

# Attendance Policy

## Park Spring Primary School



**Approved by:** Pupil Support

**Date:** January 2018

**Last reviewed on:** October 2019, September 2021

**Next review due by:** September 2022

## Contents

1. Introduction.....	2
2. Aims.....	2
3. Roles and responsibilities.....	3
4. Legislation and guidance.....	3
5. Recording attendance.....	4
6. Authorised and unauthorised absence.....	6
7. Strategies for promoting attendance.....	7
8. Attendance monitoring.....	8
9. Monitoring arrangements.....	9
10. Links with other policies.....	9
Appendix 1: attendance codes.....	9

## 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.

## 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

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:

3. Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
4. Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
5. Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
6. [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (and [2010](#), [2011](#), [2013](#), [2016](#) amendments)
7. [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. Roles and responsibilities

#### 4.1 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 Teaching, Learning and Pupil Support Committee.

#### 4.2 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.

#### 4.3 The Family Liaison Officer

The Family Liaison Officer

- 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 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.

#### 4.4 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.

#### **4.5 Office/reception staff**

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

#### **4.6 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.

### **5 Recording Attendance**

#### **5.1 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 morning session of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

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

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

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 12:30pm for Reception,

12:50pm for Key Stage One, 1:00 for Lower KS2 and 1:10pm for Key Stage 2 pupils and will be kept open for 15 minutes

## **5.2 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 8).

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.

## **5.3 Planned Absence**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as an authorised absence as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

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).

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.

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 5.

## **5.4 Lateness and punctuality**

At Park Spring Primary we have high expectations of punctuality, 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).

## **5.5 Following up absence**

Where we have not had notification of an absence from a parent/carer,

- the school will follow up with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason- 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.
- ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary,
- identify whether the absence is approved or not
- identify the correct attendance code to use.,

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

## **5.6 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, by providing pupils registration certificates .

## **6. Authorised and unauthorised absence**

### **6.1 Approval for term-time absence**

Head teachers will only 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.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 5.2 and 5.3
- 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.

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.

## **5.2 Reducing Persistent Absence**

### **5.3 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.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty may take into account:

- The 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.

## **7. 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 and School Give it 100% events
- Rewarding 100% attendance on a termly basis with bronze, silver and gold badges
- Rewarding best or most improved class attendance initiatives

- Attendance ambassadors who work alongside the family liaison officer to organise the strategies outlined above
- Targeted attendance initiatives for pupils whose attendance is causing concern
- Celebrating Y6 attendance throughout their time at Park Spring

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.

## 8. Attendance monitoring

The Family Liaison Officer monitors pupil absence on a daily basis, and with the Head Teacher 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 5.2), and each subsequent day the child is absent. If informed that a child will be absent for the school week, a welfare check will take place at some point.

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 5.3).

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.

Pupil attendance data is stored on the school's management system (SIMS), this information is accessible to all staff and is used for internal purposes and sharing with parents and outside agencies if requested. Internally this information is used to:

- > Track the attendance of individual pupils
- > Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- > Monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support

## 9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the governing body.

## 10. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to the following policies

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

## Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	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
<b>Authorised absence</b>		

<b>C</b>	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>E</b>	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
<b>H</b>	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
<b>I</b>	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	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)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed