



Park Grove Primary School
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Empowering Children through Creative Learning

Assistant Head teachers
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11th October 2016

Attendance and punctuality

Dear Parents/Carers,

Holidays in term time – important reminder from the government.

In September 2014, the Department of Education made changes, which restricted the ability of head teachers being able to authorise holidays during term time. The changes meant that unless the absence was due to exceptional circumstances, we would not be allowed to authorise it. Any children taken out of school during term time where the reasons are not exceptional will have the absence marked as **'unauthorised.'**

Any parents/carers, who take their children out of school during term time where permission has not been granted from the head teacher, will have the absence(s) recorded as **'unauthorised.'**

The Local Authority monitor every school's attendance data regularly and they may wish to take further action in cases of poor attendance. For children taken out of school during term time for an unauthorised holiday, they may choose to issue the parents/carers with a fixed penalty notice of £60 per child (if paid within 21 days) or £120+ (if not) under Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act. Failure to pay the fine could result in prosecution.

'Poor attendance at school can have a hugely damaging effect, and children who attend school regularly are nearly four times more likely to achieve five or more good GCSE grades than those who are regularly absent' (Department for Education).

Persistent absentees (PA)

Another change implemented by the government considered any child who has an attendance of 90% or lower will be regarded as a **'persistent absentee'** as this means they will have missed 10% or more of any possible sessions in the academic year (each school day counts as 2 sessions).

Please be assured that any children with a serious medical condition would be excluded from our persistent absentee data and support would be offered along with close monitoring of their circumstances.

As part of our commitment to safeguarding children, we will monitor children's attendance closely. Our initial interventions begin once a child's attendance drops below **95%**, first by letter to highlight the concerns and then a telephone call if there is no improvement after several weeks. Parents/carers will also be invited into school for a meeting to see what support can be offered.

Punctuality

All children should arrive in school by **8:45am**. Registration takes place between 8:50am and 9:00am. If children arrive after 9:00am, they will be marked as late in the register. Any children who arrive **20 minutes after** the register has been taken, they will have an **'unauthorised'** late mark, which counts as a whole morning of absence.

If late arrivals become an issue, parents/carers will be contacted by either letter, telephone or invited into school for a meeting with us.

Class teachers set children 'early bird' activities every morning, which are an important start to the children's day. This work quite often helps to consolidate any skills/knowledge previously learnt whilst also helping children prepare for the day ahead. Parents/carers should therefore ensure their child arrives in good time.

Absences

If your child is going to be absent, parents/carers have a **duty** to inform school of the reasons why by telephoning school as soon as possible on the first day of absence **and** on each consecutive day afterwards.

Doctors or dentist appointments should **not** be made in school hours unless in an emergency. However, we understand there are certain cases with hospital appointments where it is not within the parents/carers control to determine the days and times.

Attendance rewards

Park Grove recognises the importance of good attendance and punctuality, which is reflected in an attendance rewards system and is based on the following criteria:

- Children with 100% will receive a gold certificate each term,
- Children who achieve 100% for the whole year will receive a platinum certificate and a £5 gift voucher or equivalent.

School attendance board

In school there is an attendance display board (across from the story sack area) which shows each class' attendance for the month. Each class has their own space rocket and the percentages are displayed on the graph. The class who achieves the highest attendance over the course of each term receives a special class reward. Examples of the rewards include extra playtime, extra golden time or a film one afternoon during the last week of term.

Attendance Bears

We are introducing our new attendance bears for EYFS/KS1 and KS2, which will be awarded on a weekly basis in Good Work Assembly to the class (one from each key stage) with the best attendance for that week.

We hope our rewards system will continue to help improve punctuality and attendance at Park Grove and as always, we really do appreciate all the effort our parents/carers put into supporting their children's education. If you have any queries or questions in relation to any of the information in this letter, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely,



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