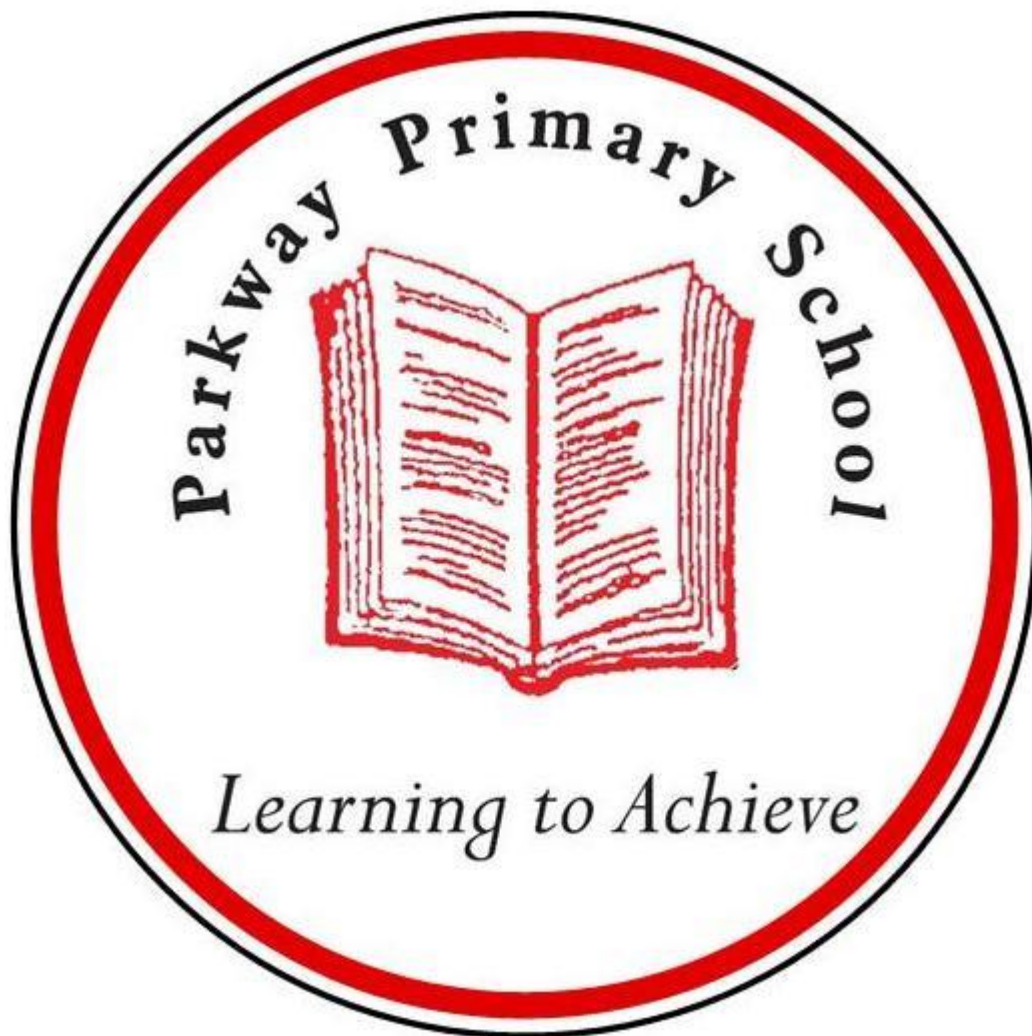


# Parkway Primary School Attendance Policy



Updated Summer 2024

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## Introductory Statement

Parkway Primary School recognises that high levels of attendance and punctuality are an essential element in enabling children to achieve their potential and is good training for their future economic wellbeing. Parkway uses a range of strategies to promote good attendance and punctuality and we collaborate actively with parents/carers to achieve this.

## Staff Contacts

Parents/carers can contact the following staff members if they have a query or concern regarding their child's attendance:

- school office staff will be the first point of contact if a parent/carer is reporting a child absent due to illness or routine medical appointment
- if a parent/carer has a query or concern regarding attendance and wishes to discuss this in person or, would like further advice, they can contact the school's Family Liaison Officer, Mrs Shepherd
- if a parent/carer wishes to speak to a member of the school's Senior Leadership Team, the Assistant Head Teacher - Pastoral, Mrs Tume, is the member of staff overseeing school attendance

## Our aim is to

- achieve our 97% target for attendance
- make families aware of the detrimental impact of taking holidays during term time
- recognise and celebrate high standards achieved by individuals and classes regarding attendance
- make clear the link between good attendance and punctuality and children's progress and achievement
- promote the importance of a punctual and organised start to the school day
- ensure school staff and outside agencies work with parents/carers to prevent unauthorised absences

## Punctuality

Parkway Primary School expects that all children will arrive on time for school each day. In the event that your child is late the following procedures then apply:

- children are marked late (L) if they arrive after 8:45am but before the close of registers
- children are marked unauthorised (U) if they arrive after registers close at 9:15am. Afternoon registers will be closed at 1.30pm
- children arriving late will need to be signed in at Reception by a parent/carer
- after receiving five late marks, a letter will be sent to the parents/carers from the Assistant Headteacher - Pastoral
- after receiving ten late marks (persistently late), a letter will be sent to the parent/carer from the Education Welfare Office (EWO), and an appointment may be given to attend a surgery with the EWO

The school will encourage and reward punctuality by awarding a trophy to the most punctual class each week in achievement assembly.

It is just as important that parents/carers model good punctuality and, accordingly, school expects that children will be collected from school at the end of the day on time. Police and social care may be called if a child is not collected from school alongside their peers, as this has a detrimental effect on the child's emotional wellbeing. If, for any reason, someone apart from a named contact on the child's file will be collecting them after school, the parent/carer will need to inform the school office as soon as is possible in order that a collection password can be provided. Parents/carers should inform the office at the earliest opportunity if they are delayed in the collection of their child(ren).

## Attendance

General procedures:

- if a child is absent due to illness we require a verbal message, telephone call or email notification. (For further details please refer to the paragraph headed Procedures when a child is absent)
- where there are concerns regarding attendance, parents/carers will be contacted and invited in to discuss any issues. If concerns persist despite this the school may involve outside agencies where appropriate to support the child to access a full education. (For further details please refer to the paragraph headed Monitoring and Processes).
- the school works closely with the EWO who comes into school on a regular basis and where persistent absence is an issue a referral may be made to the Education Welfare Service. (For further details please refer to the paragraph headed Monitoring and Processes).
- we do not authorise any holiday during term time, in line with Bexley Local Authority's Policy and Procedures
- Penalty Notices may be issued by the Local Authority to parents/carers who take their children out of school on term time holiday

School will encourage good attendance in a variety of ways:

- children are made aware of percentage attendance each week in assembly, and attendance figures are displayed in school and on the school's website
- parents/carers attending achievement assembly can share in the children's achievements
- the attendance cup is given to the class with the best attendance each week during achievement assembly
- good and improved attendance will be celebrated throughout each term by means of certificates and rewards which will be advertised to parents/carers and children through the school website and newsletters
- attendance information and updates for parents/carers will be published in the school newsletter

## Procedure when a child is absent

Parents/carers should inform the school on the morning of the first day of absence either by telephone, by leaving a message on the school phone system or by email, clearly stating the reason for the absence and, if applicable, the expected duration of the illness. Parents/carers should thereafter contact the school on the morning of each subsequent day of a child's absence to confirm the absence and the reason. When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will inform the school office. If the office has not already been informed of the reason for a pupil's absence, they will initially attempt to contact a parent/carer by telephone, if contact with a parent/carer is not made a follow up email will be sent out requesting an explanation for the absence and parents/carers are expected to respond as a matter of priority. When the child returns to school, parents/carers must ensure that a note or verbal confirmation is provided to explain the reason for the absence. Where absence is known in advance, a note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence, e.g., if a child has a medical appointment. Parents/carers are encouraged to also provide a copy of the appointment card/letter. If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office and recording the absence in the register. The school will then make every effort to contact the parent straight away and a 'Safe and Well' check will be carried out. Please note that as part of our safeguarding procedures, if the school cannot reach the parent/carer they will contact other persons on the child's emergency contacts list, if we are still unable to find out why a child is absent school may then refer to the EWO who may undertake a home visit.

## Types of Absence

The parent/carer of a child of compulsory school age is required by law to ensure that the child regularly attends the school at which they are registered. Should a parent fail to ensure that their child attends that school regularly then the parent is guilty of an offence. Legally, every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the

school as either authorised or unauthorised. Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for the child to be absent or where an explanation offered afterwards has been accepted as satisfactory justification for absence.

## **Authorised**

Absence may be authorised for the following reasons:

- illness
- medical or dental appointments, by necessity made in school time
- accredited Exam – for example, ballet/music (extra-curricular)
- approved sporting event
- an exceptional 'enrichment' opportunity (e.g., involvement in a public performance)
- family bereavement
- exclusion
- religious observance
- traveller child travelling for the purposes of parent's employment
- other unusual or rare 'exceptional' occasions as will be determined by school on an individual basis

## **Unauthorised**

Unauthorised absence is where no explanation has been given for the child's absence or where the explanation offered is considered by the school to be unacceptable.

Absence will not be authorised in the following circumstances:

- if no explanation is offered by the parent/carer
- the explanation provided is unsatisfactory (e.g. shopping, day off to celebrate a birthday, minding the house, day trip etc.)
- family holidays in term time
- where there is sporadic absence and the attendance is declining
- where no medical evidence has been provided when requested

Any absence not covered by an absence note is classified as unauthorised.

## **Holidays during Term Time**

The school does not authorise parents/carers taking children out of school for holidays during term time. If a child is taken on unauthorised holiday the school will consult with the Education Welfare Service to consider whether a Penalty Notice should be issued. The Anti-Social Behaviour Act allows the Local Authority to fine parents/carers for their child's poor attendance through issuing a Penalty Notice. These notices can result in an immediate fine for each parent/carer and for each child payable within 28 days of the date of issue of the Notice, increasing if not paid within 28 and before 42 days.

The code of conduct covering the issuing of a Penalty Notice includes absence without acceptable cause, holidays in term time and persistent late attendance after registration has closed.

All suspected holidays during term time will be investigated and proceedings may take place.

## **Promoting regular attendance through good practice**

It is essential that everyone involved in promoting attendance is clear about the important role that must be carried out in order to raise standards. Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility across the school community, including, parents/carers, children and all members of school staff.

The school will promote and model the importance of good practice by:

- keeping and maintaining registers accurately and in a timely manner
- ensuring prompt follow-up action in cases of non-attendance, (for instance, by telephoning the child's

home or sending a text message), to establish a reason for a child's absence. This will be done after the registers have been closed and no explanation given, on the first day and any subsequent days of absence

- ensuring that parents/carers understand the school's attendance policy and procedures for reporting absence by issuing an advisory letter/notice promoting good attendance to all parents/carers annually
- reporting children missing education (CME) to the Local Authority
- regularly analysing attendance data and setting an annual attendance target
- rewarding and celebrating good and improving attendance through certificates or rewards
- providing parents/carers with regular attendance grades for their child as part of the termly 'Progress Check Report' and annual reports
- constructively working with children and their families to ensure each child attends school regularly and punctually by establishing an effective and efficient system of communication with parents/carers and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice, guidance and support

## Record Keeping

Records are kept on the school system. Letters from parents/carers are scanned and attached to children's files and letters to parents/carers regarding attendance and punctuality are attached to children's files. All records are kept in line with current GDPR requirements and in accordance with school policies.

## Monitoring and Processes

Whole school attendance data will be monitored weekly for any emerging patterns for children whose attendance is below 95%. Parents/carers will be routinely contacted if attendance falls below a level deemed acceptable by the school in line with our current procedures as follows:

Attendance < 95%	a Letter 1 will be issued to parents/carers. If there is then a further decline in attendance, or no marked improvement is evidenced, a Letter 2 may be issued to parents/carers and/or parents/carers may be invited in for a meeting with the Assistant Headteacher - Pastoral and/or the Family Liaison Officer
Attendance < 92.5%	a Letter 1 will be issued to parents/carers (if this has not previously been actioned). If there is then a further decline in attendance, or no marked improvement is evidenced, a Letter 2 will be issued to parents/carers. Parents/carers may be invited in for a meeting with the Assistant Headteacher - Pastoral and/or the Family Liaison Officer and the EWO and the EWO may make contact directly with parents/carers. At this stage, an Attendance Support Plan or Attendance Contract, may be issued and school can decide whether to refer to the Education Welfare Service (EWS)
Attendance < 90%	classed as persistent absence the school can make a referral to the EWS if it has not already done so

At all stages the school will communicate with parents/carers and investigate the ways in which additional support may be provided to the child and/or the family to promote improved attendance. Support may be provided internally by school staff or from referrals to external agencies.

If a child has an increasing number of authorised absences, classed as 'persistent absence', contact will be made with the parents/carers to ascertain if further action needs to be taken, including the issue of an Attendance Support Plan or Attendance Contract. The school may also make a referral to the Local Authority department responsible for CME (Children Missing Education) if there is a concern about a pupil's welfare or safety. Parents/carers are expected to co-operate with the school and attend any meeting when requested to do so. Persistent Absence (PA) is absence of 10% or more. An individual child is deemed to be a persistent absentee, therefore, if their attendance is less than 90% (regardless of whether or not the absences have been authorised). The school will routinely analyse attendance data to identify those pupils or pupil cohorts most adversely affected by poor attendance and will work with them and/or their family to remove the barriers to learning that may exist. The school recognises that whilst every pupil has a right to a full-time education, and high attendance

expectations are set for all children in school, the attendance policy will be applied on an individual case-by-case basis so as to take account of any specific needs a child or family may have. Attendance reports and data will be routinely shared for review and analysis by the school's Senior Leadership Team and Board of Governors.

For further details on the school's attendance procedures please refer to the attached Flow Chart - Appendix I.

## Evaluation

When evaluating success, the school will consider whether or not:

- patterns and trends in the children's attendance and punctuality are improved
- parental response to absence has improved
- the school has been successful in raising the profile of attendance by celebrating good attendance within the school and the Governing Body
- children and parents/carers are fully aware of the importance of punctuality and regular attendance and aware of the attendance procedures operating within school
- parents/carers and Governors are made aware of the current laws and statutory guidance governing attendance
- attendance issues have been included as topics in school assemblies or PSHE lessons

## Safeguarding

Any attendance issues which may be related to safeguarding and child protection issues will be followed up in accordance with the school's Child Protection Policy.

## Review & Implementation Dates

This policy will be reviewed as part of the Governor Policy Review cycle and will be discussed with school representatives prior to implementation.

Revision of the above Policy was completed by: Donna Tume

Summer 2024

After consultation and agreement by Parkway Staff, this Policy was adopted by the School Governing Body and therefore implemented by the school.

Next Review Date:

Summer 2025

Signature of

Chair of Governors .....

Head Teacher .....

## Appendix I : Other Relevant Legislation and Guidance:

DfE Working Together to improve school attendance (Applies from 19 August 2024)

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65f1b048133c22b8eecd38f7/Working\\_together\\_to\\_improve\\_school\\_attendance\\_applies\\_from\\_19\\_August\\_2024\\_.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65f1b048133c22b8eecd38f7/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_applies_from_19_August_2024_.pdf)

DfE Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65e8ae343649a2001aed63aa/Summary\\_table\\_of\\_responsibilities\\_for\\_school\\_attendance\\_applies\\_from\\_19\\_August\\_2024\\_.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65e8ae343649a2001aed63aa/Summary_table_of_responsibilities_for_school_attendance_applies_from_19_August_2024_.pdf)

The Education Penalty Notices (England) Regulations 2007

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/2007/1867/made>

London Borough of Bexley Education Welfare Service

<https://www.bexley.gov.uk/services/schools-and-education/school-attendance/education-welfare-service#:~:text=support%20children%2C%20families%20and%20schools%20with%20school%20attendance%20issues>

## APPENDIX II : Attendance Flow Chart



GREEN OVER  
95%

**EXCELLENT ATTENDANCE**  
WELL DONE



AMBER UNDER 95%

### **UNSATISFACTORY ATTENDANCE:**

School will:

- Send letters of concern
- Discuss concerns with parents/carers
- Offer appropriate support (in school or external services)
- Invite parents/carers in to a meeting
- No longer automatically authorise absences
- Enter into an Attendance Agreement or Attendance Support Plan with parents/carers

School may refer to the Education Welfare Services when attendance falls below 95%.

**If ABSENCES are being UNAUTHORISED then urgent improvement is required**



RED UNDER 90%

### **PERSISTENT ABSENCE:**

Considered by the Government to be a Persistent Absence (PA). The Government consider these children to be at risk of the potential for a negative impact on future life opportunities.

School will closely monitor attendance and refer to the Education Welfare Service (if not already done so) if no immediate sustained improvement.

**Local Authority will investigate absences and consider if Legal interventions are necessary and appropriate**