



# 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; high levels of attendance means that students establish strong 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.

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

## 2. Aims

To manage and improve attendance effectively, our school aims to:

- Build strong relationships and work jointly with families, listening to and understanding barriers to attendance and working in partnership with families to remove them.
- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.
- Have a clear school attendance policy which all staff, students and parents understand.
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence.
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify students or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners where a student's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.
- Be particularly mindful of students absent from school due to mental or physical ill health or their special educational needs and/or disabilities, and provide them with support as necessary.

## 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 Behaviour and 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](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

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 the Academy Governance
- 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
- Creating intervention reintegration plans in partnership with students and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to students and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Ms G Absalom (Assistant Headteacher) and can be contacted via 01923 671424 or g.absalom@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 Mrs K Gregory 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 at least 6 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 each day of any 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.hertfordshire.sch.uk](mailto:attendance@parmiters.hertfordshire.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 any student we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Contact 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
- Contact 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.

Schools across Hertfordshire may issue a Notice to Improve to any parent whose child’s absence levels have triggered the national threshold for a penalty notice – i.e., 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. The Notice to Improve may be used to offer parent/s an opportunity to engage with support and improve the attendance levels of the child concerned. Where a parent fails to engage with the offer of support during the Notice to Improve validity period and/or further unauthorised absences are recorded for the student and/or the student fails to make significant improvements in their attendance patterns, a penalty notice may be issued.

All Notices to Improve issued by Hertfordshire schools will have a validity period of 6 school weeks (a maximum of 30 school days) and will clearly list the attempts which have been made and support which has already been offered to resolve the absence concerns. Parents should be provided with clear contact details for the staff member/s within the school that they should contact to access the support that remains available during the Notice to Improve validity period.

Attendance records will be reviewed daily throughout the improvement period and, where further unauthorised absence is recorded, consideration will be given as to whether a penalty notice is to be issued. Schools are not required to wait until 30 school days have passed before considering a penalty notice – decisions will need to be taken on a case by-case basis, based on the level of parental/student engagement and/or level of attendance improvement noted. Sufficient improvement during the Notice to Improve validity period may include evidence of no further unauthorised absences within the improvement period or enough improvement tailored to the specific family circumstances.

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**

All schools are expected to restrict leaves of absence to the specific circumstances set out in regulation 11 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to students during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. The application must be made in writing no fewer than 20 days before the proposed absence.

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. The DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance. Leave of absence will not be granted for a student to take part in protest activity during school hours.

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.
- To attend an offsite approved educational activity
- To participate in an approved sporting activity

## 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.

Parmiter’s School adheres to the Hertfordshire Code of Conduct for Fixed Penalty Notices relating to attendance. In Hertfordshire all parties agree that the Access & Inclusion Statutory Attendance and Participation Teams act as the ‘Authorised Persons’ and administer the scheme and issue penalty notices on behalf of police, schools, academies, and other settings to ensure fairness and consistency and in the event that subsequent legal action may need to be taken.

There is 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. These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence. The 10-school week period can span different terms or school years.

Penalty Notice Fines are issued to each parent, for each child that was absent. For example: 3 siblings absent for term time leave, would result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines. Parent refers to anyone with parental responsibility and may include carers, step-parents, grandparents or any other adult with parental responsibility.

### First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for term time leave of absence or unauthorised absence the amount will be:

- £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days
- Reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days

### Second Offence (within 3 years)

The Second time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence the amount will be:

- £160 per parent, per child within 28 days

### Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)

The third time an offence is committed a Penalty Notice will not be issued and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrate’s Court.

- Prosecution can result in criminal records and fines up to £2,500
- Cases found guilty in Magistrates’ Court can show on the parent’s future DBS certificate due to ‘failure to safeguard a child’s education’

## **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.

Where a student has a social worker, we will inform the social worker of any unexplained absences.

For students with special educational needs and disabilities, schools are expected to:

- Work in partnership with parents and carers to develop specific support approaches for attendance for students with special educational needs and disabilities, including, where applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the student's education, health and care plan is accessed.
- Work in partnership with families to help support routines where school transport is regularly being missed and work with other partners to encourage the scheduling of additional support interventions or medical appointments outside of the main school day.
- Establish strategies for removing the in-school barriers these students face, including considering support or reasonable adjustments for uniform, transport, routines, access to support in school and lunchtime arrangements.
- Consider adjustments to practice and policies to help meet the needs of students who are struggling to attend school, as well as making formal reasonable adjustments under section 20 of the Equality Act 2010 where a student has a disability. Any adjustments should be agreed by, and regularly reviewed with the student and their parents.
- Ensure joined up pastoral care is in place where needed and consider whether a time-limited phased return to school would be appropriate.

Where a student's health needs means they need reasonable adjustments or support because it is complex or long term, we will seek medical evidence to better understand the needs of the student and identify the most suitable provision in line with statutory guidance.

### **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
K	Off-site educational activity	Student attending a place for educational provision arranged by a local authority under section 19(1) of the Education Act 1996 (exceptional provision of education), section 42(2), or 61(1) of the Children and Families Act 2014 (special educational provision off site)
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
J1	Interview	Student has an interview with a prospective employer or 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
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

<b>Authorised Absence</b>		
<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
C	Exceptional Circumstances	Each application considered individually given the circumstances and relevant background context. The school will determine the number of days a student can be absent from school if granted. This code applies to pregnant students.
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.	Student has employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours
C2	Compulsory school age student subject to a part-time timetable	A temporary part-time timetable is in place, under exceptional circumstances.
E	Suspended or Permanently Excluded	Student has been suspended or permanently excluded but no alternative provision has been made
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	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	A mobile child is a child of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode and whose parent(s) is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place. The school may ask for proof that the family are required to travel for occupational purposes during the period of absence.
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Student unable to attend the school because a local authority has a duty set out in regulation 10(12) or (13) to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school and have failed to do so.
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Y1 - Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available Y2 - Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel Y3 - Unable to attend due to part of the school site being closed

		<p>Y4 - Unable to attend due to whole school being closed</p> <p>Y5 - Unable to attend due as student is in criminal justice detention</p> <p>Y6 - Absent in accordance with public health guidance or Law</p> <p>Y7 - Unable to attend because of other unavoidable, emergency cause that affects the student (not the parent)</p>
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<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 yet established	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