

Vision Motor Training Ltd

Attendance Policy

**Statement of Intent**

Vision Motor Training is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our learners. Regular attendance is critical if our learners are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them.

One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling experience. We actively promote 100% attendance for all our learners, and we use a variety of weekly, termly and annual rewards to promote good attendance and punctuality.

The Staff, in partnership with parents/carers, have a duty to promote full attendance at Vision Motor Training.

**Parental Responsibility**

Under the 1996 Education Act, Section 7, parents/carers have a legal duty to ensure that their young people attend regularly and arrive on time. Regular attendance is essential to the all-round development of the young person, and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them in order to make good progress in their learning. Poor attendance undermines their educational attainment and progress and, sometimes, puts learners at risk by encouraging anti-social behaviour.

**It is the parents’/carers’ responsibility to contact the provision by 9.50 a.m. on the first day their child is absent. This is a safeguarding issue requirement so that all parties know that your child is safe and their whereabouts is known. Parents/carers should update the provision for each day of absence and inform the provision when their child is returning.**

Pupils are expected to arrive by 9.30 a.m. All pupils that arrive late must report to the office where the reason for lateness is recorded.

**The Role of the School Staff**

Tutors complete a register at the beginning of each morning and once during the afternoon session. Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. (The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Tutors mark pupils present, absent or late. The tutor notifies the names of children whose attendance is causing concern.

It is the responsibility of the Attendance Officer to ensure:

* Attendance and lateness records are up to date.
* If no reason for absence has been provided, parents are contacted on the first day of absence by phone call.
* Receive, update and maintain, accurate registers in line with Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2001.
* Where there has been no communication, letters are sent to parents requesting reasons for absence.
* The appropriate attendance code is entered into the register (see National Attendance Codes).
* Parents are informed termly of the child’s attendance figure.
* The Attendance Officer will work proactively with parents/carers and communicate sensitively to try and remove barriers to promote good attendance.

**The Role of Parents/Carers**

It is the responsibility of the parents/carers to communicate with the Attendance Officer, any issues that might hinder attendance.

**The Role of Pupils**

It is the responsibility of pupils to actively get themselves into the provision, be punctual and ready to learn. Pupils need to speak to the Attendance Officer, or any member of staff, if there are issues preventing attendance, so that they can be resolved.

**Timeline of the Staged Approach for Managing Poor Attendance**

* 95 - 100% attendance – the tutor to investigate and notify the Attendance Officer of concerns. The Attendance Officer to contact parent/carer if appropriate.
* 90 - 95% attendance - school intervention letters/meetings with parents/carers, with the assistance of Local Authority Education Welfare Service, if necessary.
* Where the level of absence has not improved and there are unauthorised absences, the provision will consult with the Local Authority School Education Welfare Service for advice.
* For the cases that require intensive family support, the provision may make an Early Help Assessment.

**Children Missing Education**

No young person should be removed from the provision without consultation between the Director and the Education Welfare Service when appropriate. Please see the circumstances below: -

* Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed, by completing a Child Missing Education referral for the following circumstances: -
	+ If the whereabouts of the child is unknown and the school has failed to locate him/her.
	+ The family has notified the school that they are leaving the area, but no Common Transfer Form (pupil file) has been requested by another school.

**Lateness**

At Vision Motor Training, the register is taken at 9.30 am and 12.20 pm. Learners arriving after these times must enter by the main entrance and report to the office where the reason for lateness will be recorded. The pupil will be marked as late before registration has closed at 10.10 a.m. (Code ‘L’).

The register will close at 10.10 am and 1.00 pm. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (Code ‘U’) and this will count as an unauthorised absence.

Frequent lateness after the register has closed (‘U’), will be discussed with parents/carers with the Attendance Officer and Education Welfare Service and could provide grounds for prosecution or a Penalty Notice.

**Penalty Notice Proceedings for Lateness**

**Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with East Riding Of Yorkshire County Council’s Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct effective from January 2016, as revised in April 2017, when:**

* 10 incidents of late arrival after the registers have closed during any possible 100 school sessions leads to a Penalty Notice Warning Letter.
* The Penalty Notice Warning Letter sets out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded.
* If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15-day period, a Penalty Notice(s) will be issued (one per parent per child).
* Where a Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days of issue the Local Authority will instigate court proceedings.

**Authorising Absence**

Only the Director can authorise absence using a consistent approach. The Director is not obliged to accept a parent’s/carer’s explanation. A letter or telephone message from a parent/carer does not in itself authorise an absence. If absences are not authorised, parents will be notified.

If no explanation is received, absences will not be authorised.

Absence (for example leave for holidays) during term time can only be approved in “exceptional circumstances”. The following reasons are examples of absence that will not be authorised:

* Persistent non-specific illness e.g., poorly/unwell.
* Absence of siblings if one child is ill.
* Inadequate clothing/uniform.
* Oversleeping
* Confusion over school dates.
* Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons.
* Child’s/family birthday.
* Shopping trip.
* Family Holidays (with some rare exceptions).

Persistent unauthorised absence (10% or more of the school year) may result in a referral to the Local Authority for consideration of prosecution. The provision will follow procedures with the LA prior to referral and parents will be notified in writing.

When a referral is made, the child’s Registration Certificate, copies of all letters sent to parents and minutes of any meetings **need to** be attached to the completed referral form with any other relevant information.

**Action may include**: -

* Attendance Improvement Meetings with the school’s Attendance Officer and LA.
* Home visits conducted by provision staff or EWS.
* Fast Track to Prosecution with support of EWS.

**Penalty Notices Proceedings for Poor Attendance**

**Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with East Riding of Yorkshire County Council’s Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct effective from January 2016 and revised in April 2017.**

* A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of absence for 10 or more half day sessions (5 school days) without authorisation during any 100 possible school sessions or period of 50 days of schooling – these do not need to be consecutive.
* A Penalty Notice can also be issued where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours.
* After the appropriate request for a Penalty Notice is received, the LA will issue a warning letter setting out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded
* If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15-day period a Penalty Notice will be issued (one per parent per child)

**Exceptional circumstances could include**:

* Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the parent will not be in receipt of any leave soon that coincides with school holidays.
* Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent’s or child’s rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
* The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.
* To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family.
* Any strong personal reasons why a family might need to take a child away from school for a short break.

Any examples provided are illustrative rather than exhaustive. It is acceptable to take a pupil’s previous record of attendance into account when the provision is making decisions. The fundamental principles for defining ‘exceptional’ are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. And by 'unavoidable' it implies that an event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. It is important to note that the director can agree the absence of a young person in exceptional circumstances and this discretion can be used also to determine the length of the authorised absence.

Where Penalty Notices are imposed, the regulations state that the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28-day period will result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 says that parents are **guilty** of an offence of failing to secure regular attendance at school unless they can prove that the child was absent:

* with leave (the school has given permission).
* due to sickness or any unavoidable cause (the sickness or unavoidable cause must relate to the child, not the parent).
* religious observance.
* failure by the Local Authority to provide transport.

In law, these are the only acceptable reasons for a child being absent from school.

The Director may authorise absence in “exceptional circumstances” but this must be requested in advance and agreement to each request is at the discretion of the Director, acting on behalf of the Governing Body (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Each case will be judged on its merits and the Director’s decision is final. Once the decision not to authorise leave is taken, it cannot be authorised retrospectively.

If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken anyway, the case may be referred to the LA who may issue a Penalty Notice to each parent for each child taken out of school.

Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28-day period will result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

**Date of Review: June 2023**