



Parkland
Primary School

Learning together

ATTENDANCE POLICY

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1. Introduction

Parkland Primary School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance.

- 1.1 The whole school community – pupils, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's part in this.
- 1.2 The policy has been drawn up based on current government and Local Authority guidance and statutory Regulations. The school will ensure that all members of the community know of the policy and have access to it.

2. School's roles and responsibilities

- 2.1 All staff (teaching and support) at Parkland School have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our pupils are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.
- 2.2 Attendance Leader
The Headteacher will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. As the Attendance Leader, the Headteacher will ensure that up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared with the Academy Director and the Senior Leadership Team. Information is made regularly available to all staff, pupils and parents (who will regularly be reminded about the importance of good school attendance) and that the Governing Body is fully aware of attendance data and targets. He will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.
- 2.3 Registration
 - i) The school is required to mark the attendance register twice each day; once at the start of the day and once during the afternoon session. Classroom teachers are responsible for completing the attendance registers. The admin staff complete the registers using the prescribed codes (shown overleaf).

REGISTER CODES

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

- ii) Children should arrive at school at 8.40 to be in class for registration. The register will be called promptly at **8.50am** and **1.00pm** in KS1 and **1.10pm** in KS2 by each classteacher and a mark will be made during the registration period in respect of each child.
- iii) The registers will close at **9.00am** and **1.00pm** and **1.10pm**. Any pupil who arrives **after** the closing of the register will be marked as **absent**. A child will be marked as late up until 9.30pm. Any child arriving after 9.30am will be marked with a U which means absent for the morning session.

2.4 Categorising absence

- i) A mark will be made in respect of each child following the close of the registers. Any child who is not present will be marked unauthorised absence unless leave has been granted by the school in advance or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended in such a way that the original entry and the amendment / correction are distinguishable. The decision about whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised rests with the Headteacher.
- ii) Parkland School recognises the clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding children. It recognises that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be as damaging to a child's education as authorised absence, will potentially send a message to parents that any reason for non-school attendance is acceptable and can render children extremely vulnerable to harm. If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, with supported medical evidenced, staff at Parkland School will challenge parents about the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence **will always rest with the school**.
- iii) If no explanation about an absence is received by the school **within 2 weeks**, the absence will remain unauthorised;
- iv) Absence will be authorised in the following circumstances:
 - (a) where leave has been granted by the school in advance, for example –
 - a pupil is to participate in an approved performance for which a licence has been granted by the Local Authority,
 - a pupil is involved in an **exceptional** special occasion – in authorising such an absence the individual circumstances of the particular case and the pupil's overall pattern of attendance will be considered,
 - in **exceptional** circumstances, permission has been granted for a leave of absence for which the parents have sought permission in advance (see appendix for the school's leave of absence form);
 - (b) where the school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend;
 - (c) where the pupil has a medical appointment (although parents should be encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible, and to return their child to school immediately afterwards – or send him / her to school beforehand;

- (d) where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control, e.g. extreme weather conditions;
 - (e) the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's / student's parents belong;
 - (f) the pupil lives more than two miles (if he/she is under eight) or three miles (if he/she has reached eight) and no suitable transport arrangements have been made by the Local Authority;
 - (g) the pupil / student is of no fixed abode, his/her parent is engaged in a trade which required him/her to travel, the pupil / student has attended school as often as the nature of the trade permits **and**, have reached the age of six, he/she has attended 200 sessions in the preceding 12 months;
 - (h) in other **exceptional circumstances** (eg a family bereavement) and **for a very limited period**.
- v) Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised. Some examples of reasons for **not** authorising absence would be:
- (a) no explanation has been given by the parent;
 - (b) the school is not satisfied with the explanation;
 - (c) the pupil or parents are staying at home to mind the house;
 - (d) the pupil or parents are shopping during school hours;
 - (e) the pupil is absent for **unexceptional** reasons, eg a birthday;
 - (f) the pupil is absent from school on a family holiday;
 - (g) the pupil has been stopped during a truancy sweep and is unable (or the parent is unable) to give a satisfactory reason for the absence.

2.5 Approved educational activity

Where a student is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the school will check his/her attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register.

2.6 Absences after close of class registers

Any sudden absences that occur during the day will be picked up immediately by the classteacher and reported to the school office. The school office will advise the Headteacher.

2.7 Staff Training

The School Attendance Leader will ensure that all staff responsible for taking registers, including any temporary or supply staff, receive sufficient training to enable them to perform the task accurately.

3. Collection and analysis of data

- 3.1 The Attendance Leader will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to the senior leadership team, parents and the governing body. The report should include commentary on the trajectory and the school target. The data will inform the school's future practice to improve attendance and prevent disaffection.
- 3.2 Attendance is monitored by year group and by reasons for absence. It is also analysed by gender, ethnicity, pupils / students with special educational needs and those who are vulnerable to poor attendance eg fsm
- 3.3 Accurate attendance returns are made to the DfE (via the Local Authority and SIMS) within the stipulated time frame.

3.4 Persistent absence

A child is defined as persistently absent if they miss 15 per cent or more of school time by the Department for Education. It is necessary to monitor pa pupils at regular intervals throughout the academic year. Pupils with attendance below 85% will be clearly identified and the reasons for their absences addressed using the range of support and statutory interventions available. Vulnerable groups e.g. pupils on free school meals within this range will be differentiated for additional monitoring and action.

4. Systems and strategies for managing and improving attendance

- 4.1 Attendance has a very high profile at Parkland School. Parents are regularly reminded in newsletters and school meetings about the importance of good attendance and its links to attainment.
- 4.2 Parkland School has procedures for dealing with unexplained absences within a week. The school office will contact the families for an explanation of absence and refer to the Headteacher.
- 4.3 First-day calling
Parkland School has in place a system of first-day calling. This means that parents will be telephoned or sent a text on the first day if a pupil is absent without explanation to establish a reason for the absence. This helps to identify at an early stage pupils who do not have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parents' knowledge. Where it is not possible to make contact with parents on the first day of absence, the school will send a letter to them by first class post.
- 4.4 Meetings with parents
Where there is an emerging pattern to a pupil's absence over a 3 to 4 week period (or sooner if staff are particularly concerned), with or without explanation, the school will invite parents to a meeting to discuss the reasons for the absences. Plans should be put in place with the parents and pupil to resolve any difficulties and improve the attendance within a specified time limit – usually no more than 6 weeks. It will be explained to parents that any future absences will be unauthorised unless there is clear evidence of a good reason for them.

4.5 Follow up of unauthorised absence

If there continue to be unauthorised absences by the end of the specific time (or sooner if the pupil is failing to attend school at all), there will be follow up action which could result in legal action by the Local Authority.

4.6 Lateness and punctuality

Pupils are expected to arrive at school on time every day. It is very disruptive to their own education, and that of others in their class, if they are late. Pupils who arrive after the register closes will be marked absent for the whole session (a session being a morning or an afternoon). This absence will be unauthorised unless the school is satisfied that there is a legitimate reason for the pupil to be late. Such a reason will not include things such as missing the bus, clothes in the washing machine or lost shoes. A pupil who is persistently absent by reason of lateness will be dealt with in the same way as other students with an emerging pattern of absence. If the matter is not resolved quickly, follow up action will be taken which could result in legal action by the Local Authority.

4.7 Pupils / students who arrive late for school but before the register closes must report to the school office and will be recorded in the "Late Book". They will then be marked as late.

4.8 For health and safety reasons it is important that the school knows who is in the building. Pupils arriving late should therefore report to the school office. **It is important that all pupils arriving late follow this procedure.**

4.9 For the same reason it is important that parents of pupils leaving the premises legitimately (eg for a medical appointment), or returning to school later in the day inform the school office. The school office will record that the child has left the school site and will mark them back in when they return.

4.10 Post-registration truancy

Post-registration truancy occurs when a pupil goes missing from school having previously registered for the session. This behaviour not only means the pupil will not be receiving a full-time education, it also potentially renders him/her vulnerable to harm. Parkland School takes this very seriously and will endeavour to ensure it does not happen. If, however, a pupil appears to have left the premises without authorisation, the school will try to make contact with his/her parents immediately.

5. **Unauthorised Term-time Holidays**

5.1 New government guidelines, which came into effect on 1st September 2013, now prevent Headteachers from granting any leave of absence during term time, unless there are exceptional circumstances. A family holiday during term-time therefore does not fall under the category of 'exceptional circumstances'.

5.2 Where any pupil has absences recorded as a result of an unauthorised family holiday, we are required to inform Leicestershire County Council who will issue penalty notices as set out below. This applies to any unauthorised leave of absence taken reaching a total of 5 days or more in any school year. At Parkland School fixed penalty notices will come into effect from The Summer Term 2014 as part of the Discovery School Trust Attendance Management Policy.

- 5.3 The parent(s) of any child who has absences recorded as a result of an unauthorised family holiday will each be fined £60 which must be paid within a 21 day period. Failure to pay the fine(s) within this timescale, will result in the fines being doubled to £120 which will need to be paid within 28 days of the original fine being issued. If the fine(s) remain unpaid after the full period of 28 days has expired, parents may face legal action under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. If found guilty of an offence under this Act, parents will receive a criminal record and could be fined up to £1000..
- 5.4 Parkland School will consider every application individually, its policy is NOT to grant leave of absence other than in the most exceptional circumstances. An application must be made in writing, with appropriate evidence, **in advance** of the absence.
- i) Authorised leave of absence may be considered in the following circumstance:
- (a) service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays during term-time;
 - (b) when a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis;
- ii) Requests for holidays for the following reason will not be authorised:
- (a) cheaper cost of holiday;
 - (b) availability of the desired accommodation;
 - (c) poor weather experienced in school holiday periods;
 - (d) overlap with beginning or end of term.
- iii) A response to all requests for a leave of absence will be made giving the reasons for the decision.
- iv) Leave of absence during periods of national tests, ie SATS and GCSE examinations will NOT be authorised.

6. Parents'/carers' responsibilities

6.1 The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parents / carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child), who will be supported and encouraged by Parkland Primary School.

- i) It is expected that parents / carers will:
- (a) ensure their children attend the school regularly;
 - (b) support their children's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum;
 - (c) not expect the school to automatically agree any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from school.

ii) Parents will also be expected to:

- (a) Notify school on the first day of absence using the schools absence telephone line, Schoolcomms or reporting to the school office;
- (b) ensure their children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and with the right equipment for the day;
- (c) work in partnership with the school, for example by attending parents' meetings and consultations, signing homework diaries when asked to do so, taking an interest in their children's work and activities;
- (d) contact the school without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their children's school lives Parkland School will endeavour to support parents to address their concerns.

7. Pupils' responsibilities

- 7.1 All pupils should be aware of the importance of regular school attendance. If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school regularly, they should speak to their class teacher.
- 7.2 Pupils should attend all their lessons on time, ready to learn. If they have been absent from school they should give their class teacher a note from their parents to explain the absence. Pupils also have a responsibility for reporting to the school office if they arrive late.

8. Governors' responsibilities

Section 175 (2)

The governing body of the Discovery Schools Trust will make arrangements for ensuring that their functions relating to the conduct of the school are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are pupils at the school.

9. Reviewing the policy

The DSAT (Discovery Schools Academy Trust) will review this policy each year.

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