

Viking Academy Trust



Attendance and Punctuality Policy Upton Junior School

School' has been written after consultation with staff and following DfE guidance.

Approved by the Trust: Term 6 2017

Reviewed annually: Term 6

Last review date: Term 6 2023

Signed:



Chair of Trust

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

The Viking Academy Trust

Upton Junior School

Empowering children through education: One Childhood One Chance

Schools in the Viking Academy Trust (VAT)

Upton Junior School
Ramsgate Arts Primary School
Chilton Primary School

This Attendance and Punctuality Policy is specific to **Upton Junior School**.

Introduction

This is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Parents/Carer Responsibilities

Make sure your children of compulsory school age (Reception to Year 6) are educated to the fullest extent and arrive to school on time.

Inform school on the first day of absence and secure prior authority for authorised absences.

Co-operate with school if there are attendance problems.

Not to book holidays during term time. These will not be authorised unless special circumstances have been highlighted.

Where possible avoid booking medical appointments during school time. Evidence will need to be provided.

Key Stage 2 SATs week in May is of great importance and should not be missed.

To make sure that your child has had a good night's sleep - children need to be wide-awake to learn.

School's Responsibilities

To maintain a culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance for children – a figure of 97% or higher.

To ensure that staff complete registers accurately and efficiently in the morning and afternoon.

To ensure that attendance data is accurately entered and to seek clarity from the School Attendance Officer if needed.

To inform Kent County Council Schools' Liaison Officer about continued/regular absence or habitual lateness.

Regularly monitor, analyse and report on attendance levels, identifying individual pupils, pupil cohorts or specific pupil groups requiring support.

Celebrate good attendance by communicating class and pupil achievements. This will be shared within the school community on a regular basis, via the school website and newsletter.

Reward excellent attendance of 98% or higher through end of year rewards.

Build strong relationships with individual families, to listen and understand and remove the barriers to attendance, working with them and liaising with relevant outside agencies including Social Services, Early Help, Virtual School and other educational providers.

Why Regular Attendance is So Important

Learning: Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Please see Appendix 1 – Viking Academy Trust Lost Learning Chart

Upton Junior School Attendance Targets

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

The minimum level of attendance for this school is 97% attendance and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares.

Our target is to achieve better than this at 98% or higher, because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling.

We monitor absences and punctuality on a weekly basis, to show us where improvements need to be made. If attendance has fallen below 95% the school may choose to contact you to see if there are any issues.

If attendance falls below 90% a formal letter will be sent to you and you may be called in for a meeting with the Head of School and / or Attendance Officer.

If attendance remains below 90% following communication, a meeting and / or incentives to combat the barriers to attendance, the Schools Liaison Officer will be formally notified. For more information on legal action taken please see the [Department for Education](#) webpage.

Understanding Types of Absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like:

- Illness
- Medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time
- Emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given.

This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Attending weddings during term time
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Shopping
- Looking after other children

- Birthday days off
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse. Please contact the school if you are struggling to support your child to come in.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason (attendance figure of 90% or lower). Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully by the School Attendance Officer and Head of School.

How We Manage Absence at Upton

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence and keep in touch with the school throughout the absence period
- Provide medical evidence (medical appointment card/GP/hospital note/prescription) where possible

If your child is absent we will:

- Contact you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you

If your child's absence persists we will:

- Invite you in to discuss the situation with the Attendance Officer and /or Head of School if absences persist
- Alert you if attendance moves below 95% without good reason
- Send a formal school letter if attendance moves below 90%
- Contact the School Liaison Officer at Kent County Council if the options above fail to improve the child's attendance

Telephone Numbers

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your correct contact numbers at all times. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then

something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year and you can contact us via email, phone or MCAS anytime to alert us of a change.

Lateness/Punctuality

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence. Please be advised that lateness is recorded by the school and specific codes attached depending to how late the child is.

Please see Appendix 2 – Viking Academy Trust Attendance and Punctuality Codes

How We Manage Lateness at Upton

The school day starts at 8:30am with registration taken at 8:45am and it is expected children have arrived in class by this time. If your child comes into the school after 8.45am, it will be recorded as late on the register.

At 9.15am the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record, you will be asked to meet with the Head of School and/or Attendance Officer to resolve the problem, but please approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Holidays Requests in Term Time

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

An application must be made in writing, (a [Leave of Absence Request](#) form is available on the school website) with appropriate evidence, in advance of the intended holiday. Kent Local Authority guidance advises that penalty notices will be issued for 10 or more unauthorised sessions within a 50-day period.

On receipt of the Notice the Penalty will be £120 per parent reducing to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28-day period may result in prosecution by the attendance service.

Please note it is Kent County Council, not the school that make the decision to issue a penalty notice and receive any fine paid.

A request to take a child out of school during term-time for the following reasons will not be authorised:

- Cheaper cost of a holiday;
- Availability of the desired accommodation
- Poor weather experienced in school holiday periods; and
- Overlap with beginning or end of term

Upton will respond to all requests for a leave of absence in writing (email) giving the reasons for the decision.

Upton will NOT authorise a holiday during periods of national tests ie: SATs examinations.

Please see Appendix 3 – Annual Reminder to Parents / Carers regarding Term Time Absence Requests

Attendance and Safeguarding

Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare, wellbeing and life opportunities for your child includes monitoring each child's attendance carefully.

Failing to attend this school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (and [2010](#), [2011](#), [2013](#), [2016](#) amendments)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

In Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible and that every child's welfare and life opportunities are promoted.

Appendix 1 – Lost Learning Hours



Viking Academy Trust

Chilton Primary School, Ramsgate Arts Primary School, Upton Junior School



What percentage attendance means to your child in terms of lost learning...

175 non-school days a year		175 days to spend on family time, visits, holidays, shopping, household jobs and other appointments			
190 SCHOOL DAYS IN EACH YEAR 190 days for your child's education Green	6 days absence 184 DAYS OF EDUCATION	8 days absence 182 DAYS OF EDUCATION Light Amber	19 days absence Half a term missed 171 DAYS OF EDUCATION Dark Amber	21 days absence 169 DAYS OF EDUCATION	47 days absence 143 DAYS OF EDUCATION Red
	100% → 97% (Expected)	96% → 94% (Monitoring)	93% → 90% (Monitoring)	89% → 75% (School Action)	
Good - not a drop of learning lost Best chance of success Gives your child a flying start		School to monitor Negative effect on attainment Progress weakened due to gaps		Serious concern – Persistent absence Not fair on your child Court Action	

80% attendance over 5 years = 1 whole year of education lost.

Research suggests that pupils who have an average of 20 days absent per school year see negative effects throughout their educational journey – resulting in a whole GCSE grade deficit by the time they leave secondary education.

Article 28 of United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child : The right to learn and go to school

Appendix 2 – School Attendance Codes

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	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations

T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school

#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day
---	------------------------	---

Absence Requests During Term Time

Term-Time Holidays: A Guide for Chilton Parents & Families

Time off school for a family holiday is not a right.

Since 1st April 2022, **34 families** have requested to take their child/ren out of school during term-time to go on a family holiday.

Whilst the school recognises many of these holidays have been rebooked due to cancellations caused by Covid-19, absence during term-time has a detrimental impact upon children's learning and therefore, as of 1st September 2022, the school **will not authorise absence** for a holiday other than in the most exceptional circumstances.

An application must be made in writing, with appropriate evidence, in advance of the intended holiday. Kent Local Authority guidance advises that penalty notices will be issued for 10 or more unauthorised sessions within a 50 day period.

On receipt of the Notice the Penalty will be £120 per parent reducing to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the attendance service.

Please note, **it is KCC, not the school that make the decision to issue a penalty notice and receive any fine paid.**

Request to take a child out of school during term-time for the following reasons will not be authorised:

- Cheaper cost of a holiday;
- Availability of the desired accommodation
- Poor weather experienced in school holiday periods; and
- Overlap with beginning or end of term

Chilton will respond to all requests for a leave of absence in writing (email) giving the reasons for the decision. Chilton will NOT authorise a holiday during periods of national tests ie: SATs examinations.

Please see attached two related documents:

- 1) Viking Academy Trust: What Percentage Attendance Means to your Child in Terms of Lost Learning

2) Viking Academy Trust Term Dates 2022-2023 * There are 175 non-school days a year – 175 days to spend on family time, visits, holidays, shopping, household jobs and other appointments.