

Pupil Attendance Policy



Reviewed Date: October 2021

Next Review: October 2023

Attendance Policy

Park School recognises that punctual and regular attendance, alongside high standards of behaviour, is an essential prerequisite to effective learning and is, therefore, committed to maintaining high levels of attendance, punctuality and positive behaviour.

Park School will strive to promote a teaching and learning ethos which encourages good attendance and where each pupil will feel valued and secure.

Aims

1. To improve/maintain the overall attendance of pupils at Park School.
2. To develop a framework that defines roles and responsibilities in relation to attendance.
3. To provide advice, support and guidance to parents/guardians and pupils.
4. To promote good relationships with the Education Welfare Service.

Role of the School

Schools have a legal responsibility to report any pupil whose absence falls below 85% or where there has been an absence of more than 10 days and where it is proved impossible to make contact with a parent or carer.

Schools are required to take an attendance register twice a day, and this shows whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved activity off site, or absent.

If a pupil is absent, every absence has to be classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised.

Only the school can authorise the absence, not parents/ carers. This is why information about the cause of each absence is required in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness or other unavoidable cause.

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

- parents/carers keeping pupils off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained

To enable our school to accurately record and monitor attendance in a consistent way we will adhere to the guidance provided in the Department of Education Circular 2015/02, which can be found at the following link:

<https://www.deni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/2015-02-Attendance-Guidance-AbsenceRecording-By-Schools.pdf>

It is hoped that parents/carers, school staff and statutory authorities can work closely to overcome any problems which may affect a pupil's attendance. If a pupil is reluctant to attend, it is never a good idea to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This will only give the impression that attendance does not matter, and may make matters worse.

Role of Parent/Carer

Parents/Carers have a legal duty to ensure their child of compulsory school age shall receive efficient full time education suitable to age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular school attendance or otherwise.

If a child is registered in school, their parent/carer has a legal duty to ensure that they regularly attend that school. It is a parent/ carer's responsibility to inform the school of the reason for a pupil's absence one the first day of absence. This should be confirmed with a written note when the pupil returns to school.

If the absence is likely to be prolonged, this information should be provided to ensure the school can assist in any necessary arrangements which may be required.

Pupils are expected to be in school at 8.55am for registration and the beginning of classes. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that your child is punctual.

Lateness is recorded at registration and on your child's attendance record. If your child appears to be reluctant to attend school please discuss the matter promptly

with the Form/Base teacher to ensure that both you and your child receive maximum support.

Role of Pupils

Each pupil at Park School must attend school punctually and regularly. If you have been absent from school, a written note from a parent/carer must be provided to your teacher when you return.

Procedures:

Registration

Morning registration is from 8.55am - 9.15am promptly.

Only pupils who have a late taxi/bus may arrive after this time.

Pupils who are late will be recorded as such in the register.

Absence

Pupils must bring a written explanation of the absence from his/her parent/carer to the first registration on returning to school. This note should include:

- the pupil's full name and registration class
- the date(s) of the absence
- as full an explanation as possible for the absence
- the name of the parent / carer in block capitals along with their signature

To assist in this matter a proforma "Absence Note" has been devised (see attached) which can be used (additional copies available from Office)

If a pupil fails to bring a note within two days of returning to school they will be reminded about the importance of bringing it in. Pupils, who persistently fail to bring absence notes, will be brought to the attention of the Principal who will make contact with the home.

Absence for Medical reasons:

Parents/carers are asked, whenever possible, to make appointments outside school hours. If an appointment has to be made during school hours a written explanation must be provided stating clearly the time of the appointment.

If there are frequent absences for medical reasons, parents/carers may be asked to provide medical evidence in the form of a doctor's certificate. An "Exeat Slip" pro forma has also been devised (see attached) for such a circumstance and can be used (additional copies available from Office).

Notes should be signed by the class teacher at morning registration and sent to the school office.

Pupils are expected to return to school following their appointment whenever possible.

If a pupil has a medical condition that may affect attendance and punctuality parents/carers are asked to contact the school to discuss possible arrangements with their Form/Base teacher.

Family Holidays during Term Time

Park School strongly discourages holidays during term time due to the impact that they have on pupils' learning.

Parents/carers must contact the school, prior to booking any holiday to explain the need to remove a pupil from school during term time. The contact should be in the form of a letter addressed to the Principal.

Currently there is no legislation in Northern Ireland with regard to holidays in term time (as there is in the rest of the United Kingdom) However, if a pupil's attendance falls below 85% in a school year, the school concerned is obliged to contact the Educational Welfare Officer.

Education Welfare Service

The Education Authority through the Education Welfare Service (EWS) have a legal duty to make sure that parents meet their responsibility towards their child's education. If a pupil's absence causes concern, or if their attendance falls below 85%, they will be referred to the EWS, if appropriate. EWS will support staff and parents in developing and implementing strategies to address or improve school attendance.

Absence Note

To be given to your child's teacher on the day your child returns to school following any absence.

Pupil's Name: _____ Class: _____

Date of Absence: From _____ to _____

Reason: _____

Signed: (Parent/Carer) _____ Date: _____

Exeat Note

Pupil's Name: _____ Class: _____

The above has an appointment to attend:

(Details): _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

Signed:(Parent/Carer) _____

Signature of Teacher: _____ Date: _____