



Attendance Policy

Attendance Matters every lesson counts

Status of policy: Non Statutory

Frequency of review: 2 years

Date of most recent review: 01 October 2024

Date of next review: October 2026

Approved by A.A.Hutchings, Headteacher

INTRODUCTION

- This policy was developed through a process of consultation with the relevant professionals: Local Authority, Headteachers of the Education Improvement Partnership, Parents, Staff & Governors.
- It will be reviewed every two years by the Head Teacher & school staff. They will make any changes, which are deemed supportive of the aims of the policy.

Role	Responsibility
Head Teacher	To monitor attendance throughout the school
School Business Manager/Class teacher/Headteacher	To monitor the attendance situation of individual children.
Head Teacher	To raise the level of attendance of those children identified at risk/persistent absentees
Headteacher/Class teacher/DCPO (Designated Child Protection Officer)	The welfare of young children in the school.
Governors	To monitor the effectiveness of this policy.
Local Authority	To support the school in achieving its objectives by following LA guidelines.

Why is good attendance so important?

The government has set a target of 95% attendance for all pupils. This rate allows for periods of illness or particular circumstances when absence from school is unavoidable.

There are two different types of school absenteeism:

- Persistent absenteeism – When pupils record less than a 90% attendance at school.
- Severe absenteeism – When pupils are present for less than 50% of their school days.

Good attendance underpins a child's success in all areas of the curriculum. At Parkgate Primary School we believe that children can only learn effectively if they attend school regularly, so they are able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. It is important too, that young learners see good attendance and punctuality as the basis of their personal success and are important qualities that are valued.

We promote good attendance and punctuality and implement strategies to bring about improvement. Where possible we work in partnership with families.

Children who are persistently late or persistently absent soon fall behind with their learning developing large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.

'Improving attendance is everyone's business. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families.'

~ Working Together to Improve School Attendance, DfE.

It is vital that children are in good attendance habits from the day they start school. We need to work together to ensure this happens so that there are no issues 'downstream'. Early intervention is key.

Aims:

Through this policy we aim to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a minimum of 97% attendance for all children, apart from those with chronic health issues.
- To create a culture in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and valued by all.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents/carers, staff and the Education Welfare Service so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility

- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties. To be consistent in implementation, both in terms of rewards and sanctions
- To value the individual and be socially and educationally inclusive.

Objectives:

- To involve the children more in their school attendance
- To communicate effectively with parent(s)/carer(s) about regular school attendance
- To recognise the key role of class teachers in promoting and monitoring good attendance
- To ensure time and organisation within the school to enable the aims and objectives to be met
- To use our effective working relationship with Local Authority to secure good attendance.

Targets:

- School attendance target is 97% but we hope for 100%
- To have an effective means of collecting and monitoring attendance information
- To discuss the setting of targets for the school with the Local Authority and the LA's ASIA.
- To ensure that such data is available and used effectively by school managers and staff in conjunction with the Local Authority.
- To agree specific targets for individuals, groups, years and the whole school in a context of all known relevant factors and record these where appropriate
- To target resources in order to improve attendance and implement strategies where most appropriate and to undertake this within a reasonable time frame
- To keep parent(s)/carer(s), pupils and governors, the Education Improvement Partnership and the Local Authority informed of policy and practice
- To ensure that the school is aware of government targets which may have been set for some vulnerable groups, such as Looked After Children.

Parent(s)/carer(s) will be advised of our policy on attendance:

- When their children first start at our school
- Home school contracts
- Through newsletters
- At parent(s)/carer(s) evenings
- In the school prospectus

Children or young people will be advised of our policy on attendance:

- In assemblies
- In the classroom
- During appropriate areas of the curriculum.

Procedures:

- Children are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year, unless there is a good reason for absence. There are two types of absence:
 - - Authorised (where the school approves pupil absence)
 - - Unauthorised (where the school will not approve absence)
 For Information: See Appendix B for definitions
- It is expected that parent(s) or carers will provide an explanation if the child is absent on every day the absence occurs, at the start of the school day.

- Follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school.
- The head teacher will regularly remind parent(s)/carer(s) of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Work with parents to improve individual pupil's attendance and punctuality
- Refer to the Educational Welfare Service any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve.
- All staff are aware that they must raise any attendance or punctuality concerns to the Head Teacher
- Children with 100% attendance will be rewarded by the school by receiving a Gold certificate.
- Children with 98% & 99% attendance will be rewarded by the school by receiving a silver certificate at the end of each school term.
- Children with 96% & 97% attendance will be rewarded by the school by receiving a Bronze certificate at the end of each school term.
- At the end of each term recognition will be given to the class with the highest attendance rate.

Identification & Referral:

- If a child is regularly late for school or is often absent, this is noted by the class teacher &/or office administration. The class teacher will contact parents/carers to arrange an informal discussion.
- If this persists the teacher will register concern with the head teacher (cause for concern) and attendance will be scrutinised and monitored.
- If there is no or insufficient improvement, at this point an attendance letter may be sent and parent(s)/carer(s) can be invited in for a meeting
- At the meeting, parental duty to ensure full school attendance will be discussed and support offered by providing links to other agencies as appropriate
- Patterns of non- attendance will be monitored and referred to the Local Authority.
- A referral to the Local Authority will consist of the referral form, copies of all correspondence to parent(s)/carer(s) and a print out of the child's attendance record.
- The Local Authority meets with the Headteacher annually to discuss attendance. Patterns of non - attendance are highlighted and parents may be required to attend a meeting.
- Current government guidance states that less than 90% absence is classed as persistent absence (PA).

Completing the Register:

- Registers provide the twice daily record of the attendance of all pupils; they are legal documents **that may be required in a court of law**, for example as evidence in prosecutions for non-attendance at school. Registers must be preserved for a period of three years after the date they were last used.
- The register should be marked using the codes advised by DCSF and Cheshire West and Chester Council
- For schools with computerised registers the Governing Body is responsible for registering with the Data Protection Registrar under the Data Protection Act 1998

Lateness

Pupils who are late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of others. Pupils who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning, often the most

important aspect, as the beginning of the day is where the teacher explains the learning and what each child is expected to achieve.

School begins at 8:40am and all pupils are expected to be in school for registration at this time. If the child arrives after 08:50am, a late mark will be issued.

Twenty minutes after the close of registration at 09.10am a late mark becomes an unauthorised absence. After 09.10 a child will be coded "U" which statistically counts as an unauthorised absence.

Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern further action may be taken. Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness parents/carers will receive a letter advising them of the concerns and the school will provide opportunities for parents/carers to seek support and advice to address these issues.

Medical Appointments

If possible, routine medical appointments should be made outside the school day. If this is not possible, children who have attended a medical appointment (doctor, dentist, hospital) and following the appointment are well enough to come to school, they will have the absence recorded as a medical absence.

Leave of Absence (Family Holidays) during Term time

From 1 September 2013, a change to government legislation means that schools are no longer allowed to authorise requests for children to be taken out of school for a holiday during term time.

We follow the statutory DfE guidance and discourage holidays during term time due to the impact they have on pupils' learning. Parent(s)/carer(s) are strongly urged to avoid booking a family holiday during term time.

Family holidays taken during term time will be categorised as unauthorised absence. **Parent(s)/carer(s) do not have the right to take their child out of school for such a holiday.** Only in exceptional circumstances will holidays be authorised. Parents should inform school by letter if they are going on holiday. We appreciate the courtesy of this information although, we cannot authorise the absence.

Exceptional circumstances for absence from school

These are at the Headteacher's discretion and include:

- Services leave
- Family Respite
- Family crisis (Looked After Child, Adoption, Bereavement, Severe medical needs)
- Return to homeland (Long distance visit to family members)
- Religious Events
- Examinations
- Approved sporting activity
- Family events at the discretion of the Headteacher
- Urgent medical appointments (routine appointments should be made outside of school hours if possible)

Any other circumstances that do not meet the criteria stated above will again be at the Headteacher's discretion.

Absence Request

Parents/carers must complete an absence request form and return it to school no less than one week before the absence. A leave of absence form can be obtained from the school office.

Please note that absence will **NOT** be authorised under any circumstances during the period of statutory assessments.

Unauthorised Absence

If you choose to take your child out of school for 5 days or more without the approval of the Head Teacher you may be issued with a Fixed Penalty.

Where a child incurs 10 unauthorised absence marks (2 per day) a fixed penalty notice may be issued.

If issued, a penalty of £80 per parent is payable within 21 days of issue. If unpaid this will increase to £160 to be paid within 28 days. Failure to pay may result in the Local Authority instigating legal proceedings where parents/carers may face a fine of up to £2,500. In the case of repeated fines, if a parent receives a second fine for the same child within any three-year period, this will be charged at the higher rate of £160.

A child who is absent longer than 5 days after an agreed return date can legally be removed from the school roll and the parent may be liable to prosecution.

A child who is absent longer than 20 days after the agreed return date can legally be removed from the school roll and will no longer have a place at this school.

If you are leaving the area, you must provide details of where you are going and how you can be contacted. If you do not do this and the school is unable to trace your child, this will be treated as a safeguarding matter.

Pupils returned to school by Truancy Patrols

The school will have in place a procedure for pupils who are returned or stopped by a truancy patrol.

What can parent(s)/carer(s) do to help?

- Let the school know as soon as possible why your child is absent
- Reinforce to your child the importance of attending school
- Do not allow your child to have time off school unless it is really necessary
- Encourage your child to be punctual

If you are worried about your child's attendance at school what can you do?

- Talk to your child; it may be something simple
- Talk to the head teacher and staff at the school
- Talk to the Local Authority Educational Welfare Service

Appendix A

Local Authority CW&C: Educational Welfare Service

Education Welfare Service delivers on the Statutory Duties of the Local Authority in relation of school attendance or otherwise. The EWS sits in the Education Directorate.

Statutory duties will include the following:

- identification of children missing education (CME)
- improving attendance via investigation / enforcement process
- School Attendance Orders
- Contribute to the code of conduct for Fixed Penalty Notices
- Assessment of Fixed Penalty Warning requests
- Assessment and Guidance for section 444 parental prosecution
- Child performance/employment regulation (child licensing)
- Right to inspect registers

Appendix B: Definitions

Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school.
Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

Appendix C:

	Number of days / weeks missed		Actions to be taken by school
100% Attendance	0 days missed	Outstanding	
98% Attendance	4 days missed	Very good	
95% Attendance	9 days of absence 1 week and 4 days of learning missed	Good – Almost there in achieving our school target (97%)	Teachers to email parent/carers
91% - 94% Attendance		Improvement needed	Teacher to phone home
90% Attendance	19 days of absence 3 weeks and 4 days of learning missed	Improvement needed	Letter home to parents from office requesting parents to make an appointment with class teacher.
85% Attendance	28 days of absence 5 weeks and 3 days of learning missed	We are concerned	Headteacher/Deputy inform LA
80% Attendance	38 days of absence 7 weeks and 3 days of learning missed	We are very concerned	
75% Attendance	46 days of absence 9 weeks and 1 day of learning missed	Unacceptable	