



Attendance Policy

Rationale

At College Park Infant School we believe that pupils need to attend school regularly and punctually if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered to them and make all round progress in learning and personal and social development.

Attendance at school is a statutory requirement and parents/guardians are obliged under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act, to ensure that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless illness or other authorised absence prevents it.

The Department for Education sets the national expectation for primary schools to reach at least 95% attendance across the year. Each school may also set an individual target. The target for College Park is to always be above 95% in line with our high expectations for everything.

We recognise that from time to time some pupils and their families may experience problems which could lead to lateness or absence. However, we aim to actively encourage punctuality and attendance by:-

- discouraging lateness;
- expecting an application from parents/guardians for leave of absence (when known in advance);
- being alert to emerging patterns of absence;
- promoting regular attendance, involving the Local Authority's School Attendance Team when necessary.

Purpose

To promote good attendance at College Park Infant School we provide an education that brings out the best in every child, builds on their strengths, enables them to develop a love of learning and helps them to grow into confident and independent citizens, valued for the contribution they make. We encourage and support the involvement of each child in their own learning and aim that school provides an interesting, stimulating and motivating environment.

Process

Registration Procedure

The Register is called and attendance data is marked on the School Information Management System (SIMs) register.

Absences must be coded according to the given codes.

Gates are unlocked at 8.30am and classroom doors are opened at 8.45am. The children should be in class no later than 8.55am, when registers will be taken.

Any child arriving at school between 8.55am and 9.04am will be marked as late.

Morning registers will close at 9.05 am. Children who arrive after the register has been closed will be marked late after register (unauthorised absence).

Afternoon registers are taken at 12.50pm (Yr R), 1.05pm (Yr 1) and 1.20pm (yr 2). They are closed after 5 minutes for each year group respectively.

All telephone messages or messages in person regarding absence/lateness are to be recorded in the school office and/or on the attendance sheet which is kept in the front of the register.

All absence notes/ letters from parents/guardians must be kept in the Register.

Registers will be retained for 5 years.

N.B. Registers are Legal Documents and may be used in evidence in cases where parents/guardians are being prosecuted for attendance offences.

Procedures for Following Up Absence

If any child has not been registered or the school has not been notified about a child's absence, the office will contact the parent/guardian on the first day directly by telephone or by text. If necessary a member of staff may visit the home address to ascertain the reason for the pupil's absence.

If there are safeguarding concerns then the school will contact Social Care or the Police.

If the parent/guardian notifies the school of a child's reason for absence, but the child continues to be absent for more than a week then an update check will be made by the school.

If a pupil returns to school with no explanation of his/her absence, a letter requesting a reason for absence will be sent by Administration Staff and followed up until a reply is received.

(Class teachers should enquire on return as to why child was absent.)

Office to follow up as needed and liaise with the Headteacher.

The School's Role in Pupil's Absence

Issues regarding attendance

The initial follow-up on punctuality and absenteeism rests with the Class teacher. It is the teacher who calls the register, learns the friendship patterns within the class and is most aware of family dynamics and potential problems.

If the teacher notices that a child is absent regularly this is brought to the SIMS Manager's attention and a print out of attendance is requested.

Levels of Concern

Green level: If a child has 10 days of continuous or regular absence, such as a particular day of the week, parents/guardians are invited in to discuss any attendance issues they have with the Headteacher, whilst being reminded of their statutory responsibility. Establishing good links and a working partnership with parents/guardians is an important prerequisite for achieving good levels of attendance.

The school will not authorise illness over 5 days unless satisfactory information has been shared with the school e.g. telephone call, proof of medication or photocopy of appointment card.

Amber level: If poor levels of attendance continue beyond 15 days, contact will be made with parents/guardians asking them back to meet with the Headteacher to discuss further issues. If the absences are related to medical issues the parents/guardians will be then required to provide evidence of each absence. The evidence can be doctor or hospital appointment cards.

Red level: If absences continue and evidence is not provided the parents/guardians will be informed that they will be referred to the Local Authority School Attendance Team for consideration of a Fixed Penalty Notice.

The school may submit a request for a School Attendance Panel meeting to be held if a pupil has 20 or more unauthorised sessions (see SAT Guidance for further details).

Issues regarding punctuality

Children arriving at school after 8.55 a.m. when the registers are called will be marked late.

Punctuality will be monitored by the SIMS/Admin Officer and Headteacher. Procedures will be the same as the above for attendance. It will be based on continuous or regular lateness.

Promoting Attendance

Our aim is to encourage parents/guardians via their children to regularly attend school. To promote attendance class percentages will be celebrated in monthly newsletters as appropriate. At the discretion of the Headteacher a child may be removed from a class's attendance figures i.e. for long term illness but not overall figures reported to the Department for Education. Other incentives are used to encourage attendance, such as stickers, certificates and rewards.

At the end of the each term, any child who has 100% attendance for that term will receive a sticker. At the end of the year children will receive certificates/stickers for:

- 100% attendance
- Improved attendance
- Trying hard with attendance

Authorised/Unauthorised Absences

Sickness, hospital appointments, dentist, religious holidays, clinic and family funerals would all be examples of authorised absences, except in cases of persistent absence.

Shopping, birthdays, visiting relatives, buying shoes, going for a haircut, parents/guardians unwell would be classed as unauthorised absence.

Holidays

The Government made changes in terms of schools' responses to parental requests for Leave of Absence from schools. It is a Government policy that children should attend school regularly and school absence should be reduced to a minimum. This is because there is clear evidence that any absence from school can and does impact on children's education attainment.

The previous law on leave of absence allowed schools to authorise up to ten days leave for the purpose of family holiday in special circumstances and many people interpreted this as an entitlement. This is a misunderstanding and the Government has now changed the law to avoid any confusion.

Term Time Holiday

From 1st September 2013 the law removed references to **family holiday** and **extended leave**. The amendments make clear that the headteacher **may not** grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**.

Exceptional Circumstances

Examples of **exceptional circumstances** may be, **significant family bereavement, significant family illness or Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad.**

If exceptional circumstances occur within the following times, **the first month of an academic year, transition days or Year 2 SATs time**, the headteacher must be convinced that absence is the only option.

Fixed Penalty Notices

Referral for a **fixed penalty notice (FPN)** is given for unauthorised absence from school. It may be used in the following circumstances:

- When a pupil has at least 10 sessions (5 school days) recorded as an unauthorised absence in a term.
- For an unauthorised leave of absence in term time e.g. a family holiday.
- Persistent late arrival at school (after the register closes).

The school supports the view that every lesson counts and discourages parents/guardians from taking holidays/children out of school in term time. However, there may be circumstances when this is unavoidable.

Medical and Dental Appointments

Upon leaving school the office will note that the child is Offsite and the reason, e.g. dentist. Upon return the parent/guardian and child will report to the office when the child will be 'signed in'. The school will encourage parents/guardians to make non urgent medical appointments out of school hours. If these appointments do fall in school time the parent/guardian should be aware that the child should return to school for the rest of the session.

Exclusion

Exclusion is very rare but in the event that exclusion is necessary the LA guidelines will be used. If a lengthy period of exclusion is required reintegration will be planned and monitored.

Moving

If children move on to another school contact is awaited from the new school and then the child's records are sent on to them. However if a child leaves the school without informing us, after two week's absence if we are still unable to contact the Parents//Guardians, this will trigger a missing child enquiry to the Local Authority School Attendance Team.

Responsibilities

- Parents/Guardians are responsible for their child's attendance.
- Classteachers are responsible for day to day monitoring of attendance and punctuality through registration.
- SIMS/Admin Officer is responsible for monitoring the weekly attendance data and reporting it to the Headteacher.
- The Headteacher and SIMS/Admin Officer meet regularly, to share information and take appropriate action.
- The Senior Leadership Team, including the Headteacher, are responsible for tracking the data and reviewing the protocols in place for attendance and punctuality.
- The Headteacher is responsible for reporting to Governors and working with families to improve attendance.
- The Governing Body is responsible for monitoring progress and questioning and supporting the school.

Agreed : November 2017

Review: November 2020