

# Parkstone Grammar School



## ATTENDANCE POLICY

DATE APPROVED	October 2021
APPROVED BY	Curriculum & Student Matters Committee
NEXT REVIEW	2024-25
TYPE OF POLICY	Non-Statutory



# ATTENDANCE

## SAFEGUARDING

The monitoring of students attendance is central to the safeguarding procedures of Parkstone Grammar School. By promoting and monitoring attendance levels and by taking necessary action as a result of poor attendance we will be supporting the safeguarding work taking place within school to keep our pupils safe.

## AIMS

1. To convey a clear message to students and parents that regular sustained attendance is vital as there is a proven link between high attendance and academic success. This policy ensures that we therefore consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all our young people.
2. To ensure all students are fully safeguarded, all attendance procedures will be implemented with rigour and consistency.
3. To establish and sustain effective links with parents, to ensure awareness of their legal responsibilities.
4. To encourage students to acquire good habits of regular attendance and punctuality as a preparation for the world of work.
5. School attendance is subject to various Education Laws and this policy is written to reflect these laws. These requirements are contained in:
  - The Education Act 1996 – sections 434(1)(3)(4)&(6) and 458(4)&(5)
  - The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
  - The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
  - The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
  - The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

## RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Promoting positive behaviour and excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community including students, parents, staff and governors.

### Students will

- Attend school on a regular basis.
- Arrive to their registration class by 8.25am.
- Attend all lessons punctually.

### Parents will

- Ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually.
- Contact the school on the first day of absence by 9.30am.
- Provide a written note or email explaining their child's absence on return.
- Arrange medical or dental appointments out of school hours wherever possible.
- Inform the school in advance of any known absence.
- Attend any necessary meetings to discuss their child's attendance and punctuality as appropriate.



### **The school will**

- Write to all parents/carers at the start of the academic year and at termly intervals thereafter to remind parents of the contents of the policy and appropriate school procedures.
- Make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including students, parents, staff and governors.
- Monitor attendance and punctuality, interviewing students without delay if there is a problem.
- Complete a CME (Child Missing Education) form after a prolonged absence from school (usually 10 school days) and send this to the Local Authority if no contact has been made with the school.
- Treat as a priority any students who are likely to become Persistent Absentees, where attendance is approaching or below 90%.
- Work with students and their families to ensure each student attend school regularly and punctually.
- Provide support, advice and guidance and regular information to parents and students on issues relating to attendance and punctuality.
- Recognise the needs of the individual student when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.
- Promote effective partnerships with the School Inclusion Link Worker and other agencies.
- Include attendance data in reporting to parents.
- Provide attendance data to governors.

### **School Procedures**

- Students are registered in tutor groups at morning registration at 8.25am.
- Students are registered in period 5 for afternoon registration by 2.15pm.
- Students are registered in all teaching lessons.
- All registrations are completed electronically using the schools SIMS system.

### **Lateness**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. Good habits are vital for the world of work.

Students should arrive in their tutor rooms by 8.25am in the morning, arriving after 8.25am will mean the student is recorded as Late. The register remains open for the tutor to amend until 8.30am. If a student arrives after this time they must report to reception where they will receive an 'Authorised Late' mark. Any student arriving after 8.55am will receive an 'Unauthorised Late' mark and this would be counted as an absence by law. The only exception to this is when school buses arrive late.

Punctuality to school is monitored by the pastoral year teams and appropriate levels of sanctions and/or support are in place to deal with persistent lateness. Attendance and punctuality to lessons is monitored by the subject teacher with an overview held by the Head of Department.

An absence report will be brought to Leadership group meetings once a fortnight to ensure that Key Stage Managers are kept up to date with attendance levels in their year group which can be discussed as appropriate at line management meetings.

### **First Day Absence**

Parents and carers are expected to contact the school each day of their child's absence and provide a reason for their non-attendance at school, using either the "Notify a Student Absent" phone line (01202 605605, Option 1) or the email Student Absence button 'Report an absence' via the school website.

If no contact is made by the parent/carer a member of the Attendance Team will contact the child's parent/carers as part of the school's 'First Day Absence Call'. The information received will then be transferred to the telephone messages record held by the Attendance Team and also recorded electronically



in the comment box in the appropriate register on SIMS. If the reason for absence is one the school is not allowed to accept by law it will be recorded as 'Unauthorised'.

### Subsequent Absences

Each subsequent day of absence will be treated the same as the first day of absence with a call to parents/carers if no contact has been made with the school. If no contact has been made after two days discussions will take place with the appropriate Head of Year, Key Stage Manager and School Inclusion Link Worker to determine the next course of action.

### Frequent Absence

Attendance is monitored regularly by the school's Attendance Team in conjunction with Heads of Year. Observable patterns include:

- Attendance falling below 95%.
- Developing patterns of absence.
- Numbers of broken weeks.

Where absence begins to cause a concern for students we will intervene as necessary. The following points will be used to trigger letters home to parents.

Stage	Number of days absent
Pre-Stage One	5 (10 sessions)
Stage One	8 (16 sessions)
Stage Two	18 (36 sessions)
Stage Three	20 (40 Sessions)

Actions required for each stage:

#### **Pre-Stage One** – 5 whole days or 10 sessions

Student spoken to by Assistant Head of Year. Notes are recorded.

#### **Stage One** – 8 whole days or 16 sessions accumulatively

Tutor, Assistant Head of Year or Head of Year to meet with students to discuss absence

Student placed on Amber List – compiled by Assistant Head of Year and discussed with Head of Year, who raises with Line manager in their fortnightly meeting

Stage one letter sent home

#### **Stage Two** – 18 whole days or 36 sessions

Weekly monitoring by year team – further absence to trigger meeting with Head of Year

Stage two letter sent home

Phone call to parents or invite parents to a meeting to discuss possibility of voluntary contract

Student placed on Red List – raised at Line Management and then at Leadership Group

Discussion with pastoral team and tutor to review grade card or round robin (if the grade card is more than one month old or yet to be published)

Implement other strategies as necessary (i.e. medical note/evidence required for medical appointments. This is dependent on the features of the child's absence)

#### **Stage Three** – 20 Whole days or 40 sessions

Stage three letter

Meeting with Parents, School Inclusion Link Worker, Head of Year, and Key Stage Manager

Specific targets to be set by School Inclusion Link Worker and monitored weekly

Referral to SEN – 'Prolonged absence.'



The school also works with the School Inclusion Link Worker where there are attendance issues. They will audit the school's attendance statistics on a termly basis identifying students of particular concern. Attendance surgeries or home visits are then arranged with the families. The School Inclusion Link Worker will also engage in meetings held by Heads of Year where issues have already been identified by the school.

## **MEDICAL CONCERNS**

If any student is absent from school due to illness, a letter or email must be provided by their parent/carers. Prolonged absence due to medical reasons will require medical evidence such as a doctor's note, hospital appointment letter or prescription.

Any student with no long-term medical needs that will affect attendance will be supported by the school, but parent/carers will be asked to meet with the appropriate pastoral team. The aim of the meeting is to ensure that the school is doing everything it can to support the student (see also: Supporting Students with Medical Needs Policy on the school website).

## **AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES**

### **Authorised Absences**

Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for a student to be out of school, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for absence. All absences will be treated as unauthorised until the school has agreed on a satisfactory explanation.

### **Categories of Authorised Absence**

- **Illness, Medical and Dental Appointments**

Where the school believes that a student is genuinely unwell the absence will be authorised. When attending a medical or dental appointment it is important that such appointments be made outside school hours unless in extreme unavoidable cases. Students must return after or before such appointments to obtain a present mark for that session.

- **Days of Religious Observance**

The school will be sensitive to such requests and parents are encouraged to give advance notice to the Headteacher/Governing Body for leave of absence.

- **Exclusions**

A student excluded for a fixed period remains on roll and the absence will be treated as authorised as it results from a decision taken by the school.

- **Other**

The school will follow the latest guidance from the Government regarding attendance during extraordinary circumstances for example Covid-19.

### **Unauthorised Absence**

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This could include:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy through the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained



- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark (after registration has closed)
- Day trips and holidays in term time

Unauthorised absence can/will lead to school sanctions being imposed on a student and where appropriate the school will refer to the School Inclusion Link Worker. This action could lead to sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

### **Leave of Absence During Term Time**

The Department for Education made amendments to the 2006 Education Act (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 which came into force on 1 September 2013. The amendments remove previous references to the allowance of family holiday and extended leave.

This new law means that the Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Requesting leave of absence can only be made by the parent/carer the child resides with and must be done in writing, in advance, to the Head of Year/Headteacher, but will only be considered under exceptional circumstances.

The following would be counted as Exceptional Circumstances:

(You may be asked to provide written evidence in certain circumstances)

- Return of parent from active service (Forces)
- Death or terminal illness of a parent, step-parent or sibling
- Young Carers
- Disability or respite leave

The following are examples which may not be counted as exceptional circumstances and may lead to requests not being granted:

- Cheaper holiday dates
- Attendance at a wedding or christening
- Visiting relatives either abroad or in the UK
- Limitations on parents leave' entitlement or dates (unless supported by a contract of employment)

If leave of absence is taken without authorisation it will be considered as an unauthorised absence and that, as such, may lead to a request to the Local Authority for the issuing of a Penalty Notice. The fine is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice; rising to £120. Parents may also be fined for each child that they take out of school on unauthorised leave within term time.

### **SUMMARY**

Continuity of attendance is vital for academic success. Absence can lead to a lack of progress within a student's curriculum but it can also affect a young person's integration amongst the peers. This can lead to more severe problems of social acceptance. This policy is therefore of vital importance to the whole school community and will be revised on a regular basis by the Governing Body.



# APPENDIX 1

## LETTERS HOME

### STAGE ONE LETTER

Dear [Parent/Carer's name]

#### Re Absence from School

[Child's Name] has now had \_\_\_\_\_ days absence this academic year which would be [percentage] over the year if no other absences occur.

As I am sure you are aware high levels of school attendance are crucial in terms of academic success for our students and there is no substitute for attending regularly and participating in school lessons.

If the attendance of [Child's Name] does not increase throughout the year then we are sure that, at this stage, the impact of the absence on [Child's Name] school work can be minimised and we will have no further concerns. However, we thought it wise to write to explain that continued higher rates of absence may start to adversely affect progress and attainment throughout the year.

If there is anything that we can do to help or further support you then please do not hesitate to ask and we are always happy to discuss any issues which may begin to impact attendance. Our experience shows us that regular communication with home and early discussion of these matters can really help support our students in the development of excellent attendance habits for later in life.

Thank you for all your help in supporting [child's name]'s work at Parkstone Grammar, please do not hesitate to contact us if you would like to discuss anything further.

Yours sincerely

HOY/ Assistant HOY



## STAGE TWO LETTER

Dear [Parent/Carer's name]

### Re Absence from School

[Child's Name] has now had \_\_\_\_\_ days absence this academic year, equating to \_\_\_\_\_ weeks and \_\_\_\_\_ day(s). This would be [percentage] over the year if no other absences occur.

This falls below the School expected minimum attendance of 96%. As I am sure you are aware high levels of school attendance are crucial in terms of academic success for our students and there is no substitute for attending regularly and participating in school lessons.

[Child's Name]'s absence is now approaching the stage where statistics show that it can make up to a grade's difference in their outcomes for the year. It is also important that, as far as is possible, further absences are avoided this year. If [Child's Name]'s absence continues to increase we will hold a meeting between yourselves and the year team to discuss how we can ensure approved attendance.

There are always some instances where this might be inevitable, for instance if a period of illness was to prevent a child attending school. As we are now at the point where outcomes are affected by absence it is important that we discuss if any gaps in [child's name]'s learning need to be addressed through some further support.

Please contact us if you have concerns regarding work missed.

Yours sincerely

HOY/ Assistant HOY





### STAGE THREE LETTER

Dear [Parent/Carer's name]

#### Re Absence from School

[Child's Name] has now had \_\_\_\_\_ days absence this academic year, equating to \_\_\_\_\_ weeks and \_\_\_\_\_ day(s). This would be [percentage] over the year if no other absences occur. This falls below the School expected minimum attendance of 96%.

As you are aware high levels of school attendance are crucial in terms of academic success for our students and there is no substitute for attending regularly and participating in school lessons.

We are now very concerned that [Child's Name]'s achievement is being impacted. A student whose absence is at such levels will underperform by at least a grade in relation to expectations and we are keen to ensure this does not happen. We would like to meet to discuss the issues with attendance on [arranged date]

At this meeting we will discuss how attendance will be monitored for the foreseeable future, the impact that attendance is having on current performance, a review of any issues which may be preventing good attendance and to offer support in the process of sustaining better attendance from this point onwards.

We will also be discussing the absence with the School Inclusion Link Worker as future absence will put [Child's Name] in danger of reaching an attendance rate of 90%. This level of absence is defined by the Government as persistent absenteeism and may require us to trigger a greater level of support, including discussions with the School Inclusion Link Worker to improve attendance rates.

As a school we are clear in our commitment in helping parents to support good levels of attendance and we are keen to ensure our communication is such that enables all students to achieve their potential. We look forward to meeting with you and will be in touch to arrange a meeting as soon as possible to ensure that [child's name]'s attendance improves and that all learning that has been missed can be addressed to ensure the impact on achievement this year is minimised.

Yours sincerely

HOY/ Assistant HOY