

# VANAREAL GRACELAND ACADEMY

Abacha Road Mararaba



## Attendance Management Policy

<b>Policy Number</b>	O2 – Attendance Policy
<b>Prepared By</b>	Paul Ojobo
<b>Acknowledgement(s)</b>	All staff
<b>Date Approved</b>	
<b>Effective Date</b>	September 2024
<b>Physical Location of Policy</b>	Organisational file in office & on website
<b>Date of Next Review</b>	<b>June 2026</b>

## Document Information

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### Document history

Version no.	Date	Change
1.0	June 2024	Registration procedures & system updated. Update of contact systems

### Approvals

Role	Name	Signature / Approval	Date
Head of School (Admin)			
Head of School (Academy)			
Director Acedemy	Esther Ochiekwu		
School Board			

## **RATIONALE**

Good attendance is an essential part of a child's life at Vanareal Graceland Academy. We view good, regular attendance as an essential part of a child's academic and social success within school and so expect all children to be on roll everyday, when school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. Without regular attendance, any child's progress will not be maintained and extended and their ability to make and maintain friendships will be severely affected. Viewed more positively, learning and friendship opportunities are enhanced by sustained periods of unbroken attendance.

Full attendance should be an expectation shared by the child, the home and school. That shared, positive attitude towards school will help us all to gain the very best academic and social development for every child and will provide a very important and useful role model for a child's future working life.

We recognize that all children have differing needs, and if a child was considered to have a disability which prohibited him/her attending school every day then we would deal with each case individually.

## **AIMS**

The aim of this policy is to provide clarity around the issue of attendance:

- Inform parents of their legal responsibility, expectations and school policy;
- encourage and promote good attendance and punctuality;
- support teachers and senior leaders in promoting and monitoring good attendance and punctuality;
- provide clear procedures.

## **ARRIVAL AND REGISTRATION**

It is important that children arrive for school punctually to ensure a calm and purposeful start to the day. All children should be ready to come into school at **8.45am** each day. The register is taken twice a day **at 9.00am and 1.00 pm**. A day counts as 2 attendances.

**Morning registration ends at 9.00 am. If a child arrives after the registration period he/she will be marked in as late. After 9.20 am this will become an Unauthorized Absence. The afternoon register is taken at 1.00 pm.**

It is essential that children arriving and leaving school with a parent/guardian outside the normal hours are signed in or out from the office *using the door entry system*. The signing in/out register in the office is used in the case of an emergency or a fire drill.

Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence.

## **ABSENCE**

All parents are asked to contact the school by 9am if their child is absent on the first day of absence with the reason by phone – **+23480xxxxxxx**, **letter**, email to [Info@vglacademy.com](mailto:Info@vglacademy.com) or in person, ideally before 9am.

When a child is absent, the class teacher will record the absence in the register on the school portal

If no notification has been received regarding the reason for absence, the school office will endeavour to contact the parent or guardian, to establish the reason for absence.

If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child.

## **ILLNESS AND MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS**

Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours. If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment.

The school office should be informed during the morning, if appropriate, for the duration of the absence.

**In line with clear guidelines set out by the authority, parents of pupils at Vanareal Graceland Academy and can expect the following:**

- To be given an array of different ways that parents can contact the school to make school aware of absence. These will include the school email address and the school phone number whereby parents can either leave a message with a member of staff or leave a message on Whatsapp.
- Follow up calls to be made to parents of children that are not in school and no reason is offered. This can be in the form of a telephone call or text. If no contact made, an email will be sent.
- Attendance monitoring to be continuous and on-going. Allowing for school to raise concerns promptly with parents.
- Any concerns immediately dealt with, and parents contacted, via either phone call, face-to-face or letter.
- To expect that attendance and punctuality be dealt with using a consistent system.
- To be reminded of the importance of good punctuality and attendance via letters and newsletters.

### **Parents/Carers are expected to:**

- Inform school at the earliest opportunity that their child is going to be absent from school or nursery by 9am.
- Not to make medical appointments during the school day. If they have to be during the school/nursery day then school will be given plenty of notice and provided with a medical card/appointment letter.
- Work with school to sort out any difficulties impacting on attendance or punctuality at the earliest opportunity.
- Not take children out of school for holidays, and if time does need to be taken in exceptional circumstances this will be applied for with 6 weeks' notice. Any proof of exceptional circumstances should also be handed in at this time eg. Medical evidence, official letters from place of work, calendars of religious events.

## **LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

- Head of School **shall not** grant **any** Leave of Absence during term time **unless they consider** there are **exceptional** circumstances relating to the application.
- Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are **exceptional circumstances** and the Head of school must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.
- Head of school will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.
- The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent.
- Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being unauthorized

**Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on a case by case basis and on its own merits. Leave of absence will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances and only if attendance is above 97%.**

**Leave for holidays during term time will not be granted. It is illegal to take children out of school for holidays during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. There is no entitlement to any leave of absence for a holiday during term time. Schools are in session for 38 weeks, so there are opportunities to take children on holiday during the remaining 13 weeks.**

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or give into pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school (not by parents) as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing, on a leave of absence form, which are available from the school office.

### **Absence DEFINITIONS**

**Authorised Absences** are mornings or afternoons away from school for a legitimate reason such as genuine illness or other unavoidable cause, and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian.

**Unauthorised Absences** are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This includes:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily

- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained

- Children who arrive too late to get a mark.

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with staff in resolving any problems together.

**It is not usually appropriate for the school to authorise absences for shopping, looking after other children, day trips, birthday celebrations etc. Leave may, however, be granted in an emergency (eg bereavements) or for medical appointments supported by a medical card/letter.**

## **EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

There may be an occasion that constitutes **exceptional circumstances**; an application can be made to the head teacher for the consideration.

## **LONG TERM ABSENCE**

When children have an illness that means they will be away from home for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up their school work.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

## **REPEATED UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE**

Unauthorized absences remain on the child's record and might be reported to the ministry of education

Attendance and punctuality are monitored by Ministry of education and the school. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents and guardians will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem.

The Local Authority has the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

## **STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING ATTENDANCE**

### **Why attendance matters:**

- Less than 5 days absence = 98%+ attendance
- 5-14 days absence (approx.) = 93.5% attendance
- 14-20 days absence (approx.) = 90% attendance
- 20- 30 days absence (approx.) = 88% attendance
- If a child achieves 80% attendance, this means that they have missed approximately 40 days of education over the academic year, averaging 1 day a week.

At Vanareal Graceland Academy the staff and Governors endeavor to support parents and carers by:

- Providing an environment in which pupils feel welcomed and valued. The school's ethos

must demonstrate that pupils feel that their presence in school is important, that they will be missed when they are absent/late and that follow up action will be taken.

- Making every effort to match learning tasks to pupil's needs.
- Collating attendance data half termly and analysing it in order to help identify patterns, set targets, correlate attendance with achievement and support and inform policy/practice. If concern is raised about a particular child, the following support is actioned –



- Parents/carers will be reminded regularly (via newsletters, Whatsapp group, PTA sessions etc.) of the importance of good attendance.
- The head of school will make a termly report to School Board on attendance.
- The head of school may liaise with other agencies when this may serve to support and assist pupils who are experiencing difficulties.
- Supporting positive links with feeder school to help with a smooth transfer to their next school. Discussions will identify those pupils who may require extra support during this process.

## **MONITORING AND REVIEWING**

The School Board also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out.

The School Board will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that the school's attendance figures are as high as they should be.

The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.

The school office will be responsible for monitoring attendance on a day to day basis. If they become aware of an unexpected pupil absence during the course of the school day, they will contact the head teacher immediately. If there is longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this again will be reported to the Head of school , who will contact the parents or guardians.

## **SUMMARY**

The school has a legal duty to publish its attendance figures to parents and promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend school. The staff at Vanareal Graceland Academy are committed to working with parents to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

## School Attendance Monitoring Process

<b>Stage 1</b>	Current attendance <u>below 97%</u> without clear authorized reasons for absence	
	<b>Actions:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letter 1 outlining initial concern sent.</li> <li>• Class teacher or pupil support worker to have a conversation with parent/carer re: early concerns.</li> <li>• Attendance re-assessed after 6 weeks</li> </ul>	
<b>Stage 2</b>	Half termly (4 weekly) monitoring for identified stage 1 concerns	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If improved attendance, Letter 1a (positive increase)</li> <li>• Continue 4 weekly monitoring and feedback until 95%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If on-going concerns, Letter 1b (little or no improvement)</li> <li>• Pupil Support Worker to make contact re: support needed</li> <li>• Attendance re-assessed after 6 weeks</li> </ul>
<b>Stage 3</b>	Half termly (4 weekly) monitoring still shows little or no improvement	
	<b>Actions:</b> Letter 2 – meeting request sent Meeting with Headteacher to set targets and explore Early Help Referral. Attendance re-assessed after 6 weeks.	

