



# Park Street C of E Primary School



**POLICY:** ATTENDANCE

**Date of approval:**

SPRING 2023

**Date of review:**

SPRING 2025

# Park Street Church of England VA Primary School and Nursery

In our school our Christian vision shapes all we do.

## Flourish and "Let your light shine." Matthew 5:16

At Park Street, we are committed to creating a school community of happy and confident lifelong learners equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to FLOURISH and lead successful lives.

### **Aim**

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a suitable education which includes full-time education. Good attendance helps all children to maximise their learning. At Park Street C of E Primary School and Nursery, we aim to encourage and support pupils in achieving excellent levels of attendance and punctuality so that they are able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them and develop good lifelong habits.

### **Target Setting**

We set annual targets for attendance in accordance with The Education (School Attendance Targets) Regulations 2007.

### **Expectations**

Park Street School will:

- Provide a safe learning environment.
- Ensure that records of attendance are maintained according to DfE legislation and guidance.
- Monitor the attendance of groups and individuals regularly
- Phone on first day of absence
- Follow up all instances of poor attendance and punctuality.
- Complete all attendance data requirements for the CSF and the DfE
- Support and encourage parents and children in developing and maintaining good patterns.

### **Parents**

Parents are expected to:

- Ensure that their child attends school regularly and punctually.
- Maintain regular communication with school staff when necessary
- Avoid taking their children out of school in term time for holidays or other days
- Inform the school in writing beforehand if they know in advance that their child is to be absent for any reason.
- Telephone the school at the start of the first day of unplanned absence (e.g. illness)
- At the end of an unplanned absence to send a note into school.

We recognise that we can only be successful in our time-keeping and attendance procedures with the co-operation and support of parents.

### **Children**

Children are expected to:

- Arrive in school, regularly, and punctually.

- Work with school staff in developing positive attitudes and habits

### **School Day**

The school day begins at 8.55am. The whistle is blown in the playground at 8.50am. The children enter school between 8.50 and 9.00am. The registers will be closed after 9.05am. Any children arriving after this time enter via the main entrance and are registered late.

### **Registration Records**

Teaching staff complete the online Arbor Attendance Module at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. At each session they must record whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The Administrative Assistant checks the system, adding any late children. Parents of any children who are absent from school and have not rung and left a message are telephoned to check the reason for their child not being at school. Updated messages on highlighted children are recorded in the Attendance file on the Shared computer drive.

Staff must ensure that the attendance module is completed using the correct Attendance Codes.

### **The Admission and Attendance Registers**

The law requires all schools to have an admission register and an attendance register. All pupils (regardless of their age) must be placed on both registers.

The Admission Register must contain the personal details of every pupil in the school, along with the date of admission or re-admission to the school, information regarding parents and carers and details of the school last attended.

Attendance Records are legal documents and are of paramount importance in assessing attendance. They are used as evidence should the parents of a persistent non-attender be prosecuted by CSF. They are available for inspection by OFSTED and Attendance Improvement Officers. The Administrative Assistant prints monthly returns which are filed in the Attendance file. Attendance Registers must be kept for a period of three years.

### **Dual Registration – at another educational establishment**

The law allows for dual registration of pupils at more than one school. The main examples of dual registration are pupils who are attending a pupil referral unit, a hospital or a special school on a temporary basis.

Each school should only record the pupil's attendance and absence for those sessions that the pupil is scheduled to attend their school.

### **Reporting**

With their child's end of year report, parents receive the registration certificate detailing absences up to the summer half-term.

## Absences

The school follow up any absences to:

- Ascertain the reason
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken including consideration of PREVENT
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct code to use before entering it on to the school's electronic register.

If no explanation for absence is received by the school, a letter is sent, signed by the Head, requesting explanation on a tear-off slip for return to the office. If none is received an unauthorised absence is recorded.

When a pupil's non-attendance gives cause for concern the Headteacher will write to/meet with parents. This may result in the AIO being informed. This may lead to other agencies becoming involved. This may in turn lead to legal action.

Watch especially for pupils who are:

- Away for long periods.
- Regularly away for short periods.
- Periodically away with a definite pattern.

Professional judgement should also be used in determining whether an absence falls into an unauthorised category. We should have regard to the following factors:

- The nature of the event.
- Its frequency - is it a one-off?
- Whether advance notice is given or parents have discussed the matter with the Class teacher or Headteacher beforehand.
- The overall attendance pattern of the child.

## Authorised/Unauthorised Absence

It is the school - not the parent - which authorises an absence.

Absence will only be authorised due to:

- The pupil is absent with leave [defined as 'leave granted by any person authorised to do so by the governing body]
- The pupil is ill or prevented from attending by any unavoidable cause
- The absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent belongs
- The pupil is a child of Traveller parents who temporarily leave the area giving reasonable indication of their intention to return
- There is a family bereavement
- The pupil is taking part in an approved public performance
- In exceptional circumstances
- The pupil is engaged in an approved off-site educational activity - educational visit, sporting activity, musical activity, residential school trip.

Absence is unauthorised if:

- No explanation is forthcoming from the parent.
- The school is dissatisfied with the explanation.
- The pupil is absent for *unexceptional* special occasions.

Parents are asked to avoid making medical or similar appointments during school hours if at all possible.

All absences which are to be authorised by the school must be covered by a communication from the pupil's parents in writing. Only the school's acceptance of the explanation can result in the absence being authorised. If the school is unable to authorise an absence it will be classified as unauthorised.

Please refer to Hertfordshire County Council's Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct, April 2019 regarding Penalty Notices.

### **Leaving and returning to school during the school day**

When pupils leave or return during the school day, office staff must be notified. The parent/carer must complete the late book in the school office, giving reasons for leaving or returning and the times.

### **Inspection of Attendance Records**

The attendance records are checked half termly by the Head. We work in partnership with the CSF Attendance Improvement Officers to improve attendance for individual pupils and the whole school. The Head consults with the AIO when concerns are identified.

### **Family Holidays**

Changes to legislation, which came into force in September 2013, make clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers no longer have the discretion to allow up to 10 school days in a school year for a family holiday or to agree to extended leave for parents to visit their country of origin.

Requests for leave of absence must be made by parents to the Head on form "Application for Leave of Absence" in advance. These are available from the school office. If leave is granted, it is given in writing.

### **Long Weekends and Days Out**

The Headteacher grants leave for these only in compassionate or other exceptional circumstances. Applications should be by letter, giving reasons.

### **Punctuality**

We encourage punctuality -

- to ensure that school time is not wasted
- as an act of courtesy to staff and other pupils.
- to nurture good workplace skills

We should be sensitive to individual circumstances - late arrivals could stem from difficulties at home or other genuinely unavoidable circumstances. Professional judgement and knowledge of the child and his/her home circumstances should inform how to deal with lateness.

If a child is persistently late, the parents will be contacted so that they can work together to bring about an improvement in punctuality.

### **Maintaining Positive Approaches**

Parents are regularly reminded about attendance and punctuality in school newsletters.