

VICTORIA DOCK PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY



Working together for your children

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INTRODUCTION

Regular school attendance is important. Pupils need to attend regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them to maximise achievement. Irregular attendance undermines the education process and leads to educational disadvantage and poor attainment.

At Victoria Dock Primary School we strive to provide the very best quality of experience within our school including:

- A positive school ethos
- Value for every member of the school community
- The highest quality classroom experience
- Extra curricular activities

In this way pupils are encouraged to have a high regard for their school and for all school experience, promoting good attendance in a mutually caring environment.

REGISTRATION

Under Regulation 3 of the Pupils' Registration Regulations 1956, all schools (other than independent schools for boarders only) must keep an attendance register on which, at the **beginning** of each morning and afternoon session, pupils are marked present or absent.

Even if a register is called at the end of the school day/school session, this cannot replace the statutory requirement to call the register at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions.

At Victoria Dock Primary School registration should be completed by 9.00 a.m. in the morning and 1.10 p.m. in the afternoon. If pupils are away from the school premises for a whole day then the register should be marked for the afternoon session, together with the morning session. The register must be sent to the school office by 9.00 a.m. and 1.10 p.m. At 9.20 a.m. and 1.30 p.m. the Registers are closed and if children arrive after this time they are deemed absent for statistical purposes. Latecomers will be marked in the Late Book at the office and then sent to their respective classes.

The Education (Pupils' Attendance Records) Regulations 1991 which replaced the 1956 Regulations introduced a further requirement that attendance registers must show whether an absence of a pupil of compulsory school age is authorised or unauthorised.

At Victoria Dock Primary School the register will be marked in black ink by use of an oblique stroke to record presence in the morning and a reverse oblique stroke for the afternoon.

A red 'O' is used to denote absence with an 'A' (or appropriate symbol) inside to denote an authorised absence. Latecomers, who arrive before the Register is returned to the school office will be marked with a black oblique stroke through the 'O'. Latecomers who arrive after the Registers have been closed will be entered in the Late Book and an 'L' will be marked in the 'O' and the time of arrival noted in the Register.

Authorised absence is allowed for the following reasons:

- *B Receiving part-time and/or temporary education at an off-site unit or other than at the school where registered (including link courses, consortium arrangements)
- C Other authorised circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code)
- E Excluded (fixed or permanent)
- H Annual family holiday (for which leave has been granted) to a maximum of 10 days
- J Attending interview e.g. with prospective employer or with another education establishment
- M Medical/Dental Appointments
- *P Approved sporting activity
- R Day of religious observance in the religious body to which the parents belong
- S Study leave
- *V Educational visit
- *W Work experience

*Approved educational activities – counts as ‘present’ for statistical purposes.

PROOF OF AUTHORISED ABSENCE

- Notes of telephone explanations or verbal explanations are recorded on the appropriate form by office staff. These are passed to the class teacher and are then filed.
- If no notification of absence is received after registration is closed, a member of the school office staff will telephone home to ascertain the reason for absence and will fill in the appropriate details.
- Explanations of absence will be available for the Head Teacher and Educational Welfare Officer to scrutinise.
- No absence will be left unchecked. If no satisfactory explanation is received, a note will be made and the Educational Welfare Officer will be informed.
- Emerging patterns of absence will be recorded so that a pattern can be established e.g. regular absence on Fridays. All documentation/evidence will be used by the Head Teacher and the Educational Welfare Officer who will decide on the best course of action.

HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME

In all cases, parents planning to take the child on holiday during term time should, as soon as possible, complete a holiday form (available from the school office and the school website) detailing the dates and reasons.

Each case is considered on its merits and the following set of criteria:

- Attendance of the child must be at least 97% (unless there are exceptional circumstances for the absence being greater).
- Reasons for request in good time, such as marriages and funerals.
- Ability of the family to take holidays out of term time, supported with a letter from the employer.
- Absence due to holidays already taken during the same academic year.

Parents are not allowed to authorise absence. Booking a holiday and then coming to ask for a holiday form is not the way it should be done. Victoria Dock Primary School may, if appropriate, authorise up to ten days absence, but does not have to. Parents do not have a right to ten days. If parents choose to take children out of school they must take responsibility knowing that the absence may be unauthorised.

Any unauthorised absence may be taken into account if legal action is considered necessary.

PARENT/SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents of children of compulsory school age are required to ensure that they receive efficient full-time education, whether by regular school attendance or otherwise. Parents are thus primarily responsible for ensuring that children attend, and stay at school. It is the responsibility of the school to support attendance and to take seriously problems which may lead to non-attendance.

Session times are clearly stated in the school prospectus and reinforced at the time of registration and starting school. Children are collected by their teachers promptly at 8.50 a.m. and 1.00 p.m. Teachers should be in the playground a few minutes before these times. The teacher on duty/lunch time supervisor will blow the whistle promptly.

The school will discourage late arrival through positive means:

- Good examples set by staff.
- Praise.
- Individual discussions where appropriate. The parents of persistent latecomers will be invited into school to discuss the problem with the Head Teacher.

Only the school can approve absences. Parents will be made aware that parentally condoned absence for no valid reason is damaging to their child's education. This message will be communicated to parents through the school prospectus and where appropriate, through letters and at meetings with parents.

REWARDS

Good attendance will be praised informally throughout the school year. It will be integrated into the positive ethos of the school, underpinned by the school's aims. Specific rewards in terms of certificates will be issued for 100% attendance at the end of each term with special presentation at the end of each academic year for pupils who have perfect attendance for one year.

CONCLUSION

Victoria Dock Primary School recognises the high priority of good attendance. All staff will be made aware of this and the whole school will continually work towards good attendance.

In implementing this Policy we will be aware of individual circumstances and, where appropriate, deal sympathetically with our families.