

Park End Primary School



Approved By: *D. Jackson*

Date: 13.7.20

Attendance Policy

Review Date	Type of Review	Comments	Initials
Nov 2017	New	New Policy	LR
March 2018	Update	Updated procedures	LR
May 2019	Update	Updated procedures	LR/NW
Sept 2019	Update	Updated procedures	LR/JR
Nov 2019	Update	Updated procedures	LR
July 2020	Update	Update in line with full opening of schools-addendum	LR

Welcome to Park End Primary School's attendance policy.

September 2020 please see our addendum to reflect attendance at school following full reopening

1. Our policy recognises that high levels of school attendance are significant to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential. Children and young people need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education.

2. The overall aim of the attendance policy is to:
 - Keep children safe and ensure their welfare needs are met in accordance with safeguarding practice.
 - Provide a stable environment in which our children can learn.
 - Support parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children who are of compulsory school age and registered at Park End Primary School, attend school regularly.
 - Maximise educational opportunities for all our pupils, ensuring there is a consistent and fair approach with equal opportunities for all.
 - Encourage good habits of school attendance from the Early Years onwards.

3. We do this by:
 - Applying a robust attendance process across school.
 - Notifying parents at the earliest opportunity where attendance is below expected national standards.
 - Ensuring pupils are punctual to their lessons and attend school on time.
 - Working with parents to reduce illness and medical absence.
 - Working in collaboration with partner agencies, such as health visitors, school nurses, children's services and youth services across all levels of the needs assessment.
 - Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled.
 - Identifying vulnerable children who may have a specific area of need to enable them to attend school
 - Analysing attendance data to highlight areas of concern, particularly amongst vulnerable groups, including the identification and tracking of persistent absence pupils.
 - Working with the families of children in the early years' foundation stage to ensure there is a readiness to learn.
Highlighting the importance of attendance with pupils through achievement and rewards.

4. The legal powers and duties that govern school attendance and explains how they apply to local authorities, academies, head teachers, school staff, governing bodies, pupils and parents, are contained in:
 - The Education Act 1996, sections 434(1)(3)(4) & (6) and 458(4) & (5)
 - The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
 - The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
 - The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
 - The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
5. Further advice and guidance provided by the DfE on specific aspects of attendance is referenced in the policy.
6. Park End Primary School recognises that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and all staff who during the course of their employment have direct or indirect contact with the pupils and their families, or who have access to information about them, have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of the pupil. This includes effective joint working practice with external agencies and professionals that have different roles and expertise and ensuring attendance practice and record keeping reflects this responsibility.
7. As with all aspects of a child's life, it is the parents/carers who have the pivotal role in ensuring their child's best interests are taken into consideration at all times. The law in relation to the regular attendance of a child at school is strict in the application of this responsibility. At Park End Primary School we want to support our parents in carrying out this responsibility but at the same time we will tender challenges where a child's level of attendance falls behind expectations. To this end, the policy is robust in its early identification of attendance concerns and structured to ensure the appropriate level of support is put in place.
8. The policy is relevant to every child on roll at Park End Primary School, between the ages of 2 and 11 years old.
9. The School recognises that a child's learning journey starts at the very beginning of their Early Years education, this being an important time for parents to embed good habits of attendance with their child, which will follow them through their school life. The parent is expected to have good routines in place to ensure their child is prepared for school each day and is ready to learn by attending regularly and being in school on time. Once established, we believe the child will easily become accustomed to all school routines and will grow through their education to become an independent learner.
10. We also recognise that at times difficulties may arise within a family, which can impact upon a child's learning and school attendance. In such cases, it is important for a pupil or parent to speak to any person in the Safeguarding Team, who in confidence, will listen and discuss the best way forward. We

believe in working closely with the pupils and parents to ensure a child's education is not interrupted and they can continue to attend school regularly.

Context of the school attendance measures

11. A parent is responsible for ensuring their child, who is at compulsory school age, receives a suitable full-time education and attends school regularly. This is a legal requirement.
12. A child reaches compulsory school age on or after their fifth birthday. If they turn five between 1 January and 31 March, they are of compulsory school age on 31 March; if they turn five between 1 April and 31 August they are of compulsory school age on 31 August. If they turn five between 1 September and 31 December, they are of compulsory school age on 31st December.
(School Attendance November 2016)

Attendance Registers

13. The law requires all schools to have an attendance register. All pupils (regardless of their age) must be placed on the register.
14. The attendance register is taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. Entries into the register must not be pre-populated. On each occasion a record is made as to whether a pupil is:
 - Present;
 - Attending an approved educational activity;
 - Absent; or
 - Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.The school will follow up any absences to:
 - Ascertain the reason;
 - Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken if necessary;
 - Identify whether the absence is approved or not; and
 - Identify the correct code to use before entering it on to the electronic register which is used to download data to the School Census
15. All attendance information is kept in accordance with confidentiality and data protection practice.
16. The main attendance register is compiled electronically using the School Information Management System (SIMS).

School Day

17. **Registration Code / \: Present in school / = am \ = pm**
 - Present in school during registration.

- Morning registration will take place at the start of the school day.
 - Afternoon registration will take place immediately after lunch.
18. The timings for the school day are published on the school website and displayed on a noticeboard in school. The doors open at 8.50am, morning registration takes place at 9.00am. Afternoon registration for Reception and Key Stage 1 & KS2 takes place at 12.30pm.
19. If a pupil were to leave the school premises after registration they would still be counted as present for statistical purposes. In such cases, to ensure effective safeguarding practice is in place, it is important that the pupil's details are recorded in school as being signed out. The adult collecting the child must sign the child out using the electronic signing out system. Accordingly, where the pupil returns to the school, they should be signed back in. Reasons for signing a child out of school, in every case, must be confirmed by the parent. Evidence will be requested to support the reason.
20. The electronic signing in system does not automatically write this back into the attendance register. This will be entered into the register manually the following day.

Lateness

- **Code L: Late arrival before the register has closed**
 - **Code U: Late arrival after the register has closed.**
21. (Registers close 30 minutes from the beginning of registration. For statistical reasons, arrival to school after this time is recorded as an unauthorised absence and will be subject to formal attendance processes. Afternoon registration closes after the register is taken).
22. Regular school attendance is determined between the hours prescribed by the school. As part of a parent's responsibility to ensuring their child attends regularly at school, it is important for parents to ensure their child arrives on time to school.
23. Park End Primary School will not tolerate a child being late to school and reasons will be contested. We strive hard to ensure each pupil within our care is taught to achieve good and outstanding national curriculum requirements. This cannot be achieved where a child is late to school and is not ready to learn.
24. Once the classroom doors are closed, the pupil and/or parent will be required to sign in at the school office, where the reason for lateness will be recorded. In the case of a primary school aged child, the expectation is for the parent to accompany the child into the school office, to record the reason for lateness.
25. Lateness to school can be a very upsetting and isolating experience for a

child.

26. Before the beginning of the school day, it is important for a child to have contact with their peers on the playground. This is one of the times during the school day where they can share quality time with their peers and are able to forge their friendships. Children who are late to school miss this opportunity and can quickly become anxious and withdrawn, lacking in self-esteem and feeling left out.
27. Children who are late miss the important start to a lesson, and have to 'catch up' without receiving the instruction that the rest of the class have received. If this is a regular occurrence this may lead to the child becoming unhappy and disaffected with their learning and not wanting to come to school.
28. Lateness to school is a safeguarding factor which is monitored to identify pupils who may be vulnerable for welfare reasons. The reasons for lateness will be explored with families on an individual basis and the level of need assessed. Where required, early help will be implemented.

Attendance and Absence Codes

29. A list of all the codes and their meanings are contained in the *Pupil Registration (England) Regulations 2006*.
30. Information on those attendance codes to be used for absence related to the Coronavirus (COVID-19), will be provided by the Department for Education (DfE). There will also be a requirement of schools to submit data regarding such absence to the DfE.
31. The codes enable the school to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations. They are also used for collecting statistics through the School Census System. The data helps the school, local authority and Ofsted to gain a greater understanding of the level and the reasons for pupil absence.
32. Absence from school is a safeguarding factor and is monitored to identify pupils who may be vulnerable for welfare reasons or identified as not making progress in their learning.

Monitoring Attendance

33. Park End Primary School expects all pupils, at any one time throughout the school year, to be attaining at least 97% attendance. This equates to 5 days (10 sessions) absence within the school year. This requirement is in accordance with Ofsted guidance which rates attendance as follows:

% Attendance	Grade
100%-99%	OUTSTANDING
98%-97%	GOOD
96%-95%	SATISFACTORY
94%-91%	INADEQUATE
90%-86%	CAUSE FOR CONCERN
85%	SERIOUS CONCERN

34. The school adopts a staged attendance procedure approach offering guidance correlating to the pupil's overall attendance to determine the level of intervention deemed necessary. The monitoring of attendance for pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), follows this process but without recourse to legal attendance procedures until the child is at the legal age for school.

35. At any of the following stages, where attendance improves and is no longer a cause for concern, procedures to manage attendance will cease.

36. The attendance process is subject to fast tracking and where appropriate, formal attendance processes will be initiated without recourse to the staged approach

Stage 1 Identification

37. School will contact parents on an individual basis, when pupil progress is being affected by their child's attendance. Each child's attendance will be considered separately according to that child and family's personal circumstances. Throughout the attendance process, school will consider both the number of sessions missed and early periods of the school year. We will also consider attendance in previous years. At Stage 1, support for parents can be provided through a phone call, face to face contact or an attendance support meeting. School will expect to see an improvement in attendance within 2 weeks, or the process will move to Stage 2.

Stage 2 Basic Warning Letter

38. Where there has been no improvement in attendance, the school will advise the parents with a basic warning letter that their child's attendance has fallen below expectations. School will seek proof of medical illness absence. The school does not require the parent to provide a GP sick note, and does not expect the parent to make an additional payment, subject to prescription charges, to satisfy this requirement.

39. If there is no improvement in attendance within 2 weeks then school will

consider moving to more formal attendance procedures (Stage 3)

Stage 3

Initial Attendance Case Conference

40. Following a continued decline in attendance, the parent will be invited, by letter, to attend an Initial Attendance Case Conference; the purpose of this meeting is to formulate an Improved Attendance Plan and work together to improve attendance. The legal implications of the attendance proceedings at Stage 3 must be explained to the parents, including the fact that, following the initial attendance case conference, the school will follow its legal obligation and make a fixed penalty warning notice referral to the local authority. The local authority will follow up on the referral according to each families' individual circumstances (see legal intervention below)
41. At the initial attendance case conference a plan will be agreed to improve attendance; a copy of the minutes of the meeting, including the plan for improved attendance will be sent via post to parents.
42. Where the parent does not attend the Initial Attendance Case Conference, the meeting will be held in their absence and the minutes delivered during a planned home visit, so that the legal implications of the attendance procedures can be explained.
43. A review conference will be held within 4 to 6 weeks. At the review, the recommendations made at the Attendance Case Conference will be discussed.
44. The decision may be made by the school and local authority to arrange a final review meeting or for no further meetings.
45. If the outcome at the final review meeting is that no improvements have been made in attendance, then a Fixed Penalty Notice (S444) may be issued by the local authority or the local authority may take this to the magistrate's court.

Legal Intervention

46. Attendance at school is a legal requirement, subject to section 444 of the Education Act 1996. As stated above, the school is required to make a referral to the local authority.
47. In most cases, the Local Authority will work to improve school attendance through the Penalty Notice Regulations. This involves the Local Authority issuing a parent with a penalty notice warning letter, requiring the parent to ensure the child attends school every day for 15 consecutive school days, otherwise the parent may be issued with a penalty notice. By adopting this measure, it is hoped that good habits of attendance will be encouraged and further intervention is not required. Where the penalty notice warning period

has been achieved, it is important that improvements to attendance are sustained.

48. The issuing of a penalty notice is undertaken by the local authority acting on the recommendation of the school, subject to evidential requirements being satisfied. The penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 to be paid within 28 days. Payment is made to the local authority. There is no right of appeal by parents/ carers against a penalty notice. If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 28- day period, the local authority must decide either to prosecute for the original offence to which the notice applies or withdraw the notice.

49. In some cases, a court warning letter will be issued to parents where, on the acquisition of evidence, the school will refer the matter to the local authority for a summons to be issued against the parent. Cases are triable on conviction to a fine up to and not exceeding £2500 and/or 3 months' imprisonment.

50. Where the matter is referred for legal proceedings, the school may be minded to require the Magistrates to consider imposing a Parenting Order. This is not a punitive requirement but is aimed at supporting the parent in giving effect to their parenting responsibilities to enable school attendance to improve.

(School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures, January 2015)

Persistent Absence

51. A pupil who has 10% or more absence is classified for statistical purposes as being a 'persistent absentee'. This is measured in sessions missed from school and could be owing to either authorised or unauthorised absence. These are pupils which the school considers to be particularly vulnerable and in most cases will be subject to an Improved Attendance Plan, to ensure they are supported in attending school regularly.

52. Throughout the school year, persistent absence is calculated as follows, where 1 day equals 2 sessions:

TERM 1 7 sessions or more	TERM 1 to 2 14 sessions or more	TERM 1 to 3 20 sessions or more	TERM 1 to 4 25 sessions or more	Term 1 to 5 31 sessions or more	Term 1 to 6 38 sessions or more
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(A Guide to Absence Statistics, May 2016)

Unauthorised Absence

53. Unauthorised absence is recorded where the school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence.
54. Parents/carers are expected to notify the school of their child's absence on the first day of the absence and every day thereafter. A message can be left on the school answer machine as there is an automated service to take messages.
55. In accordance with safeguarding practice, school has a responsibility to follow up all unexplained and unexpected absence. Therefore, all unexplained and unexpected absences will be followed up as indicated below.
- A text message will be made to the person listed as our first contact. The text requests parent/carer to contact school with a reason for absence.
 - On the second day of absence a telephone call will be made.
 - If no contact is made with school by the third day, then a home visit will be made to ascertain the reason for absence.
 - If there is no response to the home visit, on the 3rd day of absence, school will contact all alternative people on our contact list.
 - Also in accordance with safeguarding practice, where a child has been absent for an excess of 10 days, without good reason, when the school has made every effort to find out the whereabouts of the child, then the child will be listed as 'missing in education'
 - If school is concerned about the safety of pupils at any stage of contact procedures we will escalate the case to children's service or police.
56. When the reason for the pupil's absence has been established the register will be amended with the appropriate code.

Illness (not medical or dental appointment)

57. Parents/carers are advised to notify the school as soon as possible when a child is to be absent for illness. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, Park End Primary School will advise parents to provide medical evidence to support illness. The school can record the absence as unauthorised if no medical evidence is provided. Parents/carers will be advised in writing of school's intention to do this. In such cases, a prescription notice, medical letter, appointment card, or similar, will suffice. The school does not expect parent/carers to request medical certificates from the GP, which can incur a charge.
58. The school will ensure that pupils at school with medical conditions are supported to enable them to have full access to their education. In such cases an individual healthcare plan may be initiated, in consultation with the parent and pupil and relevant healthcare professional. The plan should consider the management of absence from school. It is unacceptable practice to penalise children for their attendance record if their absences are related to their medical condition, e.g. hospital appointments.

(Supporting children at school with medical conditions, December 2015)

Medical or Dental Appointments

59. Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence. Parents/carers are encouraged to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment, returning to school immediately after the appointment.
60. It is important to ensure effective safeguarding practice. A pupil arriving at school after being at a medical appointment, who has not been marked present for that session, must be signed into the school at the office. Evidence of the medical appointment will need to be produced, otherwise a child arriving into school will be recorded as late, which may be an unauthorised lateness, depending on the time of arrival into school. The school seeks to work flexibly with parents/carers in managing medical absence, so as not to penalise children for their attendance record if their absences are related to their medical condition, eg. hospital appointments. *(Supporting children at school with medical conditions, December 2015)*

Children Missing from Education

61. A pupil who is absent from school for 10 consecutive school days **without a reason** is regarded as a 'child missing from education'. In such cases, a referral will be made to the local authority. Before doing so, the school will have made all necessary enquiries to trace the pupil, through any additional contact numbers. This is regarded as a major safeguarding concern and may involve contact being made with the Police or the local authority children's services. It is important that all absences are notified to the school on each day of absence and a change to contact information is updated. *(Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2019)*

62. Further guidance regarding children missing in education can be found at https://www.middlesbrough.gov.uk/sites/default/files/CME_guidance.docx

Leave of Absence in Term Time

63. The parent/carer who has responsibility to ensure the regular attendance of their child at school, should make application to the Head Teacher of the school where their child is on roll, for any leave of absence in term time. Using the appropriate application form, the request should be made providing at least one month's notice. A separate application is required to be completed for each child. Leave of absence in term time is not a parental right.
64. The application form and the Leave of Absence in Term Time leaflet is available from the website or downloadable from the website.
65. Head Teachers will not grant leave of absence in term time. However, there may be exceptional circumstances for granting leave of absence in term time, which will be determined by the Head Teacher.

66. The exceptional circumstance criteria will focus on:

- a recent serious illness/bereavement of an immediate family member;
- a member of the Armed Forces whereby they need to undertake a tour of duty which conflicts with school holidays;
- restrictions on police or firefighter leave, where a police officer or firefighter has specific duties in relation to a national event which conflicts with school holidays.

67. Each parent will be informed in writing within 10 school days of the application being received.

68. Where the decision is made not to grant leave of absence in term time and the leave is taken without prior approval, or without application, the matter will be referred to the local authority.

69. For all unauthorised holidays that are longer than 5 school days, a referral will be made to the local authority for consideration of the issue of a penalty notice. In doing so, Park End Primary School adheres to the local authority Penalty Notice Code of Practice in making the recommendation for the issue of penalty notices. A penalty notice may be issued to each parent/carer in respect of each child who has been absent. Further information on the code of conduct can be found at <https://www.middlesbrough.gov.uk/schools-and-education>

70. The penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 to be paid within 28 days. Payment is made to the local authority. There is no right of appeal by parents/carers against a penalty notice. If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 28-day period, the local authority must decide either to prosecute for the original offence to which the notice applies or withdraw the notice.

71. To enhance safeguarding practice, Park End Primary School requires an application for any leave of absence in term time to be completed (with the exception of medical absences). This includes where a child is participating in a sporting activity, performance, or where the absence is for religious observance. In such cases, the school will make enquiry as to the safeguarding arrangements of any external provider, before agreeing to the absence. Evidence will be requested to support an application.

Travelling children

72. Where a child is to be absent from school to travel in the course of a parent's business, a letter is required to be written to the Head Teacher by the parent, giving details of the duration of the period of absence and the expected date of return. With this information, for short periods of absence, the school will consider authorising the absence. Where this information is not provided and the period of absence is in excess of 20 school days, the school will remove the child from the school roll.

73. Whilst travelling, ideally the child should be registered at another school. This will ensure that a child's learning continues. In such cases, the child will remain on the school roll as a dual registered pupil. If required, the school

can help the parent/carer to identify a school in another area.

Alternative Provision

74. Pupils may be present at an off-site activity which has been approved by the school e.g. a trip to Robin Wood during school time. The appropriate code (B) is used in such cases and in using this code the school is certifying the education is supervised and measures have been taken to safeguard children. This code should not be used for any unsupervised educational activity or where a pupil is at home doing school work.
75. A pupil may be dual registered at more than one school. Where this is the case, the appropriate code (D) is used to indicate the pupil was not expected to attend the session as they were scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered. Each school should only record the pupil's attendance and absence for those sessions that the pupil is scheduled to attend their school.

Rewarding Attendance

76. Park End Primary School has incentives for encouraging pupils to attend school regularly.

Taking children off roll

77. When a parent informs us that they are planning to transfer their child/ children to a different school, parents are asked for the name of the next school.
78. Children are not taken off roll at Park End Primary school until confirmation is received that the children have started at a different school; confirmation that the school is expecting them to start is not accepted and further enquiries will be made.
79. The attendance officer will contact the intended school for this confirmation.
80. Once confirmation is received that the children have started at a new school, then they are removed from roll at Park End Primary School.
81. Where the attendance officer is not able to ascertain which school the children are currently attending after three days of investigation, then the children will be listed as 'missing in education' and the procedures for this will be followed (see paragraph 60 above).
82. All investigations are recorded upon the CPoms system.

Every Day Counts

83. Education is important to all children regardless of ability. It builds a child's resilience and offers a safe and nurturing environment in which a child can

learn exciting new skills and knowledge every day, as well as learning to work with others and forging friendships which will support them through their childhood, with some friendships lasting well into adulthood.

84. Being organised the night before with appropriate bedtimes is an important and common sense approach to ensuring a child attends school and is ready to learn. Once established, this is a habit which will follow them through life.

Attendance Expectations following full reopening (September 2020)

In March 2019, when the COVID-19 outbreak was increasing, no parent was penalised or sanctioned for their child's non-attendance at school in line with Government guidelines.

School will be reopening to **all** children in September 2020 and it is vital for all children to return to school to minimise as far as possible the longer term impact of the pandemic on children's education, wellbeing and wider development

Ref Guidance for full opening: school – GOV.UK p,16

Attendance will be mandatory again from the beginning of the autumn term

Parents have a duty to secure that their child attends regularly at school.

Schools must record attendance and follow up absence.

Sanctions, including fixed penalty notices can be issued in line with local authorities' codes of conduct.

Pupils who are shielding or self-isolating

There will be a small number of pupils who will not be able to attend school in line with public health advice, this absence will not be penalised.

As of the advice received on 6.7.20 this includes

- Children self-isolating because they have coronavirus symptoms – high temperature, cough,
- Children who have had a positive test
- Children in close contact with someone who has had a positive test for coronavirus.

As of 1st August 2020 this does **not** include children who are shielding.

For this small number of children, Park End Primary School will provide access to remote education.

Actions to support parents and children who are anxious about returning to school

- Opportunity to discuss concerns with a member of the pastoral team.
- Early identification of pupils that require support.
- Additional support provided to pupils according to their needs (1:1 basis).
- Early communication with other professionals involved with the family e.g. social workers to access further support for the family.