



Working together to support Good Attendance

Parkside Middle School Attendance Policy

“Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less...” School Attendance DfE (August 2020)

The government expects:

- Schools and local authorities to:
 - Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence.
 - Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled; and,
 - Act early to address patterns of absence.
- Parents/carers to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.
- All pupils to be punctual to their lessons

Regular attendance at school is essential to promote the education of all pupils. The school's ethos demonstrates that children feel that their presence in school is important, that they are missed when they are absent or late. The school will take appropriate action, when necessary, to promote the aims of the policy.

As a school we agree that the following aspects are important to implement to improve children's attendance. Our aim is to give a clear and consistent message to both parents/carers and children of our school, which we will constantly reinforce in our day-to-day work and publicise through our own prospectus, newsletter, website, and letters. This policy is in line with the Department for Education, School Attendance guidance.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance>

Aims

- To maximise attendance of all children
- To provide an environment which encourages regular attendance and makes attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school
- To monitor and support children whose attendance is a cause for concern and work in partnership with parents and carers to resolve any difficulty
- To analyse attendance data regularly to inform future policy and practice
- To work closely and make use of the support from the wider community, the Education Welfare Officer at the Local Authority and multi-agency teams.

Roles and Responsibilities

The following people have key responsibilities in the pursuit of high levels of attendance and punctuality:

Governors

- To set and monitor progress towards annual targets for attendance.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the Attendance Policy.

Head teacher and Senior Leadership Team

- To ensure that effective systems are in place to accurately reflect individual pupil and group and whole school attendance patterns.
- To monitor individual pupil, group and whole school attendance and punctuality.
- To work in partnership with key agencies if attendance and / or punctuality is an issue.
- To provide Governors with information to enable them to evaluate the success of policy and practice.
- To write to parents/carers regarding any concerns about their child's attendance.
- To arrange meetings with parents/carers to discuss support and set targets for those experiencing attendance difficulties.

Form tutor

- To provide an accurate record of the attendance of each child in their class.
- To record the reasons for absence given to them on SIMs.
- To respond promptly to any issue raised in the weekly analysis of registers by office staff.

School Attendance Officer

- To prepare, manage and co-ordinate the use of the SIMS Attendance Manager System.
- To monitor and track attendance patterns for all children and prepare relevant attendance reports when necessary.
- To contact parents/carers by text or telephone on each day of their child's absence to establish the reason.
- To ensure that a satisfactory reason for every absence has been established for each child at the end of each week.
- To make a judgement in conjunction with the Headteacher whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.

The role of the Attendance Officer is invaluable in supporting the school and families in improving attendance. Those students whose attendance has fallen below 94% are particularly vulnerable to becoming Persistently Absent students, as a result their attendance is monitored. Standard practice for our school will be for the Attendance Officer to send a 'warning letter' home as soon as a student's attendance drops to 92% - if there are no other extenuating circumstances

Education Welfare Officer

- To enforce the law regarding school attendance.
- To support the whole school response to attendance through regular meetings and
- monitoring individual children's attendance.

Parents/Carers

- To ensure that at least 2 contacts are given to the school by parents/carers
- To support children in their attendance and ensure that they arrive on time
- Notify the school **each day** if your child is absent
- Provide evidence of any medical appointments in advance
- Complete a medicine request form (available from the school office) to enable staff to administer medicine to your child so that they can stay at school
- Attend any appointments or meetings that are made to discuss punctuality and attendance
- Ensure that your child shows respect and care for themselves, others, and the environment
- Ensure that the school is updated with any changes to your contact details
- Communicate with the school if there are any issues you feel will affect up

School begins promptly at 8:50 am. If your child arrives after this time, they must report to the school office so we can mark them as present but late on the register. If your child has not arrived at school by 9:20, then a text/phone call will be made to establish why your child is not in school. It may be that they have arrived late and NOT reported to the office, but we still need to establish where they are. If you do not notify school of the absence the mark given will be unauthorised.

If your child has to attend a doctor's/hospital appointment, the school needs to be notified in advance and any appointment cards/letters will need to be shown to evidence this.

We understand that there are sometimes circumstances in which your child cannot attend or may be late and, in these situations, we ask that you approach us to discuss. We want to help your child to receive the very best out of their time at our school and excellent attendance and punctuality is key.

If you wish to discuss anything at all concerning your child's attendance/punctuality, please contact the school office. We are here to help.

Promoting Good Attendance

Parkside Middle School regularly promotes good attendance in school. We discuss the importance of attendance in school with the children, in assemblies and lessons.

We recognise that good attendance should be rewarded. Certificates for 100% attendance will be awarded each term and for 100% attendance each year. We also recognise rewards can be a strong motivator for students who have made efforts to improve a poor attendance record and individual rewards will be given.

School Procedures

The School uses SIMS to store and monitor its legal responsibilities in relation to attendance. Registers are a vital legal document and teachers are required by their contractual duties to take an attendance register at the beginning of both the morning and afternoon sessions. Registers must be completed carefully and accurately, as they provide a record of a pupil's attendance.

If a child is absent from school during the morning registration period their absence must be recorded as authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity (attendance out of school). Only the Headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence will be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised. The coding for any absence will be in accordance with the guidance provided by the Department for Education.

Reporting Absence

Parents/Carers should contact school on the first and any subsequent days of absence by 9am either by phone call or email, giving the child's name, class, and reason for absence.

Where we are not made aware of the reason for a child's absence we will, wherever possible, contact parents/carers by text/telephone on each day of absence. If a reason cannot be established the absence will be marked as 'O' unauthorised.

If any member of staff is concerned about a reason for absence, the DSL or DDSL will be informed.

Registration/Lateness

Class teachers complete the registers electronically during morning registration from 8.45am – 9.00am, any pupils arriving after 9.00am are marked with 'L' indicating late arrival. Pupils arriving after 9.20am will be marked as 'U' which indicates an unauthorised late mark, unless a legitimate reason has been provided, i.e., medical appointment. Each term late marks will be analysed, and a letter sent out to Parents/Carers advising them of the pupil's late record if more than four late marks have been recorded during the half term.

1) Leave of Absence in term time

In line with the Government Guidelines, we have renewed appeals to parents not to take their children out of school during term time. The Governors of the school support this and students will only be given permission to take holidays in term time if there are exceptional circumstances.

Headteachers cannot and will not authorise school absence purely for the reason of a family holiday. If you feel you have an exceptional circumstance, please speak to the school in the first instance. You must complete an absence request form detailing the reasons as to why your child will be absent during the school term.

Please note we advise that you do not plan for your child to be absent from school without gaining prior agreements from the school first. The school cannot retrospectively authorise absence from school under any circumstances.

Parents are legally responsible for ensuring their children receive education in accordance with section 7 of the Education Act 1996 and if on a school roll that they regularly attend school.

When submitting an application for leave of absence during term time, both parents with parental responsibility must sign the form. In the absence of a parental signature, the school will contact the parent who has not signed the request to inform them that an application form for a planned absence has been submitted for their child without their consent.

Should the school decide not to grant leave of absence and parents still take their child out of school the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and will be subject to a Penalty Notice fine by the Local Authority.

- **Fine:** A Penalty Notice will be issued in cases where 6 days or more of unauthorised leave is taken during school term time. Parents/carers should note that the Local Authority may issue parents with a Fixed Penalty Notice if their child's level of unauthorised absence reaches 6 school days in a 12-week period, resulting in a fine. Your local council can give you a fine of £60 for each child taken out of school, which rises to £120 if you don't pay within 21 days. If you don't pay the fine after 28 days, you may be prosecuted for your child's absence from school.
- **Prosecution:** You could get a fine of up to £2,500, a community order or a jail sentence up to 3 months. The court also gives you a Parenting Order.

Medical and Dental Appointments

Where possible these appointments should be made out of school hours particularly if they are for follow-up treatment or are non-urgent. However, we do recognise that this cannot always be possible and, therefore, if an appointment has to be made during a school day, it should be towards the end of the day. We ask that a letter or appointment card is provided.

Reporting, Monitoring and Evaluation

All absences both authorised and unauthorised absence will be reported to the parent/carer at the end of the academic year within their child's report. So that parents can benchmark their child's attendance the Governing Body agree targets of attendance in line with national policy. These are outlined below:

100%	Excellent
98% - 99.9%	Very good
96% - 97.9%	Good
94% - 95.9%	Satisfactory
Under 94%	Unsatisfactory
Under 90%	Concerning

Children whose attendance is less than 96% are monitored. Those students whose attendance has fallen below 94% are particularly vulnerable to becoming Persistently Absent students, as a result their attendance is monitored. Standard practice for our school will be for the Attendance Officer to send a 'warning letter' home as soon as a student's attendance drops to 92% - if there are no other extenuating circumstances. If absence continues and is not authorised the school will make a referral to the Education Welfare Department.

Attendance data will be collected monthly to establish patterns of irregular attendance. This will include children with:

- Incomplete weeks
- Monday and Friday absences
- Lateness; periods of extended absence
- Periods of un-authorised
- Children who are persistent absentees (School-age pupils are persistent absentees if they miss more than 10% of their possible sessions in a school year)

This data will be discussed with the Safeguarding Team as part of the regular meetings.

Further information can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance>

Date of policy September 2021

Date to be reviewed September 2023

Headteacher.....

Chair of Governors.....

COVID-19 Addendum

Coronavirus (Covid 19) School behaviour and attendance: parental responsibility measures

Latest government guidance:

Addendum: recording attendance in relation to coronavirus (COVID-19) during the 2021 to 2022 academic year - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

This guidance sets out how schools should record where pupils are not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus in the 2021/22 academic year. This category should only be used to record where their attendance would be contrary to legislation or guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of COVID-19 from Public Health England (PHE), or its successor body the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), or the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC).