

PARK AVENUE GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

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Educating Nurturing Inspiring

REVIEWED ON _____

Introduction

This is a successful school and your daughter plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education, it is vital that they attend regularly and your daughter should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your daughter attends regularly and this policy sets out how we will achieve this together.

Why regular attendance is so important:

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect the learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so many affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your daughter's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Promoting regular attendance:

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is every body's responsibility – parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us focus on this we will:

- Report to you at least half termly on how your daughter is performing in school, what her attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to her attainments
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and form achievements
- Reward good or improving attendance through form achievements
- Reward good or improving attendance through form competition and certificates.

Understanding types of absence:

Every half day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED OR UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings and afternoons away from school for a good reason such as illness, medical/dental appointments, emergencies which unavoidably fall in school time.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This type of absence can lead to the authority using sanctions and/ or legal proceedings.

- Parents/ carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school consistently late
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthday parties
- Day trips and holidays in term which have not been agreed.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absences or to give in to pressure to excuse them for attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 20% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark, is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

Absence Procedure

If your daughter is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence,
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even if you have already telephoned us;

If your daughter is absent we will:

- Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with your daughters Head of Year or the Headteacher if absence persists;

Telephone Numbers:

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. Help us to help you and your daughter by making sure we always have an up-to-date number – if we do not then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers through out the year.

Lateness:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your daughter misses the start of the day she can miss work and not spend time with her class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

How to manage lateness:

The school day starts at 08.30am and we expect your daughter to be in class at that time.

Registers are marked by 08.35am and your daughter will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At 08.35am the registers will be closed. In accordance with the regulations, if your daughter arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site,

If your daughter has a persistent late record, you will be asked to meet with the Headteacher to resolve the problem, however you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your daughter to school on time.

Holidays in Term Time:

Taking holidays in Term Time will affect your daughters schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away during school time.

Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost of your daughter's education.

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

All applications for leave must be made in advance and at the discretion of the school and a maximum of 10 days in any academic year **may** be authorised. In making a decision the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave in term time.

Full details of our policy and procedures are available from the school, but it is important that you understand the circumstances when leave in term time **will not be agreed by us:**

- When a pupil is just starting the school. This is very important as your daughter needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible.
- Immediately before and during GCSE assessment periods, end of term exams or any other public examinations.
- When a pupil attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence.
- Where a pupil attendance rate is already below (95%) or will fall to or below that level as a result of taking holiday leave.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classified as unauthorised and may attract sanctions.

School targets, projects, and special initiatives

The school has targets to improve attendance and your daughter has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

The minimum level of attendance for this school is 95% attendance and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your daughter's attendance compares.

However our target is to achieve better than this, because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe our pupils can be amongst the best in the country.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

Summary:

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure the highest level of attendance as possible.

I have read and understood the terms and conditions of the Attendance Policy at Park Avenue Girls' High School, Stoke on Trent.

Parent/ Guardian: _____ Name(_____)

Daughter's Name: _____ Form: _____

Date;_____

ABSENCE AND ATTENDANCE CODES

- /\ Present at registration
- (B) Educated offsite i.e. attending a taster day at another school (authorised)
- (C) Other authorised circumstances i.e. attending wedding of a family member, family bereavement, prison visit, etc.
- (E) Excluded – Authorised absence
- (F) Extended family holiday (agreed) - authorised absence. More than 10 school days (in exceptional cases)
- (G) Family holiday (not agreed or days in excess of agreement) – unauthorised absence
- (H) Family holiday (agreed) – up to 10 school days – authorised absence
- (I) Illness (not medical or dental etc – appointment) – authorised absence
- (J) Interview (for further education) Authorised absence
- (L) Late (before registration closed) - present
- (M) Medical/ Dental appointment – Authorised absence
- () Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/ description)
If the reason for absence is not justified (by putting a code in the circle) within a two week timescale then the absence will be considered as authorised and parents must be notified
- (S) Study leave – authorised absence
- (U) Late (after registration closed) – unauthorised absence
- (V) Educational visit or trip – ‘present’
- (W) Work experience – ‘present’ the school will check on the attendance of the pupil at the work experience placement and mark the register accordingly
- (Y) Forced and practical closure. Not counted in possible attendance i.e. school closed due to weather, fire, health .e.t.c

Summary

Authorised Absence (Red)

B
C
E
F
H
I
J
M
S

Unauthorized Absence (Red)

G
U
O

Present (black)

/\
L
V
W

PROCEDURE FOR MONITORING ATTENDANCE
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a) First day contact

The purpose of first-contact is to:

- Provide a way in which parents can let the school know that a pupil is unable to come to school, the reasons for this and the expected date of return
- Enable the school to contact parents/ carer to notify them their daughter/ cared child has not arrived in school

A designated member of the office staff will be responsible for contacting parents on the first day of absence

Procedures

- Registers to be checked at 9am and 2pm, pupils who are first day absent are identified
- The office member contacts parents by phone to query the absence (ensure correct phone/mobile number is used)
- Records of all absence contacts made to parents must be kept.

b) Following up absences

- Parents must send a written note to explain their daughter's absence(s) on the first day she returns back to school although they have phoned the school.
- If the pupil is absent for **two consecutive days** and the office failed to contact parents, then on the third day of absence a letter to parents urging them to notify the school of the reason for their daughter's absence will sent.
- Within three school days of the date of the letter, if the parents have still not contacted the school, the Headteacher will contact the safeguarding board to seek advice. **All phone calls must be recorded.**
- Data manager to check form registers on a weekly basis and act immediately upon any unjustified/ cause for concern absence. They will also ensure that form tutors are using the correct code and that register figures are fully completed.
- Data manager to be expected to sign and date in the register when checking it.

c) Actions to be taken for pupils whom attendance is a cause for concern

- Absence on a certain day on a regular basis, all members of staff will inform the welfare officer(Aapa Nisa) who will send a letter to parents to discuss their concern.
- Too many absences on a certain day due to medical appointments
- Pupils who fail to return to school at the end of an authorised leave of absence
- Pupils who go on holiday without gaining school permission:
 - recorded as G in registers
 - Parents are contacted by WO
- Pupils regularly attend school after registration is closed:
 - WO will invite parents in writing for a meeting to discuss the concern and agree on targets

KEY ELEMENTS IN SECURING POSITIVE ATTENDANCE

The aim of improving overall attendance of all pupils is to maximise the impact of effective teaching and learning. Policy should define agreed roles and responsibilities and promote, monitor and elevate the consistent application of practice. Key elements to be considered and included are:

1. Leadership of attendance
2. Registration practice
3. Promotion of good attendance
4. Persistence Absence(PA)
5. Support, advice and guidance
6. Roles and responsibilities
7. Data analysis
8. Rewards and sanctions
9. Monitoring, evaluation and review

1. Leadership and Attendance

A member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) should champion attendance, take a day to day role in ensuring attendance remains a high priority, oversee the school's attendance team and lead the whole staff group in securing improving levels of attendance through the measures included in this document.

2. Registration Practice

Clear and consistently applied registration practice ensures accurate data. Registers are taken at least twice daily and also lesson by lesson. Attendance and absences are recorded accurately in accordance with the law and guidance. All absences are accounted for within two weeks.

Form tutors play an active role in promoting attendance during tutor time. All staff understand the effect of using the wrong code on the use of sanctions in relation to attendance and pupils whereabouts during the first five days of exclusion, and on identifying pupils who are at risk of becoming persistent absentees (PA).

3. Promoting good attendance

Policy and practice make attendance and punctuality priority for all of the school community, including pupils, parents, carers, teachers, and trustees, non teaching, administrative and ancillary staff.

Displays around the school give clear messages about the importance of attendance

4. Persistent Absence (PA)

The school evaluates its practice and draws up an action plan in response

Pupils who are at risk of becoming persistent absentees are identified early and an individual action plan is agreed with the pupil and parent/carer

5. Support, advice and guidance

There is positive and frequent communication with pupils, parents and carers about attendance. Staff set a good example in order to help pupils establish regular and punctual attendance.

All pupils have an individual attendance target based on a traffic light system that sets high expectations. This is revised each term. First day contact is made with parents/carers if a pupil fails to attend.

There is an escalation of intervention from the first day of absence giving increasing support and guidance if needed and, where required, direction and enforcement. Intervention recognises the needs of the individual pupil.

There is swift and effective communication between school and the home. There is a speedy response to any problems identified.

There is a clear and time limited case management of poor attendance.

Personalised learning and curriculum modification are in place to address and reduce disaffection.

Pupils returning from absence are helped to catch up on work missed, and there is a formal reintegration process for pupils returning from longer absence; for example study support, homework clubs and activities outside of the normal school day. Alternatives are available for pupils who are unable to attend.

6. Roles and responsibilities

All staff have agreed roles and responsibilities in promoting and securing high levels of attendance.

The escalation of intervention is clearly set out with tasks and timescales for school staff and partner services and agencies.

7. Data Analysis

There is a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance data. The school has at least half termly attendance and absence figures, which are compared to figures for the current and previous years.

The school has longitudinal data for the previous years.

The school knows and monitors the number of pupils who have persistent absence, or are on track to become pupils with persistent absence. There is a breakdown of attendance/ absence by absence code, year group, key stage and attainment.

The school can demonstrate that it knows the whereabouts of each pupil and/ or their reasons for absence.

Attendance is compared to successful schools in similar circumstances.

8. Rewards and Sanctions

There are frequent promotional activities such as assemblies and celebrations of achievement and improvement through rewards and praise.

There are group and individual opportunities to succeed.

9. Monitoring, Evaluation and review

- The attendance policy was drawn up
- The policy is publicised to all staff, pupils and carers at the start of each year.
- The policy is reviewed at least biannually (twice a year)
- There is a scrutiny process in place to set targets and monitor progress against targets and benchmarks over time in relation to absence and persistent absence.
- Successful interventions are implemented.

example of successful interventions include:

- Letter from WO sent home each term to outline the Schools expectations for attendance
- Systems and structures in place to ensure that pupils stay on site all day
- Individual support for pupils with high levels of absence
- School use of parent contract
- Focusing on the importance of pupils attending school by ensuring Study leave is kept to a minimum and allowed only for pupils in KS4 who have the motivation and skills to make effective use of the time.
- Ensuring that pupils understand the need to attend tests and exams

The school has evaluated its policy and practice against the Ofsted Inspection criteria.

BAD WEATHER – CODE OF PRACTICE

Principles of the Code

In adverse weather conditions, the School's objectives will be to:

- a) Maintain the same standard and level of service as far as possible.
- b) Avoid as far as possible any additional costs associated with lost time or the need to provide cover.

The school recognises that adverse weather conditions will, from time to time, make travel to and from work difficult. However, staff are expected to make all reasonable efforts to reach their workplace in order to help fulfil the objectives stated above. The school will ensure that no individual or group of staff is treated more favourably than another individual or group.

1. Arriving late

Staff arriving late will not lose pay provided the Headteacher is satisfied that their arrival time is reasonable taking account of:

- a) The distance they live from their workplace.
- b) The prevailing weather conditions.

2. Failure to Attend

- a) Staff who are unable to reach their normal workplace or a prescribed alternative, will not lose pay provided the Headteacher is satisfied that all reasonable efforts have been made. If the Headteacher is not satisfied, the employee will have the choice of:

- i) Taking unpaid leave
- ii) Taking annual leave
- iii) Making the time up

- b) The school reserves the right to request medical certificates to be provided where absence due to sickness is claimed during a period of inclement weather.

3. Leaving Early

- a) In adverse weather conditions staff will normally continue working until their normal finishing time.
- b) Staff allowed to leave early will not lose pay.

4. Making Up Time

Where a staff chooses to make up time lost, the Headteacher should ensure that time is made up as soon as possible and, in any case, within three months. If an employee still has an outstanding debit of time at the end of the three month period he/she will be required to lose pay or forfeit annual leave in respect of this time. The Headteacher should make the necessary arrangements for lost time to be recorded.

5. Review

The operation of this Code of Practice will be reviewed as and when necessary.