

The Villa Pre-Preparatory

Attendance Policy

Introduction

Every child has a right to be educated and regular attendance is extremely important. We seek to ensure that all pupils receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her true potential. To ensure that this is achieved, school staff will work with pupils and their families to ensure each pupil attends school regularly and punctually.

All children are expected to attend school except when they are ill, in which case they should be fully recovered before returning. Punctuality is equally important, as the teaching day begins straight away.

Regulations

The parent of a child of compulsory school age is required by law to ensure that the child regularly attends the school at which he/she is registered. Should a parent fail to ensure that his/her child attends that school regularly, the parent is guilty of an offence. (Parents who are convicted of this offence may be fined up to £2,500 and/or sentenced to up to three months in prison. Alternatively, parents may be subject to a fixed penalty notice.) When a child of compulsory school age is absent from school, the attendance register must indicate whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. (See the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006.)

Compulsory School Age

Your child is of "compulsory school age" on the 1st January, 1st April or 1st September following their 5th birthday.

- Children becoming 5 years old between 1st September and 31st December are of compulsory school age from the beginning of the term after 1st January (Spring Term).
- Children becoming 5 years old between 1st January and 31st March are of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term after 1st April (Summer Term).
- Children becoming 5 years old between 1st April and 31st August are of compulsory school age from the beginning of the term after 1st September (Autumn term)

The school takes absence seriously whether a child is of compulsory school age or not as this has impact on their learning and the other children in the class.

Registers

Registers are taken every morning at 8:50am.

Registers for the second session of the day are called at various times after 13:00 depending on the timetabled activities for the class.

Registers must be marked using the official DfE codes.

Reporting an absence

Parents are required to telephone the School (020 7703 6216) or to email school@thevillaschoolandnursery.com on the first day of absence by 8.50am, with a reason for the absence. If a child is unwell, then the nature of the illness should be indicated. If the parent notifies the school by phone, this must then be followed up in writing via email or the planner when the child returns to school. If the absence is longer than 2 days, the parent must repeat the process to ensure the school is kept informed.

What constitutes Authorised Absence?

Absence may generally be authorised for the following reasons:

- Illness
- Emergency medical or dental appointments
- Days of religious observance
- Exclusion
- Traveller child travelling
- Family bereavement (for a limited duration)
- Involvement in a public performance
- Off-site examination
- To visit a new school
- Lateness (when the child arrives before the register has closed and offers a satisfactory explanation)

Excessive amounts of authorised absence may often be as damaging to continuity of learning as unauthorised absence. The school will therefore only authorise absence sparingly and only after careful consideration, particularly where children have a history of irregular attendance.

Inappropriate authorisation of absence may seriously undermine effective intervention by the local education authority and compromise any potential legal action.

Requests for Leave of Absence

The Headteacher has a duty to ensure that term dates are protected and leave of absence will not normally be granted for family holidays in term time. In exceptional circumstances, parents should write directly to the Headteacher explaining fully why the request is being made to remove a pupil from school in term time. This must be received by the Headteacher at least four weeks in advance of the planned absence. The parents will be notified about the outcome of the request by email.

Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence is where no explanation has been given for the child's absence or where the explanation offered is considered by the Headteacher to be unacceptable.

Absence should not be authorised in the following circumstances:

- No explanation is offered by the parent/carer
- The explanation offered is unsatisfactory (shopping, minding the house)
- Family holidays (which are taken without the school's prior consent or knowledge and/or are in excess of any time agreed with the school)
- Lateness when the child arrives after the register has closed and fails to offer a satisfactory explanation
- Special occasions (when the school does not agree that these should be given)

Monitoring

The Headteacher has a responsibility to monitor attendance of the children in the school and will work with parents to resolve any difficulties. Parents will be contacted if their child's attendance falls below 90%, regardless of whether or not the absence has been authorised. Parents will be asked to meet with the Headteacher to discuss their child's attendance. If no improvement is seen in attendance, further action may be taken including contacting the Educational Welfare department at Southwark Council's Early Help Service.

The school will report the following issues to the local authority:

- 20 days of unauthorised absence
- Failure to attend regularly
- Deletion from the school register where the next school is not known