



Attendance Policy

The senior leader responsible for attendance at Parklea, is:

- Mr. Stephen Spooner: Email - school@parklea.co.uk

The Parent/Carer Day to day attendance contact at Parklea is:

- Parklea Administration Team: Email - school@parklea.co.uk
Telephone – 01582 571619 option 1 Upper Site

The Education Welfare Officer at Parklea is:

- Mrs Elaine Simpson: Email - ewo@parklea.co.uk

Parent/Carer Contact Details

It is vital that the school has your up-to-date contact details including address and telephone numbers. We may need to contact you urgently if your child is ill or has an accident.

A second contact on file is required for safeguarding reasons and you will be encouraged to provide at least one alternate contact.

Ratified by the Governing Body:
Review Date: 24/02/2025

Introduction and Background

Parklea Primary School recognises that good attendance and punctuality are essential for pupils to get the most from their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing and wider life chances.

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education other than at a school.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly and on time. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

The Department for Education (DfE) has produced statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities. It is called “[Working together to improve school attendance](#)” and it includes a National Framework in relation to absence and the use of legal sanctions. Our School Attendance Policy reflects the requirements and principles of that guidance.

This policy is written with the above guidance in mind.

Having excellent attendance and punctuality will not only enable your child to grow and achieve whilst at Parklea Primary School, but it will also equip them with vital skills for their adult life.

This policy has been developed in consultation with school governors, teachers, local Headteacher Associations, the Local Authority and parents and carers. It seeks to ensure that all parties involved in the practicalities of school attendance are aware and informed of attendance matters in school and to outline the school’s commitment to attendance protocols. It details the responsibilities of individuals and groups involved and the procedures in place to promote and monitor pupil attendance.

In addition, all schools follow the DfE’s statutory safeguarding guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education, which emphasises the importance of understanding the potential vulnerabilities of children who are missing or absent from education.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

Our policy aims to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued.
- Raising and maintaining a whole school awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.

Why regular and punctual attendance is important

Regular attendance is incredibly important. Pupils who attend regularly and arrive on time achieve better academically and will enjoy better relationships with staff and peers. It contributes to their social and emotional well-being when people are together. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly, on time and every day the school is open, unless the reason for absence is unavoidable.

This policy sets out how we can achieve this together.

How we celebrate attendance at Parklea.

- Promote and celebrate good attendance and punctuality in parent/carers communications, assemblies and in class
- Celebrate the class with the highest attendance by winning the Attendance Trophy each half term + a book for the class library.

Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents/carers, pupils and all members of the school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will

- Report to you on how your child is performing in school; what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainment.
- Work together to raise awareness of attendance levels across the school.
- Contact parents at an early stage where we have attendance concerns.

Understanding attendance

Every half-day (am and pm) must be registered by the school as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information regarding the reason for any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, hospital appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable reasons.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been granted. This type of absence can lead to school referring to the Local Authority for penalty notices (fines) and/or legal proceedings.

Unauthorised absence includes, (however this list is not exhaustive):

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily e.g. because they had a late night or for non-infectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn;
 - absences which have never been properly explained;
 - children who arrive at school **after the close of registration. These are marked on the register using a 'U'**. This indicates that they are in school for safeguarding purposes, however is counted as an unauthorised absence for the session;
 - shopping trips;
 - looking after other children or children accompanying siblings or parents to medical appointments;
 - their own or family birthdays;
 - holidays taken during term time, not deemed 'for exceptional purposes' by the headteacher, including any arranged by other family members or friends; (see below)
 - day trips;
 - other leave of absence in term time which has not been agreed.
- refusal to attend school - If your child is reluctant to attend, for whatever reason it is not good practice to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This should always be addressed with school staff.

- **Holidays in Term Time / Term Time Leave**

- We do not authorise any holidays in term time. Holidays 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. Savings you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education and possible legal action.
- All applications for term-time leave must be made in advance and supporting evidence will be required. In deciding whether leave should be authorized or unauthorised, the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave in term time. Term time leave is only granted at the discretion of the Headteacher and will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

Please see our Term Time Leave Policy for further information regarding unauthorised leave.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA) and Severe Absenteeism (SA) meaning:

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee (PA)' as defined by the government when they miss 10% 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 parents/carers support and cooperation to tackle this.

A pupil becomes a 'severe absentee (SA)' as defined by the government when they miss 50% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Pupils within this cohort may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and, as such, are likely to need more intensive support.

Missing school will make your child fall behind in lessons and will impact on their academic progress and achievement.

This table shows how many days missed each half-term will make your child a PA student:

How many days off or occasions of late will make your child a persistent absence student?	
Half-term 1	3 ½ days off school from September until October half-term holiday will make your child a PA student.
Half-term 1-2	7 days off school from September until the Christmas holiday will make your child a PA student.
Half term 1-3	10 days of absence from September until February half-term will make your child a PA student.
Half term 1-4	12 ½ days of absence from September until the Easter holidays will make your child a PA student.
Half-term 1-5	15 ½ days of absence from September until May half-term will make your child a PA student.
Half-term 1-6	19 days of absence for the full academic year, September to end of summer term in July will make your child a PA student.

All PA and SA cases are made known to the Local authority attendance support team who advise on any action that should be taken.

Please work with us to promote excellent attendance and punctuality to ensure that your child makes every minute of every lesson, of everyday count.

Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent you must:

Contact us before school begins, or as soon as possible, on the first day of absence (and all subsequent days) to give us the reason. We can be contacted by telephone or email.

Call 01582 571619 and press 1 for the Upper Site, where all attendance is monitored.

Select 1 from the menu for registering your child absent.

Leave your child's name, class and reason for absence (you may receive a call back to enable us to better understand the reason).

Or you can email school@parklea.co.uk.

On your child's return to school, you should provide evidence supporting the reason for the absence, if requested.

If your child is absent we will

- Text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you.
- If we cannot reach you we may contact other contacts in certain circumstances.
- If we have not been able to reach you or we have not received suitable evidence after 3 days, we may carry out a home visit.
- Refer to the Local authority on the 10th day of absence if we have not been able to contact you
- If we are concerned regarding patterns of attendance or punctuality, we will initiate our school support (see below)

Upper Site:

08.15 Gates open and children can go straight into their classroom.

08.20 Gates close.

08.30 Registers close and teaching and learning begins.

Children will receive a late mark (L) if they arrive between 08.30 and 08.45.

Children will receive an unauthorised late mark (U) if they arrive after 08.45. This is the equivalent of an unauthorised absence.

Lower Site:

08.15 Gates open and children must wait on the playground, with an adult, until they are called to enter the building

08.30 Classroom doors open

08.35 Gates close

08.40 Registers close and teaching and learning begins.

Children will receive a late mark (L) if they arrive between 08.40 and 08.55.

Children will receive an unauthorised late mark (U) if they arrive after 08.55. This is the equivalent of an unauthorised absence.

School support for children failing to attend regularly and / or punctually

Understanding barriers to attendance

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long-term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities, or other vulnerabilities. High expectations of attendance remain in place for these pupils, however we will work with families and pupils to support improved attendance whilst being mindful of the additional barriers faced. We can discuss reasonable adjustments and additional support from external partners, where appropriate.

All children may occasionally have time off school because they are too unwell to attend. Some children may be reluctant during their school career to attend for various reasons, any barriers preventing regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school, please contact the school or leave a message for one of our Family Workers, Ms Taylor or Mr Bradbury.

We work with an Education Welfare Officer who regularly checks our registers for patterns of attendance - where there are 3 broken weeks due to absence or unauthorised lateness over a period of 12 weeks, a more detailed look at the reasons provided by parents will be initiated and you may be invited to attend a meeting one of our Family Workers.

If there is no improvement following this invitation you may be requested to provide supporting evidence for further absences and or be invited to attend a meeting with the Education welfare officer where plans of support will be initiated with your agreement.

It is important that we work together. Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful, however, where no improvement is made following support that is offered, legal action via the Attendance Support Team at LBC (see below) or referrals to outside agencies (see below)

who may also be able to support you to improve attendance may be initiated.

Outside agencies include the School Nurse, Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing support services, a Child and Family Support Worker or the relevant Local Authority team/s. Where outside agencies are supporting the family, you may be invited to attend a Team Around the Family meeting (TAF) to consider what is working well and what needs to improve. An individual support plan will be agreed and subsequently reviewed.

Local Authority attendance support services

Local Authority Attendance Specialists work strategically by offering support to schools, to reduce persistent absences and improve overall attendance.

Parents are expected to work with the school and local authority to address any attendance concerns. If attendance does not improve working with the school, legal action may be taken in the form of a Penalty Notice (**see Annex A**) for the Luton Code of Conduct or prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

School Attendance and the Law

New legislation was passed in Spring Term 2024. The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 which introduced a National Framework in England. The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational need they may have. Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly at the school at which they are registered.

Parents may be recognised differently under education law, than under family law. Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a parent (from which can be inferred 'biological parent') but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child.

A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

National Framework for Penalty Notices

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.

Where parents are deliberately avoiding the national threshold by taking several term time holidays below threshold, for example returning to school on the fourth day (before the five-day minimum) or using the days before and after school holiday dates during the academic year, or repeated absence for birthdays or other family events. The local authority will exercise discretion and consider issuing a penalty notice if appropriate.

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.

(See Annex A) for the Luton Code of Conduct.

Deletion from Roll

For any pupil leaving Parklea Primary School other than at the end of year 6, parents/carers are required to email school@parklea.co.uk and provide the child's name, class, current address, date of leaving, new home address, name of new school, address of new school. This information is essential to ensure that we know the whereabouts and may appropriately safeguard all our pupils, even those who leave us.

Under Pupil Regulations 2006, all schools are now **legally required** to notify their Local Authority of **every new entry** to the admission register **within five days** of the pupil being enrolled. In addition to this, **every deletion** from the school register must also be notified to the Local Authority, as soon as the ground for deletion has been met in relation to that pupil, and in any event no later than the time at which the pupil's name is deleted from the register. This duty does not apply when a pupil's name is removed from the admission register at a standard transition point – when the pupil has completed the final year of education normally provided by that school.

Absence data

We use data to monitor, identify and support individual pupils or groups of pupils when their attendance needs to improve, and schools are required to submit pupil attendance data to the Department for Education on a daily basis Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024. Persistently and severely absent pupils are tracked and monitored carefully. We also combine this with academic tracking, as increased absence affects attainment.

We share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners, when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

