

PARKLANDS INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOL



SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE POLICY

Approved by the Governing Body of Parklands Infant & Nursery School

Date: Tuesday 17th December 2024

Signed: _____

Mrs S Evitts (Chair of Governors)

PARKLANDS INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOL

SCHOOL ABSENCE /LEAVE OF ABSENCE POLICY

School Attendance

Parklands Infant and Nursery School is committed to raising attainment and attendance. Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is the need for pupils to attend school regularly to receive the full benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Regular school attendance is essential if a child is to make the most of the educational opportunity available to them. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

All children of compulsory school age have the right to an efficient full-time education, regardless of age, aptitude, ability and any special needs they may have. Parklands Infant and Nursery School takes its responsibility to monitor and promote the regular attendance of all its pupils seriously. We acknowledge that irregular attendance seriously disrupts continuity of learning, undermines educational progress, can lead to underachievement and low attainment and impedes the child's ability to develop friendship groups within school.

This policy has been developed in consultation with Governors, Teachers, Education Welfare Services and Parents/Carers. It seeks to ensure that all parties involved in the practicalities of school attendance are aware and informed of attendance matters in school and to outline the schools commitment to attendance matters. It details the responsibilities of individuals and groups involved and the procedures in place to promote and monitor pupil attendance.

At Parklands we are committed to:

- ☐ Maintaining a whole school culture that promotes and raises the awareness of the benefits of attendance.
- ☐ Promoting good attendance and reducing absence (including persistence absence).
- ☐ Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled, particularly disadvantaged pupils, those with SEND, and those with medical conditions.
- ☐ Acting early to address patterns of absence.
- ☐ Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued
- ☐ Raising the awareness of the importance of differentiated and relevant curriculums.

Promoting opportunities to celebrate and reward pupil's successes and achievements

- ☐ Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.
- ☐ Creating a school ethos that pupils want to be part of
- ☐ Meeting the legal requirements set out by Government
- ☐ Following and developing procedures that enable the school to identify, follow up and record unauthorised absence, patterns of absence and parent/carer condoned absence with effective monitoring and intervention
- ☐ Consistently recording authorised and unauthorised absences
- ☐ Developing a range of effective strategies to follow up intermittent and long term absenteeism and promote good attendance
- ☐ Monitoring and analysing attendance data to pre-empt any potential attendance concerns.
- ☐ Encouraging open communication channels between home and school
- ☐ Ensuring procedures for the reintegration of long term absentees are effective

At Parklands we expect parents and carers to:

- ☐ Perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school to attend regularly.
- ☐ Ensure their child is punctual to school properly dressed, with the right equipment and in a condition to learn. A reason should be offered for any lateness.
- ☐ Keep requests for their child to be absent to a minimum and only under "exceptional/medical circumstances".
- ☐ Try their best to arrange medical appointments out of school hours.
- ☐ Offer a reason for any period of absence, preferably before the absence or on the first day of absence.
- ☐ Work closely with the school and/or Education Welfare to resolve any problems that may impede a child's attendance.
- ☐ Take family holidays during school holiday periods, be aware that requests for holidays during term time will be refused except in exceptional circumstances and be aware that penalty notices may be issued for unauthorised holidays.

- ☐ Support their child and recognise their successes and achievements.

Parents/Carers have a legal duty to make sure that their child aged 5-16, if registered at a school, attends regularly. If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at the school at which they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided for them, the parents/carers may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the local authority's education welfare services. Education welfare services conduct all investigations in accordance with the Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) Act 1984.

If a child is in the care of foster parents, special/legal guardianship, or in a residential home, it is important that the carers recognise their parenting role where attendance to school is concerned. They will be supported by close co-operation between the school, education welfare services and the social services where such a child's attendance is irregular.

The local authority has the power to prosecute parents who fail to comply with a School Attendance Order (section 442 of the Education Act 1996) or fail to ensure their child's regular attendance at school (section 444 of the Education Act 1996).

As an infant and nursery school we recognise that all absenteeism is parent/carer condoned due to the age of the children. Where this is believed or found to be without reasonable justification, and a regular occurrence, the school will treat this as a safeguarding concern and may refer to Children's Services in line with escalation policies and the local authority threshold.

At Parklands we expect all pupils to:

- ☐ Respect themselves and others and realise that everyone is important
- ☐ Do all they can to attend school regularly and punctually
- ☐ Inform a trusted adult if they feel unsafe or feel they are being bullied in any way
- ☐ Encourage friendship, respect for all, and a sense of belonging
- ☐ To be happy and encourage others to feel happy

School Procedures for Recording and Monitoring Attendance

Recording

The class teacher will take a register recording who is present and absent from school at 9:00am. Any late pupils should then enter the school through the main entrance. If any pupil arrives late the details are recorded on a late 'slip' that records

the name, class, time and reason for lateness. All staff need to be aware that any child arriving late MUST register at the office for purposes of fire regulations.

The register officially closes at 09.30am and any pupil arriving after this will be marked with a U code which indicates that the child arrived after the registers have closed. The afternoon session begins at 1.00pm and the register is again taken at these times. Where children have a medical appointment and leave school during the day this must be recorded on the appropriate form by parents/carers situated in the school office.

A phone call is made to parents on the first day of a child's absence if there has been no contact by the parents/carers and then again for each day of absence (unless the first day response was for a sickness bug where the child must be away from school for 48 hours). The class teacher and office staff will make all efforts to obtain a reason for absence, as a last resort, a letter is sent home requesting an explanation for any unexplained absences at the end of the term.

The Headteacher reviews the attendance of pupils at the end of every term and completes an audit with the Early Help Practitioner. Where attendance falls below 95% and into 'persistent absentee', the headteacher will send a letter home. If the level of attendance is between 90% and 95% the letter is a notification to alert the parent/carers of the attendance level and outlining the risks of low attendance. Where attendance has fallen between 85% and 90% it is categorised as a 'worrying' attendance issue and the letter invites parents/carers to make an appointment to speak with the Headteacher to discuss any issues. If attendance falls below 85% then it falls into the category of 'serious concern' and an appointment date and time to see the Early Help Practitioner are sent in the letter. An attendance plan will be drawn up at this meeting, regular support and monitoring put in place, with the plan to be reviewed after a set amount of time. Monitoring will still occur for the term after support and involvement with the EHP has been withdrawn in case attendance levels slip again.

The following policies are in conjunction with this policy:

Children Missing Education

Child Protection and Safeguarding

Attendance codes

A set of standard codes are used consistently within the register. These codes are input into the electronic register as required and are used to give depth of meaning to the register and provide statistical meaning to the absences.

Code School Meaning Statistical Meaning Physical Meaning

/ Present (AM) Present In for whole session

\ Present (PM) Present In for whole session

B Educated off site (Not dual registration) Approved Educational Activity Out for whole session

C Other authorised circumstances Authorised Absence Out for whole session

D Dual registration Present Out for whole session

E Excluded no alternative provision

G Family holiday (not agreed) Unauthorised Absence Out for whole session

H Family holiday (agreed) Authorised Absence Out for whole session

I Illness(not med/dental etc. appointments) Authorised Absence Out for whole session

J Interview Approved Educational Activity Out for whole session

L Late (before reg closed) Present Late for session

M Medical/Dental appointments Authorised Absence Out for whole session

N No reason yet provided for absence Unauthorised Absence Out for whole session

O Unauthorised absence Unauthorised Absence Out for whole session

P Approved sporting activity Present Out for whole session

R Religious observance Authorised Absence Out for whole session

S Study leave Approved Educational Activity Out for whole session

T Traveller absence Authorised Absence Out for whole session

U Late(after registers closed) Unauthorised absence Late for session

V Educational visit or trip Approved Educational Activity Out for whole session

W Work experience Approved Educational Activity Out for whole session

X Non-compulsory school age absence

Y Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

School closed to pupils and staff Attendance not required Out for whole session

* DfES Z: Pupil not on roll Attendance not required Out for whole session

Leave of absence (Term -time Holiday)

The law makes it clear that the headteacher should not grant approval for any leave of absence during term-time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances. ²

Parents are not entitled to take their children on holiday in term-time. Such holidays can only be taken with the written approval of the headteacher. Each case will be considered on its own merits and the decision of the headteacher is final.

Please remember that holidays taken in term-time without the headteacher's approval may result in:

- Each parent receiving a penalty notice for each child for each period of absence
- A penalty notice will be issued regardless of the child's previous attendance
- A penalty notice will be issued without warning

Taking or allowing your child to take a holiday in term-time without the school's permission is a serious matter. If we find that you have done so, we will not hesitate to issue a penalty notice.

Whilst there is no DfE guidance on what would constitute an exceptional circumstance, below are examples that have been given to the Derbyshire County Council where leave has been granted.

(These examples are illustrative and not meant to be exhaustive)

- ☐ Attending the wedding of a family member, family bereavement, prison visits.
- ☐ Significant family illness.

Circumstances that may not be considered exceptional are:

- ☐ Availability of cheap holidays and cheap travel arrangements.
- ☐ Days overlapping with the beginning or end of term.
- ☐ Birthday of pupil or family member.
- ☐ Parent/carers has set leave during the year that doesn't coincide with school holidays.

If leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday is not granted and then taken, registration code G should be used which could result in a penalty notice being issued if requested by the headteacher.

Other leave of absence that is granted should be recorded as C in the attendance register. Leave not granted, but taken, should be recorded O.

At Parklands, there is a protocol for Parents/Carers requesting leave of absence for exceptional circumstances; they must make an appointment to see the Headteacher at least two weeks before the anticipated start date to discuss their situation. They must then make their request in writing (forms requested at the school office). A response in writing is sent to each parent/carer by name with the decision as soon as is practicable. Leave of absence cannot be approved retrospectively.

Parents who remove their child from the school for the purpose of a family holiday without seeking prior approval can be issued with a penalty notice. If the headteacher has compelling evidence that absences were for the purpose of a family holiday, registration code G should be used. At Parklands we would hope to avoid issuing penalty notices, and this would be a last resort situation and the decision would have to be considered by the Headteacher and Governing Body. If a penalty notice does have to be issued and is not paid the local authority must consider initiating legal proceedings against the parent/carer, for the original offence of unauthorised absence from school. Section 444, Education Act 1996.

In making the decision the local authority should consider the Attorney General's Guidelines for Crown Prosecutors. The local authority will take into account the number of unauthorised sessions and any mitigating factors where it would not be in the public interest to proceed with legal action.

Penalty Notices

With the introduction of the new National Framework for penalty notices, changes will come into force for penalty notice fines from 19th August 2024. The new penalty notice fines are more severe to reflect the Government's stance on this. monitoring is on a 3-year basis. Please refer to the details below:

Per parent, per child:

Penalty notices will be issued to each parent, for each child absent. For example: 3 siblings absent for term time leave would result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines.

5 consecutive days of term-time leave

Penalty notice fines will be issued for term time leave of 5 or more consecutive days.

10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10 week period

Penalty notice fines will be considered when there have been 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10 week period.

First offence:

The first time a penalty notice is issued for term time leave or irregular attendance is £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days – reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.

Second offence (within 3 years)

The second time a penalty notice is issued for term time leave or irregular attendance is £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.

Third offence and any further offences (within 3 years)

The third time an offence is committed for term time leave or irregular attendance a penalty notice will not be issued and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court. Magistrates' fines can be up to £2500 per parent, per child. Cases found guilty in Magistrates' Court can show on the parents' future DBS certificate due to 'failure to safeguard a child's education.'

Parklands Infant and Nursery School have adopted the local authority's Penalty Notice Code of Practice meaning that we can request that the local authority issue penalty notices for unauthorised absences for leave for the purpose of a family holiday that have not been approved, or for persistent absenteeism (without valid medical reason).

Strategies used at Parklands to promote good attendance and punctuality

- ☐ Staff will ensure that the curriculum is delivered within a culture of inclusion and in such a way that pupils feel that they have and can succeed.
- ☐ Build strong relationships with families.
- ☐ The parents/carers of pupils whose attendance has been a cause for concern will be encouraged to set and achieve attendance goals for their child/children.
- ☐ Accurately complete attendance registers and have effective procedures in place to follow up absence immediately.
- ☐ Pupil attendance figures will be published with the termly and annual academic reports.
- ☐ Positive verbal reinforcement is given to pupils who have been absent from school for a period of time and an education action plan developed to help them catch up with any missed curriculum and promote future attendance if necessary.
- ☐ Attendance is discussed at parent/pupil consultations where necessary
- ☐ Weekly class attendance cups presented in assembly for the highest attendance, text to all parents/carers to inform them who has won.
- ☐ End of term class treat for the class with the highest attendance

☐ Headteacher certificates and stickers for 100% term attendance and for 100% year attendance. Smaller certificates for those with good attendance (95%-99%)
Regular support from EHP for parents/carers to overcome barriers to attendance.

Parents/Carers invited to Attendance Celebration Assemblies to see their child presented with their attendance certificate.

☐ Individual improved attendance will be recognised and praised.

Appendix 1

We will:

Expect: expect there to be a commitment from all to improving school attendance

Report: report and follow up any absence immediately

Monitor: monitor absences, patterns of absences using data

Record: begin to build up a chronology as soon as attendance issues are raised

Listen and understand: Listen to parents/carers and understand the issues.

Facilitate support: Work with the parents/carers to overcome barriers to attendance.

Formalise support: work with parents/carers to set up an action plan of intervention and support.

Enforce: If there is no improvement, proceed with legal enforcement, and/or referral to Children's Services.

Appendix 2

Procedure for proceeding with issuing a penalty notice in the case of persistent absenteeism



