	Vanguard Learning Trust
	As a group of local primary and secondary schools, Vanguard Learning Trust's mission is to serve its local community by providing outstanding, inclusive education. We have a collective purpose and responsibility to provide effective teaching, through an ambitious curriculum based on equality of opportunity and entitlement that allows our students to shine both in and out of the classroom. Each school in the Trust has its own ethos, which also complements the Trust's vision and values, and the common aspiration that all students can thrive and develop into responsible young adults ready to embrace their future.

Vanguard Learning Trust
Policy executive summaries

December 2024

Contents

1. Attendance policy

This is a new Trust-wide policy ([click here](#) for Part A) based on new statutory guidelines.

The three key details parents/carers should be aware of are that school staff:
- seek to develop a sense of belonging amongst students, encouraging them to attend and feel part of a community and shared endeavour;
- are eager to work with students, parents/carers to reduce barriers to attendance; and
- monitor attendance closely, rewarding students with good attendance as well as those who make improvements to their attendance over time.

Overview

The attendance policy represents the commitment of the Trust to improving and sustaining high levels of attendance across all schools. It is aligned with the Department for Education's (DfE) statutory guidance '*Working together to improve school attendance*' (2024) ([click here](#)) and takes into account recognised best practice.

Part A summary

Part A of the policy begins by setting out the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders, in particular the duties of the school attendance team, parents/carers and students themselves. The policy explores how all schools record attendance accurately, manage absences and work collaboratively to address absenteeism via the Trust's attendance forum. The policy outlines strategies such as how schools will monitor attendance data, develop targeted interventions and work closely with families and external agencies to address barriers to attendance. It includes provisions for dealing with persistent and severe absence, highlighting the need for regular communication between home and school as well as regular signposting of support services. The policy covers procedures for recording absences due to illness, medical appointments and other exceptional circumstances, ensuring these are managed in line with national regulations. It outlines how headteachers may use a range of legal interventions where necessary to address absenteeism, in partnership with the local authority.

Part B summary

Part B of the policy explores how schools apply the statutory information contained within Part A. It provides further exemplification of the roles and responsibilities of specific people within the school community. Contact details are provided for the school's attendance team, as well as the ways in which parents/carers can inform the school of any periods of absence. The policy outlines any processes or systems that the school uses to monitor attendance and celebrate good or improving attendance, as well as the targeted support that the school will implement to reduce absenteeism. It also explores the ways in which the school staff support children facing barriers to attendance, including those with additional vulnerabilities and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The policy outlines how the school collects feedback from stakeholders about the policy's implementation. The policy will be updated on an annual basis to align with new guidance from the local authority and/or DfE.

2. Behaviour policy

The three key details parents/carers should be aware of are:
- maintaining good standards of behaviour is everybody's responsibility;
- our collective focus is on celebrating good behaviour and fostering long-term positive attitudes, so that students can get the most out of their time at school; and
- communication is key with parents/carers having good contact with the school, including prompt responses to any messages about their child's behaviour.

Overview

Vanguard Learning Trust understands the importance of ensuring a safe environment for students. The behaviour policy aims to establish a supportive and respectful atmosphere, conducive to learning and personal development, across all schools. The policy is in two parts: information and standards set out in Part A are linked to the Trust's central values and are applied consistently across all schools, ensuring fairness and clarity with expectations of behaviour. Part B of this policy is school-specific and explores how the school implements the behaviour policy, as well as their own procedures and practices.

Structure of Part A

Part A delineates the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders in upholding positive standards of behaviour. It outlines proactive measures to ensure student safety and well-being, including for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The policy provides transparent procedures for investigating behavioural incidents, handling searches and confiscation of prohibited items, as well as the use of reasonable force. The policy also includes methods that might be used to support positive behaviour, such as pastoral support plans and alternative provision, as well as details of how schools can issue suspensions and permanent exclusions as a last resort. The policy outlines how the Trust monitors and evaluates the policy's effectiveness and how information is shared with stakeholders.

Structure of Part B

Part B explores the school's ethos and how it fosters positive behaviour and attitudes, outlining key messages conveyed to students such as pledges and mnemonics. It identifies staff with specific responsibilities for behaviour management. The policy contains sections on uniform, attendance and punctuality, as well as online safety. Information is provided on the school's inclusive approach to supporting students with special educational needs and/or disabilities. It addresses the school's reward system, including celebration events and certificates, as well as providing information about sanctions that may be issued. In addition, the policy outlines how the school collects feedback from students about behaviour in order to inform the development of its policy and practices.

Changes made to policy for September 2024
- Adopted a standardised structure for the contents of Part A and Part B.
- Part A, section 3: clarity on roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders.
- Part A, section 4: further information and changes to language related to aspects of child-on-child abuse, based on updates to the Department for Education's statutory guidance *'Keeping children safe in education'* (2024).
- Part B: information about behaviour support the school will offer to students from vulnerable subgroups or for those with additional needs.

3. Home-school communication protocol

The three key details parents/carers should be aware of are:
- all communication relating to school matters between parents/carers and school staff must be on a professional basis and onsite meetings should be prearranged;
- the core hours of operation are 8am to 4pm during term time which means that a communication sent later than 4pm will be processed as being received the next school day; and
- staff are expected to respond to parents/carers communications ideally within 24 hours or by 48 hours, eg. an email sent on Tuesday at 3:30pm will ideally be responded by Wednesday at 3:30pm or by Thursday at 3:30pm. If a member of staff is not in a position to respond, an acknowledgement will be sent, stating when and how the matter will be dealt with.

The aim of the protocol is that all stakeholders communicate effectively with each other and in a respectful manner. Vanguard Learning Trust aims to ensure that communications between all members of the school community are clear, professional, timely and appropriate. The protocol outlines expectations; notes related policies, eg. behaviour; provides guidance on social media; states roles and responsibilities; describes types and modes of communication - electronically and onsite - providing specific information in the appendices for schools; describes parental engagement as well as sharing information with third parties. The protocol also describes the actions the school can take if a parent's conduct does not meet expectations.

4. Safeguarding and child protection policy

The three key details parents/carers should be aware of are:
- safeguarding is everybody's responsibility, collectively having a part in keeping children safe;
- schools work collaboratively with external partners to create a culture of safeguarding vigilance; and
- all staff are trained to recognise the indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation and know how to raise concerns with the school's safeguarding team.

Overview

Vanguard Learning Trust places paramount importance on safeguarding children and young people. The Trust's safeguarding and child protection policy aims to ensure that all students are protected from harm and are provided with a safe, supportive and nurturing environment.

Structure of Part A

Part A of the safeguarding policy delineates clear roles and responsibilities for all stakeholders, ensuring a unified approach to safeguarding across schools. The policy highlights the role of the designated safeguarding lead, who is responsible for implementing effective safeguarding practices, as well as liaising with local authorities and agencies. Comprehensive training helps staff to recognise indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation, considering broader contextual risks. The policy outlines how all Trust staff must read key safeguarding documents at induction and undergo annual refresher training. There are clear procedures for reporting and responding to concerns, emphasising timely and appropriate action, thorough investigations and collaboration with local safeguarding partners. It includes specific arrangements for vulnerable students, such as those in alternative provision or those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The policy ends by outlining how schools handle concerns related to staff, including 'low-level concerns'.

Structure of Part B

Part B of the policy details school-specific safeguarding policies and procedures, beginning with the introduction of the school's safeguarding team. The policy covers the school's efforts to promote student welfare and wellbeing, including clear protocols for raising and recording concerns. The policy outlines how safeguarding education is integrated into the school's curriculum and addresses the needs of all students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The policy also includes details of the school's whole-school approach to mental health, measures for keeping children safe online as well as guidelines for the use of mobile phones and social media. The policy ends by outlining how it links to other school policies, providing a comprehensive safeguarding approach.

Update to 2024 policy
- Various technical changes to reflect the language found in the Department of Education's statutory guidance '*Keeping children safe in education'* (2024).
- Section 6.1.5: expectations of how parents/carers and the school can work together effectively to help safeguard children.
- Section 10.2: information about how the school will consider the needs of the family in the context of making referrals for early help support.