

School Attendance Policy



Reviewed: Autumn 2021

Next Planned Review: Autumn 2022

Whole-School Attendance Policy

The framework for a whole-school attendance policy is based on the 5 'Ps' - namely, Philosophy, Principles, Procedures, Performance and Practice.

Philosophy

Old Park Primary School is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience to all pupils. We believe that, if pupils are to benefit from education, punctuality and good attendance is crucial. As a school, we organise and do all we can to ensure maximum attendance for all pupils. Any problems that impede punctuality and regular attendance are identified and addressed as speedily as possible.

It is the policy of our school to celebrate achievement. Attendance is a critical factor to productive and successful school career. Our school actively promotes and encourages 100% attendance for all our pupils.

Our school gives a high priority to conveying to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance.

If there are problems which affect a pupil's attendance we investigate, identify and work in partnership with parents and pupils to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the pupil to full attendance and consistent punctuality.

Principles

The school will:

- ensure that all staff are aware of the registration procedures and receive in-service training on registration regulations and associated education law,
- complete registers accurately at the beginning of each morning and during the afternoon session,
- stress to parents/carers the importance of contacting staff early on the first day of absence,
- reward good and improved attendance of all pupils,
- promote positive staff attitudes to pupils returning after absence,
- consult with all members of the school community and the Attendance Support Team in developing and maintaining the whole-school attendance policy,
- ensure regular evaluation of attendance procedures by senior managers and the school governors,
- send regular newsletters to parents and pupils informing them of attendance rates and related issues, additionally maintain and update information on the school website with any attendance related issues,

- work towards ensuring that all pupils feel supported and valued. We send a clear message that, if a pupil is absent, she/he will be missed,
- have in place procedures which allow absentees to catch up on missed work without disrupting the learning of other class members, consider remote learning opportunities where necessary,
- take responsibility for Children not Receiving Education (CNRE), so that school are in regular contact with the pupil and parent, ensuring the pupils safety, working together so that the pupil can resume full time education,
- monitor and regularly review those pupils subject to a modified timetable, ensuring it is a short term intervention and have a clear plan for reintegration back into full time attendance at school.

Procedures

If no contact is received from the parents/carers of an absent pupil on the first morning of absence we will:

- follow 'First day contact' procedures and contact the parent by telephone/text message,
- send a letter if an explanation has still not been received after 3 days of unexplained absence or send a School Attendance Letter (SAL),
- refer to the school's Education Welfare Officer (EWO), to follow up absence if no response is received after 5 days of absence and consider a referral to '*Family Connect*' if no contact can be made with the parent,
- where there are safeguarding or similar concerns regarding the pupil/family additional services should be contacted immediately if the school is unable to make contact with the family (e.g social care, strengthening families),
- invite the parents into school for an 'Attendance Concern Meeting' (ACM) after a maximum of 10 days absence, unless other action is planned. This meeting should include a senior member of staff, parent, pupil (where appropriate) and the EWO. The aim of this meeting will be to identify and resolve the difficulties which are preventing the pupil from attending school. The parents/carers will be made aware of the legal requirements regarding school attendance,
- support the pupil's re-integration where a pupil is returning to school after an absence of longer than two weeks. In the event of a pupil returning after a long-term absence then a 'Reintegration Plan' can be implemented. The plan should include all members of the school staff and will be designed to be as supportive of the pupils needs as possible
- provide Early Help advice and support to the family, undertaking an Early Help Assessment if appropriate and make a referral to Strengthening Families if it is felt the family would benefit from additional support.

In order to ensure the success of this policy every member of the school staff will make attendance a priority and convey to the pupils the importance of their education.

Performance

It is important to set realistic targets for both attendance and persistent absence; these targets will be set during the autumn term of each academic year, in consultation with the Governing Body. The Governing Body must approve the school target for attendance to be set for the following academic year and will be recorded in the governing body minutes. Ideally, the target should be sent to the Attendance Support Team by the end of the autumn term at the latest. In compiling an 'Action Plan', the school will look at those interventions which have been successful as part of the evaluation process.

When evaluating success the school will consider the impact of the work on school attendance by whether or not:

- Attendance has improved
- Persistent absence has reduced
- Punctuality has improved
- Parental response to absences has improved
- Re-integration plans, where implemented, have been successful
- There are specific key groups where a target approach is appropriate to raise attendance, e.g. children in receipt of pupil premium.
- The school has been successful in raising the profile of attendance both within the school, governing body and the local community
- Pupils are fully aware of the importance of punctuality and regular attendance and the attendance procedures operating within school
- Attendance issues have been included as topics in school assemblies, Personal and Social Education (PHSE) lessons, or as a theme for any other lessons

Practice

The school will recognise the importance of good practice by:

- Keeping and maintaining registers accurately
- Maintaining a consistent approach to marking registers
- Regularly analysing attendance data & comparing it against both the local and national average, and considering the performance of key groups in comparison to the national data for that particular group.
- Ensuring prompt follow-up action in cases of non-school attendance
- Liaising closely with the school's EWO, if appropriate
- Recording (and retaining) carefully, all telephone messages/email or contact from parents
- A signed copy of any correspondence to parents is retained by the school
- A referral is made to AST (the Attendance Support Team) for intervention using the electronic ASTR form

Key notes regarding coding of absence as follows

- Code B should not be used 'for any unsupervised educational activity or where the pupil is at home doing school work'.
- Code X is being temporary used for children isolating who are not well with covid-19 symptoms but not yet a confirmed positive case. If the child is confirmed having covid-19 they will be then marked as code I for illness.
- Any leave of absence is granted entirely at the Head teacher's discretion if there are 'exceptional circumstances'. If the leave of absence is unauthorised the regulations

do not allow school to give retrospective approval. If parents do not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.

This policy is based on a model Telford & Wrekin Council Attendance Support policy and guidance (September 2020), a copy of which can be obtained from the school office.