 **Park Grove Primary School**

**Attendance Policy**

**AIMS**

The main aims of this policy are to:

* raise awareness amongst pupils, parents, staff and governors of the importance of good attendance and punctuality;
* raise awareness amongst pupils, parents, staff and governors of the importance of keeping safe and reducing the risk of Coronavirus;
* raise and maintain levels of attendance in school amongst pupils.

It is written with reference to:-

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

Guidance relating to pupil leave of absence from school (CYC July 2013)

School Attendance: Statutory Guidance and Departmental Advice (August 2013)

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Coronavirus) (Amendment) (Number 2) Regulations 2020

The Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel) (England) Regulations 2020

**ATTENDANCE EXPECTATIONS DURING COVID-19**

During COVID-19, the usual rules on school attendance will apply, including:

* **parents’ duty** to ensure that their **child attends regularly** at school where the child is a registered pupil at school  and they are of compulsory school age;
* It is a legal requirement that all children come to school; every day and on time. It is still our commitment, during COVID-19, to ensure that all our children are in attendance every day and monitor all absence.
* the schools’ responsibilities to **record attendance** and **follow up absence**;
* the school’s ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with local authorities’ codes of  conduct.

**NEW FOR 2020 to 2021 – not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)**

Although school attendance is mandatory from the start of the autumn term, there are some circumstances where pupils will not be able to attend school due to coronavirus (COVID-19).

To make sure schools record this accurately and consistently, we have made changes to the regulationsgoverning school attendance registers to add a new category of non-attendance – ‘not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)’.

This category must only be used to record sessions that take place in the 2020 to 2021 academic year where a pupil does not attend because their travel to, or attendance at, school would be:

* contrary to guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) from Public Health England (PHE) and/or the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)
* prohibited by any legislation (or instruments such as statutory directions) relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19)

In line with the Secretary of State’s expectation that no parent will be penalised for following official public health advice for their child not to attend a given session, this new category of non-attendance will not count as an absence (authorised or unauthorised) for statistical purposes.

In line with current legislation, and current guidance from PHE (Public Health England) and DHSC (Department of Health and Social Care), examples are as follows:

### Pupils who have symptoms should self-isolate and get a test - if a pupil tests negative and if they feel well and no longer have symptoms similar to coronavirus (COVID-19), they can stop self-isolating and return to school.

### Pupils who live with someone in the household who has symptoms, the household should self-isolate and the member of their household should get a test - if the member of the household tests negative, the pupil can stop self-isolating and can return to school. If the household member tests positive, the pupil should continue self-isolating for the full 14 days from when the member of their household first had symptoms. In all cases of self-isolation, schools should ask parents to inform them immediately about the outcome of a test.

* Pupils who are required to self-isolate because they are a close contact of someone who has symptoms or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) - pupils may not have symptoms themselves but may be required to self-isolate if they are a close contact of someone with coronavirus. The [NHS test and trace](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-how-it-works#people-who-have-had-close-contact-with-someone-who-has-coronavirus) guidance states that a person should self-isolate for 14 days if they have had recent close contact with a person who has tested positive for coronavirus.

### Pupils who are required by legislation to self-isolate as part of a period of quarantine - as usual, parents should plan their holidays within school breaks and avoid seeking permission to take their children out of school during term time. Families should also consider that their child may need to self-isolate following trips overseas that require a period of quarantine.

**1. PRINCIPLES AND EXPECTATIONS**

1. At Park Grove Primary, we strive for the highest level of attendance from every pupil in order that they develop to their full potential during their time at school. By coming to school every day, on time, children receive the best start in life by having a good education. We expect all children on roll to attend on time, every day, when the school is open, as long as they are fit and healthy to do so.
2. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend; we believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes toward school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy, safe and rewarding place for everyone.
3. We also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school. Further information can be found in our Remote Teaching and Learning policy on the school website.
4. Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, the Governing Body are responsible for making sure that we keep an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and afternoon sessions of the school day. This register also indicates whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

**2. DEFINITIONS**

1. **Authorised absence**

An absence is authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has been informed from a parent / carer. E.g. if a child has been unwell and school receives a phone call /communication via Parent Hub/written note.

Only a school can make an absence authorised. Parents / carers do not have this authority.

Consequently, not all absences supported by parents / carers will be classified as authorised e.g. if a parent was to take a child out of school to go shopping during school hours.

1. **Unauthorised absence**

An absence is unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the headteacher. For example, when a child is on holiday during term-time and it has not been authorised by the headteacher.

If parent’s/carer’s do not notify school when there child is going to absent, it could be recorded as an unauthorised absence due to not knowing the reasons.

Authorised and unauthorised absences are reported to parents annually (as part of a child’s school report) and the Department for Education three times a year. These are held on a pupil’s school record throughout their school life.

The headteacher may consult with the Local Authority regarding the action to take over unauthorised absences.

**Please note: Parents can be given a fixed penalty notice under Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act or prosecuted for periods of unauthorised absence. Any parent issued with such a notice will be subject to a prompt fine of either £60 per parent per child (if paid within 21 days) or £120 per parent per child (if paid after the 21st day but within 28 days) Failure to pay the Fixed Penalty Notice is likely to lead to prosecution**

**3. ABSENCE NOTIFICATION**

If a child is absent, **parents/carers** should inform school of a 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;

• sending a notification 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 then informs the school office of the absence. Office staff 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.

For this reason, a written note on the day of a child’s return to school is not ideal.

As a school, we are legally required to closely monitor all children’s attendance. In the event of a child being absent from school for 10 or more consecutive days with no reason provided by parents/carers, schools are legally responsible for reporting these absences to the Local Authority. A child absent from school under these circumstances would be deemed as **‘missing in education’** and the Local Authority would have to take the necessary steps in order to locate them.

**4. REQUESTS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

At Park Grove Primary, we believe that children should be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the best possible progress with their learning. However, we do understand that there are, very occasionally, circumstances where a parent / carer may legitimately request leave of absence.

Time off for leave of absence for any reason, including family holidays is not an automatic right.

Schools are expected to **not authorise** requests for **family holidays** unless there are **exceptional** circumstances. For example:-

* Service personnel who are prevented from taking holidays outside term time if the holiday will have minimal effect to the pupil’s education
* When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis – such as a family bereavement
* Any other circumstances that the headteacher considers to be exceptional.

It is also expected that headteachers **will not authorise leave** where the following apply:-

* Availability of cheap holidays or desired accommodation
* Poor weather experienced in school holidays
* Period overlaps with beginning or end of term

Parents / carers should contact school in advance to request any leave of absence. At Park Grove Primary School, we ask that at least 7 days’ notice is given in order for your request to be processed by the school office.

Whilst the application must be made by the parents / carers that the child normally resides with, there is no restriction on who the leave is taken with. This is a matter for the parents / carers, not the school.

Term-time leave of absence requests should be made using the school’s Leave of Absence Request Form, which is available from the main office.

Requests for days off for religious observance will be considered as appropriate.

The headteacher, Senior Leadership Team or Pupil Support Team may contact parents to discuss any proposed leave of absence in term time.

**5. LONG-TERM ABSENCE**

When a child has an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, we will do all that we can to send material 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.

**6. REPEATED ABSENCE**

Pupils whose attendance levels drop below 90% are regarded as **persistent absentees** by the Local Authority, which changed in September 2015. School will alert the parent/carer of any child who has a high rate of absence i.e. below 90% with phone call. School would monitor closely and if attendance continued to be a concern, parents / carers would be invited to a meeting to discuss support, if appropriate depending on COVID restrictions.

If the situation does not improve, we will then contact the Local Authority for further advice/support, who will visit the home and seek to ensure that the parent / carer understand the seriousness of the situation.

Legal action may be taken against any parent / carer who repeatedly fails to accept their responsibility for ensuring their child attends school regularly.

**7. ATTENDANCE TARGETS**

All schools are required to set attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the Senior Leadership Team and the Governing Body, and also by the Local Authority. The targets should be challenging but realistic and based on attendance figures of previous years. Some consideration is made of attendance figures of similar schools. Our school target is currently 96% and reports are regularly generated to monitor how the school is performing.

**8. PUNCTUALITY**

Children from classes 1, 2, 3 and 4 should arrive at school and line up in their designated bubble area on the playground by **8:45am**, where they will be collected by their class teacher or teaching assistant. Children from classes 5 and 6 should arrive at school at their designated bubble area by 8:35am, where the Pupil Support Team will welcome them into the building. Children from classes 7, 8 and 9 should arrive at school at their designated bubble area by 8:35am, where they will be able to enter the building and go straight to class. Registration takes place between 8:50am and 8:55am. If children arrive after their designated entry doors are closed and locked, they will need to go to the main office to sign into the building. Please also let the office staff know what your child will be having for lunch that day.

Any children who arrive **20 minutes after** the register has been taken will have an **‘unauthorised’** late mark, which counts for the whole morning session. Children’s punctuality will be monitored closely.

**9. ATTENDANCE REWARDS**

Under normal circumstances (pre-COVID), Park Grove would recognise excellent attendance amongst our pupils with various rewards such as termly certificates and weekly class attendance bears in EYFS/KS1 and KS2. Due to current government restrictions, school is not able to give out such rewards in order to reduce the spread of the virus. This will of course be reviewed regularly and once we are in a safe position to do so, the rewards system will be reinstated.

**10. ROLES, RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Parents / carers**

Parents / carers **must** do all they can to ensure their child attends school every day, as part of the home/school agreement. They are expected to inform school before 9.30am on the first day of absence and every consecutive day they are expected to be absent, to give an expected date of return. They may be asked to provide school with details of medical appointments /medication if their child’s attendance falls below certain levels.

**Class teacher**

It is the class teacher’s responsibility to:

* mark the register and record all known absences using the appropriate code
* discuss frequent absences or patterns of absence with the headteacher and attendance coordinator
* encourage pupils to maintain good levels of attendance and punctuality at all times

**Attendance coordinator (Natalie Slater, Pupil Support Team)**

It is the attendance coordinators responsibility to:

* check the registers on a regular basis to ensure the correct codes are being used
* work with the headteacher to oversee and monitor whole school attendance and punctuality
* discuss frequent absences or patterns of absences with class teachers and the headteacher
* follow up absences where parents/carers have failed to notify school of the reason
* communicate regularly with parents/carers of children who have concerning levels of attendance or punctuality issues (by letter or phone call)
* offer support to parents/carers of children who are having attendance/punctuality difficulties
* monitor and track attendance data for groups of children
* oversee the attendance display board and attendance rewards system

**Headteacher (Jo Sawyer)**

It is Headteacher’s responsibility to:

* + set attendance targets each year (see above);
  + review attendance and take appropriate action;
  + oversee and monitor whole school attendance and punctuality;
  + report levels of attendance to governors in the Headteacher’s Report;
  + access IntegrisG2 to collect information on whole school, class or individual attendance;
  + monitor and tackle attendance below 90% and refer any children with attendance concerns to the Local Authority;
  + develop home-school links and meet with parents if there is concern over a child’s attendance.

**Office staff**

It is the responsibility of office staff to:

* seek to contact parents / carers of absent children to establish the whereabouts of a child and reasons for absence

**Governing Body**

It is the responsibility of the Governing Body to monitor overall attendance. Attendance rates are communicated in every Headteacher’s Report so they can monitor this closely. The Governing Body also has the responsibility for this policy: for seeing that it is carried out and for its review. They will therefore examine closely the information provided to them in order to ensure the attendance figures are as high as they should be.

**Local authority**

York Local Authority monitors attendance data provided by all primary schools in a bid to tackle poor attendance amongst children aged 5 to 11.

REVISED BY: N Slater (Pupil Support Team)

DATE: September 2020

NEXT REVIEW: September 2021