



## ATTENDANCE POLICY

Key Information	
Written by:	Paul Walsh, and SLT
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Policy group:	Safeguarding
Statutory / Non statutory:	Statutory
Monitoring and review:	
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### Rationale

Attendance at school is a legal requirement between the ages of 5 –16 years. Young people are entitled to formal education during this phase of their lives. It is important that they receive their entitlement for their present and future lives and for the economic and well-being of society. The Park School is responsible by law for making sure that registered students of compulsory age regularly attend their school. The Government also has a priority in reducing unnecessary absence from school. The Park School has some students who are vulnerable and have greater needs than the majority of their mainstream counterparts. This means that some students may have genuine absences from school for medical reasons.

It is our responsibility as educators to do all we can to encourage and support regular and frequent school attendance. Parents and carers are responsible for ensuring their children attend school. We at The Park School are committed to ensuring that The Park families understand how important this is. We give high priority to conveying to parents and students the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there are concerns about attendance. If there are problems which affect a student's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive, in partnership with parents/ carers and students, to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible.

### Policy Procedures

The register is a legal document and must be marked accurately, recording student attendance or absence and in the latter case if authorised or unauthorised. A certified extract of the register can be used as evidence in legal proceedings against parents for failing to ensure their child's regular attendance or in seeking an Education Supervision Order.

### Procedures for following up absence / lateness

- Students who arrive late (i.e. after 9.05am) should be registered as L
- Students who arrive more than 30 minutes after the beginning of registration should be marked late after the register has closed for that session (code U).
- A Student Signing in Late system will be kept in the school office where the names of students will be logged by the office staff and used to check the students in the case of a fire. Parents or carers dropping students off late must report to Reception and explain the reasons for lateness. This is also recorded in the Arbor electronic system.
- It is the responsibility of the parent or carer to contact the school on the first morning (and every other morning) of the child's absence. This can be done by leaving a message on the answer phone or phoning when the school office opens at 8.00am or by email. (01483 772 057 / [enquiries@thepark.surrey.sch.uk](mailto:enquiries@thepark.surrey.sch.uk)) In any case a parent or carer should contact prior to 8:45am at the latest. Parents should phone each morning whilst their child is absent.
- Parents should contact their child's transport provider if they are not coming into school.

- Parents should inform the school office via phone or email or by 8.45am at the latest if they wish to collect their child early or if they will be arriving late due to an appointment.
- Parents should inform the school about future absences using the Home – School diaries or contact the School via phone or email. If the admin staff are unhappy with the reasons given for a student's absence then the tutor or Leadership team will be informed of any concerns and will follow up with the student's family.

Each half-day absence has to be classified by the school as either Authorised or Unauthorised. School must follow statutory guidelines and publish its absence figures.

When a student does not attend school and we have not been informed, we will:

- Mark students as not present.
- Follow up with a telephone call to parents/carers (or secondary contact, if there is no answer) on the first day of absence by 10am at the latest.
- If this fails to provide an explanation for the absence, a Senior Leader will be informed.
- If contact has not been possible by 10am, a senior teacher or Designated Safeguarding Lead may visit the home address to seek an explanation for the absence.
- If there is no answer at the home address, Social Services and/or the Police may be notified.

Senior Leaders will liaise with parents/carers of students whose individual attendance is below 90%. A letter will be sent to the parents or carers and a meeting may be arranged in school. The meeting will be to identify and resolve the difficulties which are preventing the student from attending school. The parents or carers will be made aware of the legal requirements regarding school attendance. The plan will be reviewed to consider if targets have been met and attendance improved. In case of persistent 'unauthorised' absence, the Headteacher will notify the Inclusion Officer for support.

### **Authorised Absence**

"Leave" in relation to a school means leave granted by any person authorised to do so by the governing body or proprietor of the school. The Headteacher will only consider authorising an absence during term time where an application has been made in advance and where he is satisfied that there are exceptional or special circumstances to justify the request. Application forms for leave of absence for exceptional circumstances are available from the school office and should be submitted the Headteacher.

The Park School follows the DfE guidance in relation to holidays taken in term time. The Park takes a 'common sense approach to this' acknowledging that The DfE guidance states that leave of absence requests for holidays should not be granted. However, due to individual needs of students at The Park School, the Headteacher may apply special consideration to requests for holiday as well as compassionate leave.

The Park will consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request for holiday leave. This will take into consideration the Equality Act 2010, needs of individual children and their families. The application must be made in advance and the Headteacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case, which warrant the leave.

For compassionate or medical absence, it may be necessary for the school to ask the parent or carer to provide the school with written evidence of the reason for absence e.g. appointment cards, medical certificate or a letter from the GP.

If there is an extended period of absence due to medical reasons the school may ask for permission of the parent or carer to contact the child's GP to confirm that the medical condition prevents the child from attending school and to establish a possible return date for the child.

## Penalty Notices

Taken from the <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/schools/at-school/attendance-and-absence/legal-processes-used-to-enforce-school-attendance-guidance-for-parents>:

Surrey County Council has a statutory duty to enforce regular school attendance and the [Inclusion Service](#) is designated to carry out this duty on their behalf. The Inclusion Service and schools can use various legal powers if your child is missing school without a good reason.

### Prosecution for failing to ensure regular school attendance

A parent is guilty of an offence if their child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly - Section 444(1) Education Act 1996. In such a situation if the parent knows that their child is not attending they may be prosecuted for a more serious offence – Section 444 (1) (a) Education Act 1996.

If prosecuted, you could receive a community order, a fine of up to £2,500 per parent/carer or a custodial sentence.

Penalty Notices are fines of £60/£120 imposed on parents. They can be issued to **each** parent liable for the attendance offence or offences. Under Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 a 'parent' includes any person who is not a parent of the child but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child.

Penalty Notices are an alternative to the prosecution of parents for failing to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided.

Penalty Notices can only be issued by a head teacher or someone authorised by them (a deputy or assistant head), a local authority officer or the police. All schools and the police must send copies of penalties issued to the local authority.

Penalty Notices can be used where the pupil's absence has not been authorised by the school. Penalty Notices may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first five days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion. The parents must have been notified by the school at the time of the exclusion of this and the days to which it applies.

## **Strategies for promoting attendance / punctuality**

Attendance statistics are monitored by the Headteacher and the Governing Body and reported to the local authority. Attendance patterns for Individual students, cohorts and groups are also reviewed at pastoral and weekly safeguarding meetings. The target for attendance is 100%. We recognise there are many of our students with diagnosed medical conditions or conditions that impact their ability to attend at times. Opportunities to maintain awareness through newsletters and school website, Parent or Carer progress meetings and student reports will be used. Students with a known attendance problem admitted to school will be interviewed with parents and will be set targets for improvement. Parents will be kept regularly informed of all concerns regarding punctuality and attendance. This will include the amount of time missed and the impact on the students' learning. The SEND administrator or Senior Leadership team will contact parents and carers to discuss any issues, which may cause a student to experience attendance difficulties, these will be promptly investigated by the school. The Senior Leadership Team will monitor the completion of the registers and absence rates and will arrange for a letter to be sent out to parents if a child is persistently absent from school.

Individual student attendance is recorded on school reports and on the Surrey Annual review paperwork and a copy is given to parents/carers.

## **Taking students off roll**

The Park School would only take a student off roll if they meet the following criteria

- Permanent exclusion
- Transferred to another school
- At the end of Y11 transfer to post 16 provision

Our school is aware that off-rolling is unlawful. Ofsted defines off-rolling as:

“...the practice of removing a pupil from the school roll without a formal, permanent exclusion or by encouraging a parent to remove their child from the school roll, when the removal is primarily in the interests of the school rather than in the best interests of the pupil.”

Parents/Carers should inform the school as soon as possible if they plan to send their child to a different school. A student will remain on the school roll until we have confirmation from the local authority case officers and the school inclusion officer that we have permission to do so.

## Roles

Families / those with parental responsibility will:

- Notify the school on each and every day of absence
- Keep close contact with the school if a student is on extended leave due to ill health
- Ensure regular and punctual attendance.
- Request authorisation from the Headteacher if any absence is to occur during term time.
- Inform the school if your child is planning to change schools, and to inform the school about the new school your child is attending.

Form Tutors will:

- Keep an accurate and up-to-date attendance register of their Tutor Group (see details on marking the register above)
- Correct any inaccuracies which may occur in the attendance register
- Follow up absences as outlined above
- Liaise with the relevant member of the Senior Leadership Team about attendance
- Inform the office staff if they receive any communication that a student will need to leave the school premises part way through the day by prior arrangement e.g. for a medical appointment

Leadership Team /Form Tutors will:

- As and when the need arises, enable attendance and lateness to be discussed and appropriate action to be taken

Administrative staff will:

- Maintain a record of student attendance on the school's computer system
- Telephone students' homes as necessary regarding attendance
- Keep records and inform outside agencies as necessary to comply with local and national policy and procedures
- Store messages / notes from home on Arbor.
- Send out attendance letters as instructed.

Tutors will:

- Monitor students' attendance and punctuality to lessons
- Inform senior members of staff if a student leaves a lesson without permission and does not return within a short time
- Mark registers at the start and end of the day in a timely fashion
- Discuss the impact of low attendance on learning with families at progress and review meetings where appropriate
- Liaise with Admin staff over any queries
- Keep records of students who arrive late and note down reason in Arbor

Maintaining Records

- It is the responsibility of the school office to follow up on uncompleted registers and maintain the correct records. Where absence is recorded as unexplained in the attendance register, the correct code should be inputted as soon as the reason is ascertained, but no later than 5 days after the session.

- An electronic system, Arbor, is used for the administration. The school's attendance register is backed up on Arbor
- School must notify Surrey Local Authority when a student is removed or added to the register.
- School also notifies Surrey Local Authority every term of any students with modified (part time) timetables, and students that access alternative provision off site for all or part of the week.

### Additional Relevant Documents

Equality Information and Objectives

DfE School Attendance – Guidance (Sept. 2018)

Working together to improve school attendance (May 2022)

### Attendance Flowchart

