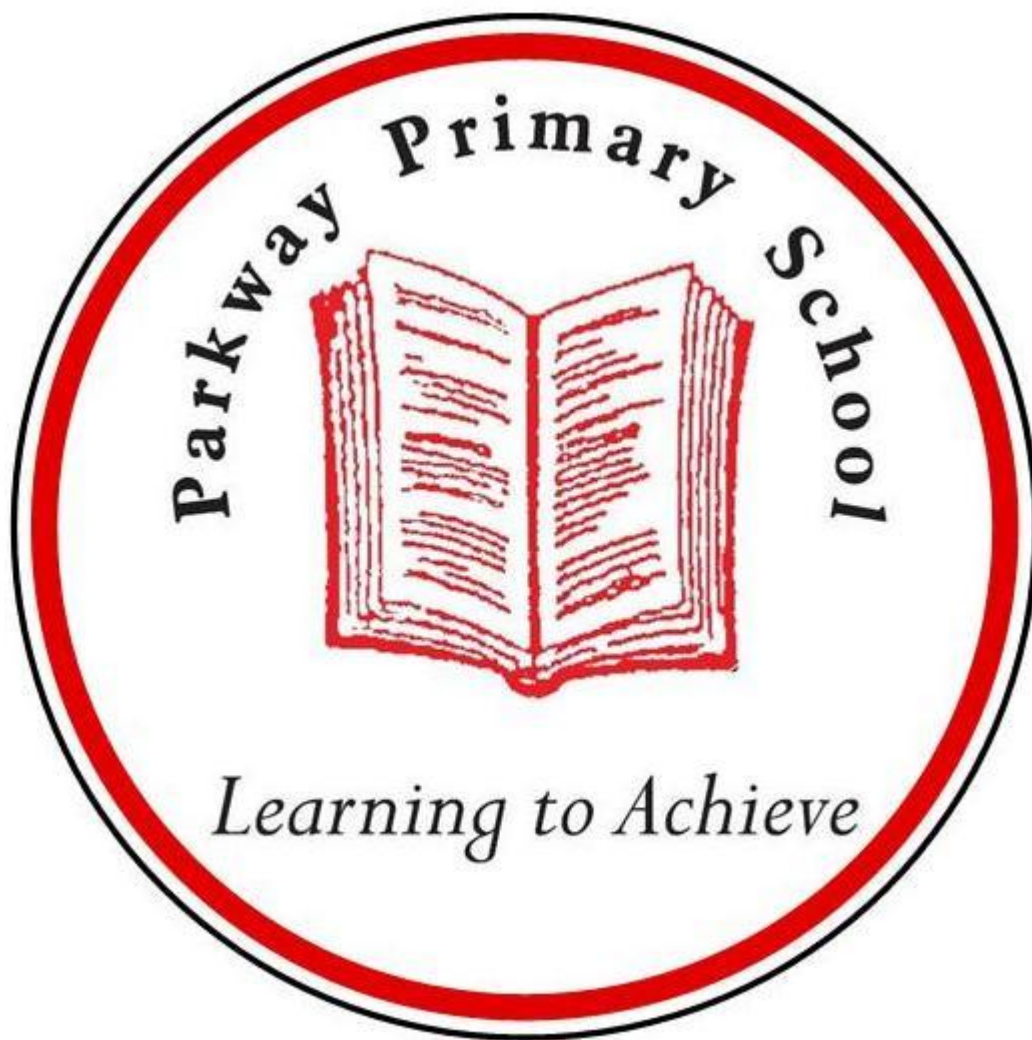


Parkway Primary School

Attendance Policy



September 2026

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Aim

Parkway Primary School aims to achieve our 97% attendance target, recognise and celebrate high attendance, make clear the link between good attendance and children's progress, promote punctual starts to the school day, and work with parents/carers to prevent unauthorised absences.

Key Contacts

Parents/carers can contact:

- **School office** – for reporting absences due to illness or medical appointments
- **Mrs Shepherd (Family Liaison Officer)** – for queries or concerns about attendance
- **Mrs Tume (Assistant Head Teacher - Pastoral)** – for Senior Leadership Team support

Punctuality

Children arriving after 8:45am but before 9:30am are marked late (L). Arrivals after 9:30am are marked unauthorised (U).

After 5 late marks, parents receive a letter from the Assistant Headteacher. After 10 late marks, the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will contact parents and may arrange a meeting.

Children must be collected on time at the end of the school day. If delayed, inform the office immediately.

Attendance

Parents must inform school on the first morning of absence by phone or email, stating the reason and expected duration. Contact school each subsequent day of absence. Provide a note or verbal confirmation when your child returns.

If we cannot contact you, we will try emergency contacts and may refer to the EWO for a home visit as part of safeguarding procedures.

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:

- Illness
- Medical/dental appointments (unavoidable in school time)
- Approved sporting events or exams
- Family bereavement
- Religious observance
- Other exceptional circumstances (decided case-by-case)

Unauthorised

Absence will not be authorised for:

- No explanation provided

- Unsatisfactory reasons (shopping, birthdays, day trips)
- Family holidays in term time
- Declining attendance without medical evidence when requested

Holidays during Term Time

The school does not authorise term-time holidays. Unauthorised holidays may result in a Penalty Notice from the Local Authority, leading to fines for each parent and each child.

Medical Evidence Requirements

Where attendance falls below 90%, absences will not be routinely authorised unless appropriate medical or supporting evidence is provided. Between 90-95% attendance, requests are considered case-by-case and evidence may be requested.

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 Action

Attendance below 95%: Letter 1 sent. If no improvement, Letter 2 issued and/or meeting arranged with Assistant Headteacher.

Attendance below 92.5%: Letter 2 sent, meeting arranged with EWO, Attendance Support Plan or Contract may be issued. School may refer to Education Welfare Service.

Attendance below 90% (Persistent Absence): Referral to Education Welfare Service if not already made. Legal interventions may be considered.

Celebrating Good Attendance

We celebrate attendance through:

- Weekly attendance cup for the best class
- Certificates and rewards each term
- Attendance information displayed in school and on our website
- Updates in newsletters

Safeguarding

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

Penalty Notices

Penalty Notices may be issued for 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10-week rolling period.

First notice: £80 (if paid within 21 days) or £160 (within 28 days).

Second notice within 3 years: flat rate of £160.

After two notices, prosecution may be considered.

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

September 2026

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:

September 2027

Appendix I : Other Relevant Legislation and Guidance:

DfE Working Together to improve school attendance (August 2026)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6a4f9ec6a6586e258d371bd0/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_2026.pdf

DfE Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66bf301e253aee7aafdbdfea/Summary_table_of_responsibilities_for_school_attendance_-_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>

National Framework for Penalty Notices

Purpose of penalty notices

179. Penalty notices are issued to parents as an alternative to prosecution where they have failed to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered or, in certain cases, at a place where alternative provision is provided. Penalty notices can be used by all schools (with the exception of independent schools) where the pupil's absence has been recorded with one or more of the unauthorised codes and that absence(s) constitutes an offence. A penalty notice can be issued to each parent liable for the offence or offences. They should usually only be issued to the parent or parents who have allowed the absence (regardless of which parent has applied for a leave of absence).

180. Penalty notices are intended to prevent the need for court action and should only be used where it is deemed likely to change parental behaviour and support to secure regular attendance has been provided and has not worked or been engaged with, or would not have been appropriate in the circumstances of the offence (e.g. as is usually the case for an unauthorised holiday in term time).

181. Penalty notices must be issued in line with the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended and can only be issued by a headteacher or someone authorised by them (a deputy or assistant head), a local authority officer or the police. They must also be issued in line with Local Codes of Conduct which are drawn up and maintained by each local authority.

182. Where a penalty notice is issued by someone other than a local authority officer, the person issuing the penalty notice is expected to check with the local authority before doing so and must also send them copies of any penalty notices issued.

183. A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first 5 days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion. The school must have notified the parents of the days the pupil must not be present in a public place. This type of penalty notice is not included in the National Framework and therefore not subject to the same considerations about support being provided or count towards the limit as part of the escalation process in the case of repeat offences for non-attendance. These penalty notices are charged at £120, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days.

National threshold when it is appropriate to issue a penalty notice

184. All state funded schools must consider whether a penalty notice for absence is appropriate in each individual case where one of their pupils reaches the national threshold for considering a penalty notice. Schools should not have a blanket position of issuing or not issuing penalty notices and should make judgements on each individual case to ensure fairness and consistency across the country. The threshold is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 school weeks). These sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks). The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term).

185. When a school becomes aware that the threshold has been met, they are expected to make the following considerations to decide whether to issue a penalty notice in each individual case:

- Is support appropriate in this case?

- If yes, schools are expected to continue with the existing support without a penalty notice or issue a notice to Improve if that support is not working or is not being engaged with. A penalty notice can be issued if either has not worked.
- If no, for example a holiday in term time, a penalty notice should be issued subject to the other conditions below.
- Is a penalty notice the best available tool to improve attendance and change parental behaviour for this particular family or would further support or one of the other legal interventions be more appropriate?
- Is issuing a penalty notice in this case appropriate after considering any obligations under the Equality Act 2010 such as where a pupil has a disability?
- (For local authorities only) Is it in the public interest to issue a penalty notice in this case given the local authority would be responsible for any resulting prosecution for the original offence in cases of non-payment?
- If the answer to these questions is yes, then a penalty notice should be issued. If not, another tool or legal intervention should be used to improve attendance.

186. Support is defined as any activity intended to improve the pupil's attendance, not including issuing a penalty notice or prosecution. As part of this consideration, schools and local authorities should consider what suitable forms of support are currently available in school and where necessary from other services and agencies in the area. They should then decide whether any of those things are appropriate in the individual cases and for those that are appropriate, whether they have been provided previously or could be provided now instead of taking legal action. The local authority's decision on whether sufficient support has been provided before issuing a penalty notice should be treated as final.

187. Whatever action is taken after the national threshold has been met, schools, and local authorities where appropriate, should monitor the impact of the action, and if it does not lead to attendance improvement review the case and consider alternative actions.

188. The National Framework does not prevent a penalty notice from being used in other cases where an offence has been committed but before doing so authorised officers are expected to make the same considerations as set out above. If in an individual case the local authority (or other authorised officer) believes a penalty notice would be appropriate, they retain the discretion to issue one before the threshold is met. This might apply for example, where parents are deliberately avoiding the national threshold by taking several term time holidays below threshold, or for repeated absence for birthdays or other family events. If local authorities wish to exercise this discretion to issue a penalty notice earlier in such circumstances, they should make this clear in their Local Code of Conduct. Local authorities who conduct, or may wish to, conduct truancy sweeps will also want to make provision for this within their Code.

Two penalty notice limit and escalation in cases of repeat offences

194. A penalty notice is an out of court settlement which is intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution. If repeated penalty notices are being issued and they are not working to change behaviour they are unlikely to be most appropriate tool. Therefore, only 2 penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3 year rolling period and any second notice within that period is charged at a higher rate:

- The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.

- A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution, but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.

195. Once 3 years has elapsed since the first penalty notice was issued a further penalty notice can be issued, but in most cases it would not be the most effective tool for changing what may have now become an entrenched pattern of behaviour.

196. For the purpose of the escalation process, previous penalty notices include those not paid (including where prosecution was taken forward and the parent pleaded or was found guilty) but not those which were withdrawn.

197. In cases where a pupil has moved school or local authority area in the previous 3 years, an additional check should be made to try and ascertain whether previous penalty notices have been issued to the parent in respect of the pupil. Where the pupil's previous school was in the same local authority area this check will be simple. If the pupil has moved between local authorities in the previous 3 years and the previous local authority(ies) is known they should be contacted to check whether a penalty notice has been issued to that parent for that pupil in the previous 3 years.

These checks can be made by the school and/or local authority depending on the agreed local process. In cases where the previous local authority is not known or the information cannot be, or is not, provided by the previous local authority, it should be assumed that the parent has not previously received a penalty notice and the escalation process started as a new case.

[to view the complete Working Together to improve school attendance: July 2026 document please use the following link

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6a4f9ec6a6586e258d371bd0/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_2026.pdf]

National Framework for penalty notices



Purpose of penalty notices



Penalty notices are issued to parents as an alternative to prosecution where they have failed to ensure their child of compulsory school age regularly attends school, or in certain cases at a place where alternative provision is provided.



They are intended to prevent the need for court action and should be used where support to improve attendance has been provided and has not worked or been engaged with, or would not have been appropriate (e.g. a holiday in term time).



Penalty notices must be issued in line with the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended and local Codes of Conduct.



Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher (or authorised deputy), local authority officer or the police. Copies must be sent to the local authority.



A penalty notice may also be issued where a pupil is present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first 5 days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion.
Fine: £120, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days.

National threshold when it is appropriate to issue a penalty notice



The national threshold is **10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks.**

This can be any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. holiday in term time, arriving late after the register closes). The 10 weeks can span different terms or school years.

When the threshold is met, schools must consider:

- ✓ Is support appropriate and has it been provided or would it be appropriate?
- ✓ Is a penalty notice the best available tool to improve attendance and change parental behaviour?
- ✓ Is issuing a penalty notice appropriate, considering any obligations under the Equality Act 2010 (e.g. disability)?
- ✓ (For local authorities only) Is it in the public interest to issue a penalty notice?



If the answer to these questions is yes, a penalty notice should be issued. If not, another tool or legal intervention should be used. Support is any activity intended to improve attendance, not including issuing a penalty notice or prosecution.

Two penalty notice limit and escalation in cases of repeat offences

Only 2 penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3 year rolling period. A second notice within that period is charged at a higher rate.

FIRST PENALTY NOTICE

Issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil.

1

Charged at
£160

if paid within 28 days.

Reduced to £80
if paid within 21 days.

SECOND PENALTY NOTICE

Issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil within 3 years.

2

Charged at a flat rate of

£160

if paid within 28 days.

THIRD PENALTY NOTICE

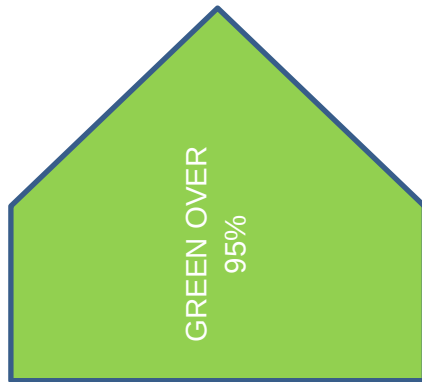
Cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first.

3

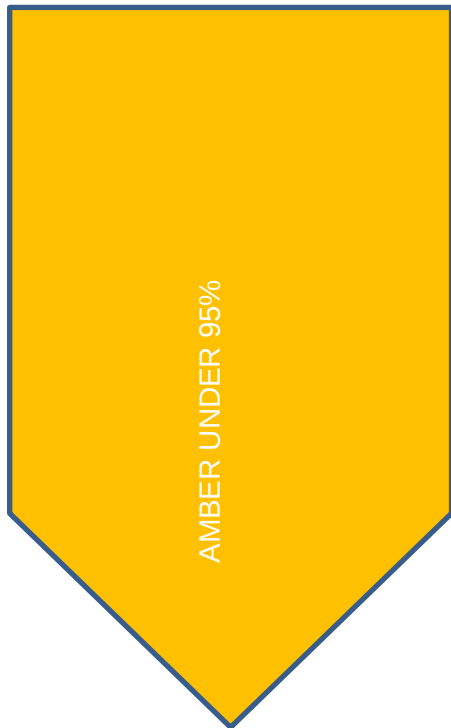
Alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution, but may include other attendance legal interventions.



- Once 3 years has elapsed since the first penalty notice was issued, a further penalty notice can be issued, but it may not be the most effective tool for changing behaviour.
- For the purpose of the escalation process, previous penalty notices include those not paid (including where prosecution was taken forward and the parent pleaded or was found guilty) but not those which were withdrawn.
- If a pupil has moved school or local authority area in the previous 3 years, checks should be made to see whether previous penalty notices have been issued to the parent in respect of the pupil.
- Where previous penalty notices cannot be confirmed, it should be assumed the parent has not previously received a penalty notice and the escalation process started as a new case.



EXCELLENT ATTENDANCE
WELL DONE



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

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

