



PARMITER'S SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

CONTENTS

1. Introduction
2. Aims
3. Legislation and Guidance
4. School Procedures
5. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence
6. Strategies for Promoting Attendance
7. Attendance Monitoring
8. Role and Responsibilities
9. Monitoring Arrangements
10. Links with Other Policies

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, including persistent absence

- Ensuring every student has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

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 the school attendance guidance 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:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

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

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

4. SCHOOL PROCEDURES

4.1 Attendance Register

By law, all schools (except those where all students are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all students must be placed on 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

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.

4.2 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 8.55am (see also section 6).

The absence should be reported using the **absence line (01923 665719) or by emailing our Attendance Officer attendance@parmiters.herts.sch.uk**, leaving the caller's name, the student's name, tutor 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.

4.3 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 **n.dormer@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 4.

4.4 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 the SLT.

4.5 Monitoring of Absence and Punctuality

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

Attendance below 90% is monitored regularly by the Attendance Officer and the Assistant Headteacher, 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 will be invited to meet with the Assistant Headteacher and the Herts 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 Herts 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.

The Assistant Headteacher and Attendance Office meet weekly to discuss the attendance.

All students are registered using the SIMS.net electronic system and are monitored by the Attendance Officer throughout the day. Where a student is absent, a phone call home may be made to reduce truancy.

5. AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

5.1 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 4.3
- 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.

4.2 Legal Sanctions

Parents who fail to secure their child's regular school attendance or who take unauthorised holidays during school time may be issued with a fixed penalty fine. This notice will be issued at the discretion of the Headmaster and may be applied to parents whose children have at least 15 sessions of unauthorised absence in the previous and/or current term.

The current penalty charge is £60 where the amount is paid within 21 days, rising to £120 for a payment within 28 days. If the penalty notice is not paid in full by the end of the 28 day period, the Local Authority will either prosecute for the offence to which the notice applies under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, or withdraw the notice. The notice can only be withdrawn under limited circumstances.

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

6. STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING ATTENDANCE

Where poor attendance is identified Heads of Year will intervene to address this. This will include conversations with both parents and students to identify the underlying causes and support to make improvements. Where attendance continues to be an issue parents will be invited in to meet with the Assistant Headteacher or to attend an attendance surgery with the Hertfordshire Attendance Team. 100% attendance is celebrated at the end of each term with the award of positive conduct points.

7. ATTENDANCE MONITORING

The Attendance Officer and Assistant Headteacher monitor student absence on a weekly 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 4.2).

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.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a student's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the student will be classified as a persistent absentee.

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.

8. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

8.1 The Academy Governance

The Academy Governance is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

8.2 The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual students and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

8.3 The Attendance Officer

The attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual student level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

8.4 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.

9. MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Assistant Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be shared with the Academy Governance..

10. LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES

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