



# Attendance and Punctuality Policy

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## **INTRODUCTION**

At Old Park Primary School we strive to give our children the best education and opportunities to help them realise their true potential. To help us achieve this we believe good attendance and punctuality are vital to the progress of their education.

Staff at Old Park will work with children and their families to ensure they feel valued, safe and secure by creating a caring environment and making everyone feel welcome.

## **THE IMPORTANCE OF REGULAR ATTENDANCE**

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's education and regular absence will affect their learning. Absence disrupts teaching routines which 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 may result in prosecution.

Children who attend school regularly create friendships and learn to develop skills they need to prepare them for future life.

## **PROMOTING REGULAR ATTENDANCE**

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is the responsibility of everyone – parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help achieve high attendance levels we will:

- \* keep parents informed of attendance levels on our school bulletins;
- \* send a detailed attendance report to parents termly and in their child's report at the end of the academic year;
- \* display weekly attendance figures on our attendance display board in our school reception area and also displaying class attendance in classes;
- \* celebrate class with the best attendance at our weekly celebration assembly
- \* reward children with 99% or above attendance at the end of the academic year with an invite to our end of year 'VIP Party';
- \* Regular campaigns to promote good attendance and punctuality.
- \* House badges and points for excellent attendance each term.
- \* Termly prize draw for 100%

## **PARENTS**

Good attendance and punctuality are vital to the progress of our children's education and while we accept that we are all ill on occasions, unavoidably late or absent, parents are expected to ensure their child attends school regularly.

As a parent, it is your responsibility to ensure your child attends school on time every day. Parents need to inform school immediately if their child will be absent from school for any reason. Allowing a child to be absent without good reason is against the law and parents can face prosecution.

## **TYPES OF ABSENCE**

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not the parents), as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why we need to know the reason for any absence.

**AUTHORISED ABSENCES** are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason, e.g. illness, medical/dentist appointments which unavoidably fall in school time or any unavoidable emergencies.

**UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES** are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no leave has been given. These include:

- \* parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily, e.g. when a parent/carer is ill or for trivial reasons;
- \* truancy before or during the school day;
- \* absences which have never been properly explained;
- \* children who arrive late after registration;
- \* shopping or day trips organised by parents in school time;
- \* holidays;
- \* birthdays.

## **PERSISTENT ABSENTEEISM (PA)**

A child 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 a child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. We monitor absence on a regular basis and if your child has reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards the mark you will be informed immediately. The Attendance and Prosecution Service are automatically made aware of any PA pupils who may then contact the family. All PA pupils are expected to provide medical evidence in the form of a doctor's note, prescription or medication if they are absent from school because of illness.

## **ABSENCE PROCEDURES**

If your child is absent from school for any reason you must contact school as soon as possible on 0121 526 2669 where you can leave a message or call into school and speak to one of the office staff to explain the reason for their absence.

If you know your child will be absent due to a medical appointment, please send a note into school with the date and time for our records.

If your child is absent from school and we have had no phone call to explain why then the following actions may be taken to ensure you safeguard your child:

We may ring or text asking you to get in contact urgently.

We may record the absence as unauthorised.

We may complete a home visit.

We may call the 'emergency contacts' we hold for your child which you provide.

If we feel a family is vulnerable or the absence is longer than a day we may contact outside agencies as deemed necessary by the Head Teacher.

## **REGISTRATION & LATENESS**

At 8.50am the bell rings and the staff on duty close the door. Staff will then take the morning register.

Any child who arrives after 8.50am when the doors are closed must enter school through the main office where a parent/carer should sign them in. They will receive a late mark (L).

Any child arriving after 9.15am may be given a 'U' code – meaning they arrived after morning registration closed.

The afternoon register is taken by 1.05pm, any child arriving back from lunch after this time will get a late mark for the afternoon session.

Any child arriving after 1.30pm may be given a 'U' code – meaning they arrived after afternoon registration closed.

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day, they can miss work and vital information for the rest of the day. Pupils arriving late disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

By encouraging good punctuality at an early age we are preparing children for their future and understanding the importance of being punctual.

A 'U' code will have an impact on your child's overall attendance. Children who persistently have 'U' codes recorded may be referred to the Attendance and Prosecution Service.

## **Extended Leave in Term Time (Previously known as holidays in term time)**

### **RECENT CHANGES**

In 2013, the Department for Education issues revised advice on School attendance (which can be found at <http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/attendance/advice-on-school-attendance> and they amended the Pupil Registration Regulations 2006.

The amendments to the 2006 regulations which came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013 will:

- Remove reference to family holiday and holidays in term time.
- Remove reference to the previous allowance threshold of ten school days.
- Make clear that Head Teachers may **NOT** grant leave of absence in term time unless there are *EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES*.

It is up to Head Teachers to determine whether circumstances are 'exceptional'.

## **PROCEDURE**

Any parent requesting time off during term time must complete a written application at least 2 weeks prior to the time requested. This form is available from the school office. The Head Teacher will then look at the request and determine if the circumstances are exceptional. They will take into account the circumstances, reason for needing time off, the amount of time requested, time of year and the child's previous attendance history including previous holidays in term time.

A letter will then be sent with the Head Teacher's decision of whether the time requested will be authorised or unauthorised.

Any unauthorised time off during term time which meets the criteria will be referred to the Attendance and Prosecution Service. They may decide to issue a penalty notice of £60, per parent, per child which rises to £120, per parent, per child if not paid within 21 days.

School will ensure all parents and families have access to all school holidays as soon as they are available for the following year, a list of these are also available on Sandwell Councils' Website. If children are absent from school for longer than 20 days proceedings may start to remove the child from the school's admission register. This would be done in accordance with the guidelines and procedures given by Admissions and the Attendance and Prosecution Service.

Any parent/family who fails to complete a 'Leave of Absence' form may still be referred to the Attendance and Prosecution Service for a penalty notice to be issued.

## **CONSEQUENCES**

The potential consequences of unauthorised leave in term time are:

- Possibility of Penalty Notice being issued (to each parent for each child).
- Possibility of losing the school place.
- The possibility of prosecution under section 444 of the Education Act 1996 for repeat offences of unauthorised holidays.

## **OTHER INFORMATION**

- The school's policy does not allow leave of absence for holidays in term time.
- Please remember that the more time your child misses from school, the more difficult it is for them to catch up on their work.
- The school Attendance Officer may decide to complete a home visit if we believe a child is on holiday but this has not been reported by a parent/carer.
- School will consider each request individually and respond in writing accordingly.
- All Sandwell schools follow this policy and may consult with one another if there are siblings in other schools.
- School will always make a member of staff available to talk to you about your circumstances and answer any queries you may have.

## **MONITORING ATTENDANCE**

We are working hard to monitor and promote attendance in our school to maintain our high standards here at Old Park. We have a requirement to update the Local Authority of our attendance and have regular contact with the Attendance and Prosecution Service.

The following monitoring arrangements will be used:

- \* Any member of staff concerned about a child's absence should report their concerns to the School Attendance Officer and the Head Teacher will be informed and take appropriate action as necessary.
- \* The School Attendance Officer will print off weekly class attendance figures for review by the Head Teacher.
- \* Parents of children whose attendance falls below 96% will be sent a letter pointing out their child's attendance with a printout attached.
- \* Parents of children whose attendance shows a regular pattern of absence e.g. every Friday, will be invited into school to discuss reasons with the Head Teacher or Attendance Officer.

Monitoring attendance and identifying reasons for absence will help to show us where improvements can be made.

## **CONCLUSION**

We are committed to supporting every child ensuring that all children are healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic well-being.

Parents should feel able to come into school and discuss any concerns they have regarding their child's absence. We will support parents and seek to resolve any issues to help improve their child's attendance.

## **PERSONS RESPONSIBLE FOR APPLYING THIS POLICY**

- \* Head Teacher – Ms Boddington
- \* Deputy Head – Mrs Pearce
- \* Class Teachers
- \* School Attendance Officer – Ms Eve Taylor
- \* Chair of Governors – Mrs Tracy Wallace