



Attendance Policy

Last reviewed: October 2024

Next reviewed: October 2025

Received and Agreed by the Governing Body

Signed Chair of Governors: _____ Date: _____

1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [Working together to improve school attendance, DfE \(August 2024\)](#)
- [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [School attendance parental responsibility measures, DfE \(January 2015\)](#)
- [Children missing education, DfE \(September 2016\)](#)
- [Keeping children safe in education, DfE \(September 2023\)](#)
- [Working together to safeguard children, DfE \(December 2023\)](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Why Regular Attendance is Important:

3.1. Learning

We know from experience and from studies that regular absence and poor punctuality can have a detrimental effect on a child's learning. When a pupil is absent or arrives late it disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning not only of that pupil but also that of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child'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 a penalty notice or prosecution.

3.2 Safeguarding

At Parkwood, we believe every pupil should be able learn in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from harm. We respect and value all children and are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our pupils so they can learn and participate in all school activities in a relaxed and secure atmosphere.

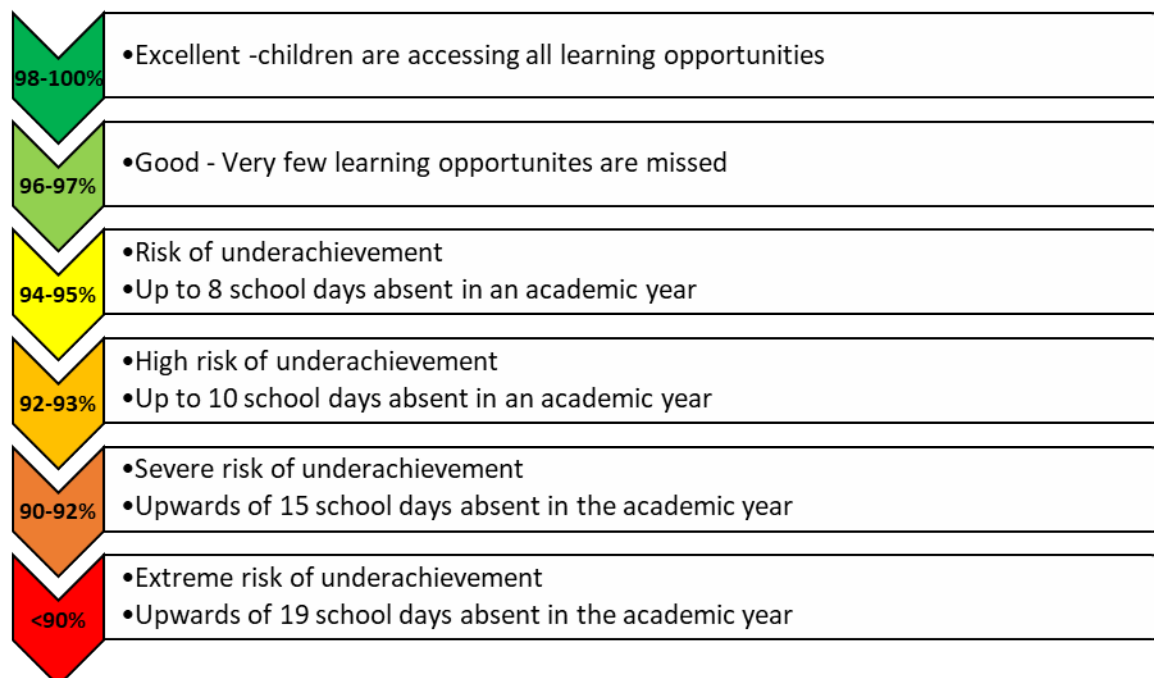
Attending school regularly promotes the welfare and safety of children whilst they are not in the care of their parents/carers. Safeguarding is about offering early help and support to children and families and difficulties with attendance and lateness may be signs that something is worrying the child or that there are difficulties within the family. Poor or irregular attendance, persistent lateness, or children missing from education may be considered a safeguarding matter if this places your child at risk of harm.

Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school; safeguarding and promoting the welfare and life opportunities for children encompasses; Attendance, Behaviour Management, Health and Safety, Access to the Curriculum and Anti-bullying, protecting children from abuse and neglect, online safety, radicalisation and extremism, FGM and CSE.

More information on safeguarding and the protection of children can be found in the schools Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

In order to allow us to safeguard the children in our care it is important that parents and carers provide the school with their current contact details and provide at least three other contact numbers in case of emergency.

It is also important for parents to let school know of any specific vulnerability in relation to their child or home circumstances. If you are uncertain about what would be considered a vulnerability please speak with Andrea Sumner (AHT and DSL), Paul Thomas (HT and Deputy DSL) or Magda Nowak (Guidance and Support Officer, member of the Safeguarding team)



4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 The Governing Body

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data

- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

4.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

4.3 The Attendance Officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the Headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Martha Chiutsi and can be contacted via the school office – 02088025366
admin@parkwood.hackney.sch.uk.

4.4 Class Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office, this is completed by 8.47am and 1.20pm via the school MIS SIMS.

4.5 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9.30am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child (as part of safeguarding procedures)
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

5. Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff. To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Provide parents / carers with details on attendance in the weekly update;
- Report to parents at least half-termly if their child's attendance and punctuality rate is of concern and how this relates to their attainments;
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements and reward good or improving attendance through, certificates;

6. 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.

6.1 Authorised Absence

An authorised absence is where the school has either given permission in advance for the child to be absent or where an explanation offered is accepted as satisfactory justification for absence.

Absence may generally be authorised for the following reasons:

- Illness, medical appointments (appointments should be made outside school times where possible)
- Unavoidable cause (which is expected to be an emergency and unavoidable)
- Days of religious observance
- Traveller child travelling for the purposes of parents' employment

6.2 Unauthorised Absences

An unauthorised absence is where either no explanation has been given for the child's absence or where the explanation offered is not considered acceptable by the school.

This includes:

- Parents / Carers keeping children off school to assist with translation
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a late mark
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time.

If an absence is recorded as unauthorised the school may refer this to Synergy, the School's Education and Welfare Service who can use various sanctions to promote regular attendance such as issuing a Penalty Notice Fine or initiate court proceedings, through the local authority.

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

Please see Appendix A for attendance codes used in schools.

6.3 Legal sanctions

There is now a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England, of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. The 10 sessions of absence do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence (G, O and/or U coded within the school's registers). The 10-school week period can span different terms, school years or education settings.

Sanctions may include issuing each parent (for each child) with a Penalty Notice for £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days (for the first offence). A second Penalty Notice issued within a three-year period will result in a fine of £160 per parent, per child. If a third offence is committed the matter may be referred to the local authority for consideration of prosecution via the Magistrates Court. If prosecution is instigated for irregular school attendance, each parent may receive a fine of up to £2500 and/or up to 3 months in prison. If a parent is found guilty in court, they will receive a criminal conviction.

There is no entitlement in law for pupils to take time off during the term to go on holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure or recreation, or to take part in protest activity in school hours. In

addition, the Supreme Court has ruled that the definition of regular school attendance is “in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school.”

We will work with parents and the Local Authority to ensure that parents are supported to secure education for children of compulsory school age. Where required, we will formalise support and where necessary, work with the LA to use legal measures.

7. Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence (PA) is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

PA pupils and their parents/carers may also be subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include: allocation of additional support through a Mentor, individual incentive programmes and participation in group activities around raising attendance. All PA cases are also automatically made known to Synergy, the School's Education and Welfare Service.

If your child has or is at risk of reaching the threshold for PA you will be asked to provide evidence for any future absence. This may be medical evidence for illness which can be in the form of prescription, medicine packaging or hospital letter.

Please see Appendix B for procedures to address PA.

8. Absence Procedures

8.1 If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence and give an expected return date. You need to call at least every 2nd day thereafter to advise school of your child's progress.
- 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;
- Or, you can call into school and report to reception, who may arrange for a member of staff to speak with you.

8.2 If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone, text or email you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you.
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Attendance Officer/Headteacher if absences persist.
- Refer to the local authority School's Education and Welfare Service if attendance moves below 94%.

9. Family Contact Details

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. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have current telephone number / email contact – if we don't then something important may be missed. This is especially important for your child's health and safety. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year. You are also asked to provide two other contacts in case of emergency where we are unable to contact you.

10. Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information / instructions and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons and it can be embarrassing for the child. This can encourage absence.

10.1 How we manage lateness

The school day starts at **8.45am** and we expect your child to be in class at that time. The school gates open at 8.30am and we recommend pupils are in the playground by 8.40

Registers are marked by **8.47am** and your child will receive a 'late' mark if they are not in by that time.

At **9am** the registers will be closed. If your child arrives after that time, they will receive an **unauthorised** absence mark that shows them to be on site but **not** counted as a present for statistical / legal purposes. This means that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record, you will be asked to meet with the Headteacher and/or Attendance Officer to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

11. Leave in Term Time

There is no entitlement in law for any leave of absence from school in term time.

Taking leave in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time.

Remember that any monetary savings you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

All applications for a leave of absence must be made in advance to the Headteacher and will only be considered if there are exceptional circumstances. 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.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice. Your child's school place may be also be at risk.

12. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- Also see Hackney Education Penalty Notice Code of Conduct

Appendix A

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		

G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix B

Flowchart for Concerns Over Attendance/Punctuality

At each point the school may refer to Synergy, the School's Education and Welfare Service.

