

Dear Parent/Carer,

Attendance at The Park School

Firstly, I would like to thank you for the warm welcome I have received at The Park during my first half term, particularly the parents I have had the chance to speak to and work with already. It is fantastic to work in a school where parents are so warm and supportive of us as teachers. The staff and most importantly the students are an absolute pleasure to work with and I feel very fortunate to be part of the team.

One of my areas of responsibility is school attendance. As you will be aware, this is incredibly important for a variety of reasons; not only for academic achievement but for social development, mental health and wellbeing as well. We know how much regular attendance impacts the quality of service we can provide and so we will be supporting students in a number of different ways to make the most of every day in school.

Children whose attendance falls below 90% become 'persistent absentees' (PA). If your child becomes a PA, you will receive a letter to notify you of this and to allow you an opportunity to contact school to discuss the reasons for your child's absence. In many cases this could simply be a sustained bout of illness, however if there are school related barriers that are affecting your child's attendance, we strongly encourage you to speak to us about this so we can work together to resolve the issue.

If your child is unwell and absent from school for more than one day, please expect that your child's form tutor will call home to see how they are and to ask you when we can expect to see them back in school. This is a supportive measure to see if there is anything that school can do to help in getting your young person back to school quickly.

Please can you ensure that medical and dental appointments are made outside school hours as much as possible and if they do have to be attended during the school day you try to get your child into school for at least part of the day.

From 1st September 2013, a change to government legislation means that schools are no longer allowed to authorise requests for children to be taken out of school for a holiday during term time unless there are **exceptional** circumstances. These circumstances will be determined by the headteacher. **Parents will be given a penalty notice or prosecuted for periods of unauthorised holidays.** For details about penalty notices please see Surrey County Council's ['What will happen if my child does not attend school?'](#). If your child is absent from school due to illness and we suspect that you have taken them on a term time holiday, we may ask for supporting evidence to demonstrate that they were ill. This may be in the form of medical evidence. Please do not be offended if we ask for this, we are merely undertaking our obligation to improve attendance at school.

Every school is accountable for ensuring that every possible action is taken to improve and maintain very high standards of school attendance. We rely heavily on the support of parents and carers to achieve this and look forward to working with you this year to make certain that students attend school on a regular basis.

Yours faithfully,

Mark Rose
Assistant Headteacher

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