



Parklands
Educate Together

Attendance Procedures

These procedures aim to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a minimum of 95% attendance for all children, apart from those with chronic health issues.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.

We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and pupils.
- Ensuring that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development.
- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, pupils, staff and governors on school attendance matters.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.

Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the adult telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents/ carers do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school. This also includes arriving late to school after the register closes (30 minutes after the beginning of the school day at 8.45).
- Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

Procedures

Parklands will undertake the following procedures to support good attendance:

- To maintain appropriate registration processes promptly each day;
- To maintain appropriate attendance data, analysing this to look for patterns or trends;
- Learning Mentor to contact families where there are concerns over attendance, offering advice and support as necessary;
- To communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, parents and pupils through Newsletters, including links to local information;
- To have consistent and systematic daily records which give detail of any absence and lateness;
- To follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school;
- To strongly discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time;
- To ensure families have the up to date information from North Somerset Local Authority in respect of absences and the use of fixed penalty notices;
- To work with families to improve individual pupils attendance and punctuality

We will refer to the Educational Welfare Service any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve.

Fixed Penalties will be used to discourage families from taking holidays in term time or for persistent unauthorised absences that have not improved despite interventions.

Responsibilities

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality, however the Learning Mentor will analyse trends on a fortnightly basis. They will then liaise with the Headteacher regarding actions, which may take the form of phone calls, meetings, letters or fixed penalties.

Class teacher

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/carers
- Informing the Headteacher where there are concerns and acting upon them
- Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness
- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation which should be noted in the electronic register
- Discussing attendance issues at consultation evenings where necessary

Learning Mentor

The Learning Mentor is responsible for:

- Monitoring of school attendance and identifying families with poor attendance or at risk of being so.
- Contacting families of vulnerable children if no reason has been provided for absence.
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised

- Liaising with the Headteacher or Deputy regarding concerns

Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues
- Making referrals to the Educational Welfare Officer service
- Providing reports and background information to inform discussion with the Local Authority
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.
- Issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice to the family through the Local Authority

Registration

Each class teacher has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance. Any pupil who is absent must be recorded at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session. The attendance register must be completed by the class teacher by 9.15am at the very latest and within 15 minutes of the end of lunch break (staggered for different age ranges).

All attendance records are documented using Arbor software. Attendance registers are legal documents and these must be kept secure and preserved for a period of three years after the date they were last used.

Lateness

If a child arrives after registration closes then that child will be marked as accordingly. Once the classroom doors are closed the only way to get into school is via the school office. Any child who arrives for school later than 9.15 will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning. (Attendance code U).

Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school later than 9.15am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence provided an appointment card is shown (Attendance code M).

Children who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning, often the most important aspect, as the beginning of the day is where the teacher explains

the learning and what each child is expected to achieve. Those with persistent lateness will be contacted by the Learning Mentor to offer advice, and FPNs may be used at a later stage if lateness persists.

Absences

Parents/carers should contact the school on the first day of their child's absence via phone, email or using the Arbor portal. When parents/carers notify us of their child's absence it is important that they provide us with details of the reason for their absence.

All absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised absences on the computer. It is important that we receive accurate information from parents with reasons for the child's absence. This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. The Headteacher has the ultimate responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.

Where we have not received reasons for a child's absence then we will contact the family. If no explanation is received this will be recorded as unauthorised.

Illness

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school long term, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services to see if arrangements can be made for the child to be given some home tuition outside school, such as from the Hospital Education Service.

Where over the course of an academic year, a child has repeated periods of illness, the school will write to parents to ask them to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness related absence. This evidence could be a Doctor's note, appointment card or copy of a prescription.

Parental Request for Absence from School for Holiday

With effect from September 2013, updated in 2024, the government abolished the right of headteachers to authorise absence specifically for holidays of up to 10 days per year if special circumstances exist. Instead, headteachers will only be allowed to grant leave of absence for any reason if they are satisfied exceptional circumstances exist.

The law does not grant parents an automatic right to take their child out of school during term time. If the request is for a holiday in term time you must be the parent carer with whom the child normally lives. Permission must be sought in advance and there must be exceptional reasons as to why this family holiday needs to be taken during term time. Our school can only consider requests from the main carer parent.

The Headteacher will only be allowed to grant leave of absence for any reason if they are satisfied exceptional circumstances exist. Visits to relatives, for medical treatment of either the child or a relative abroad unless an NHS doctor's note is provided or because travel is cheaper are not exceptional circumstances. Nor are availability, family event or to visit ill relatives.

Leave of absence in term-time will never be authorised:

- during the first term, when a pupil is just starting at school;
- during an assessment/test period – e.g. Key Stage SATs
- when a pupil's attendance record already includes **any** level of unauthorised absence;
- Birthday, family celebration, family illness
- Shopping
- Minding the house, caring for siblings or relatives
- Parental illness

Addressing Attendance Concerns

The school expects attendance of at least 95% from all children except those with a medically diagnosed chronic illness.

It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their primary school career. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and the governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. In primary school we rely upon parents to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually and therefore where there are concerns regarding attendance parents are always informed of our concerns. Initially concerns about attendance are raised with parents via letters which are sent home. There will be opportunities for the parent/carers to discuss reasons for absence and support to be given by the school with the aim to improve attendance. Where a child's attendance record does not improve over a period of time then the school has a responsibility to make a referral to the Educational Welfare Service.

Unauthorised absence may incur a penalty notice from the Education Welfare Service who may issue a Penalty Notice of up to £80 per child per parent if the child is over 5 years old. This rises to £160 if not paid within 21 days with a prosecution

possible after 28 days non-payment (Note- amount correct at time of writing but is subject to change- please consult Local Authority website for latest information).

In addition, education-related parenting orders are available by direct application by a school or LA to the Magistrates' Court as an ancillary order following a successful prosecution by the LA for irregular attendance or breach of a school attendance order.

Absence for religious reasons

The school will authorise one day of absence per religious festival, up to a maximum of 3 days in any one academic year, on the day specifically set aside by the Religious Body of which the parent/carer is a member and this will be marked as 'R' in the register. If parents/carers require an additional day this must be requested in advance and this can only be authorised if it is felt that exceptional circumstances apply (this would be marked in the register as 'C').