Virtual Learning uk

TITLE	VERSION
Attendance Policy 2026-2027	6

APPROVAL BODY	DATE	REVIEW DATE
Board of Governors	August 2026	August 2027

LEAD PEARSON	Director of Operations

POLICY STATEMENT

VLUK is committed to providing a good educational experience to all its learners. VLUK believes that if learners are to benefit from education, good attendance is crucial. VLUK regards attendance and punctuality of learners as a priority, and aims to encourage high attendance rates and avoid levels of persistent or intermittent absenteeism. VLUK does all it can to ensure maximum attendance for all learners.

BACKGROUND

VLUK is a National Independent Training Provider, delivering education in the 16-19 FE sector. It is part of The Oxford Virtual Education Group. VLUK is led by a Chief Executive Officer, accountable to a Board of Governors and Group Chief Executive Officer and supported by an Executive team and a Senior Leadership Team (SLT). Accountable to the SLT is a layer of middle management located throughout the country. The Middle Leadership team is responsible for tutors and enrichment staff.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to support learners' attendance on VLUK programmes. It does this by ensuring staff are aware of and consistently implement the VLUK processes to support learners and parent/carers maintain a high level of attendance.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all staff at VLUK from Governors, Senior Leadership Team, Middle Leaders, Tutors and Support Staff and confirms VLUK's approach. It also applies to all learners on any VLUK programme.

DEFINITIONS

- Authorised Absence: An absence approved in advance or subsequently validated by official documentation (e.g., medical certificate, hospital appointment letter, official driving test notification, religious observance).
- Unauthorised Absence: An absence without prior permission or valid explanation, including unnotified sickness, holidays in term-time, or missing sessions without evidence.
- Lateness: Arrival after the scheduled start time of a lesson or session. Arrival more than 15 minutes after the session start time will be recorded as an unauthorised absence for that session unless an exceptional reason is accepted.
- Persistent Absence: An attendance rate below 90% at any point in the academic year.
- Active Learning: Documented engagement in timetabled learning activities, assessments, guided learning hours, or work placement activities as defined by DfE funding rules.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Board of Governors	The Governing Board or a delegated committee review and challenge the effectiveness of the internal controls and the management of risk detailed in this policy.
Chief Executive Officer	Overall responsibility and oversight of this policy, ensuring resources are used effectively and appropriately.
Senior Leadership Team	Responsible for managing the policy, employee adherence to the policy, and the monitoring of learner attendance.
Lead Person	Responsible for the implementation and delivery of this policy; ensuring the policy aligns with regulatory requirements and best practice.
All Line Managers	Responsible for ensuring all staff are aware of and follow this policy and adhere to it.
All Tutors and Middle leaders Employees and Volunteers	Responsible for accurately completing registers within the first 15 minutes of every session, conducting daily check-ins, and escalating attendance concerns promptly through the intervention framework.
Employees and Volunteers	To understand and uphold the principles of this policy.

POLICY - OBJECTIVES

VLUK promotes a high level of attendance for all learners by providing a stimulating, caring and happy learning environment. Any problems that impede full attendance are identified and addressed as quickly as possible.

VLUK gives a high priority to conveying to parents/carers and learners the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

VLUK recognises that parents/carers have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there are concerns about attendance. If there are problems which affect a learner's attendance then VLUK investigates, identifies and strives, in partnership with parents/carers and learners to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible.

VLUK's attendance target for the academic year 2026-2027 is 90%.

It is the responsibility of VLUK to:

- Ensure that all staff continue to focus attention and effort on the level of absence amongst learners.
- Expect learners to attend regularly, on time, properly equipped and ready to learn.
- Encourage punctuality and a positive attitude towards attendance.
- Communicate with parents/carers as soon as possible if there is a problem with attendance or punctuality.
- Explain the importance of attendance and punctuality throughout the curriculum.
- Set a good example and promote good attendance and punctuality.
- Closely monitor absences in order to keep unauthorised absences to a minimum.
- Include attendance on reports to parents.
- Work promptly in partnership with parents/carers and learners to resolve issues, which affect attendance or punctuality as quickly as possible.
- Establish clear procedures for recording absence.
- Escalate unexplained absences of vulnerable learners (e.g., EHCP, Care Experienced, Social Care involvement) immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE).
- Inform learners/Parents/Carers of the staged interventions to support learners whose attendance drops below expectations. These interventions are clarified within the VLUK Behaviour Policy.
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Learners should:

- Attend regularly.
- Inform VLUK before 8:30 AM on the morning of any emergency absence.
- Attend all lessons punctually.
- Expect to be welcomed and receive assistance following periods of absence in order to catch up.
- Be listened to and respected.
- Have individual records of attendance.
- Engage with catch-up work following any absence.

Parent/carers

- Are responsible for supporting learners to regularly and punctually attend, properly dressed, equipped and in an appropriate condition to learn.
- Are responsible for immediately informing VLUK of the reason for any absence on the first morning of any absence via email or text message; considerations are given to procedures where parents/carers have difficulty with the written word, or where English is not the first language.
- Are expected to work actively with staff to solve attendance problems where these develop.
- Do not have a right to take learners on holiday in term time; leave of absence must be granted in advance by VLUK; any application is considered against the learner's attendance record, family circumstances and timing with regard to assessments and examinations.
- Can expect VLUK to keep them fully informed of their child's attendance record.

POLICY - WITHDRAWAL

- In compliance with DfE 16–19 Funding Rules: Any learner who accumulates 4 consecutive weeks (20 consecutive working days) of unexplained, unapproved absence without formal contact or medical evidence will be formally withdrawn from their programme of study back-dated to their last documented date of active learning.
- Withdrawal processes must be supported by an auditable trail of contact attempts (phone calls, registered letters, home visits where appropriate).

POLICY - THE LEGAL STATUS OF REGISTERS

The register is a legal document and must be marked accurately, recording learners' attendance or absence and in the latter case, if authorised or unauthorised.

Registers, attendance tracking notes, and medical proof are retained securely for a **minimum of 6 years** following the end of the academic year to meet DfE and UK GDPR audit requirements.

COMPLAINTS

Complaints about attendance at VLUK should be made to the Director of Operations in the first instance - gemma.halsey@vluk.org

REFERENCES

Comments and Complaints Policy
Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)
Behaviour Policy (Interventions and At Risk)

SIGNATORIES



Chief Executive Officer
1st August 2026



Chair of Governors
1st August 2026