



PARK SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Approved by:	Arnet Donkin	Date: 09/2022
	Full Council	
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ATTENDANCE POLICY

Purpose and Principles

Park School recognises that good attendance, regular food, enough sleep, regular routines and positive behaviour are central to children achieving their full potential.

This policy aims to promote good attendance of pupils and to make clear the processes that the school will apply to monitor and encourage good attendance.

This policy underpins our ethos to:

- Promote children's welfare and safeguarding;
- Ensure every child has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled. Foundation Stage children can attend part-time;
- Ensure that children have access to the widest possible range of opportunities offered by the school;
- Support children to be part of the school community.

The policy applies to:

- All children at Park School and their parents and carers
- Staff including the headteacher, teachers and classroom support staff
- Council of Governance

The government requires that:

The school should:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled; and, c. act early to address patterns of absence.

Parents are required to:

- Perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly and are punctual to school at the start of the day.

Why We Value Good Attendance

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education at Park School it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless there is a good and agreed reason.

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is primarily a parental responsibility. Parents are expected to contact the school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together.

Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to promote a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility-parents, pupils and all members of staff.

Staff will encourage this by:

- Acknowledging and encouraging excellent levels of attendance
- The school office will contact parents/ carers on a daily basis if their child is absent where no information has been received as to the reason for absence. They will try to establish why the child is not in school and explain the importance of attendance and offer support if needed;
- The Headteacher will discuss absences with class teachers and a meeting will be arranged by the class teacher and/or head teacher with parents if overall attendance falls below 85%, to establish the reasons and offer support if needed;
- A School Attendance Action Plan will be completed, with targets for improvement, where attendance falls below 80%.
- Where attendance remains below 60% without extenuating circumstances and a failure of parents to engage with the school to improve attendance, The Chair of Council will be notified and the terms of the Exclusion Policy may be applied. Any decision to ask the child to leave will be taken by the Council of Governance, or if this is not possible, by the Chair of Council.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Every half day absence from school has to be classified by the school, not the parents, as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absences is always required from parents and carers.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as illness, medical/dental appointments which cannot be avoided and fall in school time, agreed holidays, emergencies or other unavoidable causes.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no permission has been given.

These could include:

- Parents/carers keeping children at home for reasons other than illness, family issues, etc;
- Absences which have never been properly explained;
- Children who arrive at school too late for registration (after 9.30am) without an acceptable reason;
- Holidays that have not already been discussed and agreed with the school.

Absence Procedures

If a child is absent the Parent/Carer must follow the following procedures:

- Contact the school on the first day of absence before 9.00am if possible by email or telephone or, in person;
- **Where a child has not arrived at school by 9.30am and the whereabouts of the child is unknown, the schools will complete and record one or more of the following actions:**
- By 10.30am, attempt to make contact with the parents, or if not possible,
- Attempt to make contact with an alternative emergency contact recorded for that child.
- If no contact can be made, the headteacher or the DSL will be informed. They will consider if there is cause to arrange a visit to the child's known home address that day. **If a child is frequently absent, with or without reason, the following procedures are applied:**
- Invite the parent/carers to discuss the situation with their class teacher if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the Headteacher if the matter continues;
- Refer the matter to Council of Governance with the possibility for a request that the child leaves the school if the matter cannot be resolved;
- Refer the matter to Devon County Council if the school cannot resolve the matter.

Lateness

Children arriving regularly late to school is not acceptable.

If a child misses the start of the day, they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting settled for the day. Late arriving pupils can also disrupt lessons, be embarrassing for a child and can encourage absence. Good time keeping is a vital life skill which will help a child as they progress through into the wider world.

School starts at 9.00am. Children should arrive at school between 8.50am and 9.00am

Registers are marked by 9.15am, children arriving between 9.10 and 10.00am will be marked as late.

If a child is persistently late:

- Class teachers contact parents/ carers if a child is persistently late. They will try to establish why the child is late and explain the importance of punctuality and offer support if needed;
- The Headteacher will discuss lateness with class teachers and will call a meeting with the parents if, following class teacher intervention with parents, persistent lateness continues.
- The Chair of Council will be notified if improvements in punctuality cannot be met even when support has been offered and the terms of the Exclusion Policy may be applied. Any decision to ask the child to leave will be taken by the Council of Governance, or if this is not possible, by the Chair of Council.

Holidays in Term time

We appreciate that holidays can be beneficial to children and can be a wonderful learning experience and that it is important for families to spend time together. However, this must be

balanced with what they will miss by not being in school, how well they are settled at school and how their absence may affect their class and their relationships with other children at school.

Any holiday should be discussed with the class teacher, and confirmed in writing, before it begins (**Planned Absence Form, Appendix 2**). Holidays taken **in term time longer than five days** must be agreed with the Headteacher and the class teacher. In making a decision, the circumstances of each application will be individually considered, including any previous pattern of holidays and absences in term time.

Parents of children accessing Early Years Entitlement Funding (EYEF) must ensure their child attends on a regular basis for the minimum number of weeks specified in the Termly Headcount process. Failure to meet the DCC minimum attendance may result in funding being reclaimed from the school and parents will be invoiced accordingly.

Children Missing in Education

When a child is missing in education this raises safeguarding concerns and the school has a duty to report this to Devon County Council. A child is considered Missing in Education if they have missed 10 consecutive school days without permission or explanation. In this instance, the school will follow the Devon County Council reporting procedure (Appendix 3)

Good attendance is an important part of being a member of a community, and vital for making the most from what the school can offer. Every effort will be made by the school to ensure that children are able to attend school regularly by working closely with parents and children.

APPENDIX 1 - Letter to Parents to Promote Good Attendance

Dear Parents & Carers,

I am writing to make you aware of the school's procedures for children who have absences from school.

There have been public cases in the past where schools have not chased up the reasons as to why children are off of school. It has then transpired that there have been tragic circumstances around these absences, e.g. illness of a parent and a child unable to seek help. We will do everything we can to prevent such situations occurring as I am sure you would agree that your child's safety is paramount to us all.

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is primarily a parental responsibility and parents are expected to contact the school with a reason as soon as possible if their child is not able to come to school. If your child is not going to be in school, please ensure you **contact the school office by email or phone the office** on 01803 864588 **before 9.15 am on the first day of the absence and every day thereafter (unless the reason for continued absence has been made clear in the initial contact)** . Leave a message if necessary.

Please telephone the school office where possible and use email only as a last resort;

Planned absences can be notified either by email or by completing a '**planned absence form**', available in each class or the office. This will ensure that information regarding the absence will be recorded correctly.

If we have not heard from you by 9.30am then we will call all the contact numbers that you have provided in order to gain an explanation for the absence. If we still have not been able to ascertain where your child is, we will call all these numbers again.

If we have not made contact and ascertained a reason for absence by the end of the day, we may arrange to visit your home address, or if the headteacher or DSL has concerns, will contact the police as your child will then be classed a 'missing child'.

This procedure is to ensure that we know where your child is and that you are all safe. Please let us know in good time why your child is absent from school.

Good attendance along with regular food, enough sleep, regular routines and positivity towards them are central to children fulfilling their full potential. I have attached an interesting guide to attendance which you may find interesting. I have also attached the attendance policy. Please do read the times of the day carefully.

If you would like to talk to me about this, please make an appointment to see me.

Thank you, in advance, for your help in this important part of keeping safe.

Best wishes

Arnet Donkin
Headteacher

APPENDIX 2 - PLANNED ABSENCE

Any holiday or other planned absence should be discussed with the class teacher, and confirmed in writing, before it begins using this form.

Holidays taken in term time longer than five days must be agreed with the Headteacher and the class teacher. In making a decision, the circumstances of each application will be individually considered, including any previous pattern of holidays and absences in term time.

Child's name:	Class:
Child's name:	Class:
Full names of all parents going away with the child(ren) listed above: Parent 1: Parent 2:	
Proposed Absence: From _____ To _____ Number of school days that will be missed:	
Reason for Absence: holiday / family circumstance / other	
Please explain the reason for the absence.	
You are asked to sign this request to confirm that the information provided above is correct. Please return the form to the class teacher or the headteacher. Print Name:	
Signed: Date:	

FOR SCHOOL USE:

Date request received in school:

Pupils current attendance rate:%

Absence Authorised by the Headteacher or other staff member authorised to make the decision:

YES / NO

Date:

If the request is **not authorised**, the main reasons are:

Date parent notified of the decision:

Signed (Headteacher or other member of staff making the decision):

Print Name:

APPENDIX 3 - Children Missing in Education Procedures

The Government has placed a duty on Local Authorities to make arrangements to establish (as far as it is possible) the identities of children in their area who are of compulsory school age and not receiving a suitable education (i.e. children missing education).

All schools are required to inform the local authority when a child is missing in education.

Children not receiving a suitable education are at increased risk of a range of negative outcomes that could have long term damaging consequences for their life chances.

In Devon we are committed to ensuring that all pupils who go missing from schools in the Local Authority, or who disappear from other counties and may have arrived in Devon, are speedily located.

What is meant by Children Missing in Education?

All children of compulsory school age (5-16 years) who are not on a school roll, being educated otherwise (e.g. at home, privately, or in alternative provision) and who have been out of educational provision for a substantial period of time (usually agreed as four weeks or more).

Where a pupil has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days they will be considered as a child missing from education.

Statutory Guidance and Devon Protocols

[Statutory Guidance](#) has been published by the Department for Education

In line with Devon County Council guidelines the school will notify the authority that a child is missing from education in the following instances:

- Pupil is known to have moved and no longer residing within a reasonable distance from the school, but new school placement unknown.
- Pupil has failed to return from previously authorised extended leave.
- Pupil was granted extended leave of absence and has failed to return with the agreed time (in excess of 10 days). No reasonable explanation has been received.
- Pupil has been absent from school for 20 consecutive days or more. Pupil's whereabouts are unknown
- A nursery child who has not transferred to a Reception or higher class in the school and no information about the new school placement has been received.

Further details regarding Devon County Councils procedures for schools to report children missing in education can be found at on the [Babcock LDP website](#).