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Dear Families

We have had an excellent start to the academic year and have very much enjoyed welcoming new and returning students to school and learning all about their summer experiences.

As we now settle into the new term I thought it would be helpful to remind all students, parents and carers of our school expectations for student attendance.

Here at Victoria, our expectation is that your child attends school each day unless they are too unwell or there are exceptional circumstances that prevent them from attending. Our aim is that every student should have the highest level of attendance possible, so that they are able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

Please find below a reminder of our school absence procedures along with the school's and Local Authority's response to poor attendance.

Types of Absence

As a school, we are required to keep an accurate record of all pupil absences. An absence is either recorded as authorised or unauthorised. Where the reason for an absence is not provided or is considered unacceptable, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. Examples of unauthorised absences would include;

· Shopping trips
· Care for family members
· Days out to theme parks or to attend concerts/shows
· Parent/carer work commitments
· Holidays taken in term time

Reporting an absence

If your child is unable to attend school, for any reason, it is important that you inform school by 09:30am on each day of the absence. You can do this by telephoning the school office on 0121 476 9478 or by emailing enquiry@victoria.bham.sch.uk. It is important that you provide the reason for the absence and the expected return date.

Where a child is absent, with no reason given, parents/carers will be contacted, in line with our safeguarding policy. During periods of extended absence, our Pastoral Team will maintain regular contact and carry out safe & well checks. This is typically arranged as a WhatsApp video call.

Illness

Whilst we understand that there may be exceptional circumstances for a small number of students who are too ill to attend school, we do expect all students to be in when they are well and able to attend.

Your child can still attend school if they have cold symptoms. You should, however, keep your child at home if they have a temperature of 38°c or above, a contagious disease, or have been vomiting or have diarrhoea (48hrs from last bout in this instance).

The DFE has asked that we share the following NHS link with you which provides further, helpful information https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/

If your child is unwell, please provide details of any symptoms when you call to register their absence. This helps us to differentiate between new and recurring bouts of illness which may require further support or a referral.

Punctuality

Please ensure that your child arrives at school on time. Please bear in mind, that when a pupil arrives late to class it not only affects the individual but can be disruptive to the learning of all pupils.

The school day for pupils is 8:50am – 3:00pm. Pupils should arrive at school between 8:50am – 9:30am when staff will be on hand to welcome and support pupils into class for registration.

Registers open at 9:20am. Pupils arriving at school between 9:30am - 9:50am will be recorded as 'late - before registers close' (L) and pupils arriving after 9:50am will be recorded as 'late - after registers close' (U). Please note that a 'U' is an unauthorised absence and will have a negative impact your child's attendance.

All pupils arriving late or leaving during the school day must be signed in/out at the school office.

The school day finishes for pupils at 3:00pm and all pupils must be collected by 3:35pm.

Medical & Dental Appointments

We ask that, wherever possible, routine medical and dental appointments are made outside of school hours. However, should this be unavoidable, or if your child has a hospital or specialist appointment, please inform the school office and/or class teacher in advance. Proof of appointments MUST be provided. A copy of the letter, text or appointment card can be sent in with your child's communication book or can be emailed to enquiry@victoria.bham.sch.uk.

Please do not keep children out of school for the whole day unless absolutely necessary. Appointments will only be authorised for the length of the appointment – half a day in most circumstances.

Holidays during Term time

Family holidays in term time are not allowed in law and cannot be authorised. Parents wishing to take their child out of school during term time are required to complete a Leave in Term-Time Request form which is available on request from the school office.

In line with our safeguarding policy and duty of care, a safe & well check(s) will be carried out by our Pastoral Team. This is typically arranged as a WhatsApp video.

In the event of recurring requests for term time holiday absence, the school may refer the matter to the Birmingham Education Legal Intervention Team.

What is good attendance?

All students should strive towards achieving at least 95% attendance. Once attendance drops to 90% your child is classed by the Department of Education as being 'Persistently Absent'.

Attendance during one school year	Equates to number of days absent	Which is approximately this many weeks absent
95%	9 days	2 weeks
90%	19 days	4 weeks
85%	29 days	6 weeks
80%	38 days	8 weeks

What we do

We have a duty of care, shared with the Local Authority, to challenge poor attendance. Attendance below 90% is considered poor. A student with attendance below 80% is of serious concern and may result in parents/carers being invited into school to discuss strategies to overcome any obstacles affecting regular attendance and punctuality. Please be assured that we are here to support and encourage all our students and by working together, in partnership, we can ensure their best interests.

As part of the process for monitoring attendance we will follow the Birmingham Legal Intervention Team (ELIT) guidance, 'Support First'. The Pastoral team will refer to this guidance to determine when referrals to the ELIT team should be made. Further information regarding this process can be found at:

https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/20014/schools_and_learning/1502/school_attendance_advice_for_parents

Should you have any concerns regarding your child's attendance please do not hesitate to contact a member of our Pastoral Team who will be only too happy to offer support and advice.

Kind regards

Gary Coffey
Executive Headteacher