



# The Parks School

## Attendance Policy

"Our mission is to **inspire** growth, **nurture** potential and **support** one another with **passion**, upholding **integrity** and fostering **respect** whilst promoting **empowerment** with everything we do"

## **Introduction:**

The Parks is a successful school, and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

## **Why Regular Attendance is so important:**

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any student's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

## **Promoting Regular Attendance:**

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents/ carers, students and all members of school staff.

## **To help us all to focus on this we will:**

- Promote a culture across the school which identifies the importance of regular and punctual attendance;
- Report to you termly on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is;
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements;
- Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates and outings/events;
- Further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school;
- Make attendance and punctuality a priority for everyone associated with school, including parents/ carers, students, staff and governors;
- Set targets to improve individual student and whole-school attendance.

## **Understanding types of absence:**

Every half-day absence from school will be classified by the school as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. Therefore, information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed
- holidays that exceed the amount agreed by the Headteacher

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

### **Persistent Absenteeism (PA):**

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

PA students are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

All our PA students and their parents/ carers are subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include allocation of additional support through a Mentor, use of circle time, individual incentive programmes, parenting contracts and participation in group activities around raising attendance. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the Local Authority Attendance Team.

### **Absence Procedures:**

#### **If your child is absent, you must:**

- Contact school as soon as possible on the first day of absence

#### **If your child is absent, we will:**

- Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you.
- Invite you in to discuss the situation if absences persist

### **Telephone numbers:**

There are times when we need to contact parents/ carers about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. So, help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up-to-date number – if we don't then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

- **The schools contact number is – 01942 909033**

## **In-School Strategies to Improve Attendance/Punctuality**

Parents / carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. School may consider using the following strategies to help support parents in improving their child's attendance and/or punctuality. This includes:

- Meetings in school between parents/ carers, students, pastoral staff and the Head teacher.
- Student Parent and School contract
- Referral to outside agencies (Early Help)
- Penalty notices

### **Lateness:**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving students also disrupt lessons, which can be embarrassing for the child and can in turn, encourage absence. Being 10 minutes late every day throughout the academic year is the same as missing two weeks of school.

### **How we manage lateness:**

The school day starts at **9.30 am** and we expect your child to be in school before that time.

Registers are marked by **at this point** and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At **10.20 am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record, you will be asked to meet with the Headteacher and/or the pastoral support worker to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

### **Holidays in Term Time:**

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents/ carers to help us by not to take children away in school time.

Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

All applications for leave must be made in advance using the 'Request for leave of absence' form from the school office and, at the discretion of the school a maximum of 10 days in any academic year may be authorised but only in 'special circumstances'. In making a decision, the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave in term time however leave in term time will **not** be agreed by us in the following circumstances:

- When a student is just starting the school. This is very important as your child needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible.

- Immediately before and during assessment periods, GCSE or any other public examinations.
- When a student's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence.
- Where a student's attendance rate is already below (90%) or will fall to or below that level as a result of taking holiday leave.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

### **Extended Leave in Term Time**

Only in 'exceptional' circumstances will 'leave' of over 10 days (but less than 20) be authorised by the school.

### **Religious Absence**

The school will authorise one day 'leave' per religious festival, e.g. Eid, but no more than 3 days in any one academic year. Parents must request this leave in advance

## **Roles and responsibilities for attendance matters in this school**

### **Parents/ carers**

- Ensure children attend regularly and punctually
- Contact school on 1<sup>st</sup> day of absence
- Avoid holidays in term time wherever possible and apply in advance using form
- Attendance at meetings in school
- Participation in Parenting Contracts and Common Assessment Framework, and cooperate in support and interventions offered by school or other agencies

### **Students:**

- Attend school/registration punctually
- Speak to parents/teacher if issues arise that may have an effect on school attendance
- Cooperate and participate in interventions and support offered by school or other agencies

### **Headteacher:**

- Take the lead in ensuring attendance has a high profile within the school
- Ensure there are designated staff with day-to-day responsibility for attendance matters
- Ensure adequate, protected time is allocated to discharge these responsibilities
- Take overall responsibility for ensuring the school conforms to all statutory requirements in respect of attendance

### **Designated Staff:**

- First day response: Contact parents/ carers if a reason for absence has not been provided
- Input and update the attendance registers
- Regularly identify and monitor student, class and whole school attendance and punctuality levels, particularly that of vulnerable groups
- Regularly communicate student attendance and punctuality levels to parents
- Work with children and parents/ carers to remove barriers to regular and punctual attendance

**All School Staff:**

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere for children and provide a safe learning environment
- Ensure an appropriate and responsive curriculum
- Provide a sympathetic response to any students' concerns
- To be aware of factors that can contribute to non-attendance
- To see students' attendance as the responsibility of **all** school staff
- Participate in training regarding school systems and procedures

**Senior Management**

- Adopt the whole-school policy and review regularly
- Monitor the consistent implementation of the attendance policy
- Agree statutory targets for the school

**School targets, projects and special initiatives**

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

The minimum level of attendance for this school is **90%** attendance and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares.

Our target is to achieve better than this however because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe our students can be amongst the best in the city.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided in newsletter and we ask for your full support.

**Summary**

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents/ carers have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and students, as this is the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.