



# Parklands Junior School

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## Attendance / Punctuality Policy

*Inspiring Success*

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## PARKLANDS JUNIOR SCHOOL

### Attendance and Punctuality Policy

The Governors, Head Teacher and staff of our school wish to ensure that every child benefits from regular and punctual attendance, thus maximising educational opportunities for their learning. We also wish 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 Children, Schools and Families.

Each year we will review our attendance figures and set targets 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 Junior School will use to meet its attendance targets.

#### Rationale

All parents or carers will understand that this school believes regular attendance to be important for children's progress and wider development. However, some may not appreciate the impact disappointing attendance can have upon progress.

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 regularly.

All absence must be classified as either authorised or unauthorised. Authorised absences are periods away from school for good reason 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; and children who arrive at school too late to get a present mark.

### The Policy

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

Disappointing attendance will be reported by class teachers to the member of the administration team. It will be brought to the attention of the parent in person and if no improvement is noted, by letter. Medical absences of more than 4 days will require a doctor's certificate or note.

If a student 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, this will be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

All pupils, whose attendance falls below 90% after a half-term in school, would be placed by the school on **attendance watch**. The child's attendance record would then be considered in detail and reported to the Leadership Team. Where absence did not stem from a period of illness, the attendance of such children could become a cause for further action. Parents would be notified of the concern and invited to comment; the school would 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 Card targeting those with erratic attendance. The card will reward pupils for consistent attend across a period of two weeks or more.

If attendance were to remain a concern, the case would be referred to the Educational Welfare Officer. They in turn would 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 would request the Educational Welfare Officer to consider placing the child on **medical watch**. Absence would then only be authorised by the school as medical, if a note were received from a health professional. The parent would be informed of this move in writing by the Educational Welfare Officer.

Any pattern of absence - a particular day or days - could see the child placed on **attendance watch** even if overall attendance was above 90%. For example, the child may have missed five Mondays in the autumn term (attendance could still be as high as 93% but five Mondays missed would have an impact upon learning).

## 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 the 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 given 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, where 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 will need to be sent to the Head Teacher, for them to decide 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 **8:55am**. The registers will remain open until **9.30am**. 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 **1:20pm** 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 asking for an explanation. If no explanation is received the absence will be marked as unauthorized 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 a member of the school administration team.

## Promoting attendance

This school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents/carers that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education.

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

In addition, we have a weekly competition, with the class achieving the highest attendance level being awarded the Attendance Ted in the end of week assembly. Similarly school has instigated a "Hunt the Bear" race, where all classes move along a track displayed in the school hall and the speed is determined by the attendance level of that class. The class which reaches the end first is the winner.

School plans to instigate an attendance lottery in the near future. This will give those pupils with 100% attendance for the term to be entered into a lottery at the end of each term to win a significant prize.

## 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 where required.

A range of interventions are available for Local Authority Officers, some of which necessitate the courts' involvement. When an Educational Welfare Officer is taking a parent or parents or carers to the Magistrates Court, this school will provide all the necessary information in the form of 'Certified Extracts' of the register which will be required to 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. The same penalty also applies to parents whose children are deemed to have too many unauthorised absences for any other reason.
- 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.