



Pupil Attendance and Targets: Policy and Procedures

Introduction

All children of compulsory school age have the right to an efficient full-time education, regardless of age, aptitude, ability and any special educational need or disability he or she may have. Regular school attendance is essential if a child is to make the most of educational opportunities available to them. Park Mead Primary School takes seriously its responsibility to monitor and promote the regular attendance of all its pupils.

This policy has been developed in consultation with governors, teachers, education welfare services, parents and primary carers. It seeks to ensure that all parties involved in the practicalities of school attendance are aware and informed of attendance matters in school and to outline the school's commitment to promoting the importance of attendance. It details the responsibilities of individuals and groups involved and the procedures in place to promote and monitor pupil attendance.

The policy will aim to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued;
- raising the awareness of the importance of a differentiated and relevant curriculum;
- promoting opportunities to celebrate and reward pupils' successes and achievements;
- raising awareness of the importance of good attendance;
- ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently;
- ensuring that attendance concerns, revealed by monitoring, are effectively acted upon to support the regular attendance of each child.

Statements of expectations:

Pupils have a responsibility to take care of themselves and alongside others, play a positive role in the life of the school and to make the most of the educational opportunities available.

What is expected of pupils?

- respect themselves and others;
- do all they can to attend school regularly and punctually;
- inform a trusted adult if they feel that they are being bullied;
- encourage friendships and sense of belonging;
- be happy and encourage others to feel happy.



What is expected of parents?

- keep requests for their child to be absent to a minimum (please refer to the school's 'application for leave of absence', Appendix 1);
- offer a reason for any period of absence, preferably before the absence or during the early part of the first day of absence;
- ensure that their child arrives at school on time, properly dressed, with the right equipment and in a condition to learn. A reason should be offered for any lateness;
- work closely with the school and the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) to resolve any problems that may negatively affect a child's attendance;
- be aware of curriculum requirements and to be especially vigilant with regards to attendance during important academic times such as SATs week.
- support their child and recognise their successes and achievements.

Parents have the prime responsibility for ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually. They have a legal responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly and stay in school for every lesson after they have registered. Parents should also make sure that their children arrive on time, properly dressed, with the right equipment and in a fit state to benefit from the education offered to them. Parents may be prosecuted if a child does not attend school regularly and punctually. This will be conducted in accordance with the 1996 Education Act which aims to ensure that parents carry out their duty to secure suitable education for their children.

If a child is in the care of foster parents or in a residential home, it is important that the carers recognise their parenting role in promoting attendance at school. They will be supported through close co-operation between the school, education welfare services and social services where such a child's attendance is irregular.

What is expected of the school?

- create a school ethos where pupils want to be fully involved;
- meet the legal requirements set out by Government;
- give a high priority to punctuality and attendance;
- develop procedures that enable the school to identify, follow up and record unauthorised absence, and patterns of absence with effective monitoring and intervention;
- consistently record authorised and unauthorised absences in line with the guidance of the 1996 education act;
- develop a range of effective strategies to follow up intermittent and long term absenteeism and promote good attendance;
- encourage open communication channels between home and school;
- develop procedures for the reintegration of long term absentees;
- develop procedures which may lead to a formal referral to the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO);



- adequately provide for pupils with difficulties, within resources available and ensure the appropriate delivery of the curriculum.

The school will endeavour to provide an environment which is conducive to educating every pupil. School attendance will be positively supported wherever possible and the promotion of good communication and co-operation between all parties involved will be paramount. The school has a statutory responsibility to record and monitor the punctuality and attendance of pupils for both the morning and afternoon sessions. A register of attendance must be taken once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. The register has to record whether a pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off site or absent. If a pupil is absent the register must record whether the absence was authorised or unauthorised.

What is expected of the local authority?

The Local Authority has a responsibility to provide education and promote regular attendance of all statutory school age children. Through the Education Welfare Service (EWS) the Local Authority provides support to schools and parents to fulfil their legal duty. The EWS is the enforcement agency of the Local Authority and as well as providing guidance and support through its officers may exercise its right to take a parent to court for not fulfilling their duty under section 444 of the Education act 1996. The court may fine the parent and put in place a School Attendance Order (SAO), an Education Supervision Order (ESO) or a Parenting Order.

School Procedures for Recording and Monitoring Attendance

Recording

The class teacher will take a register recording who is present and absent from school at **8.55am**. At **9.00am** the register is taken to the school office. Any late pupils should then enter the school through the main office entrance. If any pupil arrives late the office staff will ask the parent to sign a late book that records the name, class, time and reason for lateness. If a child arrives unaccompanied by a parent the office staff will complete the record asking the pupil to offer a reason. All staff are aware that any child arriving late must register at the office for purposes of fire regulations.

The register officially closes to the office at **9.20am** and any pupil arriving after this will be marked absent for the session. A reason for the lateness will need to be provided and a decision made by the school to mark it as an authorised or unauthorised absence.

During the morning the absences from that morning and the previous afternoon will be recorded onto the electronic registration system and all the present pupils marked accordingly. The reasons offered for late arrivals from the previous day and any absences will be assessed and the appropriate code entered into the system. The register is returned to the class teacher before the start of the afternoon session and the register is again taken at **1.15pm**.

Reasons for absence may be offered verbally by phone but must be followed by a letter on the child's return to school. The school may then decide if it wishes to authorise the absence or record it as an unauthorised absence. This decision will be made within the guidance set out in the 1996 Education Act, which identifies the following reasons as acceptable reasons for an authorised absence:

- the child is ill or is prevented from attending by an unavoidable cause;



- the child lives over a certain distance from the school and either the Local Authority has failed to make suitable arrangements to register the child at a nearer school or the Local Authority has failed to make suitable travel arrangements;
- the child is absent on days exclusively set apart for religious observance in their particular faith;
- the child is absent 'with leave granted under exceptional circumstances'. This refers to leave being granted by the school, not by the parent.

A reason for a period of absence is always required. The school will contact parents who have not offered a reason and after a three week process will mark the absence as unauthorised if no reason is provided.

On the first day of absence the parent will contact the school with reasons for absence by phone, e-mail or letter. If there has been no contact from the parent the school will phone to inform parents before 10:00am that the child is not in school and enquire as to why this is the case.

Attendance Codes

A set of standard codes are used consistently within the register. These codes are input into the electronic register as required and are used to give depth of meaning to the register and provide statistical meaning to absences.

Targets for Attendance

Attendance targets for individuals are reviewed termly with the attendance officer, head teacher, Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Educational Welfare officer (EWO). They meet to check progress by identifying:

- broken weeks (how many weeks where attendance is less than 100%) in a term;
- sibling links;
- attendance patterns for children causing concern, including lateness.

Strategies for promoting good attendance are discussed, some of which may be short term. Examples include:

- weekly presentation of the attendance cup to the class with the least absence;
- 100% attendance certificates awarded termly
- attendance colours presented annually;
- reference to attendance ratios during parent consultations for children with attendance at or falling below 95%.



Penalty Notices

At the present time (academic year 2018 / 2019) the school has taken the decision not to issue penalty notices to parents where unauthorised attendance for a child has become a concern; however parents and primary carers must be aware that this may become legislation in the near future and the school will inform parents should our policy on this issue change. Please see the information below regarding the potential instigation of penalty notices in the future.

(The issue of a Penalty Notice would be considered where attendance has fallen below 85% and there are no less than 10 unauthorised sessions during the preceding 6 school weeks. Parents' failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school or Education Welfare Officer would be a factor when considering the issue of a Penalty Notice. Unauthorised absence would include late arrival after the close of registration without good reason. The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 per parent per child if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 per parent per child if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.

If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority must prosecute the parent/carer for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996).

A whole school attendance target is agreed annually by the senior leadership of the school and the Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

This policy is linked to:

- Doc 15: Home School Agreements
- Pol 6: Safeguarding and Child protection
- Pol 17: Behaviour Management, Anti-Bullying and Exclusions

Agreed by the Governing Body on.....

Signed by:.....

Date:.....

Chair of the Governing Body

Next Review: Autumn 2019

