

Park Hill School Attendance and Punctuality Policy

At Park Hill Primary School we are committed to promoting and maintaining excellent attendance and punctuality for all our children. This Attendance and Punctuality Policy embeds our commitment to inclusion and equality of opportunity. It also expresses our firmly held belief in the central role that regular attendance and punctuality play in achieving success at school and at work.

If learners are to get the greatest benefit from their education in school, it is vital that they have good attendance and arrive punctually. As learners grow and prepare for their next stages of education and employment, they need to see good attendance and punctuality as important qualities that are valued by others, including employers. We will do all that we can to encourage good attendance and punctuality. Where learners are not conforming to our high expectations for attendance and punctuality, we will put into place effective strategies to bring about improvement.

Aims

At Park Hill School we believe that there should be a whole school approach to improving and maintaining targets for attendance and punctuality. The benefits of a whole school approach to tackling absenteeism are that:

- Responsibility for promoting school attendance and punctuality is shared by everyone in the school.
- Developing an attendance policy touches all aspects of the school's life and relates directly to the school's values, ethos and curriculum.
- Rigorous collection and analysis of data about attendance and punctuality enables the school to check progress against measurable outcomes.

Objectives

- To ensure that all pupils from all learner groups attend school well.
- To ensure that all pupils are punctual.
- To win the support of parents and carers in ensuring their children attend school well and that they arrive on time.
- To keep good records of attendance through the school registers and school management systems and to take prompt action to follow up absences.
- To monitor closely pupils with attendance and punctuality issues (in particular those with below 92% attendance) and to work with parents and carers (and, where appropriate, other agencies) to bring about improvement.
- To ensure that children who have been absent from school are supported in catching up on any learning they may have missed. (This includes ensuring that children who are absent because of illness have work sent home for them to complete.)

Strategies

- All staff to complete registers accurately and in accordance with school procedures for each session.

- Staff to draw to Attendance Leader's attention any absences that are cause for concern.
- Parents asked to telephone or make contact with the school if their child is absent for any reason.
- A policy of first day contact will be maintained. If a pupil is absent without explanation when the register is taken, the Learning Mentors will contact the parents on the same day wherever possible.
- An extensive system of incentives and rewards will be maintained which encourage children on an individual, class and whole school basis to attend school regularly and punctually. Children who improve their attendance and punctuality will also be commended.
- Parents will receive a printout of their child's attendance every term at parents' evening.
- Attendance and punctuality results for each class will be announced every week in the Merit Assembly and will be published in the Wednesday letter.
- Names of children with 100% attendance will be published in the Wednesday letter each half term.
- Attendance and punctuality improvers will also be acknowledged.
- The Attendance Leader will work closely with the Attendance Champions, the Learning Mentors and the Attendance Governor.
- Home visits or meetings in school with parents will be conducted for those whose children's attendance or punctuality is concerning.
- Where children are persistently absent, procedures for court action will be taken, following guidelines set down by the Education Welfare Office. In such cases, the Attendance Leader will liaise with the Education Welfare Office and will act as the Designated Lead Person.

If a Child is Absent

- Teachers are required to take an attendance register twice a day and this shows whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, or absent. If a pupil of compulsory school age is absent, every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school and correctly coded according to LA regulations.
- All children who arrive in school after the close of the register (9.00 am) will be marked as late (code 'L'). Children arriving after 9.30 am will be marked as code 'U' (unauthorised late). If children are persistently late, parents will be contacted.
- Parents should contact the office between 8.30 and 9.15 am whenever their child is unable to attend.
- The school will endeavour to make contact with parents on the first day of their child's absence, if no call is received by 9.15 am. If no contact can be made for two consecutive days, on the third day a home visit will be carried out. If all attempts to locate the child are unsuccessful, the school will inform the 'Children Missing in Education' team at the Local Authority.
- Unaccountable absences will be recorded as unauthorised absence (code 'O') on the child's attendance record

- If a child is absent for more than three days or on three separate occasions in the space of three consecutive weeks, medical proof of illness will be required in order for the absence to be authorised by the school. Otherwise, future absences will be marked as code 'O'.
- If a child's attendance dips below 92% at any point, future absences will be unauthorised (with code 'O') unless medical proof is provided. This will continue until the attendance of the child rises above 92%.
- If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or guardians will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem or an unannounced home visit will be made.
 - ❖ The governors, supported by the LA, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against parents or guardians who repeatedly fail in their responsibility to send their child to school on a regular and punctual basis.
 - ❖ In cases where a child has 20 or more sessions of unauthorised absence, they may be included in a Spotlight Campaign.
 - ❖ The aim of a Spotlight Campaign will always be for the child to be attending school more regularly.
 - ❖ However, if a child is still incurring unauthorised absences, this could result in court action being taken.
 - ❖ All of the procedures relating to Spotlight will be followed in line with the guidance given by the Education Welfare Office. The Attendance Leader will act as the Designated Senior Person in all such cases.
- All staff should be alert to the possibility of a girl being at risk of FGM (according to Chapter 9 of the Multi Agency Practice Guidelines and Section 5C of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003).
- In certain cases, where there are safeguarding concerns around a child, the Head Teacher will ask the class teacher to alert the Senior Leadership at morning registration if the child is absent. Further investigations will then be made to ensure the safety of the child.
- In cases where children stop attending Park Hill, they will remain on our roll until confirmation has been received that they are attending another school or advice to take them off roll has been received from the 'Children Missing in Education' team.

Extended Leave during Term Time

- Term time holidays and leave of absence are not allowed within the local authority and the Head Teacher will therefore not authorise any extended leave during term time.
- Guidelines set out by the Education Welfare Office will be followed and parents may be at risk of a penalty fine. In such cases, a suite of letters will be sent to parents in line with EWO policy and the Attendance Leader will act as the Designated Senior Person.
- If a child has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days, the school bursar will inform the Local Authority and seek guidance from them.

Long Term Absence Because of Illness

- When a child has an illness that results in them being away from school for over one week, the school will do all it can to send study materials home. Confirmation of illness will usually be required from a doctor. If confirmation is not provided upon request, the school may make a referral to the school nurse to confirm the nature of the child's illness.
- If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or is a repetitive absence, the school will contact support services to arrange support for the child and his/her family (eg use of hospital tutor).
- The school will act sensitively to the individual needs and circumstances of returning pupils following significant periods of absence.
- On the pupil's return to school, some dedicated teaching assistant time will be set aside to make sure their learning is brought up to the same standard as the majority of the class.

Religious Observance

- Pupils are entitled to one day's authorised leave for religious observance, eg Eid or Diwali.

Medical Appointments

The school expects parents to book appointments for their children outside of school hours. Where appointments during the school day are unavoidable, parents should inform the school at least one day in advance of the appointment. These appointments, however, do have to be recorded as absences using the code 'M'.

Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance. Attendance and Punctuality will be a standard item on the agenda of all full governing body meetings and the Attendance Governor will meet with the Attendance Leader once a half term.

The governors will examine closely the information provided to them by the Attendance Leader and seek to ensure that Park Hill attendance figures are as high as they should be and that pupils are not disadvantaged by low attendance. In order for this policy to be successful, every member of the school community must make attendance a high priority. We must share enthusiasm for education, communicate its importance to pupils and all members of the school community.

Outcome

The staff and governors will do all that they can to ensure that pupils come happily, willingly and punctually to school so that they gain the greatest value from their school life.

Reviewed by Liz Bakalou
November 2017

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