

Attendance Policy

Park Spring Primary School



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1. Introduction

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

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 (defined as a minimum 96% attendance) at school is essential for children's achievement and progress. Absence, whether it is long term, frequent or occasional, leads to missed experiences, missed learning opportunities and may cause fractured social relationships which encourage an increased pattern of non-attendance.

Attendance is a whole school issue which is linked to safeguarding and is a shared responsibility. Parents/carers should ensure that their children attend school and provide reasons for any absence.

Dear Families

You will find attached a guide for parents/carers, detailing procedures and protocols that we are following as a school for attendance, based on guidance that we have received from the Local Authority attendance team.

The guide provides you with information of the impact of attendance on your child's academic achievements and the procedures that we will put in place for those children whose attendance is a concern to the school.

As part of the children's mid-term and end of year report we share with you key data in relation to their attendance. We have implemented a RAGged system (RAG- Red, Amber, Green). Attendance above 96% will be Green as this is the school target and the national expectation. Attendance between 90% and 96% has been ragged as amber, however pupil's attendance that is below 93% will be closely monitored and the school will support these families to improve. This may lead to the child being placed on a FAST Track (see guidance). Attendance below 90% is classed as persistent absence and is ragged red.

The table below indicates what this means for you and your child.

Attendance Level	96-100%	90-96%	90% or below
What does this mean?	Your child has the best chances of succeeding at Park Spring Primary. Excellent attendance is linked to achievement, better	Your child has missed up to 95 lessons in an academic year which will undoubtedly have an impact on their attainment levels, progress and friendships. Your child will most likely make less progress because of their attendance. Poor attendance can limit your child's future opportunities and set up bad habits for work and life.	Your child's attendance is unsatisfactory and classified as persistent absenteeism. Children with attendance at this level often face challenges in school, do not do as well academically and statistically are more likely to be involved in/be victims of crime.

	relationships and overall behaviour.		
What will happen as a result?	Your child will receive attendance prizes.	<p>Your child's attendance will be monitored closely. If there is no improvement, you may be invited to a meeting in school.</p> <p>You may be asked to attend a meeting in school and be placed on an informal/formal attendance contract.</p> <p>If your child's attendance falls below 93% (your child will be placed on a FAST Track). You may face a fine or other legal action.</p>	<p>You will be contacted by the Family Liason Officer.</p> <p>You may be placed on an informal/formal attendance contract which will identify the necessary support to help your child's attendance improve.</p> <p>If your child's attendance falls below 93% (your child will be placed on a FAST Track). You may face a fine or other legal action.</p>
What do I need to do?	Continue to praise your child and take an interest in what they do at school.	<p>All appointments must be arranged for out of school hours.</p> <p>No term-time holidays</p> <p>Do not keep your child off school unnecessarily - we will call you if your child needs to come home.</p> <p>Do not keep your child at home if there are problems. The best way to support your child is to ask for a meeting in school to address the problems. The more time your child has off school the harder it will be for them to catch up.</p>	<p>Attend a meeting with school to discuss attendance.</p> <p>No term-time holidays.</p> <p>Contact school for support/advice.</p> <p>Work with the Attendance Officer and school to improve attendance.</p> <p>Ensure your child arrives on time every day and show them that you think school is very important.</p>

2. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Improving the overall percentage of attendance and punctuality of all pupils at school, thus ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Ensuring that all stakeholders have greater awareness of their responsibilities
- Maintain a high profile for attendance and punctuality
- Defining a clear, effective system for managing punctuality or absences, where we act early to address patterns of absence
- Improving monitoring and reporting of attendance and punctuality
- Developing positive and consistent communication between home and school
- - Promoting good attendance and punctuality.

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

3. Legislation and guidance

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that 'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full time education suitable: -

- a) To age, ability and aptitude and
- b) To any special educational needs, he/ she may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'.

The Law relating to safeguarding:

Keeping Children Safe in Education, March 2015 and preceding legislation places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18. This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance: The Education Act 1996 · The Education Act 2002 · The Education and Inspections Act 2006 · The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 · The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010 · The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 · The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 · The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016 · The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

4. School procedures

4.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:55am on each school day.

The register for the first session (morning) will be taken between 8:55 and 9:05 and will be kept open until 9:15am. The register for the second session (afternoon) will be taken at 12:40pm for Reception, 1:00pm for Key Stage One and 1:30pm for Key Stage 2 pupils and will be kept open for 15 minutes

4.2 Unplanned absence

Parents/carers must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9:30am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

These are the various ways you can notify us of pupil absence:

- 1) Call the School and select the 'Report an Absence' option and leave a message.
- 2) Call the school and speak to a member of staff in the school office.
- 3) Text or call the attendance Mobile Phone on 07891 274 260.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

You can notify us of medical appointments in the same way as you would notify us of a pupil absence, or you can request to speak to Wendy Holl (Family Liaison Officer).

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

At Park Spring Primary we have high expectations of punctuality in all pupils as we know that lateness leads to lost learning and can result in children feeling flustered and embarrassed on arrival, and therefore less ready to learn. We believe instilling a necessity for punctuality in children is preparing them well for later life.

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent (for that session), using the appropriate code.

Attendance and punctuality are monitored daily at Park Spring Primary and patterns of lateness will be followed up by the Family Liaison Officer/Inclusion Manager and may result in your child being put on a Fast Track (see point 7 for further information).

4.5 Following up absence

Where we have not had notification of an absence from a parent/carer, the school will follow up any instance to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use. This will be done via a phone call or text from school, or where a child has attendance below 93% we will come and door knock.

In cases where we do not receive any notification/explanation for a pupil absence, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

We report pupil attendance to parents/carers bi-annually: in the mid-term report at February Half Term and the end of year report in July.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

Only the school, within the context of the law, can approve absence, not parents/carers, and it is a statutory requirement for the Head Teacher to decide with every absence whether it is authorised or unauthorised. Wherever reasonably possible, we expect parents/carers to make routine appointments (e.g. medical, dental) outside of school time. If this is not possible, please give written notice, in advance, with a copy of the appointment slip.

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/carers 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 unauthorised.
- The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Head Teacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 4.2 and 4.3

Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.

5.2 Legal sanctions

Schools can fine parents/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Head Teacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year

One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission

Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

We have the following strategies to promote high attendance and punctuality:

- Ace Attendance displays in class. For every day every child is in class a coloured letter is added (over the black and white one on display). When the class fills the Ace Attendance sign in colour they receive a class treat of their choosing
- Cluster Give it 100% events
- Family Liaison Officer attends half termly cluster-wide attendance networks.
- Rewarding 100% attendance on a half termly basis
- Rewarding best class attendance half termly

Where a pupil's attendance becomes a concern (falls below 93%) we will endeavour to help families make improvements, and will follow the protocols outlined in point 7.

7. Attendance monitoring

The Family Liaison Officer monitors pupil absence on a daily basis, and the Head Teacher and the Inclusion Manager monitor attendance on a weekly basis.

Parents/carers are expected to call the school in the morning (before 9:30am) if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2), and each subsequent day the child is absent.

In order for an attendance record to be good it must be 96% or above:-

100% = excellent attendance

98% = very good attendance

96% = good attendance

If a child's attendance falls below 93% we will put a child on a Fast Track plan. This involves the child being monitored for a period of 4 weeks, in which the attendance is expected to be 100%. At the end of the 4 week period, if the attendance has not improved, the parents/carers will be invited to an Attendance Panel where they may then be issued with a Fixed Term Penalty warning (details in section 5.2).

If a child has attendance below 93% and they are absent without notification, we may go to the family home and 'door knock' in an effort to bring the child in to school, and offer any support that may be needed to the family.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

8. Roles and responsibilities

8.1 The Parent/Carer

We want to work with families and expect parents / carers not to knowingly affect their child's progress by taking them out of school during term time. In cases of illness/exceptional circumstances the parent/carer will notify the school before 9:30am on the first and each subsequent day of illness, and applications for Exceptional Leave must be made 10 days in advance.

8.2 The Governing Board

The Governing Board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Head Teacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The link governor for attendance is Pam Lamming on the Pupil Support Committee.

8.3 The Head Teacher

The Head Teacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The Head Teacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

8.4 The Family Liaison Officer and the Inclusion Manager

The Family Liaison Officer and the Inclusion Manager:

- Monitor attendance data at the school weekly, and individual pupil level on a daily basis
- First day and subsequent absence calls to establish where children are when we have not received notification of absence, and go out door knocking where a pupil's attendance is below 93%
- Report concerns about attendance to the Head Teacher
- Work with/within the guidance/recommendations of local authority education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arrange calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advise the Head Teacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- Set up and monitor Fast Tracks where attendance falls below 93%
- Hold attendance Panels/Reviews
- Seek to work with families and offer support to improve outcomes for children e.g. through wake up calls, Early Help Plans etc.

8.4 Class Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

8.5 Office/reception staff

Office/reception staff are expected to take calls from parents/carers about absence and record them on the school system.

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the governing body.

10. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
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/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment

R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

11. 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 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 school year	Equals one day absent	Equals days absent	Which approximately equals days 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	½ Year
80%	38 Days	8 Weeks		200 Lessons	1 Year
70%	57 Days	11 ½ Weeks		288 Lessons	1 ¼ Year

60%

80 Days

16 Weeks

400 Lessons

2 Years

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.
- 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.
- 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
- 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/carers 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/carers 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 unauthorised.

- The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and 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 unauthorised 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.