

Parkside Academy



Attendance Policy

June 2013
(review July 2015)

Attendance Policy

We recognise, at Parkside Academy, a direct correlation between a pupil's attendance and achievement and wish to encourage excellent attendance.

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education, it is vital that they attend regularly and are at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is the parent's legal responsibility and permitting absence from school, without a good reason, creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

The school's standard procedure on authorised/unauthorised absence clarifies expectations for pupils, parents and staff.

Types of Absence:

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents) as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED.

Authorised absence

Authorisation for absence will usually be granted in the following circumstances:

- Illness of the child – a note or telephone call from the parent/guardian is required. In cases of extended absence or regular occasional absence, further information may be requested from a doctor.
- Hospital/dental/doctor appointments – a letter or appointment card should be shown at school beforehand. If possible, the child should attend school before or after the appointment as appropriate.
- Bereavement or serious illness of a close family member – contact by the child's parent/guardian should be made with the Year Leader, explaining the situation.
- Days of religious observance – a note from the parent/guardian should be received explaining that the day is one set aside exclusively for religious observance by the religious body to which the child's parent belongs.
- Interviews – a letter inviting the pupil for interview should be shown to the school before the interview date.

- Participation in events organised by agreed outside agencies – eg. representing County at sport, St John’s Ambulance activities etc. Permission for absence from school before the date of the event is necessary.
- Contract bus not arriving – in such a case, the pupil should always wait at the bus stop for 20 minutes after the scheduled time in case the bus is just late. If the bus does not arrive, pupils should try to get to school by public transport or parents’ cars. Pupils who usually use a contract bus would not be expected to walk to school.

Unauthorised absence

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no ‘leave of absence’ has been given. This includes:

- Shopping trips including those for uniform
- Visits to watch sporting activities, concerts etc unless school organised
- Looking after younger children or ill relatives – except in an emergency
- Waiting for deliveries, workmen, tradesmen etc
- Part-time jobs
- Late bus that arrives before the 20 minute waiting time expires
- Because it is an ‘out of routine’ day e.g. non-uniform days, school visit etc.

There may always be special circumstances where one of the above may be waived by the school. If parents feel they have such a case, they should contact the child’s Year Leader.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil becomes a ‘persistent absentee’ when they miss 15% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully by the Attendance Officer and will be subject to an Action Plan.

Absence Procedures

If a child is absent, parents must:

- contact the Attendance Officer as soon as possible on the first day of absence.
- send a note in on the first day the child returns with an explanation of the absence.
- provide medical evidence for any absence of more than 5 school days.

If a child is absent, the school will:

- telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you
- contact you again if the absence is for more than 2 days
- invite you in to discuss the situation with the Attendance Officer and/or Year Leader – or Deputy Headteacher if absences persist.

The following stages will be implemented:

- If attendance falls to **95%**, a **first warning letter** to be sent to parent/guardian
- If attendance falls between **95% and 90%**, a **second warning letter** to be sent.
- ***If no improvement, a third letter will be sent to parent, inviting them in to school for a meeting with the Year Leader and Attendance Manager. Medical evidence for all absence will be required at this stage.***
- If no improvement, a **fourth letter warning** of fixed penalty notices etc. will be issued and a referral will be made to the School Action Enforcement Team.

Parkside Academy fully supports the Education Welfare Service's policy on fixed-term fines for regular unauthorised absences and will always refer persistent non-attendees to the Enforcement Team for legal proceedings.

Family holidays in term time

Taking holidays in term time will affect a child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to support us by not taking children away in school time.

Advice to parents from the DfE is that:

- wherever possible, holidays should be taken during school holidays.
- if you wish to take a holiday in school time, you need to ask for permission from the school well in advance

Leave of absence request forms are available via the Attendance Office.

Parents who remove their child from school for an unauthorised holiday will be liable to a fine.

Approved Holiday Work

Pupils who complete approved holiday work, which is of an acceptable standard upon return, will be recognised as 'educated off site' and the holiday will be authorised.

'Catch-up' after an absence

- In the case of a short term absence, it is incumbent upon the pupil to copy up any missed work. Subject teachers will provide the necessary information to the pupil on return.
- If a longer absence is notified, the Attendance Officer will collect work from the relevant teachers and arrange for collection by a parent.
- When a pupil is excluded from school, work is available via the VLE. Should this be problematic for parents, work packs can be arranged.
- In the case of notified extended absence with medical involvement, the school undertakes to arrange tuition via the Home and Hospital Service.

Those responsible for attendance matters in school are:

Mrs. A. Henry	Attendance Officer
Mr. G. Hopper	} Year Leaders
Mrs. J. Clay	
Mr. C. Goldsmith (Associate)	
Mrs. N. Close-Ash	
Mrs. S. Robson	
Mrs. G. Orchard	
Mrs. A. Wise	Deputy Headteacher

Summary

Parkside Academy has a legal duty to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to ensure that their children attend. All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.