



Registration and Attendance Policy

Reviewed by S&C 29th September 2015

Ratified by Full Governors on 18th November 2015

Review Period 2 Years

Next Review Due Autumn Term 2017

Signature of FGB Chair *Charles Booth*

This policy has been reviewed in line with the 9 principles set out in the Single Equality Policy and an initial screening Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out.

PARLEY FIRST SCHOOL

REGISTRATION and ATTENDANCE POLICY

“All children and young people have a right to a primary education, which should be free. Discipline in schools should respect children’s human dignity. Young people should be encouraged to reach the highest level of education they are capable of”
Article 28 Unicef Children’s Charter

Introduction

This policy provides a framework and guidance for staff and parents to encourage pupils to attend school regularly so that they can take full advantage of the educational opportunities available.

Relationship to other policies

The policy on attendance should be read in conjunction with the policies on school session times, current guidance produced by the school for staff on the registration of pupils and the School Attendance and Good Practice procedures issue by the local authority. The home-school agreement is also pertinent.

General Principles

Regular attendance at school is critical if children are to gain the maximum benefit from the education we provide. Parents are legally responsible for sending their children to school. Our school actively supports regular attendance: **absences and lateness are monitored on a weekly basis** by the Headteacher, the governing body and supported by the Social Care team. Individual attendance rates are available to parents via School Pupil Tracker and this is updated every half term. This information is also passed on to Middle School in Year 5

Parley First School expects excellent attendance from its pupils, in order for them to make the most of the opportunities that the school has to offer. We rely on our partnership with parents to ensure that this is achieved.

From September 2013, the Law relating to school attendance became much tougher and the amendment to the 2006 Regulations state:-

“Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances”.

The County Council have issued the following statement in relation to this:

Dorset County Council Children’s Services Directorate fully supports schools in expecting parents and carers to make sure that children and young people attend school on a regular basis. Any time away from school can have a significant impact on educational attainment, success in later life and longer term health and wellbeing.

Dorset County Council will be supporting all schools in ensuring the law is upheld. In law parents and carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular and punctual attendance at school. Therefore any unauthorised absence, such as taking holidays in term time, can result in a Fixed Term Penalty Notice. Failure to pay a Fixed Term Penalty Notice may result in a criminal conviction and a fine in the Magistrates Court of up to £1000.

Roles and responsibilities of Headteacher, other staff, governors

The Headteacher will ensure that

- Pupils are registered accurately and efficiently
- Attendance targets are set and monitored by the governing body
- Parents or carers are contacted when reasons for absence are unknown or unauthorised
- Pupil attendance and lateness are monitored weekly
- School attendance statistics are reported to the LA and governing body
- Pupils absent for long periods because of ill-health receive appropriate learning support.

All teachers are expected to

- Register pupils accurately and efficiently
- Report pupil attendance and lateness daily
- Encourage pupils to attend school regularly and inform colleagues if there is a problem that may lead to absences

Pupils will be expected to

- Attend school regularly

Parents and carers will be expected to

- Ensure the child attends school regularly
- Inform the school on the first day of non-attendance
- A pupil's absence from school will be considered as unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is received.

The governing body

- Will monitor closely attendance figures at the every Staffing & Curriculum Governors' meeting, especially the attendance figures of vulnerable groups such as Pupil Premium and SEND children.
- Will monitor attendance at every Fully Governing Body meeting via the Headteachers report.
- Will ensure that the Social Care Team is informed about the long-term absence of any pupils.
- Must consider any request by the headteacher to issue a penalty and need to be in agreement with this action for it to take effect. The headteacher will inform the governing body should this situation occur.(see appendix i)

The School Day

Our school day starts at 8.40 am. Registers are marked shortly after this. Pupils who are not present for registration will be marked as absent initially. If children arrive before 9.15am this absence mark will be changed to a late mark. Children arriving after 9.15am will be regarded as absent for the morning session and an explanation will be requested. **Any child arriving late or leaving early will need to be signed in or out by his parent/guardian in the late arrival book in the school office.** This is a safety precaution in case of fire or other emergency.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absences

Our school relies upon parents to ensure that children arrive in school promptly and to keep us fully informed about the reason(s) for all absences. We would ask parents to help the school by **notifying us of all absences on the first day** if possible, and always to ensure that any absence is covered by a note on your child's return to school. Verbal messages via the children are not sufficient. Unexplained absences are always classed as unauthorised absences.

There are two types of absence:

Authorised absence: instances of absence for which a satisfactory explanation has been given (e.g. medical appointments which cannot be arranged outside school hours, illness, day of religious observance etc)

Unauthorised absence: absence without permission from the headteacher or other authorised representative of the governing body. This includes all unexplained or unjustified absences.

Absences can only be authorised by the school, a written note explaining an absence does not constitute authorisation.

Procedure for Following Up Unexplained Absence

1. Every day a text message is sent to parents/carers by 10.00am to obtain reasons for any unexplained absences that day.
2. Where a response is received the child's attendance mark will be updated in accordance with the information received.
3. Where no response is received from this text message, the absence is marked as Unauthorised.

Requests for Absence

Parents are fully informed that their child's attendance is a legal requirement.

Any requests for a leave of absence must be submitted at least two weeks before start date of the absence and must be made in writing.

The governing body have delegated responsibility to the headteacher to determine if any request constitutes an "exceptional circumstance". The Pyramid have issued guidance that no authorisation will be granted for recreational purposes.

The headteacher will consider the reasons given by the parents and will inform them by return letter as to whether the reasons provided have been deemed as "exceptional".

Where authorisation is refused and the child is still taken out of school, their attendance mark for this period of absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Monitoring Attendance

Teachers mark registers electronically using SIMS twice daily (once in the morning and once in the afternoon after lunch break.)

Teachers and the attendance officer note both authorised and unauthorised absences in the registers. This is then recorded in the attendance record of each child.

Concerns about absences or lateness will be brought to the attention of the Headteacher who will relay them firstly to our school Pastoral Support Officer and then to the Social Care Team especially in circumstances where overall absence falls below 95%.

Individual attendance rates are reported to parents termly.

Each term information about the level of authorised and unauthorised absences is reported to the Department of Education.

Children Missing Education

In accordance with the DfE Guidance, the local authority is notified of details of any pupils who are regularly absent from school or have missed 10 school days or more without permission. Where a parent notifies the school of their intention to move their child to another school, the child is kept on roll until confirmation is obtained that they have been added to the register at their new school. Where no forwarding school details are provided or no confirmation is obtained of admission to the new school after 10 days, the child is removed from roll at Parley and the Local Authority is notified by means of a CME (Child Missing Education) form.

Arrangements for monitoring and evaluation

The Headteacher will, on a monthly basis, gather data on pupil attendance which will be analysed. The Headteacher and the governing body will evaluate the data and decide what, if any, further action is required.

Updated by DF 22.9.15

Appendix (i)

Dorset County Council Children's Services Penalty Notice Protocol

1. Legal Basis:

Sections 444A and 444B of the Education Act 1996 empower designated Local Authority (LA) officers, Head Teachers (& Deputy and Assistant Head teachers authorised by them) and the Police to issue Penalty Notices in cases of unauthorised absence from school. The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 require the Local Authority, in consultation with all of the above, to develop a code of conduct which must be followed when issuing Penalty Notices.

The issuing of Penalty Notices must conform with all requirements of the Human Rights Act 1988 and all Equal Opportunities legislation.

These provisions apply to all persons who fall within the definition of a 'parent' as set out in section 576 of the Education Act 1996. By virtue of this section 'parent' includes: all natural parents, whether they are married or not; any person or body who has parental responsibility for a child (as defined by the Children Act 1989); any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child. Having care of a child means that a person with whom a child lives and who looks after a child, irrespective of what their relationship is with that child, is considered to be a parent in education law.

2. Rationale for Issuing Penalty Notices:

Regular and punctual attendance at school is both a legal requirement and essential for pupils to maximise their educational opportunities.

Children's Services will continue to investigate cases of non-attendance from school and, following appropriate casework, instigate legal action if applicable.

In law, an offence occurs if a parent/carer fails to secure a child's attendance at the school at which they are a registered pupil and that absence is not authorised by the school. Penalty Notices supplement the existing sanctions currently available under section 444 Education Act 1996 or section 36 Children Act 1989 to enforce attendance at school where appropriate.

Children's Services delivers this LA responsibility.

3. Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be used:

Penalty Notices can only be issued in cases where a pupil of compulsory school age has been absent and the absence has not been authorised by the school or where the pupil has persistently arrived late after the register has closed.

The level of absence that is necessary before a Penalty Notice can be issued is 10 or more half days of unauthorised absence within a 12 school week period.

The key consideration in deciding whether to issue a Penalty Notice will be whether it can be effective in helping to get the pupil who is missing education back into school.

A Penalty Notice is a suitable intervention in circumstances of parentally condoned truancy, where the parent is considered capable of securing their child's regular attendance but is not willing to take responsibility for doing so.

To ensure consistent and fair delivery of Penalty Notices, the following criteria for their use shall apply:

- No one parent will receive more than three separate Penalty Notices resulting from the unauthorised absence of an individual child in any twelve month period.
- However, where families contain more than one poorly attending pupil, multiple issues may occur.

4. Procedure for issuing Penalty Notices:

Children's Services will issue Penalty Notices for all Dorset Schools.

Penalty Notices will only be issued by first class post and never as an on the spot action; this is to satisfy that all evidential requirements are in place and to meet health and safety requirements.

Children's Services will receive requests from schools, Dorset Police and neighbouring LAs. Requests from Schools will be sent to their area's Integrated Duty Team following discussion with a Locality Social Worker or a Practice Manager.

A Penalty Notice may be issued providing it does not conflict with other intervention strategies in place or other enforcement sanctions already being processed.

Children's Services will respond to all requests within 10 school days of receipt and where all criteria are met, will:

In cases of unauthorised absence

- Issue a formal warning to the parent/carer of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being used.
- In the same letter set a period of 15 school days within which the pupil must have no unauthorised absence.
- Issue a Penalty Notice through the post at the end of the 15 day period if the required level of improvement has not been achieved.

Exceptional Circumstances

In accordance with The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended a Penalty Notice can be issued in exceptional circumstances, for example where a parent takes a child on holiday during term time without the school authorising the absence. In such circumstances, although a minimum of 10 half day sessions of unauthorised absence will still apply before a Penalty Notice may be issued, the authorised person may issue a Penalty Notice without first issuing a formal warning to the parent as would otherwise be required. However s/he should still be satisfied that the parent was informed beforehand that, in some exceptional circumstances e.g. term time holiday, unauthorised absence could lead to a Penalty Notice being issued without further warning.

Who can receive a Penalty Notice?

Any Penalty Notice issued must be addressed to one parent but a Penalty Notice may be issued to each parent liable for the offence or offences.

An authorised person has discretion when deciding whether to issue one or more parents of a child with a Penalty Notice. This is to enable account to be taken of the specific circumstances in individual cases.

5. Roles and Responsibilities of the Local Authority

Local Authorities (LAs) may, in the absence of any other agreement, only issue Penalty Notices in respect of pupils registered at a school in that LA area or, in the case of an unregistered pupil, who resides in their area or for whom that LA has arranged alternative provision. LAs may only issue Penalty Notices in respect of pupils registered at a school in another LA area or, in the case of an unregistered pupil, for which another LA has arranged alternative provision if they have an agreement to that effect with the other LA.

6. Procedure for withdrawing Penalty Notices:

Once issued, a Penalty Notice will only be withdrawn in the following circumstances:

- Proof has been established that the Penalty Notice was issued to the wrong person.
- The use of the Penalty Notice did not conform to the terms of this Protocol.
- The Penalty Notice contains a material error.
- The Local Authority (LA) must withdraw the Penalty Notice if it is not paid in full and the LA has not, and does not intend to, instigate legal proceedings.

7. Payment of Penalty Notices:

Arrangements for payment will be detailed in the Penalty Notice.

Payment of a Penalty Notice discharges the parent/carer liability for the period in question and they cannot subsequently be prosecuted under other enforcement powers for the period covered in the Penalty Notice.

Payment of a Penalty Notice within 21 days is £60 and payment after this time but within 28 days is £120.

8. Non-payment of Penalty Notices:

Non-payment of a Penalty Notice will trigger the prosecution process.

Prosecution is for the offence to which the notice relates rather than for non-payment of the notice. In the case of unauthorised absence, if there is a prosecution, it will follow the usual procedure of a prosecution for irregular attendance (including considering an Education Supervision Order as an alternative, or in addition, to prosecution) under the provisions of section 444(1) or 444(1a) The Education Act 1996.

9. Penalty Notices and Excluded Pupils

Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on parents in relation to an excluded pupil. A parent has to ensure that their child is not present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first 5 days of each and every fixed period or permanent exclusion.

Section 105 allows for a Penalty Notice to be given to a parent guilty of an offence under Section 103. The Penalty Notice allows a parent to pay a penalty as a way of discharging any liability for the offence of failing to ensure that their child is not present in a public place on the days specified in a notice given to them. The parent must have been notified by the school at the time of the exclusion of their duty and the days to which it relates.

10. Procedure for Issuing of Penalty Notices in Cases of Exclusion

When a child is excluded from school – either for a fixed period or permanently – and the child is found in a public place during normal school hours on a specified day of exclusion

- Issue a Penalty Notice

In order for the parent to incur either form of legal responsibility the school must give them notice informing them of the duty to ensure their child is not found in a public place, the days when this duty will apply and, as appropriate, of the arrangements for alternative provision.

If the child has been provided with alternative provision and is not attending this provision then the parent will be liable under the unauthorised absence regulations.

11. Non Payment of Penalty Notices – Exclusions

In the case of a prosecution of a parent who has failed to ensure their child is not found in a public place during a specified day of exclusion, the procedures, such as preparing and serving a summons, will be similar to those for unauthorised absence.