



Park Grove Primary Academy

Attendance Policy

Introduction

In order for all children to achieve their full potential they must be in school every day, on time and ready to learn. Park Grove Primary Academy places a high value on punctual and regular attendance. Every child and family in the academies will be made aware of the importance of this through regular updates, the positive promotion of good attendance, rewards for good attendance and, where necessary, discussions with families about the need to improve attendance and punctuality. We wish to foster good attendance and punctuality habits from the early years and throughout the child's school career and into adult life.

Responsibilities

Improving the attendance and therefore life chances of the children in Park Grove Primary academy is the responsibility of parents/carers, Ebor Academy Trust and the child. Working together in partnership will ensure each child is most likely to achieve their full potential by ensuring their frequent and punctual attendance. This policy reflects the expected practice in all schools within the Ebor Academy Trust. The fair and consistent application of the policy is the responsibility of all staff. Each Ebor Academy Trust school will take the attendance register twice a day: at the start of each morning and once during the afternoon. The Academies will also notify the local authority if a student/pupil has irregular attendance or is absent continuously without authorisation.

Aims of the policy to promote good attendance

Explicit in the overall aim of the school is the principle that children should feel secure and happy in a well ordered environment and that they should be enthusiastic about coming to school. Children have a right to experience a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum; non-attendance deprives them of this opportunity.

It is the aim of this policy that unauthorised absence should be 0% on a year-by-year basis and that authorised absences should be kept to a minimum. Whole school and individual monitoring will be in line with targets set by Park Grove Primary Academy on an annual basis.

In order to improve the overall attendance of pupils, we will:

- Make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with in school
- Develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks
- Implement a common systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data
- Implement a common system of rewards for attendance
- Provide support, advice and guidance to parents and carers
- Ensure we have positive and consistent methods of communication about attendance matters with families and the schools in the Trust
- Work in partnership with supporting services and agencies and the Local Authority
- Recognise and meet the needs of the individual pupils when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.

Persistent Absence

Guidance from the Department for Education (2011) advises that if a child's attendance is below **90%**, he/she will be referred to as 'Persistent Absence.' Staff at Park Grove Primary Academy will work closely with parents and carers, the Local Authority and other external agencies to improve persistent absenteeism. This may include the use of parenting contracts and Attendance Panels.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absences

There are a series of codes defined by the Department of Education which are used to denote authorised and unauthorised absence. It is the school's responsibility to ensure that the correct codes are recorded and that patterns in children's attendance are analysed.

Parents and carers should be made aware that it is for the Headteacher to decide whether an absence is to be authorised or unauthorised. All reasons given for a child's absence are considered by the school. As examples, absence from school **may** be authorised if it is for the following reasons:

- Genuine illness
- Unavoidable/emergency medical/dental appointments
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional family circumstances, such as a bereavement or funeral

Absence from school will **not** be authorised for:

- Shopping
- Birthdays
- Minding the house
- Caring for brothers/sisters/relatives
- Parent/carer illness
- Sibling illness
- Arrivals after a specific time in the morning – please see the guidance below.

The Headteacher will only authorise a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Each application will be treated on an individual basis. Advice on what constitutes exceptional circumstances suggests situations such as children of service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays outside the term time, or families who need to spend time together following a crisis. Parents and carers are asked to ensure that they make any medical appointments (doctors and dentists) for their child outside of the school day.

If the Headteacher grants a leave request, it will be for them to determine the length of time that any child can be away from school. As a norm, leave is unlikely to be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

Parents and carers should put in writing all requests for a child's absence from school for any purpose. This should be sent to the school marked well in advance of any request for leave of absence during term time. Circumstances such as previous attendance, academic achievement, family circumstances and the time of year, will be taken into account. If your child has an older sibling, contact will also be made with local secondary schools so that a joint decision can be made. Should a leave of absence request not be authorised and your child is still taken out of school, a 'Fixed Penalty Notice' **could** be issued.

Fixed Penalty Notice

In certain circumstances parents can be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice where they take a holiday in term time, which is not authorised by the Headteacher. A Fixed Penalty Notice can require a parent to pay a sum of either £60 or £120. Each parent can be issued with a notice for each child so two parents with two children can potentially be issued with four notices.

Support and guidance available to those with poor attendance and punctuality

Where persistent absence occurs or where persistent lateness or poor attendance is identified through the monitoring processes, the appropriate member of staff from the Pupil Support Team will contact the family. They will offer support and assistance to families who are experiencing difficulties in getting their children to school. This will be via, appointments in school, guidance and advice on attendance or contact with other agencies. In some cases, families will be offered a Parenting Contract for attendance or a Family Early Help Assessment (FEHA) in order to fully support the family concerned. In more severe cases, such as 'Persistent Absence', staff will contact the Local Authority's Front Door Service. Together they will work with the family to offer further support and guidance. If attendance continues to be poor at this point, steps may be taken, as dictated by law, which may result in prosecution for non-attendance.

The Ebor Academy Trust has a duty to refer regular absence (authorised and unauthorised) to the relevant local authority. This may include any evidence to show how schools in the Trust have supported the student/pupil and parent to improve attendance. It is for each local authority to judge each referral on its own merits and make a decision on the next probable course of action.

Further information for parents and carers

Parents and carers are encouraged to read the guidance on authorised and unauthorised absence and information on Fixed Penalty Notices in the document 'School Attendance Statutory Guidance and Departmental Advice August 2013' Reference: DFE-00158-2013 via the Department for Education website www.education.gov.uk

Punctuality

All children should arrive at school by **8:45am**. Registration takes place between 8:50am and 8:55am. If children arrive after 8:55am, they should sign in at the front office and will be marked as late in the register. Any children who arrive **20 minutes after** the register has been taken will have an unauthorised late mark, which will count for a whole morning's absence. It is a legal requirement that school registers are completed at the start of both morning and afternoon sessions.

Persistent lateness causes disruption for the child, the class and the teacher. Each morning, class teachers prepare 'early bird' activities, which are an important start to the school day. This work often helps to consolidate any knowledge or skills previously learnt. Parents should therefore try to ensure that their child arrives in good time for the start of school.

If a child has a growing number of late arrivals to school, a letter will be sent to the parent / carer highlighting the concern to them. If the late arrivals do not improve, a phone call to the parent / carer will be made to see what support can be offered. If the situation does not improve, we will then contact the Local Authority who will visit the home and seek to ensure that the parent / carer understand the seriousness of the situation.

Absence notification

If a child is absent, it is a **parents/carers** responsibility to inform school of their child's absence and the reasons for the absence by:

- making a phone call prior to 9:30am on the day of a child's absence explaining why the child is ill; this should also be done for each consecutive day the child is going to be absent.
- sending a note in advance advising of a medical appointment. We urge parents/carers to try and arrange dentists and doctors' appointments out of school hours where possible.

If a child is absent, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, which informs the school and the office of the absence (including the Pupil Support Team).

If the whereabouts of any child is unknown, school will endeavour to contact the parent / carer if school has not already received notification – this is ensure parents / carers are aware their child is not in school, to establish the whereabouts of the child and to therefore ensure his/her safety. First, an automated text message is sent to the main parent/carer asking them to contact school. If no information is received, school staff will attempt to telephone the main parent/carer. If contact is unsuccessful, an **unauthorised mark** will be recorded for those absent sessions.

Any children who are absent from school for ten consecutive days or more and school have not been informed of the reason why, school have a duty of care to report this to the Local Authority and the children will be regarded as 'missing from education.'

Schools have a legal obligation to know the whereabouts of all children on their roll, which comes under the safeguarding remit.

Long term absences

When a child has an illness that means they will be away from school for five days or more, we will do all that we can to send materials home so that he / she can continue to learn and keep up with school work.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, we will contact the Specialist Teaching Team at the council so that arrangements can be made for the child to access some tuition outside school. In order for a referral to be made, medical documentation from health professionals would be required before any support could go ahead.

Attendance Rewards

Each week during key stage assemblies, one class is awarded the attendance bear (Preston the Bear for KS1 and Bear Growls for KS2) for the most improved attendance for the week and the attendance bears stay in the classroom until the next key stage assembly.

At the end of each term, gold attendance certificates are given out to children who have achieved 100%. Children who achieve 100% for each of the three terms over the whole academic year will receive a platinum certificate along with a prize.

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| <p style="text-align: center;">Important Equality Act 2010</p> |
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In operating this Policy/Procedure it is very important to ensure compliance with discrimination law which is now consolidated within the Equality Act 2010.

It is unlawful for a school to discriminate against a pupil by treating them unfavourably because of their disability.

The school is expected to make **reasonable adjustments**. The 'test of reasonableness' should be applied in each situation where a reasonable adjustment may need to be made.

In some instances, it may be justified not to make a proposed reasonable adjustment to resolve a situation where the young person, parent/carer, staff of school, governors and/or disabled members of the public who use school premises/facilities outside of core school hours could be seen as being at a "substantial disadvantage" as compared to their non-disabled peers. This doesn't mean that where this reasonable adjustment is considered and felt to be appropriate, that no action should be taken to resolve the situation.

If you have any questions/concerns concerning the application of the Act in relation to this policy/procedure you must **always** refer the matter to the Head teacher.

REVISED BY: N Slater

DATE: October 2019

NEXT REVIEW: October 2021