



Whole-School Attendance Strategy

Park Hill Infant School – July 2024

Leadership and Management

Our vision statement is: All Different, All Equal, All Achieving.

Children's life chances are enhanced by regular attendance at school and the school will support parents and carers in achieving excellent attendance in order to maximise educational opportunities for their children.

As a school we have a legal responsibility to advise parents if their child's attendance is low. At Park Hill Infant School, we aim for children to achieve at least 96% attendance for a full school year.

We will achieve our aim for attendance by recognising individual needs, and enabling all learners to achieve success, by providing an inclusive school community, which gives equality of opportunity to all.

We will communicate the minimum expected attendance level for every pupil for the academic year at the beginning of the academic year and reminders will be sent throughout. Where a child is placed on school roll in-year, this information will be communicated to parents and carers upon their admission to the school. At the end of the school year, the attendance certificate for every pupil is attached to their annual school report which provides their attendance for the whole year and a key explaining the codes used.

We promote 5 key values: Honesty, Kindness, Positivity, Respect and Courage.

We expect that all pupils will:

- Attend school regularly;
- Attend school punctually;
- Attend school appropriately prepared for the day;
- Be picked up from school punctually.

Our targets for attendance are:

- Overall attendance for whole school cohort will be at least 96% (currently 96.2%)
- PA will remain (currently 5.19%) below 10% of whole school cohort or lower
- Attendance rate for disadvantaged (currently 95.1%), SEND (currently 94.8%) and WBRI (currently 96.2%) will be improved (04/09/2023-16/07/2024.)

We will communicate our vision and targets to staff, pupils, families and other stakeholders by:

- Publishing our attendance policy on the website (for parents/ carers) and circulating it to staff and Governors by email
- Sending half-termly newsletters with reminders about attendance and punctuality;

- Publishing our leaflet 'The Importance of Good Attendance and Punctuality' on the website/ hard copies in school office and circulating the leaflet to parents/ carers by email
- Publishing our expectations regarding school attendance on the school website and in the school brochure;
- Addressing school attendance expectations at attendance coffee mornings/ afternoons, open days and new entrants' meetings for parents/ carers;
- Offering individual 1:1 attendance meetings for parents/ carers that request to meet regarding any matters involving their child's attendance (once per term – advertised by email and newsletter.)
- Addressing our expectations to pupils via school assemblies;
- Sending individual letters to parents/carers if their child has dropped below 93% attendance;
- Sending individual letters to parents/carers if they have applied for a Leave of Absence;
- Sending individual letters to parents/ carers regarding punctuality if their child has 5 or more late arrivals in a half-term;
- Sending individual emails to parents/carers regarding absence and when requesting medical evidence;
- Reporting current attendance and Persistent Absence figures to Governors via Headteacher reports to Governors sent each term;
- Arranging and celebrating 'Fun Days' for the class with the highest attendance each term;
- Displaying attendance reminders on a noticeboard by the school office;
- Publishing term dates for each school year and sending term dates to current and prospective parents;

We recognise that absence from school can pose a safeguarding risk for our pupils. We will make sure that our staff, pupils and families understand these risks by:

- Alerting appropriate staff via CPOMS to any arising attendance issues e.g. teachers are notified of all leave requests for any children within their classes, and CPOMS is updated with any correspondence between staff and parents/ carers regarding absence e.g. phone calls home regarding absence from school and any correspondence between staff and other schools/ the Local Authority/ external agencies and the Education Welfare Service (Team EWS)
- Alerting appropriate staff via CPOMS to any possible or actual referrals to the Children Missing Education Team at Croydon Council
- Briefings to staff by the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or other appropriate staff members;
- Circulating the attendance policy to staff by email and having a soft copy available on the Shared Drive (T Shared)
- Publishing our leaflet 'The Importance of Good Attendance and Punctuality' on the website/ hard copies in school office and circulating the leaflet to parents/ carers by email
- Referring any attendance concerns to the Education Welfare Officer – including Persistent Absentees, children with attendance below 93%, children with unauthorised absence and Children Missing Education;
- Circulating guidance on Children Missing Education to all staff and including this guidance in the Induction Pack for new staff and new Governors and logging acknowledgements from staff and Governors that they have read this document on the Safeguarding log;
- Addressing school attendance expectations at attendance coffee mornings/ afternoons, open days and new entrants' meetings for parents/ carers;
- Targeting support e.g. offering the Early Birds Club to families that may benefit from it;

We expect good attendance and punctuality from our pupils. We use the following strategies to ensure that pupils understand this expectation:

- We reward good attendance by organising a 'Fun Day' for the class with the highest attendance each term which is also celebrated in our newsletter;
- Pastoral support for pupils with poor attendance linked to school refusal/ anxiety around coming to school;
- We run an Early Birds Club from 08:30am-09:00am for children identified by the Headship/ pastoral team to encourage children to attend school regularly and on-time.

Absence from school affects pupils' attainment, wellbeing and wider outcomes. We communicate this to our school community via:

- Publishing our leaflet 'The Importance of Good Attendance and Punctuality' on the website/ hard copies in school office and circulating the leaflet to parents/ carers by email;
- Publishing our expectations regarding school attendance on the school website and in the school brochure;
- Addressing school attendance expectations at attendance coffee mornings, open days and new entrants' meetings for parents/ carers;
- Addressing our expectations to pupils via school assemblies;
- Sending individual letters to parents/carers if their child has dropped below 93% attendance;
- Sending individual letters to parents/carers if they have applied for a Leave of Absence;
- Sending individual letters to parents/ carers regarding punctuality if their child has 5 or more late arrivals in a half-term;
- Sending individual emails to parents/carers regarding absence and when requesting medical evidence;
- Displaying attendance reminders on a noticeboard by the school office;

We empower staff to take responsibility for attendance by:

- Offering relevant training to help staff to promote good attendance;
- Sharing relevant data so that they know which groups are most at risk of poor attendance;
- Encouraging class teachers to talk to parents/ carers about attendance during Parent/ Teacher consultations;
- Enabling staff to chat informally with parents/carers about attendance e.g. at drop-off and collection times.

We recognise that attendance is an important area of school improvement. We demonstrate our commitment to this by making sure it is resourced appropriately, to create, build and maintain systems to promote good attendance. We do this by:

- The class with the highest attendance percentage for each term (Autumn, Spring and Summer) is rewarded with a 'Fun Day' – the school fund is used to pay for £25 of resources for each 'Fun Day' e.g. face paints, party foods and hot chocolate;
- School has purchased a contract with TEAM EWS which provide an education welfare service – Our Education Welfare Officer visits the school fortnightly;
- Early Birds Club places are offered free-of-charge to pupils with low attendance/ poor punctuality or who have been identified as vulnerable. These sessions are held each morning, Mon-Fri from 08:30am-09:00am, and breakfast is provided. Early Birds Club is aimed at promoting and further developing a range of key skills including speaking and listening, play skills, social interaction and emotional development;
- If a pupil's attendance falls below 93% and there is no improvement after letters have been sent and informal conversations have taken place with parents/ carers, the parent/ carer will be invited to a formal meeting with the Headship Team and/ or the EWO;
- The school refers any pupils with unauthorised absences to the EWO. Referrals are made to the Local Authority for the consideration of a Penalty Notice where conditions are met;
- A Coffee Morning/ Afternoon is held each Autumn term with the EWO and ABM for parents / carers to meet informally and discuss any issues, without needing an appointment. Tea/ coffee and biscuits are provided free-of-charge to parents/ carers attending;
- The school's 'Importance of Good Attendance' leaflet is sent annually to all children including new starters;
- Regular infection control information from the Health Protection Agency is sent by email to parents/ carers including new starters and is available on the website. A document called 'Is My Child Too Ill for School' covers the recovery periods for common infections such as Chicken Pox, E Coli and Threadworms;

- Members of school staff may be asked to provide support to pupils with medical conditions, including the administering of medicines. Parents/ carers are given the option of bringing Calpol/ Nurofen to school, alongside any prescription medications, and written consent from parents/ carers is captured to enable staff to administer medications to children. All school staff receive First Aid at Work/ Paediatric training.

Our designated ‘Senior Attendance Champion’ on the senior leadership team is:

Natasha Parry – Deputy Headteacher

Their responsibilities include:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school;
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance;
- Developing and monitoring the school’s attendance policy;
- Monitoring attendance reports – produced fortnightly by Assistant Business Manager – and evaluating progress, monitoring any interventions or escalation procedures;
- Assigning targets and actions towards improving attendance on the School Improvement Plan.

We ensure that our governors have an accurate view of attendance at our school so that they can offer effective support and challenge. We keep governors informed by:

- Including attendance figures and analysis in the Headteacher’s report to Governors every term – including a comparison of National figures;
- Termly attendance updates in Governor meetings;
- Governor scrutiny of attendance data;
- Link governor visits.

Relationships and Communication

As a school, we understand that developing a welcoming and positive culture is important in building trust and engagement and therefore promoting good attendance. We do this by:

- Offering a wide range of extracurricular activities after-school so that pupils can build skills and better relationships with their peers;
- Ensuring that strong pastoral systems are in place so that pupils and families are supported when needed;
- Organising a range of school events for parents/ carers to build a sense of community;
- Ensuring that staff phone families with positive news, rather than only contacting them when there is an issue.

We strive to communicate effectively with staff, pupils and families so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. Our strategies for doing this include:

- Written communications, such as letters home and information leaflets;
- Online communications, such as the school website and emails;
- Telephone contact, including welfare calls and texts to parents;
- Face-to-face interactions, such as Parent/ Teacher consultations, and parenting workshops.

We understand that some families will face barriers with communication. We take the following measures to ensure that our communication with parents is inclusive:

- Using a wide range of methods to inform parents (not written communications alone);

- Using interpreters where possible e.g. staff who speak the same language;
- Ensuring that the slides of information-sharing workshops are sent out by email for those unable to attend;
- Offering the option of attending Parent/ Carer meetings virtually (for example, to support those with work commitments or mobility issues).

When required, we work with partners to promote good attendance. Examples include:

- Our Education Welfare Officer - Team EWS
- Local Authority services such as Early Help, Children Missing Education
- Social workers – where relevant and necessary

We strive to model respectful relationships and appropriate communication for staff and pupils. This will help relationships between pupils and staff to reflect a positive and respectful culture.

All staff members should:

- treat pupils with dignity, build relationships rooted in mutual respect and observe proper boundaries;
- take into consideration the vulnerability of some pupils and the ways in which this might contribute to absence, handling confidential information sensitively;
- understand the importance of school as a place of safety where pupils can enjoy trusted relationships with staff and pupils, particularly for children with a social worker and those who have experienced adversity;
- communicate effectively with families regarding pupils' attendance and wellbeing.

Parents and carers are expected to:

- encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities as documented in our 'Home-School-Child agreement';
- ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at school punctually, prepared for the school day;
- notify the school if their child is going to be late due to an unforeseen circumstance (i.e. car breaking down, urgent appointment)
- ensure that they contact the school whenever the child/children is unable to attend school;
- contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child away from school;
- provide at up to date contact numbers for each parent/ carer and at least two additional emergency contacts and inform the school of any changes of address or contact details;
- provide supporting medical documentation if the absence is for 3 days or more and the child's attendance is below 90%. This can be produced in the form of an appointment card, prescription or letter;
- provide a note, letter or appointment card indicating attendance at the dentist, doctor or optician before the arranged appointment unless an emergency situation has arisen.

We communicate this expectation by:

- using home-school agreements;
- having a dedicated attendance email address;
- making it easy to contact school when there is an issue;
- providing a designated contact for families that need extra support.

Systems and Data

We use clear and consistently applied systems and processes to improve, reward and incentivise attendance and to address absences. Our systems include:

- SIMS.Net
- CPOMS
- Microsoft Excel

We ensure that these systems are inclusive and appropriate for all pupils by:

- SIMS.Net allows us to monitor and scrutinise attendance data by vulnerability group e.g. eligible for Pupil Premium. This allows us to devise and implement attendance improvement actions based upon key pastoral factors for each individual pupil
- CPOMS allows us to securely record attendance data and improvement actions (such as letters, records of conversations with parents/ carers and meetings.) These entries can be communicated to key staff with the authorisation to view the information e.g. the Headship Team, Class Teachers and our EWO

We use robust school systems to provide useful data at cohort, group and individual levels to give an accurate view of attendance, reasons for absence and patterns amongst groups. These groups include:

- children who have a social worker, including looked-after children;
- young carers;
- children who are eligible for free school meals/ pupil premium;
- children who speak English as an Additional Language (EAL);
- children who have Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND).

Every member of staff in our school has a role in promoting good attendance. We help staff to know and understand this responsibility by:

- making specific reference to attendance in staff roles and responsibilities descriptions;
- outlining the responsibilities of all staff in the Attendance policy which is shared with all staff;
- discussing attendance issues during staff meetings.

Attendance leaders provide the following information to key staff to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement appropriate support:

- Attendance letters to parents/ carers
- Records of conversations from attendance meetings
- Records of conversation from telephone conversation
- Records of email correspondence to and from parents/ carers regarding attendance
- Dates and reasons of any Leave of Absence requests from parents/ carers

Our school attendance, safeguarding and pastoral support policies clearly outline:

- the key principles;
- rules parents/ carers need to follow;
- routines;
- consequence systems (e.g. Penalty Notices issued by the Local Authority for unauthorised leave)

The escalation procedures to address absence are:

- understood by parents and carers;
- implemented consistently;
- reviewed regularly.

We ensure this by:

- providing information about escalation procedures and attendance interventions on the school website, information leaflet, New Entrants meetings and via any other relevant means;
- explaining the systems in place during targeted attendance meetings with families;
- monitoring the use and effectiveness of interventions to ensure that these are implemented consistently;
- providing training and support for staff who are directly responsible for improving attendance;
- gathering data on the escalation procedures to address absence;
- using this data to analyse whether the current systems are working and to identify areas for further development;
- ensuring that a member of the senior leadership team has responsibility for reviewing escalation procedures regularly.

We make sure escalation procedures to address absence are initiated proactively, understood by parents/ carers and families, implemented consistently and that their impact is reviewed regularly. We do this by:

- Contacting parents/ carers for first day absences/ updates on longer absences
- Responding to Leave of Absence requests in writing
- Updating CPOMS with any relevant information and correspondence between the school and the parents/ carers (e.g. all Leave of Absence requests are uploaded to CPOMS with the school response.)
- Referring cases of poor attendance/ unauthorised absence to the school EWO – Team EWS – with associated paperwork
- Gathering evidence and making CME referrals to Croydon Council
- Gathering evidence for school referrals to services where necessary e.g. social care, health and police
- Contacting other schools/ Local Authority's to confirm attendance of children that have left
- Admissions of new starters/ off rolling of school leaver's
- Notifying parents/ carers of low attendance/ attendance concerns via phone calls, face-to-face discussions, letters
- Organising formal attendance meetings with School Leaders to meet with parents/ carers for low attendance/ attendance concerns
- Running attendance reports for School Leaders with past actions, current actions and future actions

Intervention

We will use the following data to identify where attendance interventions need to be targeted:

- Register inspections;
- Analysis of data from school registers (including analysis of absence codes);
- Analysis of punctuality data;
- Benchmarking across groups and whole school attendance;
- Analysis of trends in attendance (on an individual, group and whole-school level);
- Analysis of information recorded on the school safeguarding systems;
- Records of home visits and their outcomes;
- Records of interventions offered to individuals and groups and their outcomes;
- Information provided by pastoral and other staff.

We will monitor and analyse this data regularly to ensure that interventions are delivered quickly to address absence.

We use specialist staff to support pupils and their families to identify and overcome barriers to attendance. Specific roles and responsibilities include:

Assistant Business Manager/ Attendance Lead:

- Responsible for daily inputting of attendance data/ coding;
- Production of correspondence regarding attendance and absence to parents/ carers;
- Production of attendance reports and analysis to EWO/ Headship Team and Governors;
- developing school's attendance policy and ensuring all documents relating to attendance are up-to-date e.g. school brochure, school website information on attendance

Education Welfare Officer from TEAM EWS:

- Ensure the best outcome for all pupils;
- Improve school attendance and punctuality by contributing to relevant areas of school policy and procedure and providing termly attendance reports;
- support school with cases of poor attendance/ punctuality/ unauthorised leave;
- Take action in respect of individual absentees to secure regular attendance e.g. referrals to the Local Authority for consideration of Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence;
- Make referrals to, liaise with and collaborate in joint work with other practitioners and external services e.g. child protection services/ social care/ Early Help.

Headship Team/ Senior Leadership Team:

- Oversee whole school attendance and devise/ monitor whole school attendance improvement initiatives;
- Where necessary, meet with parents/ carers of children with attendance below 93%;
- Make referrals to, liaise with and collaborate in joint work with other practitioners and external services e.g. child protection services/ social care/ Early Help.

Inclusion Leader:

- Co-ordinating appropriate provision for children with Special Educational Needs and liaising with colleagues, parents/ carers and outside agencies.

We will create action plans in partnership with families and also include agencies that may be supporting families

Assistant Business Manager / Attendance Lead and commissioned Education Welfare Officer:

- Attendance support plan / Parenting Contract meeting where necessary will be held;
- Parenting contract / support plan will be considered where a pupil is not attending school regularly or punctuality is a cause for concern;
- Included in the parenting contract / support plans - written agreement between the parent/carer, school/ Governing Body and Education Welfare Officer;
- This will include - attendance targets, timescale for improvement and actions agreed.

We will implement a range of strategies to support pupils and families who require this. Examples include:

Education Welfare Officer from Team EWS:

- Ensure that actions not only support improvement in attendance but support parent/carers where necessary to ensure sustained improvement
- Agree and make referrals where necessary to LA statutory services e.g. Early Help where parent has given consent
- Contact LA housing/associations where concerns have been raised regarding poor housing conditions and where this is presented as a barrier to a child accessing their education.
- Signpost families to charitable and statutory organisations who can offer support when parents/carers may be experiencing mental health difficulties
- Contact Local Councillors/Members of Parliament where a concern raised by the family and impacting on their child's attendance and attainment is not being considered/resolved by an outside agency.

We will monitor the impact of any interventions, making adjustments if necessary, and use the findings to inform future strategy.

The following people are responsible for monitoring our attendance interventions:

Jane Charman – Headteacher

Natasha Parry – Deputy Headteacher/ Senior Attendance Champion

Stephanie Croucher – Assistant Business Manager/ Attendance Lead

Team EWS – Education Welfare Officer

Jane Cleall-Smith – Governor overseeing Attendance

They will do this by:

- Scrutinising fortnightly reports of all pupils with attendance below 93% and past, current and future actions;
- Noting where attendance has improved or fallen and the reasons for this;
- Benchmarking attendance data locally, nationally and in comparison, to previous years data;
- Recording all actions taken with regard to improving individual attendance on CPOMS.

Where interventions fail to address attendance issues, we will identify the reasons why and, where appropriate, change or adjust the intervention.

We will follow local authority codes of conduct, policies and procedures and make referrals for statutory intervention when school-based interventions have not resulted in improved attendance and relevant triggers/thresholds are met. The person responsible for this is:

Stephanie Croucher – Assistant Business Manager and Team EWS – Education Welfare Officer

This strategy will be reviewed annually.

By: Stephanie Croucher – Assistant Business Manager and Team EWS – Education Welfare Officer

Date of last review: July 2024

Process for monitoring attendance that has fallen below 93%

