

9<sup>th</sup> September 2020

## ATTENDANCE GUIDELINES

Dear Parent/Carer,

Missing out on more time in the classroom risks pupils falling further behind. Those with higher overall absence tend to achieve less well in secondary school. School attendance will therefore be mandatory again from the beginning of the autumn term. This means from that point, the usual rules on school attendance will apply, including:

- parents' duty to secure that their child attends regularly at school where the child is a registered pupil at school and they are of compulsory school age;
- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- the availability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with local authorities' codes of conduct

At Viridis Schools, we expect all children to arrive on time and attend every day. Children have only 190 school days in a year, and we believe that each one is important. We expect each individual pupil to achieve at least 97% attendance.

As a result of full re-opening of schools, staggered start / finish times are in place as an interim measure.

Any child who arrives at school after the allocated start time will obtain a late mark. Children who arrive late not only miss a vital part of the day but also disturb the learning of the rest of the class. All lates will be monitored and recorded. If you arrive after the allocated start time, you will receive a 'late' card detailing the number of minutes late by the learning mentor. Persistent lateness could result in a referral to the School Attendance Officer.

The interim staggered start and finish times are:

- KS2 start and finish time 8.55am – 3.30pm
- KS1 start and finish time 9.05am – 3.20pm
- EYFS 9.25am – 3.00pm

Parents/carers have a responsibility to notify the school on the first day of absence before 8:55am. A reason for absence must be provided and an expected return date given. Please inform a member of office staff or leave a message on the school answer phone. This should be followed up with a written explanation along with suitable evidence handed to the school office i.e. an appointment letter, a doctor's note, a copy of a prescription or a label of medication. In cases where a written explanation has not been provided, the absence may be unauthorised, and a letter will be sent to you. Unauthorised means the school is not satisfied with the reason of absence provided.

It is essential that all appointments such as routine check-ups or a visit to the dentist, optician or GP are booked out of school hours or in the holiday periods to avoid missing crucial learning time. If your child has any upcoming hospital appointments and you are required to collect them, please ensure you notify the school office beforehand and minimise this absence by taking as little time away as possible. Evidence will need to be provided for any hospital appointments in the school day.

We do not authorise holidays taken during term time and any absence/(s) taken for this reason will be marked as unauthorised. Unauthorised means the school is not satisfied with the reason of absence provided. You will need to complete a special leave request form at the school office to notify us of a leave such as holiday absence and provide evidence to the school so the whereabouts of your child is known as failure to do so could result in the school referring the case to the 'children missing in education' team at Hackney Learning Trust. Please note, that providing evidence does not result in validation or authorisation of absence and a holiday absence will result in a Fixed Penalty Notice at three days or more. To help plan your holidays you will find our term dates on our fortnightly newsletter and the school website. Please ensure personal holidays are taken within the 13 weeks allocated for this.

The school will refer pupils to the Hackney Learning Trust School Attendance Officer if there is a cause for concern about unauthorised absence/(s) and/or lateness. In most circumstances each liable parent/carer could receive a Fixed Penalty Notice of £60 or further action being taken if the absenteeism persists. If the penalty notice is not paid in full within 28 days, the local authority can prosecute for the offence.

The school and The Hackney Learning Trust work closely together to ensure that all pupils attend school regularly and arrive on time and we hope that you will also support us in ensuring that your child receives their full educational entitlement. We recognise that there may be reservations about returning to school this year particularly. If you have any concerns regarding your child's attendance or punctuality, please inform your child's class teacher or a member of the school leadership team and we will do all we can to support you.

We are very proud of the achievements and progress of our pupils and are passionate about a child's right to an education. This can only be achieved through good attendance to school.

Kind regards,

Aimee Walker  
Acting Headteacher