

**VALENTINES HIGH SCHOOL**

**ATTENDANCE POLICY**

**OCTOBER 2019**



Last reviewed: 7<sup>th</sup> October 2019  
To be reviewed: Autumn Term 2021.

# ATTENDANCE POLICY

## 1 AIMS

The aims of the school's attendance policy are:

- to satisfy the school's statutory obligations regarding the attendance of pupils at school;
- to protect the safety of pupils by ensuring they are on the school premises at all times when they should be and when parents believe them to be;
- to maximise the value pupils obtain from the education we provide;
- to maintain and, where possible, improve, the very high level of attendance we have at Valentines.

## 2 GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS

We expect all pupils to attend school regularly and to be punctual for the start of the school day which starts at 8:25. Progress is affected by not attending school whatever the reasons, and is likely to impair the value of education for an individual pupil.

### 2.1 Parental responsibilities

By law all children of compulsory school age (between 5 and 16) must get a proper full-time education. You are responsible for making sure this happens, either by registering the child as a pupil at a school or by making other arrangements which provide effective education. Having a good education will help to give your child a good start in life.

### 2.2 We ask that the parents ensure that their child:

- i. attends school regularly and arrives on time (at 8:25 pupils must be on school premises)
- ii. attends school prepared for work

### 2.3 Procedures relating to absence from school in cases of unavoidable absence

- If your child is ill, contact the school on the first day of your child's illness.
- Phone calls are made each morning to the parents of pupils on the first day of absence.
- Written notification of the absence period and the reason for this from the parent/guardian is required on the first day of the pupil's return.
- Dental/doctor's appointments should, where possible, be arranged outside school time. (when this cannot be avoided, a medical card must be provided as evidence)
- Absences of 5 days or more must be supported by medical evidence or where patterns of absence are shown.
- **Holidays should NOT be arranged in term time as this disrupts a pupil's education.** Any request for withdrawal of a pupil during term time for exceptional reasons will not be granted and parents may be liable to a Fixed Penalty Notice resulting in a **£120** fine per parent, per child. (£60 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days of the date of issue). Both the school and the EWO can issue penalty notices, dependent on circumstances. Extended leave may result in your child being removed from the school roll.

## **Sixth Form Attendance Policy**

Statutory regulations relating to attendance apply to Years 7 to 11. This policy applies to the Sixth Form.

Attendance is expected to be at a minimum of 95%. Persistent absentees whose attendance falls below 90% may result in exclusion from the Sixth Form.

In order to be successful Sixth Formers are required to be in school as often as possible. Holidays should be taken in the 13 weeks of school holiday time rather than in term time. It is expected that parents and students will support this notion when taking a Sixth Form place at Valentines.

All requests for leave must be made at least two weeks in advance to the Headteacher using the Leave form available from the Main Office.

The school will in general not grant leave to Sixth Form pupils. However, leave may be granted in the most exceptional cases at the discretion of the Head Teacher. It is for the Head Teacher to determine what constitutes an exceptional case. In any event, the Head Teacher cannot grant more than ten days exceptional leave and the expectation is that in most cases leave will not be granted.

If leave is refused and a pupil takes it regardless this will count as unauthorised absence. Unauthorised absence of longer than 5 days may lead to a student losing his/her place at Valentines.

If a student is sick on dates previously requested as leave, the school reserves the right to take the pupil off roll, if five or more days of absence occur and the pupil is unable to prove to the satisfaction of the school that they are at home during this period and genuinely ill. Suitable evidence may include a home visit.

Religious leave may be granted to a maximum of one day at a time, for example, Eid and similar festivals. Leave will not be granted for pilgrimages abroad.

Driving tests will be considered as authorised absence if the school is notified in advance. Similarly funerals of immediate family will be authorised. Immediate family are defined as parent, grandparent, sister or brother.

### **3 CATEGORISING ABSENCE**

**There are two categories of absence – authorised and unauthorised.** Absence for any reason may only be authorised by the school. Normally only unavoidable absences can be authorised. A note stating the reasons for an absence should be given to the Form Tutor on the day of return to the school. The tutor may have to verify the reasons given for absence.

**Unauthorised absence** is absence for which no reason acceptable to school has been given. This includes absence where a parent has colluded in the disguising of an unacceptable absence. The Head of House is responsible for deciding if an absence is unauthorised.

The school is required to produce and publish unauthorised absence figures for its pupils.

#### 4 PROCEDURES RELATING TO PUNCTUALITY

- Pupils should be on site by 8.25am. All pupils must be in Form by 8.30am for morning registration and 1.55pm for afternoon registration.
- Pupils who arrive after 8.30am sign in electronically and receive a late slip from the school office. All late pupils attend an 'instant' lunchtime detention at 1:10 that day.
- Two or more late marks a week will result in an automatic Friday late detention.
- Pupils who fail to attend lunchtime detention on the day will receive a 45 minute detention after school on Friday of that week.
- Failure to attend lunchtime detention twice in one week will result in a 1 hour Friday late detention. Sixth Formers will receive a two hour detention with the Head of Sixth Form.
- Parents/carers will receive a text message to inform them when their child is late.
- When a pupil is late 5 times, a letter/text will be sent home to parents by the school Pastoral Support Coordinator
- When a pupil is late 5 times, they will serve a week in room 46 and parents will be invited to meet the school Pastoral Support Team
- If a pupil is persistently late (10 times) they will be put in the school isolation room for 1 day.
- If a pupil is late 15 times they are once again in the isolation room
- If a pupil accumulates 20 late marks, they are in the isolation room for 2 days and parents will have a meeting with the Head of House and a member of Senior Leadership. If the pupil is a sixth former, parents will have a meeting with the Head of Sixth Form and the Headteacher.
- The Deputy Heads of Sixth Form will also be intervening with sixth formers who are persistently late.
- A pupil who arrives at school after 8.30 am should bring a note from a parent/carer to explain the lateness.

**Form Tutors are responsible for encouraging punctuality. Lateness should be investigated and, where appropriate, punished.**

- (a) During registration, the Form Tutor should discuss, where appropriate, reasons for lateness with individual pupils.
- (b) A pupil, who arrives at school during registration, but after the register has been called, receives a "Late" mark. **For every three such "Lates" received in a half term, the Form tutor should give the pupil a thirty-minute School Detention.**
- (c) Teachers should not admit late pupils to lessons unless they have a Late Slip indicating they have signed the Late Book.

- (d) If a pupil is persistently late, the Form Tutor should ask the office staff to send a standard "Late Arrival at School" letter. The Head of House should be informed of this action and referred to Education Welfare. A penalty notice will be considered where it is evident that there has been 7 lates in any one half term.

## 5 FOLLOWING UP ABSENCE

### (a) GENERAL

- (i) With the exception of absence caused by school closure on a day when attendance of pupils would normally be expected (e.g. Staff Training Day), all absences should be recorded in the register.
- (ii) Any pupil leaving school during a session for any reason (except to take part in an organised school activity when different rules apply) must obtain prior permission to leave and must SIGN OUT on the "Leaving School Premises" sheet, in the Student Reception office, indicating which member of staff has given permission.

**NO PUPIL IS ALLOWED TO LEAVE THE SCHOOL PREMISES WITHOUT COMPLETING THIS SHEET AND WITHOUT PERMISSION FROM THE HEAD OF HOUSE, A MEMBER OF THE LEADERSHIP GROUP, OR THE STUDENT RECEPTION TEAM.**

If the pupil returns during the school day he/she must SIGN IN at the Pupil Reception Office.

- (iii) Any pupil who has left school without permission or who has given an unsatisfactory reason for leaving should be given five, one hour detentions for each offence. The parents should be informed immediately. The pupil should be put on "Attendance and Punctuality" report for a minimum of one week by the Head of House informed. If the offence is repeated, the Form Tutor should have a standard letter ("Unauthorised Absence from School") sent home.
- (iv) Some absences (e.g. visit to a dentist) can be predicted and the pupil should bring a note to explain the absence before being absent. Failing this, a pupil must bring an absence note on his/her return to school and must hand it to the Form Tutor.
- (v) In the case of an absence, which has not been foreseen, the parent/guardian should telephone the school to explain the absence. A letter on the pupil's return to school should support this. (medical evidence may be required dependent upon the timeframe of absence)
- (vi) If a pupil has been absent for three days and no message has been received from parents or school are unable to make contact with parent(s) and/or carer(s) or if a pupil has returned from a period of absence and has still not, after three days, handed in an absence note, the Form Tutor should supply the name(s) of pupils to the Head of House/Assistant Head of House so that a letter can be sent to the parents.
- (vii) If there is still no explanation from the parents for the absence, the Form Tutor should liaise with the Head of House who will contact the Education Welfare Officer regarding a home visit.

### (b) SUSPICIOUS ABSENCES

Form Tutors should be vigilant for signs of possible truancy including suspicious patterns of absences over time and should bring to the attention of the Head of House pupils who fall into one or more of the following four categories:

- (i) Pupils who have been absent continuously for a significant period of time without explanation, where no absence note has been received and where a "Three Day Absence" standard letter has produced no response.
- (ii) Pupils who have frequent absences, eg 2-4 sessions each week, or every now and then, without adequate explanation.
- (iii) Pupils who have repeatedly failed to provide absence notes or whose notes are suspect.
- (iv) Pupils whom the Form Tutor suspects of truanting.

The procedure in following up such absences is likely to be as follows:

1. Concern about attendance noted (FT/HOH, etc.)
2. Information to HoH.
3. HoH to make contact with home immediately (Phone call, meeting etc)
4. HoH liaises with EWO
5. HOH makes official request for EWO to investigate
6. EWO makes home visit(s), reports back to HOH
7. If no progress, WARNING LETTER sent, possible SACM arranged. Penalty notices of £120 per parent per child may be issued to parents/guardians of Persistent Absentees.
8. If no response (say 1-2 weeks) matter referred to Education Boarding and Exclusions Panel.
9. Panel convenes and produces recommendation likely to be referred to Court.
10. Matter referred to Court (usually "Magistrates", could be "Family").

(c) **EXTENDED ABSENCE**

The Form Tutor should bring to the attention of the Head of House the names of any pupils who have been absent for more than three days or who intend to be absent from school for more than one week for reasons other than illness.

If the school has received no forewarning about an extended absence, the Education Welfare Officer will be asked to investigate. If, after four weeks, no information can be obtained regarding the expected return date of the pupil, the child's name may be removed from the school roll.

If the School has been advised in advance of the absence and date of return, parents will be warned of the possible educational and legal consequences of extended absence. The child's place will be held open during the absence, provided that absence does not exceed four weeks.

After an absence of four weeks, the child's name will be removed from the school roll. Should the child then return to Redbridge, placement in a school will depend on available vacancies. (Please contact Lynton House)

**Young People Leaving Redbridge – CHILDREN MISSING IN EDUCATION**

The school has a duty to identify any young person leaving with no confirmed forwarding address, destination or education. They must liaise with their Education Welfare Officer (EWO) who will advise the school how to proceed where necessary, and make enquiries using the Education Welfare Procedures for Children Missing From School. Cases when a forwarding address or education provision has been named, but not confirmed must also be referred, unless the EWO or school has had contact with the new provision and can confirm the placement. When there has been notice that a pupil will be leaving Valentines for another educational institution,

parents/carers will be invited by the school attendance officer to come into school and complete a Children Missing in Education which will be forwarded to Redbridge Borough.

Where the pupil's details cannot be confirmed as above, the EWO will complete a Movement of Children Referral form stating clearly where the young person is believed to be living and return this electronically to The Information Officer for CME

All efforts to trace the pupil are recorded centrally. This allows information to be recorded on CME databases, and onward referral to the new home authority (where this is known). The specialist workers can then monitor the safe arrival in the named destination and confirm the take up of education, limiting the opportunity for young people to go missing between education provisions. All young people are monitored until they are confirmed on roll at a school/ education provision or in receipt of suitable education according to their age ability and regard for any special educational need at the new destination

If the pupil(s) destination cannot be confirmed the specialist workers will make further enquiries. This next stage can include liaison with local authority's and partner agencies nationally, as well as the Police, benefit agencies, immigration and national border agencies and/or their counterparts abroad if felt necessary. This process continues until satisfactory confirmation is received the young person is on roll at an education provision in the UK or abroad.

## **6 MONITORING AND REWARDING GOOD ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY**

Phone calls are made each morning to the parents of pupils on the first day of their absence. The school compiles percentage attendance data for all form groups. These figures are made available to the tutors to use with their form groups. The attendance figures are analysed to determine any ethnic, gender or Year group variations. Each term Certificates are awarded for 100% attendance & punctuality, excellent attendance and improvements in attendance. A non-uniform day is organised each term for pupils with 100% attendance.

The head of each house group meets with the Education Welfare Officer bi-weekly. The EWO checks the registers. The Head of House and EWO discuss pupils who do not attend regularly to agree action. The EWO accepts referral forms and agrees home visits.

The school has an attendance panel consisting of the relevant Head of House, EWO and Leadership Group member. The panel targets pupils who do not attend regularly. Parents are invited to the panel meeting to discuss strategies for improvements.

When a pupil returns to school, the relevant Head of House involves the parents, the subject teachers and the EWO to plan the process. Persistent absentees are regarded as pupils with Special Educational Needs. A special programme is worked out to meet their individual needs. This may involve part-time re-entry and/or the provision of additional support staff. Staff are also made aware of the kinds of difficulties that pupils experience on their return. The pupil is also put on an attendance monitoring report and report to the Form Tutor/Head of House or Leadership Group member.

In many cases it is possible to assist the pupil by providing counselling or some other form of support from relevant organisations.

## APPENDIX 1

### 1 REGISTERS AND REGISTRATION

Effective monitoring of attendance depends primarily on the efficient use of class and form registers. All teachers play a part in this.

#### 1.1 Form Registers – General

Use of the Form Register is the major means by which the attendance of pupils at school is recorded, monitored and reported. The Form Tutor registers pupils twice a day at 8.30am and 2pm. Register should be called by the Form Tutor or teacher marking the register with the class seated and silent; each pupil should answer when his/her name is called. Pupils may **NEVER** enter the register.

Any pupil who is not present in the form room when this is done should be recorded as absent.

#### 1.2 Registration – Using SIMS Attendance Through the School Portal

The main information is to be entered on the SIMS Attendance programme that is accessed by form tutors through the school portal. In the case of a form tutor's absence, the covering teacher is to access the absent teacher's register on SIMS. In the unlikely instance that the register is unable to be completed on SIMS, the teacher may use the green register that is found in the blue folder with notices. The date and am/pm register must be clearly marked.

If you have entered the (N) mark and then the student arrives late, while the registration is still in progress, change the mark to (L).

For example:

Marks	Counts as
/ or \	Forward slash (/morning) and backward slash (\afternoon) = Present
(N)	N = Absent
(L)	L = Late

THE REGISTERS MUST BE ENTERED ON SIMS OR ON the rare occasion there is an IT issue, on A GREEN REGISTER SHEET, RETURNED PROMPTLY TO THE STUDENT RECEPTION OFFICE.

The accurate completion of a register is the responsibility of the Form Tutor. It is the responsibility of the Head of House to regularly check that each register is being kept correctly and, if any is not, to advise on what needs to be done and ensure that appropriate action is taken. Heads of House should liaise directly with the EWO or Leadership Group member.

REGISTERS ARE LEGAL DOCUMENTS AND MUST BE CLEAR AND COMPLETELY ACCURATE. This is necessary for the school, borough and national records, for use by the school or EWS or production in a court of law.

Office Staff, Heads of House and the Education Welfare Officer frequently consult registers and they should ALWAYS be submitted electronically promptly on the portal. Failure to do so can cause great inconvenience.



Blue folders should not be used as filing systems for absence notes, notices, letters, etc. and should be cleared each week.

Form Tutors are responsible for ensuring that the above instructions are carried out.

### 1.3 **Completion of Absence Report**

An absence report printed on green paper will appear in the register once a week showing the sessions when students were absent or marks that are missing. There would also be an absence codes sheet. You will need to complete the sheet using the appropriate codes.

### 1.4 **Dealing with notes and letters from students covering absence**

Ask students to present notes covering their absence, read, date and sign. Enter appropriate code on the Absence report. Either add P to the A on the PUPIL REGISTRATION FORM OR enter appropriate code on the ABSENCE REPORT.

### 1.5 **Present – But Late**

Any pupil arriving at school after registration but before 9.35 am or 2.30 pm should also receive a “Late”. Such a pupil must go to the student reception immediately on entering the school (not at some other time) and should sign in on the school Inventory computer system. The pupil should give any note explaining the lateness to the Form Tutor.

Any pupil who arrives at school AFTER 9.35pm or 2.30pm does NOT get a Late but remains as “absent” in the register.

If a pupil has a medical appointment (supported by a note or appointment card) and returns before the end of the morning or afternoon session, this should count as an attendance.

### 1.7 **The Registration Period**

- (a) The Form Tutor should arrive promptly at the form room and should remain with the form group throughout form time.
- (b) When there is House Assembly, the Form Tutor should register the pupils, take the form to Assembly, supervise the form's seating and remain with the form and continue to supervise it throughout Assembly.
- (c) Any pupil who arrives at school after the form has gone to Assembly should go to the hall where Assembly is taking place and should stand quietly outside the hall. A member of staff near to the door should then conduct the pupil into the room. A pupil in such a situation should never remain in the form room and should never wander the corridors. At the end of Assembly, such a pupil should report to the Form Tutor who should mark him/her in the register as late.
- (d) At the registration following a pupil's late arrival in school the Form Tutor should enquire into the reason for the lateness and seek a parental note.

## **2 ATTENDANCE/ABSENCE CODES**

### 2.1 **Present in School**

#### Codes

- / Present (AM)
- \ Present (PM)

L Late (before registers closed i.e. before 9.35 am or 2.30 pm) ??

## 2.2 Out on Approved Educational Activity - Attendance Code

Approved Educational Activities are supervised off-site activities, which are approved by the school. Any pupil out on one of these should have the appropriate Code marked on the Absence Report to show that this counts as an ATTENDANCE.

### Codes

B	Education off site in a supervised activity by the school (NOT dual registration)
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)
J	Interview
P	<u>Approved sporting activity</u> Sporting activity/match, theatrical performance etc organised by school.
V	<u>Educational visit or trip</u> School trip/visit e.g. Villiers Park
W	<u>Work Experience</u> Placements organised/approved by school

## 2.3 Authorised Absence Code

This is an absence where an acceptable reason has been given to the school either in advance or on return. It should be shown by the use of the appropriate Absence code.

### Codes

E	<u>Exclusion</u>	Official exclusion from school
G	<u>Family holidays (NOT agreed)</u>	
I	<u>Illness</u>	(NOT medical or dental etc. appointment)
M	<u>Medical</u>	Medical/clinic/dental appointment where pupil is out for entire session
R	<u>Religious observance</u>	Approved religious event, where parent(s)/guardian(s) belong(s) to a particular faith. Subject to prior agreement
S	<u>Study leave</u>	Study Leave - Years 11, 12, 13 only.
T	<u>Traveller absence</u>	
C	<u>Other</u>	Other Authorised Circumstances not covered by another appropriate code/description e.g. funeral.

## 2.4 Unexplained/Unauthorised Absence

(a) **UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE** is absence for which no explanation has yet been received.

N = no reason yet provided for absence. (should only be used for up to 5 days authorised and changed thereafter)

O = unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)

U= Late (after registers closed) counts as Unauthorised absence

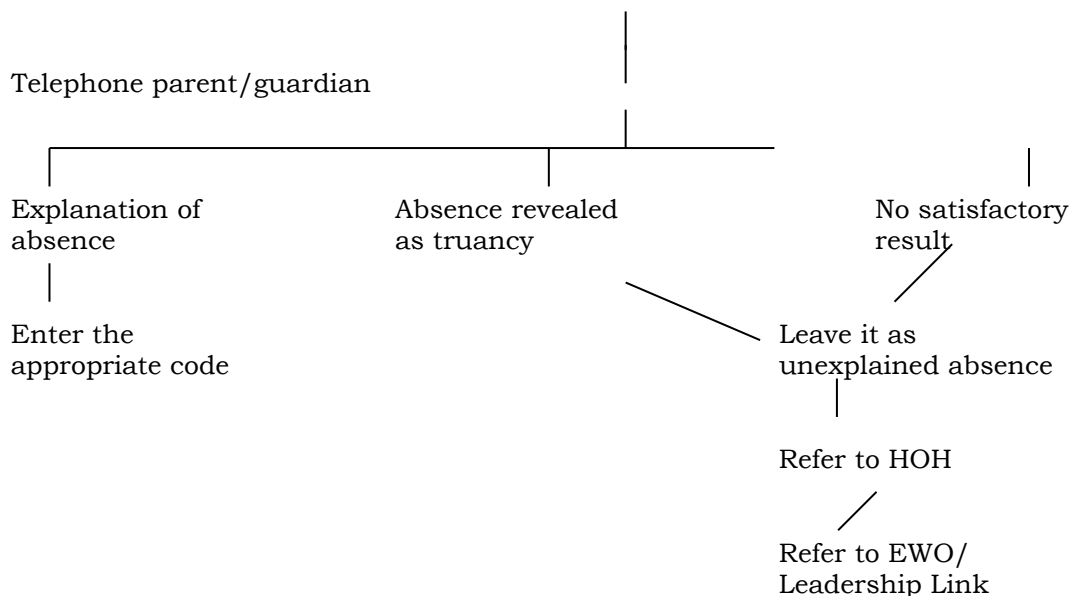
If an absence note has not been received, please follow the procedure below.

- 1 Leave it as ABSENCE until a note is received.
- 2 If, after some time, a note has still not been received the parent/guardian should be telephoned to seek an explanation of the absence. If a satisfactory explanation is received, this should be briefly noted in written form for the pupil's records and the appropriate code inserted. If the result of the telephone

call is that the absence is found to be truancy or if there is no satisfactory outcome to the telephone call the matter should be referred to the Head of House.

3. The Head of House should pursue enquiries and, where appropriate, liaise with the EWO and the Leadership Group member in charge of attendance.

No absence note



- (b) **UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE** is absence for which no reason acceptable to the school has been given. This includes absence where a parent has colluded in the disguising of an unacceptable absence. Unauthorised absence is deemed to be truancy. Unauthorised absence should be identified in the register through the use of code N for a limited period of 5 days and if no reason is forthcoming this should be converted to 'O'. **THIS SHOULD ONLY BE DONE BY THE HEAD OF HOUSE** after the above "Unexplained Absence" procedures have been carried out.

The school is required to produce and publish unauthorised absence figures for its pupils.

#### 4 Class Registers

A class register will be taken in the first 10 minutes using the SIMS system.

Most absences from lessons which are not the result of school activities will correlate with sessional absences from school which are thus the responsibility of the form Tutor to follow up. However, the Subject Teacher must exercise constant vigilance regarding absences recorded and must be particularly alert to any possible attempt by a pupil to register as normal with the Form Tutor but then fail to attend part, or all, of the ensuing session. If detected, this should be reported as soon as possible to the Form Tutor. The Subject Teacher should also liaise with the Form Tutor over late arrivals at lessons (issuing an appropriate punishment to the pupil concerned) and any sporadic, recurrent, extended or in any way suspicious absences.

Subject Teachers should note that the Head of Department, Head of House or member of the Leadership Group may study class/group registers.

**Abbreviations used:**

**HOH = Head of House**

**FT = Form Tutor**

**EWO = Educational Welfare Officer**

**LG = Leadership Group**

**SIMS = School Information Management System**

**SSA = Student Support Assistant**

**SACM = School Attendance Consultation Meeting**