and figures. Heads of Year have monthly meetings with the Home School Attendance Officer to discuss data and monitor attendance of all students

**5 REGISTRATION**

5.1 At both morning and afternoon registrations it is a requirement of the school that the member of staff taking the register calls out the name of every pupil as opposed to "counting heads" or calling register numbers. It is also expected that the calling of the register will take place in an orderly way with all pupils seated and in silence. This will minimise the risk of errors being made at this point. If a Form tutor has concerns over the validity of an absence note or is uncertain as to whether to authorise an absence, the matter should be referred to their Head of Year. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and other Senior Staff where relevant, to inform tutors when arrangements are made for pupils to receive educational provision off site or of any other special arrangements which need to be authorised.

**6 ATTENDANCE AT LESSONS**

6.1 All teachers are responsible for keeping registers of attendance at their lessons. In the event of a lesson being "covered" by another member of staff or a supply teacher, a register for the group will be supplied along with work either by the regular teacher or the Head of Faculty when the absence is unplanned.

6.2 Teachers should be aware of pupils they teach who have a record of unauthorised absence or post-registration truancy and should notify the School Office as soon as they have a concern over an absence from a particular lesson. A list of students is regularly updated for staff to contact the school office if they are absent.

**7 PUNCTUALITY**

7.1 Pupils who are persistently late to school or to lessons will be monitored closely by the Pastoral team. If no improvement is then forthcoming, parents will be asked to attend a meeting at school. Pupils may well be asked to make up the time missed by attending a school detention or in more extreme cases serve a fixed term exclusion.

7.2 Clear procedures for lateness are contained in the Behaviour for Learning System.

**8 AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE**

8.1 It is the responsibility of the school to decide whether an absence is to be authorised or unauthorised. Verulam School will decide on how an absence is to be recorded and will follow the guidance laid down by the DFE and HCC.

**9 LIAISON WITH Home School Attendance Officer**

9.1 At Verulam we work closely with the school's Home School Attendance Officer. Meetings with Heads of Year are arranged on a monthly basis. The school's registers and individual pupil's cases form the basis of discussion at these meetings. The HSAO is actively involved in advising the school on strategies to adopt and in contacting and meeting with parents and pupils.

**10 HOLIDAYS**

10.1 Parents at Verulam are regularly reminded of the importance of attendance and of keeping absences to a minimum. Accordingly, parents are strongly discouraged from taking holidays during term-time.

**11 STRATEGIES FOR ENCOURAGING GOOD ATTENDANCE**

Verulam School tries to ensure a high level of attendance through a number of direct and indirect means.

**At Verulam we:**

* try to establish positive relationships between pupils and teachers, home and school
* encourage pupils to treat each other with respect and tolerance
* create an ethos of good order where pupils can learn in safety and in an appropriate environment
* try to make lessons interesting and stimulating
* try to involve pupils actively in lessons and in the decision-making processes of school management
* support pupils through transfer from their previous school and integrate them at Verulam with care and sensitivity
* keep accurate records of attendance and punctuality and monitor our records with care
* keep parents informed of their son's record of attendance and punctuality
* notify parents when there are concerns over attendance or punctuality
* reward excellent attendance via rewards, trips, commendations and certificates
* award certificates for special achievements over attendance
* offer support for pupils who have difficulties over attendance including counselling through pastoral staff, the school nurse or HSAO
* regularly remind pupils and parents of the importance of excellent attendance
* take punitive action to reinforce the importance of attendance - a truancy from school or from a lesson will normally be punished with a Saturday detention
* set specific targets for individual pupils who need to improve their attendance

**Policy Reviewed and Approved by Governors’ HR Committee 27th June 2019**

**Date of next review: June 2020**

**Appendix A**

**Penalty Notices**

**Unauthorised Absence**

**(Truancy)**

**Hertfordshire Code of Conduct**

**And**

**Guidance for Schools**

**and Academies**

**February 2016**

1. **Local Code of Conduct – Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Absence (Truancy)**

**Introduction**

Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 empowers the police, designated Local Authority Officers and Headteachers and Deputy and Assistant Headteachers authorised by them to issue penalty notices in cases of unauthorised absence (truancy) of pupils of statutory school age.

The government requires Local Authorities to issue a Code of Conduct to which all

parties involved must adhere. Penalty notices may be issued only in accordance with the terms of the Code of Conduct.

The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to ensure that:

* the powers are applied consistently and fairly
* duplicate notices are not issued
* issuing a notice does not conflict with proceedings proposed or being taken by the
* Local Authority under section 444 of the Education Act 1996
* suitable arrangements are in place for the administration of the penalty notice

scheme.

**The Law**

Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 added sections 444A and 444B to

section 444 of the Education Act 1996. These sections introduced penalty notices as analternative to prosecution and enable parents to discharge potential liability for that

offence by paying a penalty. The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations

2007 set out the framework for the operation of the scheme.

All those defined as a parent under section 576 of the Education Act 1996 are considered to be parents for the purpose of these provisions.

As with prosecutions under section 444 of the Education Act 1996 a penalty notice may be issued to each parent liable for the offence in respect of each child.

Penalty notices apply to parents of children of compulsory school age who are registered pupils at maintained schools, academies, Pupil Referral Units (Education Support Centres), City Technology Colleges, Studio Schools, UTCs and any other alternative education provision arranged under section 19 of The Education Act 1996.

Parents cannot be prosecuted for the offence for which the penalty notice was issued until after the final deadline for payment has passed and the penalty remains unpaid. Parents cannot be convicted of that offence if the penalty is paid in accordance with the notice.

The Local Authority will retain any revenue from penalty notices to cover the

administration of the scheme and any legal actions arising from it.

**Rationale**

Regular and punctual attendance is a legal requirement for pupils registered at schools,academies or other maintained or alternative provision.

A penalty notice may be a suitable intervention in circumstances of unauthorised

absence where the school considers a parent is capable of securing their child’s regular attendance. It may be particularly effective at an early stage before attendance problems become entrenched.

**Circumstances in which a penalty notice may be issued**

* Penalty notices may only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence
* The pupil must have at least **15 sessions** (half days) unauthorised absence in the current and/or previous term
* The school must have sent a formal warning to the parent
* The school/academy/police or Attendance Improvement Officer considers that

issuing a penalty notice could avoid further absence

* Issuing a penalty notice does not conflict with any other legal action being taken
* A maximum of **two** separate penalty notices will be issued to a parent within any twelve month period
* Penalty notices will be issued for pupils of compulsory school age, up to the end of the spring term of year 11
* A penalty notice will not be issued in respect of a pupil who is looked after by the Local Authority without the prior agreement of the Central Attendance and

Employment Support Team Manager on behalf of the County Lead for Attendance

**Responsibilities of the Local Authority for issuing penalty notices**

Primary responsibility for issuing penalty notices rests with the Local Authority and may not be delegated. Schools, academies and the police may issue penalty notices if they wish to do so but any notices issued by them **must** comply with the Local Authority Code of Conduct and a copy of any penalty notice issued must be provided to the Local Authority.

In Hertfordshire all parties agree that the Integrated Service for Learning Attendance

Teams administer the scheme and issue penalty notices on behalf of police, schools,

academies and other settings to ensure fairness and consistency and in the event that subsequent legal action may need to be taken.

The Local Authority receives applications to issue penalty notices from schools,

academies and the police. Penalty notices will be issued provided that:

* the circumstances of the absence meet the requirements of the Code of Conduct
* the information is provided in the specified manner
* the request is received not more than 10 school days after the final absence cited

The Local Authority retains revenue from the scheme to cover the costs of issuing and enforcing notices and prosecuting recipients who do not pay.

**Appealing against the issue of penalty notices**

There is no statutory right of appeal once a penalty notice has been issued. The Local Authority may withdraw a notice if it has been issued incorrectly. If the penalty notice has been issued in accordance with Hertfordshire’s Code of Conduct there is no facility to overturn the decision to issue the notice.

**Effect of issuing penalty notices**

If the penalty is not paid in full before the expiry of the period for paying it the Local

Authority named in the notice shall either institute proceedings against the recipient for the offence or shall withdraw the notice.

**Payment of penalty notices**

The amount payable is £60 (per parent) if paid within 21 days or £120 (per parent) if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt of the notice.

Separate notices are issued to each parent in respect of each child.

Penalty notices are sent by first class post and are deemed to have been received on the second day after posting.

Arrangements for payment are detailed on the penalty notice and payment by cheque, postal order and by debit/credit card is accepted.

**Withdrawal of penalty notices**

The Local Authority may withdraw penalty notices in circumstances where it determines that the notice:

* has not been issued in accordance with the Code of Conduct
* ought not to have been issued
* ought not to have been issued to the person named as the recipient
* has not been paid but it is not appropriate to prosecute the recipient for the

offence

**Prosecution of unpaid penalty notices**

If the notice remains unpaid after the expiry of the payment period and the Local

Authority has not withdrawn the notice, the Local Authority will prosecute for the offence under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

All decisions to prosecute (or not) rest with the Local Authority

1. **Responsibilities of schools and academies for penalty notices**

Before using penalty notices schools and academies must have the agreement of their governing bodies.

Schools and academies should publicise their use of penalty notices, for example

through their websites, newsletters and attendance policy (if used) to ensure that parents are aware of the consequences of failing to ensure their child’s regular attendance.

Schools and academies must establish who is liable to receive any penalty notice. If it is both parents, then any correspondence should be addressed to both parents. This is important because penalty notices will be issued to each parent separately.

A formal letter advising parents of their child’s unauthorised absence and warning that a penalty notice will be issued if the unauthorised absence reaches 15 sessions in the current and or previous term is sent by the school/academy. A suggested letter is included as **appendix A**. If this letter is not used any letter sent must include the

information as in the suggested letter.

If the unauthorised absence continues and subsequently reaches 15 sessions within the requisite time period and the school/academy decides to apply to the Local Authority to issue a penalty notice they must do so within 10 school days of the final absence.

Applications for penalty notices must be made using the standard application form

**appendix B** and include a copy of the warning letter sent to parents, a copy of the

attendance certificate **appendix C** signed and dated by the head teacher and a copy of the registration certificate for the relevant period.

Applications should be sent to the Attendance Team Manager for the area in which the child goes to school.

Penalty notices will be issued if they meet the requirements of the Code of Conduct.

Schools/academies should be aware that if the penalty remains unpaid and the Local

Authority prosecute for the offence they will be required to complete a witness statement for the court and if the parent contests the case may be required to attend court as a prosecution witness.

There is no statutory right of appeal against the issuing of a penalty notice. Therefore it is important that all information is accurate and parents have been warned they are at risk of a penalty notice being issued against them. A sample penalty notice is included as **appendix D**

**Appendix A**

Suggested penalty notice warning letter

Dear

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007

Name of pupil ---------------- Registered at --------------------- (school name)

This is a formal warning that you are at risk of being in breach of the regulations stated above. -------------- (child’s name) has been absent from school and the absence(s) has/have not been authorised.

Should the number of unauthorised absence sessions reach 15 or more in the current and/or previous term you will be in breach of the regulations and the Local Authority may issue you with a penalty notice.

The notice requires you to pay a penalty of £60 within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. Each parent is liable to pay a separate penalty and penalty notices are issued for each child to whom the absence relates.

Payment of the penalty enables you to discharge your liability for the offence for the

period in question of failing to ensure your child’s regular attendance at school. (section 444, The Education Act 1996).

Failure to pay the penalty means you are liable to prosecution for the offence, by

summons to appear before the local Magistrates Court. On conviction you may be liable for a fine of up to £1,000 per parent. This is a criminal offence which carries a criminal record. The Local Authority will ask for costs of £125 to be awarded against you.

If you fail to ensure your child attends regularly and 15 sessions of unauthorised absence is reached a penalty notice will be issued. **You will not receive a further warning before the penalty is imposed.**

If you believe there are legitimate reasons for your child’s absence please contact me within 5 working days to discuss the matter.

Yours sincerely

-------------------- (Name)

-------------------- (Designation)

**Appendix B**

**Hertfordshire County Council**

**Children’s Services**

**Integrated Services for Learning**

**Attendance Team**

**Application for a Penalty Notice to be issued**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name of personrequesting issue ofPenalty Notice: |  |
| Position: (Head, Deputyor Assistant HeadTeacher only) |  |
| Contact details: |  |
|  |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Pupil’s Name: |  |
| Date of Birth: |  |
| School/Academy: |  |
| Parent(s) **full** name(s): |  |
| Address: |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
| Telephone: |  |

|  |
| --- |
| Date of warning letter: |
| **Please attach copies of:**1. Warning letter2. Certificate of attendance signed by the head teacher3. Up to date SIMS (or equivalent) printout***Please note that applications will not be processed if the necessary******information is not attached*** |

**The following sections must be completed**

1. Information on supportive measures offered to family. Please include dates of any

meetings held with parents to address poor attendance.

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2. Information on the parent(s) failure to co-operate:

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3. Has the pupil been referred to or discussed with the Attendance Improvement Officer? Yes/No – if yes, please give details

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Any further information**:**

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Please send this application **within 10 school days of the last absence** to the

Attendance Team Manager for the area where the school is based.

**Watford, Three Rivers, Bushey and Radlett Attendance Team**

Attendance Team Manager, Post Point AP 1102, Apsley 2, Brindley Way,

Hemel Hempstead HP3 9BF

**St Albans and Dacorum Attendance Team**

Attendance Team Manager, Post Point AP 2115 Apsley 2, Brindley Way,

Hemel Hempstead HP3 9BF

**Welwyn Hatfield and Hertsmere Attendance Team**

Attendance Team Manager, Post Point MU204, 2nd floor, Mundells,

Welwyn Garden City AL7 1FT

**North Herts and Stevenage Attendance Team**

Attendance Team Manager, SFAR114, 1st Floor, Farnham House,

Six Hills Way, Stevenage SG1 2FQ

**East Herts and Broxbourne Attendance Team**

Attendance Team Manager, Room 50-61, Lower Ground Floor, County Hall,

Pegs Lane, Hertford SG13 8DF

**Appendix C**

**Certificate of Attendance**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name of Child:** | **Date of Birth:** |
| **School/Academy Attended:** | **Form:** |
| **Parent/Guardian:** | **Address:** |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Week****Commencing** | **Mon** | **Tues** | **Wed** | **Thurs** | **Fri** | **Possible attendance** | **Authorised absences** | **Unauthorised absences** |
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| --- | --- | --- |
| Present | Absent | School closed |
| AM | PM | Authorised | Unauthorised |
|  |  |  |  |  |

Presented under the provisions of Section 566 of the Education Act 1996

I hereby certify that the above named child is a registered pupil at (name of

school/academy) and that the above is an accurate record of his/her attendance.

Signed: Head teacher Date:

**Appendix D**

**PENALTY NOTICE**

**S.444A EDUCATION ACT 1996**

**Please read these notes carefully**

PART 1

If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence under s.444 Education Act 1996.

To: Parent name

Of: Parent address

You are the parent of <<pupil name>> (called in this notice “the pupil”) who is a

registered pupil at << school name>>

Between (date) and (date) the pupil failed to attend regularly at <<name of school>>.

This notice gives you the opportunity to pay a penalty fine instead of being prosecuted for the offence given above. The amount of the penalty is £60 / £120 in accordance with the table overleaf. If you pay this penalty within the time limits set out below, no further action will be taken against you in connection with the offence set out in this notice.

Payment should be made within 21 days. If paid after 21 days but within 28 days the

penalty is doubled to £120. For payment details please see over.

**No reminders will be sent. If payment is not received by ( ) you will be liable for**

**prosecution for the offence and could be subject to a fine of up to £1,000.**

This notice is issued by:

Date of issue……………………………………………….

Signed…………………………………………………………

PART 2

Pupil’s Name:

Please complete the following and return this notice with your payment to County Lead for Attendance, Room 134, Hertfordshire County Council, County Hall, Hertford SG13 8DF

Name: ………………………………………………………………………………

Address: ……………………………………………………………………………

I attach payment in the sum of £ ………………………………………………..

Signed: ……………………………………………………………………………..

Date: **………………………………………………………………………………..**

Payment of **£60** should be received by ( ). **No reminders will be sent.** After this Date the penalty rises to **£120**. This should be received by ( ) after this date you will be liable for prosecution for the offence and could be subject to a fine of up to **£1,000.**

A cheque or postal order (made out to Hertfordshire County Council) should be sent to Room 134, Hertfordshire County Council, County Hall, Hertford SG13 8DF.

If you wish to pay by Debit/Credit Card please contact 01992 555407/8 quoting

742300/26084, your child’s name, school and the reference number <<IES reference

number>> Without this information your payment may not be processed correctly and you risk prosecution in relation to the non-payment of this fine.

**Note**

**1. Local Code of Conduct**

This notice is issued in accordance with a local Code of Conduct drawn up by Hertfordshire County Council. Any correspondence about the code should be addressed to: the County Lead for Attendance, Room 134, County Hall, Hertford, SG13 8DF telephone 0300 123 4043

**2. Withdrawal**

This notice may be withdrawn by Hertfordshire County Council if it is shown that it should not have been issued to you or has not been issued to you in accordance with the local Code of Conduct. If you believe that the notice was wrongly issued you should contact the County Council to ask for it to be withdrawn as soon as possible, stating why you believe the notice to have been incorrectly issued. The County Council will consider your request and contact you to let you know whether the notice is withdrawn. If the notice is not withdrawn and you do not pay, you will be

liable for prosecution for the offence that your child has failed to attend school regularly.

**3. Payment**

You should complete the notice above and send or deliver it to Hertfordshire County

Council at the address given. If you wish to pay in person you must make an appointment or it will not be possible to receive your payment. If you wish to pay by Debit/Credit Card please contact 01992 555407/8 quoting 742300/26084, your child’s name, school and reference number. Without this information your payment may not be processed correctly and you risk prosecution in relation to the non-payment of this fine.

**4. Prosecution**

If you do not pay the penalty, and the notice is not withdrawn, you will be liable for

prosecution for the offence of failing to ensure your child’s regular attendance at school. You will receive a separate summons for this which will give you notice of the time and date of the court hearing. You will be able to defend yourself and you will be advised to seek legal representation; in some cases you may be entitled to legal aid. Information on obtaining legal advice and legal aid can be obtained from Community Legal Advice 0845 345 4345 Mon- Fri 9.00 am – 8pm Sat 9.00am – 12.00 pm or from www.direct.gov.uk