



Attendance Policy

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Introduction

Here at The Park School we believe it is of vital importance that our students have high attendance at school as it contributes to the excellent progress that students at The Park School make. This is a successful academy, and all students and parents play their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to be proud to belong and to achieve their best. For

our students to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and should be at The Park School on time, every day the Academy is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Regular attendance at school is of critical importance to a child's education. Evidence tells us that the students with the highest attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment¹. Any absence affects the pattern of a student's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any student's absence disrupts the learning of others in the same teaching groups by disrupting classroom routines.

We believe that high attendance at school has many other benefits besides supporting higher levels of learning and progress. Attending school as part of a routine improves can improve mental health and resilience, and supports a healthier lifestyle. High attendance at school is an excellent way for students to grow and use their social skills. We want our students to be happy, as well as successful. Social connection is a key factor in determining levels of happiness and high attendance supports this.

Parents and schools have a key role to play in children's success and happiness. We believe that one of the most important life habits we can instil in children is attendance. Promoting good attendance helps children to understand the importance of education, commitment and taking responsibility.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at The Park School is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from The Park School without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Aims

An effective whole school culture of high attendance is underpinned by clear expectations, procedures, and responsibilities. To ensure all leaders, staff, Students, and parents understand these expectations, and how they apply at The Park School this policy sets out:

- Section 1: the practical procedures to be followed at The Park School in relation to attendance
- Section 2: the measures in place at The Park School to promote regular attendance by its registered students
- Section 3: the responsibilities of particular members of staff in relation to attendance
- Section 4: the action to be taken by staff if a registered student fails to attend school regularly

Section 1: Practical Procedures

There are clear links from this policy to our safeguarding and child protection duties as set out Keeping Children Safe In Education (DFE 2022). Our Safeguarding policy can be found on the Academy website.

The Admissions Register (or "school roll")

The Academy is responsible for keeping the Admissions Register up to date. This contains specific personal details of every student along with the date of admission or readmission to the school, information regarding parents and carers, and details of the last school attended.

We also hold emergency contact numbers for each student. It is our policy to hold more than one such number, so that we have options to make contact with a responsible adult should the need arise.

A student's name can only be lawfully deleted from the admissions register in very limited circumstances and we follow the DFE guidance on this.

The Attendance Register

The register will be taken at the start of each morning session of each school day and once during the afternoon session. On each occasion, the school will record whether every student is present, attending an approved educational activity, absent, or unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

These records will be kept electronically to ensure accuracy and the timely sharing and analysis of information – all of which is critical to ensure good attendance.

Punctuality and Regular Attendance

The school day starts at 9am when all registers are open for tutors and finishes at 3pm.

Lateness

Students at The Park School are expected to be on time as each day starts with a tutorial period.

Registers are kept open until 9.25am each morning and that at this point, any student not present is marked absent.

Absence

Parents must contact the school when their child is absent to explain that absence. This can be done as follows: by calling the school phone number of 01483772057 and leave a message on the answer phone with the details listed below, or by emailing: info@thepark.surrey.sch.uk or enquiries@thepark.surrey.sch.uk, with the following details:

- Full name of the student;
- Student's Year group or tutor group;
- Full name of person reporting absence and relation to child;
- Reason for absence.

Where a reason for the absence is not received by 9am on the day of the absence, the school will within an hour contact the parents on the same day to understand the reason for the absence.

Where further unexplained absences occur, the school will make further contact with the parent (including foster parents and/ or social workers where appropriate). This should be with the aim of understanding why the absence has occurred, and when the student will return.

The correct absence code will be inputted into the Attendance Register as soon as the reason is ascertained and within five working days of the absence. Where a student is on a school visit or trip, this will be coded correctly and will count positively towards attendance.

Granting a leave of absence will only be made in exceptional circumstances. Each application will be considered individually considering the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. If a leave of absence is granted it is for the Headteacher to determine the length of the time the student can be away from school. It is extremely unlikely that a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday. To request a leave of absence please collect an absence request form from the Attendance Office at reception at least two weeks before the intended absence, except in the case of an emergency.

Students who have a 'Managed Move' to another school or who are attending alternative provision will be dual registered at The Park School and the institution they are attending. Daily attendance will be recorded on the register. If a 'Managed Move' is successful, the student will be transferred to single registration at the receiving institution.

Section 2: Promoting Regular Attendance

This section sets out the measures in place at The Park School to promote regular attendance by its registered students.

Promoting and incentivising

The Park School will:

- Treat all students and parents with dignity. Our staff will always seek to model respectful relationships to build a positive relationship between home and school that can be the foundation of good attendance.
- Set out expectations of attendance and reporting in the home-school agreement and communicate procedures clearly in admissions interviews.
- Use Form Tutors to encourage student attendance and to celebrate high attendance and communicate with students about absence and patterns.
- Regularly inform parents about their child's attendance % and absence levels and also the impact of this on learning.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of students who the school (and/or local authority) consider to be vulnerable or are persistently or severely absent to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- Identify students who need support from wider partners as quickly as possible and make the necessary referrals.
- Make the necessary statutory data returns to the local authority.
- Support students back into school following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence and provide support to build confidence and bridge gaps. Students will be provided with 'Continuity of Learning' work when absent which means that they are able to keep up with the curriculum while absent. Tutor teachers will meet with the student on return and agree ways that the student can be supported on their return and with the support of the class TA, monitor their re-engagement with school each lesson and support with any ongoing learning, and if needed, medical needs where necessary.
- Celebrate and reward good attendance by individuals and tutor groups and make this visible in assemblies and on display around the school.
- Endeavour to make contact on the first day of absence, if no email, note or telephone call is received by the school office from the parent/carer by 9.30 am that day. If the family is not available on the telephone a message will be left, where possible. Emails/SMS text messages may also be used. The office will keep a record of contact made and responses.
- If there is no response from either of the 2 emergency contacts nominated by the parent/carer and this is considered a cause for concern, the school may decide to notify the police in the interests of safeguarding the student concerned.
- Continue to try to contact the parents/ carers if there is no response. If by the end of the second day there has still been no contact made, (third day if waiting for a response to a letter), the school will send a letter of concern to the parents/ carers or invite them into school to discuss their concerns. The school will tell parents that if absence persists that a referral will be made to the Inclusion Service (IS) via the Inclusion Officer (IO). A referral may also be made to the Surrey Children's Single Point of Access (SPA) if the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) thinks this is appropriate.
- Follow up on all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents. Although parents may offer a reason, only the school can authorise the absence. In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, verifications from a GP or other relevant body may be requested.
- Make initial enquiries of parents / carers of students who are not attending regularly, express their concern and clarify the school's and the LA's expectations with regard to regular school attendance. School will send formal letters when applicable.
- Refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the Inclusion Officer. Failure by the family to comply with the planned support set by the IO may result in further actions e.g. Penalty Notice, parental prosecution or an application for an Education Supervision Order.

- Meet, where possible, the requirements of the UN convention – The Rights of the Child, by ensuring that students are consulted in all decisions that relate to them.

Students leaving during the school day

- Students are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school. • Whenever possible, parents should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside of school time.
- Parents are requested to confirm in writing the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving, the expected return time and whether the student is being collected or will make their own way to their destination.
- Where a student is being collected from the school, parents are requested to report to the school office before the student is allowed to leave the site.
- If a student leaves the school site without permission their parents will be contacted. Should the school be unable to contact the family it may be appropriate, in certain circumstances, to contact the police and register the student as a missing person.

Data Strategy

The Park School understands that as poor attendance is habitual, prevention and early detection is crucial. We will therefore undertake regular data analysis to:

- both identify and provide immediate additional support to students and/or student cohorts that need it;
- look at historic and emerging patterns across the school and develop strategies to address them.

The Academy will typically carry out the following analysis:

- Monitoring and analysing weekly attendance (including punctuality) patterns and trends, including whether there are particular issues for some children on certain days.
- Half-termly, termly and full-year data analysis of patterns and trends, including analysis of students and cohorts, identifying patterns in use of certain codes, days where attendance is typically poor and (where appropriate) subjects with low lesson attendance.
- Benchmarking attendance data (at whole school, year group and cohort level) against Trust-level, local, regional and national data and sharing good practice with others for raising attendance.

We will use this analysis to identify students who need support so that we can focus staff efforts on developing targeted actions for those students and to identify any common themes to support improvement planning. We will use the data to inform us regarding the impact of school-wide attendance efforts, including any specific strategies implemented, to evaluate approaches or inform action. We will also provide regular attendance reports to Form Tutors to facilitate discussions with students and also to Heads of Key Stages and the Senior Leadership Team.

Absence reduction strategy

We will devise specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data. This may, for example, include students in a year group with higher-than-average absence or for specific groups of students. Individual students will be discussed at all pastoral meetings and pastoral leader's meetings will address strategies for particular groups.

Data and reports will be shared with the Local Governing Body.

As part of promoting regular attendance the school will consider the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices, in conjunction with guidance from [Surrey County Council \(See Appendix 4\)](#).

Students with medical conditions or special educational needs and disabilities

The Park School recognises that some students face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include students who suffer from long-term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and

disabilities. Their right to an education is the same as any other student and therefore the attendance ambition for these students is the same as they are for any other student.

We ask all staff to reinforce messages about the importance of attendance and create a welcoming environment which encourages students to attend.

In working with their parents to improve attendance, we will be mindful of the barriers these students face and put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education. This will include:

- Having sensitive conversations and developing good support for students with physical or mental health conditions..
- Considering whether additional support from external partners (including the local authority or health services) would be appropriate, making referrals in a timely manner and working together with those services to deliver any subsequent support.
- Establishing strategies for removing the in-school barriers students may face, including considering support or reasonable adjustments for uniform, transport, routines, access to support in school and lunchtime arrangements.
- Ensuring joined up pastoral care is in place where needed and consider whether a time-limited phased return to school would be appropriate, for example for those affected by anxiety about school attendance, recognising that such arrangements can be for a limited time only.
- Ensuring data is regularly monitored for these groups including at LGB Governing body meetings and in meetings with the local authority so that additional support from other agencies is accessed where necessary.

Students with long term illnesses or other health needs may need additional support to continue their education, such as alternative provision provided by the local authority. Local authorities are responsible for arranging suitable education for children of compulsory school age who, because of health reasons, would otherwise not receive suitable education. Please see the school's policy on supporting students with medical conditions at school for further information.

In all cases, the school will be sensitive and avoid stigmatising students and parents and will talk to them understand how they feel and what they think would help improve their attendance to develop individual approaches that meet an individual student's specific needs.

Part-time timetables

All Students of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a student's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a student from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package for a short period of time only.

A part-time timetable must only be in place for the shortest time necessary and not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement will have a time limit by which point the student is expected to attend full-time, either at school or alternative provision. Formal arrangements will also be put in place for regularly reviewing it (monthly) with the student and their parents. In agreeing to a part-time timetable, a school has agreed to a student being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore will treat such absence as authorised. We will of course consider how best to support learning when a child is working on a part time timetable using a blended approach of our Continuity of Learning plan and lessons in school.

Section 3: Particular Responsibilities

This section outlines responsibilities of particular members of staff in relation to attendance.

- The name and contact details of the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in school is part of our Senior Leadership team and Assistant Headteacher, Mark Rose who can be contacted on mark.rose@thepark.surrey.sch.uk
- Responsibility for identifying unexplained absences on “day 1” will be the Attendance Officer and Office lead Claire Hampshire
- Responsibility for identifying further unexplained absences will be the Attendance Officer along with the SLT lead Mark Rose who will consult with SLT
- Information and contact details of school staff who parents and carers should contact about attendance on a day-to-day basis are on the school website
- More detailed support on attendance can be requested from the Year Team Leads, or the DSL team
- Teachers of all tutor groups at The Park School have a responsibility to track the attendance of all their students and be supportive of those students that have difficulties with their attendance
- If any student is absent for more than 2 days, the Tutor should make a supportive call to see if they or the school can support the student or family in any way to improve attendance

Local Governing Body (LGB) Responsibilities

The LGB recognises the importance of school attendance and will:

- Promote it through the school's ethos and policies.
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Regularly review attendance data, discuss, and challenge trends, and help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual students or cohorts who need it most.
- Ensure The Park School staff receive adequate training on attendance.

The LGB will also ensure:

- that the Attendance Policy and its contents are generally made known within The Park School and to parents of registered students at the school, and
- steps are taken at least once in every school year to bring the Attendance Policy to the attention of all those parents and students and all persons who work at the school (whether or not for payment).

Section 4: Specific Action for Failure to Attend Regularly

This section sets out the action to be taken by staff if a registered student fails to attend the school regularly.

Where a pattern of absence is at risk of becoming, or becomes, problematic the school will listen to and understand the barriers to attendance the student or family is experiencing. In doing so, the school will take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for absence and understand the importance of school as a place of safety and support.

In the first instance, the school will support students and parents by working together to address any in-school barriers to attendance.

Where barriers are outside of the school's control, we endeavour to work together with all partners to support students and parents to access any support they may need. As a minimum, this will include meeting with students and parents at risk of persistent or severe absence to understand barriers to being in school, agreeing actions or interventions to address them and keeping those actions under regular review in discussion with students and families. This may include referrals to services and organisations that can

provide support. Where absence intensifies, so will the support provided, which will require us to work in tandem with the local authority and other relevant partners, as follows:

- If the needs and barriers are individual to the student this may include provision of mentoring, careers advice, college placements, individual tuition or out of hours learning, or where appropriate adjustment to the students Education, Health and Care Plan or alternative provision.
- Where the needs are wider and a whole family response is more appropriate, this is likely to include a voluntary Early Help assessment.
- Where engagement in support is proving challenging, the school will hold more formal conversations with the parents and student. This is likely to be led by the senior leader responsible for attendance, Mark Rose, social work, case officer and may include the school's point of contact in the local authority School Attendance Support Team. The aim of these meetings will be to clearly explain the consequences of persistent and severe absence to the student and family and the potential need for legal intervention in future but will also be an opportunity to continue to listen to and understand the barriers to attendance and explain the help that is available to avoid those consequences.
- Where voluntary support has not been effective and/or has not been engaged with the school will work with the local authority to:
 - o Put formal support in place in the form of a parenting contract or an education supervision order.
 - o Intensify support through statutory Children's Social Care involvement where there are safeguarding concerns, especially where absence becomes severe (below 50% attendance).
 - o Refer to the local authority for a fixed penalty notice where support would not be appropriate or has not been successful or engaged with and it is likely to change the parents' behaviour. This would happen where a number of unauthorised absences have happened within a short period of time, according to the latest Surrey County Council guidelines.
 - o Prosecute parents where all other routes have failed or are not deemed appropriate. This could include making the case for a community or parenting order where the parent is convicted to secure engagement with support.

In all cases, the school will monitor the impact of any intervention(s) and make adjustments where necessary in discussion with the student, parents and any other partners involved as part of any whole family plan or team around the family. Where interventions are failing, the school will work together with all parties to identify the reasons why and either adjust or change the approach.

Appendix 1

¹ Working together to improve school attendance

² Throughout this document, the terms 'parent' and 'parents' are interchangeable and apply equally to 'parents and carers' and includes foster parents and social workers where relevant.

Appendix 2

The School Day

Start/registration: 9 am

Daily reading sessions: 9.10 - 9.25

Lesson 1: 9.25 - 10.15

break: 10.15 - 10.30

Lesson 2: 10.30 - 11.20

Lesson 3: 11.20 - 12.15

Lunch: 12.15 - 1pm

Registration: 1.00 - 1.10

Lesson 4: 1.10 - 2.00

Lesson 5: 2.00 - 2.50

Tutor time: 2.50 - 3 pm

Transport: 3pm

Appendix 3

The Park Attendance Support Procedure/ Escalation process

Pre-emptive calling: Year Leader and Tutors will identify key students who are persistently late or absent and would benefit from an early morning call from office

Absence day one: Office phone call

Absence day two: Tutor Team phone call

Absence day four: Year Team Lead phone call

Absence day five (consecutive days): Designated Safeguarding Lead home visit

Absence support stage 1: Letter and Tutor meeting with parent/carer and student to offer bespoke support plan.

Absence support stage 2: Letter and Year Leader meeting to set targets for improvement and review support plan.

Absence support stage 3: Letter and Senior Attendance Lead meeting to review targets and support. Medical evidence required for future absences. Create an attendance contract.

Absence support stage 4: Formal involvement from Inclusion Service with bespoke support plan.

(Please note professional judgement will be used with each individual case)

Appendix 4

Penalty Notices

The Inclusion Service, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school and requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount.

The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.

If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority must consider a prosecution for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

Circumstances when a Penalty Notices may be issued

- Pupils identified by police and education welfare officers engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences.
- **The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Head teacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.**

Where a child is taken out of school for 10 sessions or more and the ‘leave of absence’ is without the authority of the head teacher, **each parent** is liable to receive a penalty notice for **each child** who is absent. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised and that they will be liable to receive a Penalty Notice if the leave of absence is taken.

- The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where a pupil has incurred 7 or more unauthorised sessions during the preceding 6 school weeks. The parents’ failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school or Inclusion Service will be a factor when considering the issue of a Penalty Notice. Unauthorised absence will include late arrival after the close of registration without good reason.

With the exception of unauthorised leave of absence taken in term time, parents will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.

Penalty Notice relating to Suspensions

Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on parents to ensure that their child is not in a public place without justifiable cause during school hours when they are suspended from school. This duty applies to the first five days of each suspension. Failure to do so will render the parent liable to a Penalty Notice. The amount payable is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the Penalty Notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid, the recipient will be prosecuted for the offence under Section 103. Alternative education provision will be made from the sixth day of any suspension and failure to attend such provision without good reason will be treated as unauthorised absence.