



Attendance Policy

September 2021

Reviewed: September 2021

Ratified by Governors: November 2021

Review: Every Year

Date of Next Review: September 2022

Coordinator		Nominated Governor	
Head teacher		Date	
Chair of Governing Body		Date	



Introduction

“Imagine, Believe, Persevere, Achieve”

Parkwood Primary School is an inclusive and happy learning environment where pupils are encouraged at all times to be ready to learn, respectful in their behaviour and safe in all that they do. A community local authority primary school, at the heart of the Parkwood area.

We want our children to:

- Feel inspired and at the centre of their own learning, being reflective about their progress and challenges and part of planning their next steps.
- To recognise success and celebrate the use of initiative, encouraging children and staff to be life- long learners

For our children to reach and gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and punctually every day when the school is open unless the reason for absence is unavoidable

Why is it important for children not to miss school?

All parents want the best for their children and having a good education is important to ensure that they have the best opportunities in their adult life. Absence means *missed* learning. If children do not attend school regularly, they may:

- Struggle to keep up with school work,
- Miss out on the social side of school life and affect the child's ability to make and keep friendships; a vital part of growing up

Research has shown that setting good attendance patterns from an early age, from nursery through primary will also help your child later on in life. Children generally find it harder to make and maintain friendships, achieve less and they often suffer with poor self-esteem.

Who is responsible for good attendance?

By law, all children of compulsory school age (between 5 and 16) must receive a suitable, full time education. It is your legal responsibility as a parent to ensure that your child attends school regularly. (*Reference "The Education Act 1996" sections 434 and 551*)

Under the *Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006*, the law requires all schools to have an attendance register of which all pupils are on.

Permitting absence from school without good reason may result in the issue of a Penalty Notice

"If any child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at school fails to attend regularly at the school, his / her parent is guilty of an offence. Education Act 1996 sec. 444(1) and 441(1A)

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents, pupils and all members of school staff. Effective partnership between school and home is essential to ensure good attendance and punctuality – it safeguards children.

At Parkwood Primary school we identify **96% attendance** or above as a target for all pupils

Understanding absence

The law requires all schools to have an admission register and, with the exception of schools where all pupils are boarders, an attendance register. The register records every half- day attendance and / or absence. Absences are categorised as either authorised or unauthorised and for this reason the school will ask a parent/ carer for the reason for absence.

Children join the school roll on the expected first day of attendance and added to the attendance register from that date. For most children the expected first day of attendance is the first day of the school year but there will be occasions when this does not happen, for instance, when a child moves from one school to the next. Hereby schools aim to agree a suitable start date with parent/care.

A school's attendance records are important for effective attendance management. They also provide evidence in the event of prosecution of parents under the Education Act 1996, or if seeking an education supervision order or a school attendance order- as directed by the school's Local Authority

Types of absence

Authorised: This is an absence whereby the child is away from school for a legitimate reason. This can be for illness, medical/dental appointments that cannot be arranged outside of school time or unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes.

For school to enable such absence the parent needs to follow the school absence procedure. A parent/carer does not have authority to authorise any absence and consequently, some will be marked as unauthorised.

Unauthorised absence: Those the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "authorised leave of absence" given. This will include children who arrive after the registers have closed. These absences will affect the child's overall attendance record and monitored by school and the Local Authority Attendance Advisory Service, ("AASAA")

Types of **unauthorised** absence may include:

- Keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Parents not contacting school with the reason for absence - unexplained absences
- Absences around the start and end of a school holiday
- Patterns that become clear – for example, Mondays/ Fridays
- Arrive to school too late to get an authorised mark
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time that have not been agreed by the head teacher
- Excessive illness without medical evidence
- Sibling sickness/ events



Some children may be reluctant to attend school so it is vital that there is sound communication between home and school. If your child is reluctant to attend, please contact the school Attendance and Welfare officer in the first instance, rather than keep the child at home. The school will work with the family to resolve any issues that might be affecting the child's attendance

Lateness and Punctuality

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to ensure that children attend school regularly and punctually. Being late into school has an impact on your child's learning time. Children can miss vital class teacher input and feedback and school news. Late arriving children also disrupt lessons for the whole class and this can often be unsettling for the child. Being on time encourages good habits and life skills for their future.

Exceptional absence

Exceptional leave are absence requests from home to school for a holiday for an exceptional reason, to attend a wedding / funeral , visit a sick relative or seek medical treatment from abroad. The 1996 Education Act, sect 444, states parents are responsible for ensuring that their child(ren) attends school regularly.

Medway Local Authority advises our Head teacher not to grant leave of absence during term time, unless exceptional circumstance exist. When children are out of school for a holiday that has not been authorised by the head teacher, or a child kept away from school longer than agreed, the absence is unauthorised. Parents **must always** apply for leave of absence in advance and in writing. Decision to authorise requests for leave of absence in term time are subject to individual family circumstance and at the discretion of our head teacher and governors

Parkwood Primary work closely with the Attendance Advisory Service ("AASAA") for schools and academies (in order to monitor and improve school attendance and outcomes for Medway children.

This service enforces our statutory responsibility and if appropriate, as a last resort, do prosecute when attendance fails to improve, and attendance recorded as unauthorised. The service also issue penalty notices for unauthorised absences or holidays.

(See also COVID)

The impact of absence - “The world is run by people who show up” Benjamin Franklin.

To put things into perspective this table will evidence how much “learning” time can be lost through lack of attendance.

% Attendance in school	Days attended in school (*)	Total absence (days)
100	190	0
95	180	10
90	171	20
85	161	30
80	152	40
75	143	50

() 190 days in each school year*

Being **LATE** for school reduces learning time

- If a child is late **5 minutes** every day they **miss 3 DAYS** of learning each year
- If a child is late **15 minutes** every day they **miss 2 weeks** of learning each year

How does Parkwood manage absence?

The national codes enable schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way, which complies with regulations. These are also used for collecting statistics through the School Census System, The data helps schools, local authorities and the Government to gain a greater understanding of the level of , and the reasons for, absence.

The codes tabulated relate to primary school

Code	Description
B	Off-site educational activity
C	Other authorised circumstances
D	Dual registration
E	Excluded
G	Holiday NOT authorised by school or in excess of the period determined by the head teacher
H	Holiday authorised by school
I	Illness (not medical/dental appointments)
L	Late(before register closes)
M	Medical/dental appointment
N	Reason for absence not yet provided
O	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity
R	Religious observance
U	Late(after register closes)
V	Educational visit or trip
X	Not attending in circumstances relating to COVID-19 (new 2020-21) Not required to be in school
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances – i.e school closure

Schools must take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once directly after lunch (second session). The above codes used in the register determine a child's attendance type. When present at both morning and afternoon session the registration code is recorded as: / \

At Parkwood Primary, start and finish times may vary accordingly to year groups and school will communicate these to parents via parent mail / school website. The school governors approve these times and the length of time that the register is kept open.

When the children need to arrive and to be collected

Year Group	Start time	Registration time	Late mark if in class after :- (L)	Late mark after Register closed – Unauthorised (U)	End of day (Collection time)
Foundation stage	8.50am	9.00am	9.00am	9.30am	3.05pm
Year 1,2 and 3	8.45am	8.55am	8.55am	9.25am	3.10pm
Year 4,5,and 6	8.40am	8.50am	8.50am	9.20am	3.15pm

At Parkwood Primary, we expect our children to enter school at the stated start times. If the child is not in class by registration time then they will receive a **LATE mark (L)**, the number of minutes late being recorded on the school system known as SIMS, an electronic database. All known reasons for absence are on the child's attendance record on SIMS.

The register will close 30 minutes after it has opened. According to regulations of the Local Authority, if your child enters school at this time or after, they will receive a mark that shows that they are on our school site but this will **not** count as a present mark but as **unauthorised absence**. **This will affect the child's attendance percentage** (*Exceptional circumstances may exist and it is essential that the attendance officer is informed as soon as possible to avoid an unauthorised mark*).

School monitor and record not only late arrivals, but also late collection from the school premises at the end of the day. If this becomes a regular occurrence or patterns start to emerge, the school will request a meeting with parents. Children remain under the supervision of staff. The school will call the primary contact, and thereafter, other contacts listed on the SIMS database until collection of the child confirmed. It is essential and the responsibility of the parent / carer, to keep this information up to date.

If the child remains uncollected when [school closes at 4pm and unless contact made](#), this will become a **safeguarding issue** and Medway Children's Services contacted.

At Parkwood Primary, we understand that there are occasions when children are absent, or late into school, and we would like to support families so children do not miss important learning and social time from school.

Please approach us as soon as possible if you are experiencing difficulty.

Absence Procedures

Parent/carer responsibility

Please ensure that telephone contact numbers and contacts are up to date by contacting the school office

If your child is absent, you must

- Contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of absence, notifying school of the reason for absence.

This is by phone, email or in person

There are unforeseen circumstances when a child may arrive late to school. Parents should attempt to inform school of this stating anticipated arrival time and circumstance.

- All contact **MUST** be made **by 9.30am**

Telephone call to 01634 234699, select Attendance option

Email to Attendance@pwsf.org.uk

- If the child is anticipated to be absent for longer than 1 day through illness, then families are expected to contact school on **day 1, 3 and 5** of the first week
- The Department of Education and NHS UK, suggest that a child with persistent sickness or diarrhoea should remain absent from school **for 48 hours from the last period of vomiting** and then return when well enough to attend. (See also [procedures for COVID 19](#))
- Families should contact school as soon as possible, particularly if there is a concern around attendance. The school will then be able to help / support the family and together help resolve circumstances.
- If the child has a medical appointment, families are required to
 - Notify the school prior to the day of the appointment.
 - To send in copies of appointment letters or written notices. (Letter/ email), confirming times of appointment and whether the child will be present in school that day.



Absence Procedures

Parkwood Primary responsibility

- School will check the completed register and contact (“**first day calling**”) any parent/carers of children that are absent but whose absence has **NOT** been reported by parent/carer.
- If contact is not possible then school will leave a voice mail message or will send a parent mail to families requesting they call school to explain reason for absence
- The Attendance officer at school will mark the child with the relevant code according to the nature of the absence, once confirmed.
- It is the duty of the Attendance officer to continuously and consistently monitor and address issues pertaining to declining attendance.
- School will address:
 - Persistent authorised lateness
 - Persistent unauthorised absences (including excessive lateness without reason provided)
- **Persistent absenteeism (PA)** is if a child misses 10% or more schooling (across the school year) for whatever reason. If a child at Parkwood is at risk of moving towards that mark the school will discuss the reason immediately. Where appropriate we will prepare an action plan to offer support with improving attendance.
- The AASAA monitor all absence marks through 5-6 weekly meetings with the SLT and school attendance officer.



Regular discussions occur between school and the AASAA, who will challenge the school to provide evidence of interventions where attendance has fallen below 90%. This service will inspect all types of absence, including illness and exceptional circumstance

If a child has an unacceptable level of unauthorised attendance, (10% or more of total attendance) letters are despatched to families to highlight a cause for concern.

Typically, if a child has regular illness, parents will need to provide medical evidence in order for any future absences to be authorised. Medical evidence comes in the form of a GP appointment card, letter regarding a hospital appointment, copy of a prescription or packaging/ labels bought from the pharmacy with a receipt.

As a rule, school cannot place a child on a **Part-time timetable** as all children of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, there may be the need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet the child's individual needs. For example where a medical condition prevents a child attending full- time. These agreements are reviewed, with a return to full time education estimated or provision in place to support the child. These agreements are between home and school and recorded as authorised.

In cases of a child's absence being a consequence of medical need, school and the AASAA are keen to work closely with families to ensure education provision maintained.

COVID-19

Not attending in circumstances relating to COVID-19

Anyone with COVID-19 symptoms or a positive test result should stay at home and self-isolate immediately. If a child has symptoms of COVID-19, parent/carers should arrange for their child to have a PCR test as soon as possible and contact school on first day of absence

Parents must contact school as soon as the PCR test comes back to them

If the child has a positive PCR test result, they will be recorded on the school register as code I (illness) until they are able to return to school.

If negative PCR test result then the child can return to school.

If pupils live in the same household as someone with COVID-19, from 16 August 2021, if you are fully vaccinated or aged under 18 years and 6 months you will not be required to self-isolate if you are a contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. Household members do not isolate, unless symptomatic or over 18 and 6 months and not double vaccinated.

If parents are stating that their child/ren should not attend school, school will challenge this and where necessary mark the child's record as unauthorised.

PENALTY NOTICES

The 1996 Education Act clearly states, “If any child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at school, fails to attend regularly, the parents/carers of the child are guilty of an offence”.

The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 also introduced the use of Penalty Notices as an additional sanction to address the problem of poor school attendance. Failure to ensure your child regularly attends school may result in prosecution in the courts or a penalty notice issued. Certain cases of unauthorised absence from school amounting to 10 sessions (5 days) , per child, can be dealt with by the way of a “Penalty Notice” which will result in the parent/ carer paying a £60 fine if paid within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. Failure to pay the fine could result in attendance to a Magistrates Court. Similarly, repeated periods of unauthorised absence will result in a summons to court.

Penalty notices will arrive by post

In accordance with the terms and Code of Practice set out by Medway Local Authority, in the event of 10 unauthorised sessions recorded, a referral from school will be made to AASAA. School will also have to submit relevant paperwork with the referral.

The AASAA are responsible on behalf of Medway council to prosecute or issue PN to parent/carers who fail to send their children to school regularly, and absence is marked as unauthorised.

Holiday Leave

Parkwood Primary encourages families to plan their holidays out of school term time as not to affect their child’s schooling. Parents should seek permission, in writing, to the head teacher to take their child/ren out of school.

The head teacher and governors may only authorise holiday requests in exceptional circumstance and are responsible for determining the parameters of authorisations.

School will communicate with parent to confirm if leave request has been authorised or declined



Promoting GOOD Attendance

The role of the parent

Families have a duty to ensure that their child/ren attend school regularly and can support them by:

- Retaining open and honest communication with Parkwood Primary
- Ensuring that telephone contact numbers and contacts are up to date
- Be positive about school and school life with your child/ren.
- Making school aware, in advance and promptly, of potential issues that may affect the child's attendance / punctuality
- Ensuring regular and early bed times
- Having school uniform; PE kits and class equipment ready the night before school
- Providing a healthy breakfast

The role of Parkwood Primary

Helping to create a pattern of good attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents, children and all members of school staff.

To enable Parkwood Primary to focus on this we will:-

- Maintain clear and prompt dialogue with families if attendance becomes a concern – whilst offering support to them. Parkwood will use attendance, pastoral and SEND staff who are skilled in supporting children and their families to identify and overcome barriers to attendance.
- Act early to address patterns of absence and encourage consultation with families around concerns to create a sustainable link between school / home.
- Celebrate good attendance in the class during registration times and in school assemblies
- Award the attendance trophy to the class with the highest attendance – weekly.
- Award HT badges and attendance certificates when children attain 100% attendance on a termly and year end basis
- Share Attendance reports and statistics with families and the school community



- Discussions at parent consultation evenings

Further guidance

Statutory Guidance

School behaviour and attendance: parental responsibility measure

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-responsibility-measures-for-behaviour-and-attendance>)

Children missing in Education

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education>)

School attendance: Guidance for schools

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance>)

Medway Council School Attendance

https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200164/school_information/358/school_attendance