



## Park Hill Primary School

### Attendance and Exceptional Leave Policy

#### Introduction

At Park Hill, we believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the best progress possible. To do this it is essential that a child's time at school is maximised and even short absences can have a detrimental effect on children's learning. Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines, so, in addition to affecting individual children, it may also affect the learning of others in the same class. **Early poor attendance habits follow right through from primary to secondary school and into employment.**

We expect all children to be at school, and on time, every day that the school is open, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage children to attend.

At Park Hill, we believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our schools a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

#### 1. Legal Requirements and Local Authority Policy

1.1 Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carers responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

1.2 Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, the Governing Body is responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

1.3 There is no automatic right to any leave of absence and all schools in Coventry are encouraged to adopt a policy of not authorising exceptional leave. Being mindful of this, only in very exceptional circumstances will the school grant leave of absence during term time.

1.4 Requests of leave of absence will automatically be declined for the following:-

- Year 2 and 6
- Children with less than 95% attendance.



1.5 Any leave taken without authorisation can lead to parents being issued a fixed penalty, which is currently £60 per parent per child.

## **2. What are Authorised and Unauthorised Absence?**

### **2.1 Authorised Absence**

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.

- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not make it an authorised absence.

### **2.2 Unauthorised Absence**

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent. Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

## **3. Procedures**

3.1 At Park Hill School the school day begins at 9:05 am

3.2 The register closes at 9:05 am. If a child is not present when the register is taken they are given a late mark. If a child arrives at school 15 minutes after the registers are closed, they will be given a **U code**. **This has an impact on your child's attendance.**

School, along with the Local Authority, will be doing an Early Bird incentive each half term. These sessions are impromptu and all children arriving on time will be given a sticker and house point.

3.3 The afternoon session begins at 1.20pm and the same procedures apply

3.4 The morning session at Nursery begins at 9.00am and the afternoon session at 1.00pm.

3.5 Persistent absence in Nursery may result in a child being removed from the roll.

### **If a child is absent without notification**

3.6 Where no notification has been received by 9.20 am a text message will automatically be sent to the parents/carers via the School Office or Pastoral will make a phone call.

3.7 If there is no response to the message the following protocol will be followed:



- Day 1: The office staff and Pastoral team will continue to try to contact the parents/emergency contacts for the child.
- Day 2: The office staff and Pastoral team will continue to try to contact the parents/emergency contacts for the child if no response by 10am then the Pastoral team may conduct a home visit.
- Day 3: The office staff and Pastoral team will continue to try to contact the parents/emergency contacts for the child if no response by 10am then the Pastoral team will conduct another home visit and EWO will be informed.
- Day 4: The Education Welfare officer (EWO) will conduct a home visit.
- If the child is subject to Child Protection legislation or is in any way vulnerable then the schools Pastoral manager/ Learning Mentor will be notified, who will then also endeavour to contact the parent or carer, in order to check on the safety of the child, or failing that notify the relevant agencies.

### **Missing Children**

3.8 If a child is missing and their whereabouts are unknown, the school will follow the Local Authority procedures in taking immediate steps to locate that child as soon as possible.

### **Written Notification of Absence**

3.9 When parents have notified the school about absence by telephone or verbally, a reason will be recorded on the sheet in the front of the register for that child and will be updated as appropriate.

3.10 Where the absence is because of a pre-arranged medical appointment, for example, the note should be sent to the school prior to the day of absence.

## **4. Requests for Exceptional Leave of Absence**

4.1 If parents wish to take their child out of school during term time, a request for leave of absence must be made on the appropriate form at least 4 weeks before the exceptional leave is due to begin, except in an emergency, in which case the application will be considered on an individual basis. Application forms can be obtained from the School Office.

4.2 The appropriate information and documentation must be provided to back up the application.

4.3 If the child is leaving the country the additional documentation detailed on the Exceptional Leave Request form must be provided.

## **5. Long-term Absence through Child's Accident or Illness**

5.1 If a child is under the care of a hospital Consultant and a Consultant's letter has been produced, and the absence is likely to continue for an extended



period, or to be a repetitive absence, the school may contact the support services so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

## **6. Repeated Unauthorised Absences**

6.1 The school will contact the parent or carer of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or carers will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school will then contact the LA support services, who may visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or carers understand the seriousness of the situation.

6.2 The Governors, supported by the Local Authority, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or carers who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis. There is a fast track to court procedure for parents of pupils whose attendance falls below the expected levels.

## **7. Rewards for good attendance**

7.1 All the children who have 100 per cent attendance in any one term will receive an excellence certificate for attendance, plus a small reward. These will be awarded during the last assembly of each term.

7.2 All children with 100% attendance across the whole school year will be recognised with a certificate and will also be entered into a prize draw.

## **8. Attendance targets**

8.1 The school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the Head-Teacher and Governors at the annual target-setting meeting. The targets are challenging yet realistic and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. When it is setting targets, the school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools, as well as national figures and those achieved by other schools in the city.

## **9. Monitoring**

9.1 It is the responsibility of the Governing Body to monitor overall attendance and the Head-Teacher will produce an annual report. The Governing Body also has the responsibility for seeing that this is carried out. Governors will therefore examine the information provided in the report to satisfy themselves that attendance meets the required levels.



9.2 The school will keep accurate attendance records for a minimum period of three years.

9.3 The rates of attendance will be reported in the school prospectus and in the annual Governors' Report.

9.4 Class teachers are responsible for monitoring attendance in their class, as well as for taking action on day-to-day absences, according to the school's procedures. If there is a longer-term worry about the attendance of a particular child, they must report this to the Head-Teacher/Pastoral Manager, who will contact the parents or carers.

## 10. Recording attendance during Coronavirus Outbreak

10.1 Pupils who are not eligible to attend a session (Years 2,3,4,5) should be **recorded as code X** (not required to be in school). (Temporarily, code X can be used for compulsory school age children - usually it is only used where non-compulsory school age children are not expected to attend.).

10.2 Pupils who are eligible to attend a session but do not

This includes children in eligible year groups, children of critical workers and vulnerable children, such as:

- where a pupil is shielding, self-isolating, or the pupil has an education, health and care plan (EHCP) and their risk assessment says that their needs cannot be safely met in school, they should be **recorded as code Y** (unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances). (Temporarily, code Y can be used where a pupil is prevented from attending school due to following government guidance on coronavirus). To help you to complete the educational setting status form, you should note whether the absence is due to shielding or isolation
- Where a pupil cannot attend school due to illness, as would normally be the case, the pupil should be **recorded as code I** (illness). To help you to complete the educational setting status form, you should note whether the illness involves coronavirus symptoms
- where a pupil does not attend school - despite being eligible and is not shielding, self-isolating, unable to attend due to illness, nor has an EHCP risk assessment saying their needs cannot be safely met at school, the pupil should be **recorded as code C** (leave of absence authorised by the school) where no other authorised absence code is appropriate

At this time, all absence should be classed as authorised.

10.3 Other authorised absence and attendance codes to be used are M code for medical appointments.

10.4 In accordance with government guidelines all parents of children in year groups who are expected in school but do not attend will not incur a fine. It is a parental



decision whether to allow their child to attend school or not and at any point they have the right to change their mind.

10.5 An attendance register is filled in daily by our office staff. This consists of a list of vulnerable children, critical worker children, teaching staff and other members of staff on the premises during the day.

A classification list of the vulnerable children also has to be filled out.

The register is filled in by 11am every day. One copy sent to Coventry City Council and one copy sent to the DFE.

This process will happen every day until the school reopens as normal to all school children.

10.6 Non attendance of a critical worker children or vulnerable children.

Where school have not received any contact from parents, then a follow up phone call will be made by either SLT or the Pastoral team.

This policy will be reviewed every three years, or earlier if necessary.

Agreed by Governors: March 2020

Signed Chair of Governors:

Date:

Signed Head-teacher:

Date:



## **Park Hill Primary School** **Exceptional Leave Policy**

### **Exceptional leave during the School Day**

Parents are expected to arrange medical appointments out of school hours where possible. Children must not be taken out of school without a previously written agreement (unless in an emergency). Parents must report to the school office, enabling the school staff to collect children from the classroom.

On return to school during the day, parents must inform the School Office so that the register can be adjusted accordingly.

Parents should inform the School Office of any unexpected events which may result in a delayed return to school.

### **Exceptional leave during Term Time**

We follow Local Authority guidance on parents taking children out of school for holidays during term time, which is **not** to authorise, and absence for this purpose will be treated as unauthorised absence. Consequently, parents may receive a Fixed Penalty Notice from the Children and Families First Service (see school's Attendance Policy). Exceptional Leave of absence will only be authorised in very exceptional circumstances.

### **Requests for Exceptional Leave**

- Except in an emergency, permission must be sought from the school at least 4 weeks before the exceptional leave is due to begin and in advance of making any



arrangements. The request must be made on an **Exceptional Leave of Absence Form**, which can be obtained from the school office.

- Evidence of any travel bookings, if applicable, may be requested by the school.

Each request for exceptional leave of absence is considered by the Head-Teacher. Reasons for exceptional leave will be logged on the child's records and will be shared as part of the transfer/transition process.

This policy will be reviewed every three years, or earlier if necessary.

Agreed by Governors: November 2016

Signed Chair of Governors:

Date:

Signed Head-teacher:

Date:

## **APPLICATION FOR EXCEPTIONAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

This application must be submitted to the Head-Teacher at least **4 weeks** before the proposed period of exceptional leave. As recommended by the Local Authority, the school has a strict policy on Exceptional Leave. This applies to **ALL** children of the school community. A copy of this and the school's Attendance Policy can be obtained from the School Office and from the school's website. Please note that you are expected to take family holidays during the school holidays and your child's absence for this purpose will be treated as an **UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE**.

Name of Child:		Class:	
Proposed date/s of absence:		From:	To:
Please give details of and reasons for the proposed absence.			
Signature of parent/carer:		Date:	





Your application will be considered by the Head-Teacher. Evidence of travel bookings may be required including return flights. Your child's attendance record will be taken into consideration.

**If permission is refused and your child is absent for the above period, it will be recorded as unauthorised absence and you may receive a Fixed Penalty Notice.**

<b>For school use only:</b>		
<b><u>Action</u></b>	<b><u>Initials</u></b>	<b><u>Date</u></b>
<b><u>Seen by Head-Teacher</u></b>		
<b><u>Head-Teacher's Comments (e.g in support or on attendance record)</u></b>		