

# Parklands Primary School

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## Attendance / Punctuality Policy

*Inspiring Success*

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## **PARKLANDS PRIMARY SCHOOL**

### **Attendance and Punctuality Policy**

The Governors, Head Teacher and staff at our school aim to ensure that every child benefit from regular and punctual attendance, thus maximising their educational opportunities. We aim to instill in pupils, from an early age, the importance of good attendance and punctuality, which they may carry with them through the rest of their school career and on into adult life.

We aim for the highest level of attendance and punctuality from all our pupils, whilst being aware that all Governors and school staff should set a good example to those pupils in our care.

School attendance is subject to various Education Laws and this attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education.

Attendance figures are reviewed annually and targets are set which reflect both the local and national figures. We will consistently work for a goal of 100% attendance for all children.

This policy outlines the procedures that Parklands Primary School will use to meet its attendance targets.

#### **Rationale**

All parents/carers will understand that Parklands Primary School believes that regular attendance is important for children's progress and wider development.

Pupils should only be absent if the reason is unavoidable. Allowing a child to be absent without good reason is against the law and parents can be fined if their child fails to attend school regularly.

All absences must be classified as either authorised or unauthorised. Authorised absences are periods away from school or unavoidable cause. Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no leave has been agreed. This includes keeping children off for trivial reasons; truancy; absences which have not been properly explained.

#### **The Policy**

All children's attendance will be monitored by school staff. Each child's attendance will be reported annually to parents and pupils.

Poor attendance will be reported by class teachers to the Attendance Officer. It will be brought to the attention of the parent/carer and if no improvement is noted, a letter to parents/carer may follow. Medical absences of more than four days will require a doctor's certificate or note.

If a pupil is absent prior to, or does not return after, a school holiday (half term, Christmas, Easter or Summer) the parent/carer will need to provide medical evidence to cover the absence. Failure to provide this evidence will result in the absence being marked as unauthorised and as such, will be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

All pupils, whose attendance falls below 90% after a half-term in school, will be placed on **attendance watch**. The child's attendance record will be considered in detail and reported to the Senior Leadership Team. Where absence does not arise from a period of illness, the attendance of such children could become a cause for further action. Parents will be notified of the concern and invited to comment; the school will then look to work further with the parent and child, using a full range of strategies to improve the child's attendance. This could include use of an Attendance Reward targeting those with erratic attendance. This card will reward pupils for consistent attendance across a period of two weeks or more.

If attendance remains a concern, the case is then referred to the Educational Welfare Officer. They, in turn, will write to parents to express concern and may meet with parents of children whose attendance was below 90%.

In the event of erratic or persistently low attendance, the school will request that the Educational Welfare Officer considers placing the child on **medical watch**. Absence will then only be authorised by the school as medical, if a note is received from a health professional. The parent will be informed of this move in writing by the Educational Welfare Officer.

Any pattern of absence - a particular day or days - could result in the child being placed on **attendance watch** even if overall attendance was above 90%.

### Absence Notes

Messages from parents explaining absence should be noted and kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about a pupil, that may require further investigation, then this record may need to be retained for longer. The records may be submitted to the Educational Welfare Officer if the officer is involved in the attendance issues of a particular child

### Returning after Absence

It is important that when returning to school after a period of absence pupils are made to feel welcome. Help will be provided so that the pupil can catch up on missed learning as well as being brought up to date with any information that has been passed to the other pupils. School may decide to hold a "Back to School" meeting with the child and parents/carers, if this is deemed appropriate.

### Pupil Leave of Absence

Amendments have been made to the 2006 regulations in the **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013**. These amendments, as described below, came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013.

The amendments make clear that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time, unless there are exceptional circumstances. If an exceptional situation should arise a letter explaining the circumstances must be sent to the Head Teacher, for them to determine whether it can be authorised. Head Teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school, if the leave is granted.

### Lateness

Morning registration will take place at the start of school at **8:45am**. The registers will remain open until **9.00am**. Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an **unauthorised absence**, unless there is an acceptable explanation. In cases where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate absence code will be entered.

Afternoon registration will be at **1:15pm** and the registers will close at **1.30pm**.

### “First Day Calling”

The school has adopted first day calling as part of its attendance policy for the whole school. When a child is absent a call is made to the parent or carer. If no explanation is received, the absence will be marked as unauthorised until an acceptable reason is given. If an acceptable explanation is received the absence will be marked accordingly. School will continue to attempt contact with parents throughout the day to confirm that the children are safe. “First Day Absence Calling” will be undertaken by the Attendance Officer.

### Promoting attendance

This school will remind parents/carers that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children attend school.

We reward pupils who have achieved 100% attendance with a certificate signed by the Head Teacher, and provide a termly certificate for the class with the highest attendance.

In addition, we have a weekly competition, with the class achieving the highest attendance level being awarded Attendance Ted in a weekly assembly. Similarly, school has instigated an attendance race.

## Working Together with the Local Authority

Local Authority Officers have responsibility for ensuring that any decisions regarding legal intervention are processed appropriately. In order that the Local Authority can exercise their duty, our school staff will co-operate fully.

A range of interventions are available for Local Authority Officers, some of which necessitate the courts' involvement. When an Educational Welfare Officer instigates proceedings in the Magistrates Court, this school will provide all the necessary information in the form of 'Certified Extracts' of the register which will be signed by the Head Teacher in advance of the hearing. Intervention may require school staff to attend planning meetings, which will be arranged by the Local Authority. The school is fully committed to co-operating with all of these procedures.

- Formal Cautioning - this may include the need for the Head Teacher or Senior Member of Staff to be in attendance.
- Penalty Notice - the school will consider any consultation that the Local Authority implements in respect of penalty notices. There is a £60 fixed penalty fine for parents who take their children on unauthorised holidays during term time. This fine would be given to each parent and so could total £120.
- Education Supervision Orders - the school will provide reports and other appropriate information to support the process of an education supervision order as instigated by the Local Authority
- School Attendance Order Notices - the school will work with Local Authority Officers where a school attendance order is considered to be appropriate.