



Vernon Primary School

Attendance Policy

The Importance of school attendance

Good attendance and punctuality are essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances. Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in his or her learning. For the most vulnerable pupils, regular attendance is also an important protective factor and the best opportunity for needs to be identified and support provided.

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

The school aims to ensure good attendance and punctuality by operating an attendance policy within which staff, pupils, parent(s)/carer(s), the governing body, the local authority and the Attendance and Children out of Schools Team can work collaboratively. The school will monitor attendance and punctuality and ensure quick and early intervention if a problem is identified.

The school and partners will work in partnership with pupils and parents collaboratively to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place. Securing good attendance cannot be seen in isolation, and effective practices for improvement will involve close interaction with our schools' efforts on curriculum, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, pastoral support, mental health and wellbeing, and effective use of resources, including pupil premium.

All staff will encourage good attendance and punctuality and will liaise with home and partner agencies if this is appropriate. Good attendance and good punctuality will be seen as an achievement in their own right and be recognised as such by the school. The attendance policy is based on the premise of equal opportunities for all, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

We recognise that attendance improvement does not happen in isolation, and it is prioritised in wider policies and improvement strategies such as:

- Raising attainment
- Support for disadvantaged pupil including Pupil Premium strategy
- Behaviour management
- Special educational needs and disabilities
- Wellbeing
- Safeguarding

Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [Working together to improve school attendance](#) guidance from the Department of Education (DfE).

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 2024](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2024](#)
- It also refers to:
- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance and maximising the percentage of children achieving attendance of 96% or above.
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Having effective means of collecting and monitoring attendance and punctuality information.
- Ensuring that such data is available and used effectively by school managers and staff in conjunction with relevant agencies and the Attendance and Children out of School Team.
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence.
- Reducing the 'Late' percentage each year by promoting and supporting punctuality in attending lessons.
- Ensuring all children attend regularly and punctually to gain the best possible educational outcomes for each child.
- Acting early to address patterns of absence.
- Targeting resources and implementing where most appropriate and undertaking this within a reasonable time frame.
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school.
- Keeping parent(s)/carer(s), staff, pupils and governors informed of policy and practice about regular school attendance and punctuality.

Role and Responsibilities

The Senior Attendance Champion will:

- Monitor and analyse attendance and punctuality data throughout the school.
- Monitor school absence data and report it to governors.
- Regularly review attendance data to ensure support is focused on the pupils who need it, paying particular attention to pupil cohorts and to groups that face entrenched barriers to attendance.
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers to facilitate discussions with pupils and families and report concerns about attendance to the headteacher and governors.
- Regularly remind parent(s)/carer(s) of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Advise the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices following the PENALTY NOTICE REQUEST For Unauthorised Leave of Absence procedure from Cheshire East Council.

- Attend targeted support meetings and work with the Attendance and Children out of School Team and the allocated attendance officer to tackle persistent absence.

The Headteacher will:

- Monitor school absence data and report it to governors.
- Support staff and initiate actions and interventions aimed at meeting or improving overall attendance and/or punctuality.
- Monitor the impact of any attendance strategies.
- Issue fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

Governors will:

- Take an active role in attendance improvement, support the school to prioritise attendance, and work together with leaders to set a whole school culture.
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Regularly review attendance data, discuss, and challenge trends, and help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Ensure school staff receive training on attendance.
- Regularly monitor recent and historic trends and patterns, benchmark against comparator schools within the local authority and nationwide.

The Pastoral Manager will:

- Report concerns about attendance to the Headteacher.
- Arrange calls and meetings with parents/carers to discuss the attendance issues of vulnerable children.
- Conduct home visits where necessary following safeguarding procedures.
- Raise the level of attendance and punctuality of those children identified as being at risk.
- Be particularly mindful of pupils absent from school due to mental or physical ill health or their special educational needs and/or disabilities, and provide them with additional support.

The School Office Staff will:

- Support the Senior Attendance Champion and the Pastoral Manager to monitor attendance and punctuality data across the school and the situations of individual children.
- Monitor attendance communications received from parents/carers by phone, on school Spider, and from the absence email address.
- Record absences and planned absences on the school attendance system Arbor, logging any medical evidence and leave of absence requests.

Class teachers will:

- Record attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submit this information onto Arbor, the school information system in a timely manner.
- Regularly remind their class of the importance of good attendance and punctuality. Each teacher will find relevant ways to promote good attendance in their class.
- Liaise with parents/carers to discuss attendance where any patterns of absence emerge.

Parents and Carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time. Parents/carers have a duty, under section 7 of the Education Act 1996, to ensure that their child of compulsory school age (5 to 16) receives an

efficient full-time education either by attendance at school or otherwise, and so share in the responsibility of ensuring good and regular attendance.

- Let the school know as soon as possible why their child is absent on the day of the absence and advise when they are expected to return.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.
- Do not allow their child to have time off school unless it is absolutely necessary.
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child.

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time.

Recording Attendance

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.

Completing the Register

- The twice-daily requirement to register pupils is perceived as an opportunity for the school to receive pupils formally from home, and serve as an introduction to the session.
- The marking of registers will be given high importance at all times within each classroom.
- Registers are marked electronically on the school information system, Arbor.
- The register should be marked using the codes advised by DfE statutory guidance and Cheshire East Council.
- Incomplete or inaccurate registers are unacceptable for several reasons. Registers provide the daily record of the attendance of all pupils; they are legal documents **that may be required in a court of law**, for example as evidence in prosecutions for non-attendance at school.
- If manual registers are required, they are to be marked in ink. Any alterations should be visible and explained. Correcting fluid products may not be used.

Lateness & Punctuality

- School begins at 8.45 am and all pupils are expected to be in the classroom for this time.
- Registration will begin at 8.45 am and registers close at 9.15 am. Up until this time pupils are given a late code (L). Register is open for no longer than 30 minutes following the DfE *Working together to improve attendance* Guidelines (August 2024).
- Arrivals after close of register at 9.15 am, are given an unauthorised code (U) = 1 unauthorised session.
- Persistent lateness after close of register may be referred to the Local Authority for possible legal action.
- Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of others.
- When a pupil is consistently late parents/carers will be required to give details explaining the reasons for the lateness. These will be monitored on a half termly basis and discussed by the Headteacher and Pastoral Manager to see if any support or advice can be offered to families. In the first instance, the class teacher will discuss the issue of lateness with the parent/carer in person or via phone call. Where appropriate a meeting may be arranged to discuss lateness with the Headteacher or Pastoral Manager.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

Absence Procedure

There are two types of absence:

- **Authorised** (where the school approves pupil absence)
 - **Unauthorised** (where the school does not approve absence)
- It is expected that parent(s)/carer(s) will provide an explanation by 9.30 a.m. if their child is absent, on the first day the absence occurs. This can be by telephone, in person at the school office, via the school absence facility on School Spider or absence email address absence@vernonprimary.cheshire.sch.uk
 - If contact, explaining the child's absence, fails to be made by parent(s)/carer(s), then the school office team will contact the home by telephone on the initial day. Where reasonably possible, the school office team will work through the emergency contact list number for an absent pupil. This is good practice and gives school additional options to make contact with a responsible adult.
 - If the absence continues without explanation or contact, a home visit will be made by a member of the Pastoral Team to ensure the child's wellbeing. The Pastoral Team will ensure that proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. This contact is recorded on Arbor and/or CPOMs where appropriate.
 - The school office and pastoral team will keep in regular contact with parents/carers during an absence until their child's return to school. This helps us to work in partnership with parents/carers to ensure a positive return to school can be made at the earliest opportunity.

Absence due to illness (both physical and mental health related)

- Parents and carers are expected to provide a full explanation for any absence due to illness or a medical condition on the first day of absence.
- Any absence due to illness will be marked with an (I) code which is an authorised absence from school.
- If the school have cause for concern about the veracity of the illness and a child is absent for more than 5 days school will request that medical evidence of illness such as a doctor's appointment card, hospital letter or a copy of prescription details for any further absences. Evidence of medical appointments may be requested.
- If requested, failure to produce medical evidence to support an absence will mean the absence will automatically be unauthorised.
- Where illness or a medical condition is impacting on school attendance, parents and carers will be invited to a meeting with the Headteacher to discuss how the school can help to improve the child's attendance levels. The purpose of the meeting will be to:
 - ❖ explore ways that absence due to illness can be reduced;
 - ❖ discuss any support needs for the child or family and if any other agencies need to be involved to offer help and support;
 - ❖ reassure the school the reasons for absence are authentic;
 - ❖ agree a plan to reduce the impact of illness on education and school life.

Children Who Become Ill During the School Day

The school is committed to promoting the health, safety and inclusion of all pupils. Where a child becomes unwell during the school day, the school will act in the best interests of the child's wellbeing while ensuring safeguarding responsibilities are met.

Fitness for School

If a child becomes acutely unwell during the school day (for example, repeated vomiting or significant physical distress), staff will assess whether the child is medically fit to remain in school. Where illness prevents the child from accessing learning or engaging safely in school activities, parents/carers will be contacted and asked to collect the child as soon as reasonably possible. This decision is taken to prioritise the child's health and welfare, not as a disciplinary or attendance measure.

Safeguarding and Welfare

The school recognises that repeated episodes of illness, particularly where there are concerns such as weight loss, marked changes in presentation, or refusal by parents/carers to collect an unwell child, may raise safeguarding concerns. In such cases:

- All incidents will be clearly recorded, including dates, frequency of illness, parental responses, impact on the child, and actions taken by the school.
- Advice may be sought from relevant safeguarding or health services.
- Concerns will be managed in line with the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures.

Medical Information and Professional Advice

Where illness is frequent or ongoing, the school will work with parents/carers to seek appropriate medical advice. Information from health professionals is essential in helping the school understand whether a child's needs relate to a diagnosed medical condition, anxiety-based difficulties, or require further investigation. This information will help the school determine appropriate support and attendance expectations.

Reasonable Adjustments and Inclusion

While medical advice is being sought or clarified, the school may implement reasonable, short-term adjustments to support the child's inclusion and wellbeing. These may include:

- A temporary reduced or flexible timetable focused on times when the child is best able to engage.
- Access to a safe and quiet space for rest or recovery following an episode of illness.
- A short-term Individual Health Care Plan developed in collaboration with parents/carers and health professionals.

All adjustments will be regularly reviewed and are intended to support the child's health and enable meaningful access to education when they are well enough to attend.

Working in Partnership with Parents

The school is committed to working openly and collaboratively with parents/carers. Discussions will be framed around supporting the child's health and wellbeing first, recognising that good attendance is best achieved when a child is medically and emotionally well enough to engage in learning.

Parents/carers are expected to work with the school to ensure timely collection of children who are unwell and to share relevant medical information to support planning.

Granting leaves of absence

School can grant a leave of absence when a pupil needs to be absent from school with permission. All schools are expected to restrict leaves of absence to the specific circumstances set out in regulation 11 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. These circumstances are:

- **Taking part in a regulated performance or employment abroad:** in line with a licence issued by a local authority or Justice of the Peace or a body of persons approval (BOPA). (Code C1)
- **Attending an interview:** for entry into another educational institution or for future employment where requested in advance by a parent the pupil normally lives with.
- **Study leave:** for public examinations, as agreed in advance with a parent the pupil normally lives with. Please note this does not include any internal examinations such as mocks as study leave should not be granted in such cases.
- **A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable:** where the pupil is of compulsory school age, both the parent who the pupil normally lives with and school agree the pupil should temporarily be educated on a part-time basis for exceptional reasons and have agreed the times and dates when the pupil will be expected to attend school as part of that timetable.
- **Exceptional circumstances:** School can grant a leave of absence for other exceptional circumstances at our discretion. It must be requested in advance by a parent who the pupil normally lives with. School will consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the school to determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school.
- The Department for Education 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. No holidays will be authorised during term time. Absence due to holiday will be recorded in the register as unauthorised.
- Parent(s)/carer(s) will be advised not to book holidays during term time.

School is able to allow pupils of non-compulsory school age to be absent for sessions they are not timetabled to attend (code X).

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

Reason to Believe Letter

Where school has reason to believe that an absence reported as illness may, in fact, be an unauthorised holiday, a formal "Reason to Believe" letter will be issued to parents/carers. This letter will outline the dates of absence, explain the school's concerns, and request appropriate evidence to support the absence. Failure to supply satisfactory evidence may result in the absence being recorded as unauthorised, and the attendance register code will be amended to reflect what the school believes to be the most accurate code. The letter will also advise parents/carers that unauthorised absences may be referred to the Local Authority and could result in the issue of a penalty notice. Attendance registers will be amended where necessary to reflect the code that school reasonably believes to be the most accurate representation of the absence, in line with statutory guidance and Local Authority expectations.

Education off-site

As well as the above leaves of absence, school can also allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities or to attend other schools or settings:

- To attend an offsite approved educational activity. (Code B)
- To attend another school at which the pupil is registered (dual-registration). (Code D)
- To attend provision arranged by the local authority. e.g. alternative provision or as part of an education, health and care plan. (Code K)
- To participate in an approved sporting activity. (Code P)
- To attend an educational visit or trip arranged by the school. (Code V)
- To attend work experience. (Code W).

As these circumstances are part of delivering a full-time education they are not classified as absences for statistical purposes.

Leave of Absence Procedure

- A request must be made at least **four weeks prior** to the first day of absence being requested. Some exceptional circumstances may not allow for this and this will be taken into consideration.
- Leave of absence requests must be made in writing to the school office absence@vernonprimary.cheshire.sch.uk for the attention of the Headteacher.
- Parents/carers may be required to attend a meeting with the Headteacher to explain their exceptional circumstances or present evidence of the circumstances.
- Parents/carers will be notified of the school's decision via email that their request for leave has been accepted or declined, detailing the reasons for the decision.
- The school or local authority will consider issuing a fixed penalty notice (FPN) for any leave of absence taken without authorisation from the school, where the child is of compulsory school age.
- If a fixed penalty notice is issued the school will follow the Cheshire East timeline for the penalties.
- The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:
 - ❖ The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year.
 - ❖ One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission.

Mental Health

Many children will experience normal but difficult emotions that make them nervous about attending school, such as worries about friendships, schoolwork, assessments or variable moods. It is important to note that these pupils are still expected to attend school regularly - in many instances, attendance at school may serve to help with the underlying issue as being away from school might exacerbate it, and a prolonged period of absence may heighten anxious feelings about attending in future. School staff will work with parents/carers, to ensure that such circumstances do not act as a barrier to regular attendance by mitigating anxious feelings in school as much as possible.

In developing this support, the usual processes relevant to any attendance case apply:

- Understanding the individual needs of the pupil and family.
- Working in partnership with the pupil and family to put in-school support in place and working with other the local authority and other agencies where external support is needed (and available).
- Regularly reviewing and updating the support approach to make sure it continues to meet individual needs.

In cases of both long term physical or mental ill health, school staff are not expected to diagnose or treat physical or mental health conditions, but will work together with families and other agencies with the aim of ensuring regular attendance for every pupil. School will:

- Facilitate any relevant pastoral support with the clear aim of improving attendance as much as possible whilst supporting the underlying health issue.
- Consider adjustments to practice and policies to help meet the needs of pupils who are struggling to attend school, as well as making formal reasonable adjustments under section 20 of the Equality Act 2010 where a pupil has a disability. Any adjustments will be agreed by, and regularly reviewed with the pupil and their parents.
- Consider whether a time-limited phased return to school would be appropriate, for example for those affected by anxious feelings about school attendance.
- Make a sickness return to the local authority if a pupil is recorded in the attendance register as absent using code I (unable to attend because of sickness) and there are reasonable grounds to believe the pupil will have to miss 15 consecutive school days or more for illness or the pupil's total number of school days missed during the current school year because of illness (whether consecutive or cumulative) will reach or exceed 15 school days.

For pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, school will:

- Work in partnership with parents to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, including, where applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's education, health and care plan is accessed.
- Work in partnership with families to help support routines where school transport is regularly being missed and work with other partners to encourage the scheduling of additional support interventions or medical appointments outside of the main school day.
- Establish strategies for removing the in-school barriers these pupils face, including considering support or reasonable adjustments for uniform, transport, routines, access to support in school and lunchtime arrangements.
- Consider adjustments to practice and policies to help meet the needs of pupils who are struggling to attend school, as well as making formal reasonable adjustments under section 20 of the Equality Act 2010 where a pupil has a disability. Any adjustments should be agreed by, and regularly reviewed with the pupil and their parents.
- Ensure joined up pastoral care is in place where needed and consider whether a time-limited phased return to school would be appropriate.

Attendance is everyone's business so in many of these cases school will not be able to fully support a pupil without the assistance of a range of other agencies. School will:

- Make use of school nursing services and mental health support teams where they are available.
- Consider whether additional support from other external partners (including the local authority, children and young people's mental health services, GPs or other health services) would be appropriate and make referrals.
- Where external support is provided work together with those services to deliver any subsequent support.

If the child has an education health and care plan, school will:

- Communicate with the local authority where a pupil's attendance falls or they become aware of barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs.
- Where possible agree adjustments to its policies and practices that are consistent with the special educational provision set out in the education health and care plan in collaboration with parents. These reasonable adjustments may include uniform, transport, routines and lunchtime arrangements.
- Where needed work with the local authority to review and amend the education health and care plan to incorporate the additional or different attendance support identified.

Part-time timetables

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. In some circumstances their education may be provided partially at school and partially at another educational setting or through education otherwise than at a school in line with section 19 of the Education Act 1996 or section 42 or 61 of the Children and Families Act 2014.

In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for school to provide a pupil of compulsory school age with less than full-time education through a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending school or another setting full-time and a part-time timetable is used to help the pupil access as much education as possible.

A part-time timetable should:

- Have the agreement of both the school and the parent the pupil normally lives with.
- Have a clear ambition and be part of the pupil's wider support, health care or reintegration plan.
- Have regular review dates which include the pupil and their parents to ensure it is only in place for the shortest time necessary.
- Have a proposed end date that takes into account the circumstances of the pupil, after which the pupil is expected to attend full-time, either at school or alternative provision. It can, however, be extended as part of the regular review process. In some limited cases, a pupil with a long-term health condition may require a part-time timetable for a prolonged period.

Where the pupil has a social worker, the school is expected to keep them informed and involved in the process.

If the pupil has an education health and care plan, school will discuss the part-time timetable with the local authority so that any support package that is in place can be reviewed as swiftly as possible.

In agreeing to a part-time timetable, school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and will record the absence accordingly (normally using code X or C2).

Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) is a term used to describe children who experience challenges in attending school due to negative feelings (such as anxiety). EBSA is commonly associated with emotional and physical distress, and a reluctance to attend school, which can lead to reduced attendance and further anxiety regarding school.

At Vernon Primary School:

- We recognise that attendance at school may serve to help with the underlying issue as much as being away from school might exacerbate it, and a prolonged period of absence may heighten anxiety about attending in future.
- We recognise that there can be attendance challenges where a child has a social, emotional or mental health issue, particularly a severe issue for which the child is receiving clinical treatment.
- Associated anxiety about attending is mitigated as much as possible by creating a plan to implement reasonable adjustments to alleviate specific barriers to attendance. These adjustments are agreed by and regularly reviewed with all parties, including parents/carers.
- In developing a plan to support attendance through reasonable adjustments, school staff take into account the individual circumstances of the child, being mindful of safeguarding responsibilities as set out in the Keeping children safe in education 2024 guidance.
- Relevant pastoral support is facilitated with the clear aim of improving attendance as much as possible while supporting the underlying mental health issue.
- Any plan to help the child to attend well may also involve making referrals to external professional support, this might include community groups, counselling services, psychological practitioners, school nursing team or, where available, Mental Health Support Teams.
- In very exceptional circumstances, however, where it is in a pupil's best interests, a plan to help a child to attend well may involve the use of a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition (including a mental health condition) prevents a pupil from attending school full-time and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package. Any part-time timetable will seek to maximise face-to-face school time as much as possible.
- We recognise that in some instances, parents/carers themselves might be living with mental health problems or experiencing wider vulnerabilities or challenging life circumstances. We recognise the need for practical, whole-family support and/or extra family support where necessary, in order to try to address the causes of poor attendance. For example, where applicable, the family's support worker might act as a convenor of any additional support offered and is a key party to join any conversations about a child's attendance.
- Where support offered is not engaged with, or where all other options have been exhausted or deemed inappropriate, schools will work with the local authority to consider whether to formalise support or to enforce attendance through legal intervention in the normal way under existing powers.

National Framework for penalty notices

Penalties for unauthorised absence

Parents/carers should be aware that if your child of compulsory school age has **10 sessions (equivalent to 5 days) of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks** this will be referred to Cheshire East and may result in a school absence penalty notice (fine). However, we retain the discretion to issue a Penalty Notice before the threshold is met. For example, where parents are deliberately avoiding the national threshold by taking several term time holidays below the above thresholds. Penalty Notice fines will continue to be issued per parent per child. For example: 3 siblings absent for term time leave, would result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines.

Please see the table below.

First Offence	Second Offence	Third Offence
The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for term time leave or irregular school attendance the fine will be charged at: £160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days of the issue, reducing to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days. (Unpaid penalty notices may result in a parental prosecution)	Where it is deemed appropriate to issue a second penalty notice to the same parent for the same pupil within 3 years of the first penalty notice, for either term time leave or irregular attendance the second penalty notice will be charged at: £160 if paid within 28 days. (Unpaid penalty notices may result in a parental prosecution)	On the third time that an offence is committed within 3 years of the first penalty notice for either a term time leave or irregular attendance a penalty notice will not be issued. The case may proceed to Parental Prosecution under the Single Justice Procedure. If found guilty of the offence of 'Failure to send a child to school' the Magistrates can impose a fine up to £1000 or legal proceedings under Section 444 (1a) can include a fine of up to £2500.

Attendance and Monitoring Strategies

To manage and improve attendance effectively, Vernon Primary School:

- Develops and maintains a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.
- Monitors attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school to identify patterns and trends. This includes looking at individual pupils, cohorts and year groups (including their punctuality) that require support with their attendance so that effective strategies can be put in place.
- Use analysis of attendance data to provide regular attendance reports to class teachers to facilitate discussions with leaders (including any special educational needs coordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads).
- Identifies whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern.
- Collects pupil-level absence data each term which is then published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school compares attendance data to the national average, and provides data and reports to support the work of the governing body.

- Has a clear school attendance policy which all staff, pupils and parents/carers understand.
- Accurately completes admission and attendance registers and has effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence.
- Builds strong relationships with families, listen to and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them.
- Shares information and work collaboratively with the local authorities, and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

Identification of Attendance Concerns & Persistent Absenteeism

- Identification of poor attendance or punctuality is made by the Senior Attendance Champion, Class Teacher, School Office Team, School Business Manager or Pastoral Manager.
- Concerns are passed to the Headteacher/Pastoral Manager, who is the person responsible for contacting parent(s)/carer(s).
- A child not attending school is considered a safeguarding matter.
- Attendance data is monitored weekly, half termly and termly.
- The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.
- If attendance falls below 90% the attendance monitoring procedure will be followed. Please see the School Attendance Concerns Flow Chart (Appendix 1).

Sharing of information when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe

Vernon school has regular Targeted Support Meetings with a Local Authority Attendance Officer. Further, to facilitate timely collaborative working across partners, school is also legally required to share information from their registers with the local authority. As a minimum this includes:

- New Pupil and Deletion returns: notifying the local authority when a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the school admission register outside of standard transition times. For full details see paragraphs 211 and 219.
- Attendance returns: providing the local authority with the names and addresses of all pupils of compulsory school age who fail to attend school regularly or have been absent for a continuous period of ten school days where their absence has been recorded with one or more of the codes statistically classified as unauthorised (G, N, O, and/or U).
- Sickness returns: providing the local authority with the full name and address of all pupils of compulsory school age who have been recorded with code I (illness) and who the school has reasonable grounds to believe will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness. Only one sickness return is required for a continuous period of sickness in a school year. This is to help the school and local authority to agree any provision needed to ensure continuity of education for pupils who cannot attend because of health needs, in line with the statutory guidance on arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs.

This collaboration allows the local authority to facilitate quicker, more efficient joint working and better target their area wide attendance strategy.

The law also allows local authority officers access to the attendance and admission register of school to carry out their functions under the Education Acts to support joint working. These officers are also permitted to take digital or physical extracts.

If a parent(s)/carer(s) is worried about their child's attendance at school what can they do?

- Talk to their child; it may be something simple.
- Talk to the Headteacher and staff at the school.
- Talk to the school's Pastoral Manager.
- Talk to the [School Attendance and Children out of Education Team](#), who will work with them and the school to resolve the situation.

Equal Opportunities

Vernon Primary School has taken into account the fact that Cheshire is an ethnically diverse community. Our practice safeguards against disadvantaging any sections of the community. Improving the performance of underachieving pupils is a key priority in our Strategic School Development Plan.

Under the Equality Act 2010 we have a duty not to discriminate against people on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

We believe that this policy is in line with the Equality Act 2010 as it is fair, it does not prioritise or disadvantage any pupil and it helps to promote equality at this school.

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every year. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing body.

Policy Date – September 2026

Review Date – September 2027

Ratified by Governors - September 2026

Working Together to Improve Attendance (DfE 2024)

At school we work to treat the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school and with local partners to work collaboratively with, not against families.

EXPECT

We aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents/carers and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across school. Our aspirational whole school attendance target is 96%.



MONITOR

We rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.



LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND

When a pattern is spotted, we discuss with pupils and parents/carers to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.



FACILITATE SUPPORT

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents/carers to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.



FORMALISE SUPPORT

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, we work together with partners to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance contract or education supervision



ENFORCE

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, we will enforce attendance through statutory intervention: a penalty notice in line with the National Framework or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

'Nobody else is quite like me'



Appendix 1 - School Attendance Concerns Flow Chart

