



Promoting Good Attendance: **A Guide for Parents and Carers**

Introduction

At Park Spring Primary School we recognise that there is a very clear relationship between the regularity with which children attend school and their academic achievement. Regular attendance at school is essential for children's achievement and progress. Absence, whether it is long term, frequent or occasional leads to missed experiences and may cause fractured social relationships which encourage an increased pattern of non-attendance.

Pupils with good attendance records benefit from:

- **Continuity of learning in their lessons**
- **Improved attainment and progress and stronger performance in assessments and examinations.**
- **Support and guidance with all their learning, and in particular their reading, writing and mathematics.**
- **Maintaining and developing positive friendships and relationships with other children and adults**
- **Developing good habits for adult life.**

It is very important to come to school, on time every day.

We monitor our children's attendance very closely so please ring and tell us if your child is ill and unable to come to school. Every time a child is absent or late for school, they miss important learning and find it very difficult to catch up later. We therefore ask for your support to keep absenteeism to a minimum, so that we can prepare your son/daughter effectively for their future.

Wherever possible, please ensure that all medical appointments are made

At Park Spring School we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of all children and we expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

after school or in the school holidays. We do not discriminate against children with medical conditions who need to attend hospital appointments that cannot be arranged out of school hours.

Park Spring Primary School aspire to achieve the National target for attendance of above 96% attendance. This is what we expect from all our families and children as a minimum, and as such we will monitor closely and put on Fast Tracks any child who drops below 93% attendance without valid reason. A Fast track is a 4 week monitoring period, after which you will be invited to an attendance panel and if there is no improvement you may be issued with a Fixed Penalty notice for a fine.

Attendance during one school year	Equals days absent	Equals days absent Which is approximately weeks absent	Which means the number of lessons missed	Absences over 5 years
95%	9 Days	2 Weeks	50 Lessons	1/4 Year
90%	19 Days	4 Weeks	100 Lessons	1/2 Year
80%	38 Days	8 Weeks	200 Lessons	1 Year
70%	57 Days	11 1/2 Weeks	288 Lessons	1 1/4 Year
60%	80 Days	16 Weeks	400 Lessons	2 Years

At Park Spring School we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of all children and we expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Our Family Liaison Officer/Inclusion Manager will ring home and meet with parents and carers if there are any concerns about a child's attendance. Please understand this is because we want the best for your child. Working together we can achieve your child's full potential!

Authorised Absences

The Department for Education (DFE) has issued guidelines to all schools detailing valid reasons for authorised or justified absences:

- **When a child is ill or receiving medical treatment (In the cases of Medical appointments/treatment the absence is only approved for the duration of the appointment and travel time e.g. for a routine dental appointment we would not authorise all day).**
- **Days of religious observance requested in advance and approved by the Head teacher**
- **Absence due to exceptional circumstance. Exceptional Circumstances being defined as being of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child which outweighs the loss of teaching times.**

There are other absences, such as "Approved Sporting Activity" that can be authorised and there will be events affecting families, some unforeseen, which will necessitate absence from school and professional discretion will need to be used in these cases about whether the absence can be authorised

Unauthorised Absences

- **Where no letter, notification or acceptable explanation is provided by parent(s)/carer**
- **The reason for the absence does not fall into one of the categories of authorised absence above.**
- **Attendance has dropped below 93% and parents have been notified that absences cannot be authorised without medical verification.**

At Park Spring School we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of all children and we expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

The Department for Education (DFE) Policy states that the following activities would be classified as unauthorised:

- **Awaiting repair people;**
- **Shopping;**
- **A birthday or family celebration**
- **Going on holiday/visiting relatives during term time**

Statutory Guidelines and Fixed Penalty Notices

Under the latest Government Legislation parents/carers who take their children out of school during term time without authorisation, may be issued with a fixed penalty fine by the local authority and could face possible prosecution in court. Fines are now issued on the following basis: Up to £120 per child and per adult responsible for that child for each unauthorised absence period. (This includes where parents/carers live in separate households but remain legally responsible for their child/ren). To provide an example, a maximum fine for one period of unauthorised absence – in a household where there are two adults and two children could result in the following: £120 x 2 children x 2 adults = £480.00 Failure to pay would result in a court hearing. The penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days, doubling to £120 if paid between 22 – 28 days and applies per parent and per child for which permission has been refused or was not sought. If the fine is not paid, parents will be reported for prosecution. All schools in Leeds have agreed to follow a common policy on absence during term time. Good attendance leads to improved outcomes for your child.

Absence Procedures

If your child is absent you must:

- **Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence and each subsequent day;**
- **Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even if you have already telephoned us; or**
- **You can call into school and report to reception.**

If your child is absent we will:

- **Telephone or text you every day of absence if we have not heard from you;**
- **Invite you in to discuss the situation with the Family Liaison Officer / Inclusion Manager if absences persist;**

At Park Spring School we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of all children and we expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

- **If there are concerns regarding your child's attendance, absence may not be authorised without relevant or medical evidence. (For example: a medical appointment card or information from your medical practitioner.) You will be informed of this decision by letter.**
- **Formally categorise your situation as one of Persistent Absenteeism if attendance moves below 93%.**

Telephone numbers

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your correct contact numbers at all times. It is important that you ensure we always have an up to date number – if we don't, then we may be unable to contact you if there is an emergency.

Leave of Absence

We expect parents / carers not to knowingly affect their child's progress by taking them out of school during term time. Please remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education. There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday. In a situation where taking your child out of school during term time is unavoidable, you must apply for Leave of Absence. All applications must be made in advance, using a standard form which can be obtained from the school office/ the family liaison officer. At our discretion, leave of absence may be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

The Government have issued regulations in September 2013 regarding Leave of Absence;

- **Head Teachers shall not grant any leave of absence during term time unless they consider there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application. Exceptional Circumstances being defined as being of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child which outweighs the loss of teaching times.**
- **Parents do not have any entitlement to take their child on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are exceptional circumstances and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.**
- **Head teachers will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.**
- **Applications for Leave of Absence must be applied for in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being unauthorized.**
- **The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and**

At Park Spring School we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of all children and we expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion.

- **Leave of absence will not be granted where a student's attendance rate is already below 96% or will fall to or below that as a result of taking leave, or where a student's attendance record already includes any unauthorized absence.**

If you would like to apply for permission for your child to be absent from school you must complete the necessary form and return it to the school for authorisation AT LEAST 10 DAYS IN ADVANCE of the proposed leave.

Parents / carers do not have the right to take their child out of school during term-time. By law, you must ask permission for exceptional leave of absence during term-time. If you take your child out of school without authorisation you risk receiving a fixed penalty fine.

At Park Spring School we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of all children and we expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.