



# Parmiter's School Attendance Policy

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## 1. Introduction

The importance of attending school regularly and punctually cannot be overstated. Students can only make the most of the educational opportunities available to them at Parmiter's if they maintain a good attendance record. The link between good attendance and high standards of achievement is well proven; Good attendance means that students establish good educational habits and routines, keep up with work more easily, develop well socially and have a good attendance record to show prospective employers.

What constitutes good attendance? Attendance percentages are not like examination results: an attendance percentage needs to be in the high nineties before it can be considered good, for example, an attendance record of 90% might seem good but is equal to 1 day missed per fortnight. If this continues from Years 7 to 11, a total of six months' education will be lost. Our view is that, in order for an attendance record to be deemed good, it must be 96% or above:

100% = excellent attendance; 98% = very good attendance; 96% = good attendance

Each year, a large number of students in every year group achieve 100% attendance records, showing that this is an achievable target. In addition, a number of children have achieved this level of attendance in successive years. Therefore, we want every student at Parmiter's to achieve at least good attendance at 96% and to aspire to reach a very good level of attendance at 98% or above.

All parents/carers and students are asked to support our expectations relating to attendance and punctuality.

## 2. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence
- Ensuring every student has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure students have the support in place to attend school

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

## 3. Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of [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:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Student Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (and [2010](#), [2011](#), [2013](#), [2016](#) amendments)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

## 4. Roles and Responsibilities

### 4.1 The Academy Governance

The Academy Governance 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

School attendance will be monitored on a termly basis by the Governors' Community Committee.

### 4.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

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

### 4.3 Designated Senior Leader Responsible for Attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis

- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to students and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Mr B Hughes (Assistant Headteacher) and can be contacted via 01923 671424 or b.hughes@parmiters.herts.sch.uk

#### **4.4 The Attendance Officer**

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- 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 the designated senior leader and Key Stage Leaders to tackle persistent absence
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advising the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The Attendance Officer is Ms D Kwon and can be contacted via 01923 671424 or attendance@parmiters.herts.sch.uk

#### **4.5 Form Tutors and Subject Tutors**

Form tutors and subject tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

#### **4.6 Parents and 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 8.30am 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 one emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

#### **4.7 Students**

Students are expected to:

- Attend school every day
- Arrive at school by 8.30am
- Arrive at every lesson on time

## **5. School Procedures**

### **5.1 Attendance Register**

We will keep an attendance register, and place all students onto this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every student is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a student is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a student is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Students must arrive in school by 8.30am on each school day. The register for the first session will be taken at 8.35am and will be kept open until 8.55am. The register for the second session will be taken at 2.20pm and will be kept open until 2.40pm.

## 5.2 Unplanned Absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 8.30am (also see section 6).

The absence should be reported using the **absence line (01923 665719)** or by **emailing our Attendance Officer - [attendance@parmiters.herts.sch.uk](mailto:attendance@parmiters.herts.sch.uk)**, leaving the caller's name, the student's name, form group and reason for absence. The line is open 24 hours a day.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

In the case of any medical absence spanning five or more days, evidence will be required. This includes cases of illness which extend either side of a non-school day such as a weekend or occasional day.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

## 5.3 Medical or Dental Appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Notification of absence for medical appointments should be made via email to [attendance@parmiters.herts.sch.uk](mailto:attendance@parmiters.herts.sch.uk) prior to the appointment.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 6.

## 5.4 Lateness and Punctuality

We understand that adverse circumstances will very occasionally prevent students from arriving on time at school but ask that all parents help their children to adhere to the school rules regarding punctuality:

A student who arrives after 8.35am but before the register has closed will be marked as late.

A student who arrives after the register has closed at 8.55am will be recorded as absent. Students who arrive after 8.55am should sign in at the Pastoral Support Base.

Students who are persistently late will be brought to the attention of their Head of Year and/or Key Stage Leader.

### **5.5 Monitoring of Absence and Punctuality**

Attendance below 90% is monitored regularly by the Attendance Officer and the designated senior leader, and appropriate action will be taken where necessary. Parents/carers will be contacted, initially by email, followed by a formal letter should the situation not improve. If problems still persist, parents/carers may be invited to meet with the designated senior leader and the Hertfordshire Attendance Officer. We also monitor those students who attendance falls between 90%-95%

Where there are 10 days of unexplained or regular patterns of absence we are obliged to contact the Hertfordshire Attendance Team who will investigate.

Regarding unauthorised absences, a breach letter will be issued to parents/carers after 6 unauthorised sessions are recorded. This is the final, formal warning prior to the school applying for a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN). Should a student have 15 unauthorised sessions (equivalent of 7.5 days) or more over two concurrent terms parents/carers are in breach of regulations and the Local Authority may issue you with a FPN. Each school day comprises of 2 sessions, one in the morning and one in the afternoon.

Where any student we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the student's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the student's emergency contacts, the school may need to contact the Police or Children's Services.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider requesting support from Children's Services.

The designated senior leader, Key Stage Leaders and Attendance Officer meet weekly to discuss school attendance.

## **6. Authorised and Unauthorised absence**

### **6.1 Granting Approval for Term-Time Absence**

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to students during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in section 5.3
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller students travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees

(occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the student is attending educational provision.

## **6.2 Legal Sanctions**

The Local Authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the Local Authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a Headteacher, Local Authority Officer or the Police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded student is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the Local Authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

The School adheres to the Hertfordshire Code of Conduct for Fixed Penalty Notices relating to attendance.

## **7. Attendance Monitoring**

The Attendance Officer monitors student absence on a daily basis.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health. In the case of ongoing illness, notification is required daily (see section 5.2).

If a student is absent for five days or more, we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this and request medical evidence. If after contacting parents a student's absence continues to rise, we will consider involving the Hertfordshire Attendance Team.

### **7.1 Monitoring Attendance Data**

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual student level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Student-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

### **7.2 Analysing Attendance Data**

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify students or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these students and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

### **7.3 Using Data to Improve Attendance**

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to Heads of Year, Key Stage Leaders, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with students and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

### **7.4 Reducing Persistent and Severe Absence**

Persistent absence is where a student misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a student 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 students 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

## **8. Policy Monitoring Arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the designated senior leader for attendance. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Academy Governance.

## **9. Links with Other Policies**

This policy is linked to our Child Protection & Safeguarding and Behaviour Policies.

## Appendix 1: Register Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Student is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Student is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Student arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Student is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Student is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Student has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Student is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Student is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Student is on a work experience placement
X	Not required to be in school	Student 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 student is in custody
Z	Student not on admission register	Register set up but student has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Authorised Absence		
Code	Definition	Scenario
C	Authorised leave of absence	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Student has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Student has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances



I	Illness	School has been notified that a student will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Student is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Student is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 student is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Student from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school

<b>Unauthorised Absence</b>		
<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
G	Unauthorised holiday	Student is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Student 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 student's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Student arrived at school after the register closed