



Attendance Policy

July 2024

Reviewed: October 2024

Ratified by Governors:

Review: Every Year

Date of Next Review: July 2025

| Senior Attendance Champion | | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|------|--------------|
| Lee McCormack | | | |
| Headteacher | Lee McCormack | Date | October 2024 |
| Chair of Governing Body | Steve Pollard/Nabil Mugharbel | Date | October 2024 |

Parkwood Primary School's Attendance Policy

'The world is run by people who show up' - Benjamin Franklin

Our attendance policy aims to improve life chances of the children attending Parkwood Primary School and prepare them to be fully contributing citizens when they reach adulthood. Regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school, higher education and employment or training.

All parents want the best for their children and having a good education is important to ensure that they have the best opportunities in their adult life. Absence means **missed** learning. If children do not attend school regularly, they may:

- Struggle to keep up with school work. Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%.
- Miss out on the social side of school life and affect the child's ability to make and keep friendships, a vital part of growing up

Research has shown that setting good attendance patterns from an early age, from nursery onwards, will also help your child later on in life. Children generally find it harder to make and maintain friendships, achieve less and they often suffer with poor self-esteem.

Parkwood Primary School's rules of safe, respectful and ready are embedded across the school thus allowing us to create a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be. We consider this to be an essential ingredient for securing good attendance from our pupils.

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance (through celebration assemblies)
- Reducing persistent and severe absence through our work with AASSA (Attendance Advisory Service for Schools and Academies)
- Ensure every pupil has access to a full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility. Effective partnership between school and home is essential to ensure good attendance and punctuality, it safeguards our children.

The **school** will:

- Provide and promote a welcoming and positive atmosphere so that children feel safe and know that their presence is valued.
- Raise awareness of the importance of full attendance and punctuality, using newsletters and other communications to parents, making attendance a high priority.

- Encourage parents to fully support the policy as a vital contribution towards their child's education. All new parents are introduced to the policy and information on attendance in the school prospectus. It is also accessible via the school website.
- Encourage the children to have a positive attitude towards attendance and punctuality so that they can retain this into adult life.
- Communicate effectively with other agencies.
- Have procedures in place to help children settle back into school after a long absence. It is important that on return from an unavoidable absence all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date with any information that has been passed to other pupils.
- Inform parents when their child's attendance becomes a concern.

The **governing body** is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and culture
- 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

The **headteacher** is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at Parkwood Primary School
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- Ensure that all staff comply with the school policy and deal consistently with absence and punctuality
- Provide training for staff in all matters of attendance.
- Ensure attendance information is available for Governors and parents.

The **designated senior leader** for attendance is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Monitoring and analysing the attendance data to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families. Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence.
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus and improvement
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Request office staff gain medical evidence where the authenticity of the absence is brought into question or the absence exceeds 5 school days.
- Addressing persistent lateness
- Addressing persistent unauthorised absences, including excessive lateness without reason provided
- Meet the legal requirements with the use of correct codes of absence, with particular reference to the authorised and unauthorised absence (DFE guidance).

- Hold regular meetings with parents of pupils who the school considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement in school.

The **designated senior leader** responsible for attendance is Mrs McCormack and can be contacted via the school office.

The **family liaison officer** is responsible for:

- Reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader and headteacher
- Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Identifying barriers to attendance with pupils and families
- Creating attendance plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Work with AASSA to tackle persistent absence
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance.

The **family liaison officer** responsible for attendance is Mrs Robinson-Williams and can be contacted via the school office

The **class teacher** is responsible for:

- Recording attendance on a daily basis.
- Raising concerns regarding the impact of absence on learning with parents at parent consultations.

The **school admin staff** are responsible for:

- Taking calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system. If contact is not possible, a voice mail message will be left requesting they call school to explain the reason for absence
- Using the correct codes once the reason for absence has been identified
- At the request of the **designated senior leader**, request medical evidence from parents/carers
- Make first day calls to any parents/carers of children that are absent but whose absence has NOT been reported by parent/carer
- Send letters as needed to advise parents/carers of this and offer support. This letter will acknowledge the pupil's circumstances but highlights the importance of good attendance.

The **parents/carers** are expected to:

- Makes sure their child attends every day on time.
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9.30am on the first day of absence and indicate when they are expected to return.
- Ensure all telephone contact numbers and contacts are up-to-date
- Provide two emergency contact numbers
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside the school day.
- Upon request from the school, provide medical evidence.
- Retain open and honest communication with Parkwood Primary School

- Be positive about school and school life with your children.
- Make the school aware, in advance and promptly, of potential issues that may affect the child's attendance or punctuality
- Keep the school well informed in cases of lengthy absence. Parents/carers will be encouraged to keep absence to a minimum. A note or explanation from a child's home does not mean an absence will be authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school.
- Embed positive routines with children that support good attendance, such as age-appropriate bedtimes; a healthy, filling breakfast; supporting your child to prepare their bag with all they need for the day ahead the night before etc
- Understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality and promote this with their child, aiming for 100% attendance each year.
- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances.

Note: by law, all children of compulsory school age (between 5 and 16) must receive a suitable, full-time education. It is your legal responsibility as a parent to ensure that your child attends school regularly. (*Reference: The Education Act 1996 sections 434 and 551*)

At all times, Parkwood will work in partnership with parents to find support routes to improve attendance.

Promoting a culture of good attendance:

The school will take positive action to encourage good attendance for all pupils:

- Home/school agreement
- Newsletters celebrating attendance achievements
- Class recognition for best attendance in celebration assembly on a weekly basis
- Individual recognition for good attendance on a termly basis
- Send letters of thanks to parents for contributing towards improving attendance

Recording attendance

We will keep an attendance register using SIMs, and place all pupils onto this register. We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session (after lunch). It will mark whether every pupil 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 pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by a specified time on each school day.

| Line starts/doors open | Registration starts (line walks in/younger children should be in classrooms) | A late mark (L) is given if the child arrives after: | Unauthorised absence mark (U) is given if the child arrives after the register has closed. | End of day collection time |
|------------------------|--|--|--|----------------------------|
| 8.35am | 8.40am | 8.45am | 9.15am | 3.10pm |

*Parents with multiple drop-offs are given a ten-minute buffer from 8.35am until 8.45am. Children who arrive after this time, must go directly to the office.

The register for the first session will be taken at as outlined above and will be kept open until timing specified. The register for the second session will be taken as outlined below.

| Year Group | Registration time |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| FS, Year 1, Year 2 and Year 4 | 1.00pm |
| Years 3 | 1.30pm |
| Year 5 | 1.25pm |
| Year 6 | 1.50pm |

Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carers must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by **9.30am** via Study Bugs app, school email: office@parkwoodprimary.org.uk or the school office (01634 234699).

If the child is anticipated to be absent for longer than 1 day through illness, then families are expected to contact school regularly to keep us updated.

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than 5 days or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for 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.

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

The Department of Education and NHS UK, suggest that a child with persistent sickness or diarrhoea should remain absent from school **for 48 hours from the last period of vomiting** and then return when well enough to attend

Continuing Absence Without Contact

If after 3 days of absence, your child has not been seen and contact has not been made with the school, we will make all reasonable enquiries to establish contact with parents/carers and the child, including making enquiries to known friends and wider family. In the event of an absence of three or more days without contact from the family, a home visit will be made, by a member of school staff or the local authority, to ascertain the safety and well-being of the child and in addition to the reason for absence from school. The headteacher will take advice from the local authority for all absences incurring more than 10 days. We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer then the local authority is notified that the child is at risk of missing education (CME). The Attendance Advisory Service staff will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up-to-date contact number. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment via the school office by telephone call or email. Copies of appointment letters may be requested. However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

Lateness and punctuality

Legally, the register must be taken twice a day, once at the start of the school day and once in the afternoon. It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to ensure that children attend school regularly and punctually. Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other pupils. Ongoing and repeated lateness after the close of registration is considered as unauthorised absence and could be subject to legal action.

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code

- After the register has closed will be marked as an unauthorised absence, using the appropriate code

Mornings:

| Line starts/doors open | Registration starts (line walks in/younger children should be in classrooms) | A late mark (L) is given if the child arrives after: | Unauthorised absence mark (U) is given if the child arrives after the register has closed. | End of day collection time |
|-------------------------------|---|---|---|-----------------------------------|
| 8.35am | 8.40am | 8.45am | 9.15am | 3.10pm |

*Parents with multiple drop-offs are given a ten-minute buffer from 8.35am until 8.45am. Children who arrive after this time, must go directly to the office.

Afternoons

| Year Group | Lunchtime end | A late mark (L) or other appropriate code is given if the child arrives after: |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|---|
| FS, Year 1, Year 2 and Year 4 | 1.00pm | 1.00pm |
| Years 3 | 1.30pm | 1.30pm |
| Year 5 | 1.25pm | 1.25pm |
| Year 6 | 1.50pm | 1.50pm |

School monitor and record not only late arrivals, but also late collection from the school premises at the end of the day. If this becomes a regular occurrence or patterns start to emerge, the school will request a meeting with parents.

When parents are late, children remain under the supervision of staff. The school will call the primary contact, and thereafter, other contacts listed on the SIMS database until collection of the child is confirmed. It is essential and the responsibility of the parent/carer to keep this information up to date. Following ten minutes after the end of the of school day, the child will be taken to our wraparound care facility. Parents will incur a charge for this service.

If the child remains uncollected when school closes at 4.00pm and contact cannot be made, this will become a **safeguarding issue** and Medway Children's Services will be contacted.

Following up unexplained absence

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

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason.
- 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 the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may call Medway's Children's Services

Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels each term.

Parents/carers will also be asked to confirm/update contact details twice a year (parent consultation)

Understanding Absence

The register records every half-day attendance or absence. Absences are categorised as either authorised or unauthorised and for this reason the school will ask a parent/carer for the reason for absence.

The school's attendance records are important for effective attendance management. They also provide evidence in the event of prosecution of parents under the Education Act 1996, or if seeking an education supervision order or a school attendance order as directed by the school's Local Authority

Types of Absence

Authorised: This is an absence whereby the child is away from school for a legitimate reason. This can be for illness, medical/dental appointments that cannot be arranged outside of school time or unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes. For school to authorise such absence, the parent needs to follow the school absence procedure. A parent/carer does not have authority to authorise any absence and consequently, some may be marked as unauthorised.

Unauthorised Absence: Those absences the school do not consider reasonable and for which no authorised leave of absence given. This will include children who arrive after the registers have closed (see timings above). These absences will affect the child's overall attendance record and monitored by school and the Local Authority Attendance Advisory Service (AASAA)

Types of **unauthorised** absence may include:

- Keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Parents not contacting school with the reason for absence
- Absences around the start and end of a school holiday
- Patterns that become clear, for example Mondays and/or Fridays
- Arrive to school too late to get an authorised mark (see timings above)
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time that have not been agreed by the Headteacher

- Excessive illness without medical evidence
- Sibling sickness
- Death of a pet
- With effect from the 1st September 2022, any pupil who has been suspended from school, and provision has been arranged, if the student does not attend the provision this shall be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as 'one-off, never to be repeated' events which are unavoidable, such as visiting seriously ill relatives, the bereavement of a close relative, a wedding or other significant traumas experienced by families.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated via a request form, which can be collected from the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Medway Local Authority advises all Headteachers not to grant leave of absence during term time, unless exceptional circumstance exist. When children are out of school for a holiday that has not been authorised by the Headteacher, or a child is kept away from school longer than agreed, the absence is unauthorised and may result in parents/carers being issued a penalty notice from AASSAA. See letters in Appendix D.

Parkwood Primary work closely with the Attendance Advisory Service (AASAA) for schools and academies in order to monitor and improve school attendance and outcomes for Medway children.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness (including mental illness) and medical/dental appointments
- Our school acknowledges the multi-faith nature of the school community and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside of school holidays or weekends. In accordance with the law, the school will authorise one day's absence for a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs. Should any additional days be taken, these will be recorded in the register as unauthorised absence. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body, to confirm whether the day is set apart
- The school will authorise the absence of a traveller pupil of no fixed abode who is unable to attend school because they are travelling with their parent who is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place. This is subject to certain limits, depending on the child's age and number of sessions absent. The school will discuss cases individually with Traveller parents as necessary. Parents should let the school know of their plans as far in advance as possible. Authorised Traveller absence will be recorded appropriately in the register. To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children, wherever possible, the child should attend school elsewhere when their

family is travelling for occupational purposes. In which case the child will be dual registered at that school and this school, which is their 'main' school. Children from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities whose families do not travel for occupational purposes are expected to register at school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly

- Parents of a child performer can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a performance. They must contact the Headteacher to discuss the nature and frequency of the work, whether the child has a valid performance license and whether education will be provided by the employer during any future leave of absence. It is, however, down to the Headteachers discretion as to whether to authorise this (remains satisfied that this will not have a negative impact on the pupils education) and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs.
- Parents of able sportsmen and women can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in regional, county, national and international events and competitions. It is, however, down to the Headteachers discretion as to whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Permission for your child to leave early or arrive late to attend coaching and training sessions is also at the discretion of the Headteacher/Principal and is not likely to be approved if it is a regular event, unless the sports club or association is providing an education tutor as part of their coaching.
- An agreed flexi-schooling contract as agreed by the headteacher and governing board.

Attendance monitoring

The **designated senior leader** for attendance will analyse data on a **bi-weekly basis**

The monitoring will focus on the following:

- Identifying trends in individual's data
- Identifying trends in vulnerable groups' data
- Increases in attendance
- Decreases or flat-lining attendance
- Work with FLO to identify barriers and offer bespoke support to families.

At Parkwood Primary school we identify **96% attendance** or above as a target for all pupils

Pupil-level absence data will be 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. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

If a child at Parkwood is at risk of moving towards persistent absence, the school will discuss the reason immediately. Where appropriate we will prepare an action plan to offer support with improving attendance. See example of an attendance contract in appendix A.

The AASAA monitor all absence marks through 4-5 weekly meetings with the senior designated leader, DSL, office manager and family liaison officer.

Regular discussions occur between school and the AASAA, who will challenge the school to provide evidence of interventions where attendance has fallen below 90%. This service will inspect all types of absence, including illness and exceptional circumstance

If a child has an unacceptable level of unauthorised attendance, (10% or more of total attendance) letters are despatched to families to highlight a cause for concern and that offers support. See appendix C.

Parkwood will always take a support first approach however penalty notices will be considered for 10 or more missed sessions (5 days) in 10 school weeks.

Typically, if a child has regular illness, parents will need to provide medical evidence in order for any future absences to be authorised. Medical evidence comes in the form of a GP appointment card, letter regarding a hospital appointment, copy of a prescription or packaging/labels bought from the pharmacy with a receipt.

As a rule, school cannot place a child on a part-time timetable as all children of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, there may be the need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet the child's individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a child attending full-time. These agreements are reviewed, with a return to full time education estimated or provision in place to support the child. These agreements are between home and school and recorded as authorised.

In cases of a child's absence being a consequence of medical need, school and the AASAA are keen to work closely with families to ensure education provision maintained.

Attendance Codes:

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance. The national codes enable schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way, which complies with regulations. These are also used for collecting statistics through the School Census System. The data helps schools, local authorities and the Government to gain a greater understanding of the level of, and the reasons for, absence.

| Code | Reason |
|--|---|
| Attending the School | |
| / | Present morning |
| \ | Present afternoon |
| L | Late arrival before register closed (9.10am) |
| Attending a place other than school | |
| K | Attending education provision arranged by the local authority |
| V | Attending an educational visit or trip |
| P | Participating in sporting activity |
| W | Attending work experience |
| B | Attending any other approved educational activity |

| | |
|--|--|
| D | Dual registered at another school |
| Absence (leave of absence) | |
| C1 | Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad |
| M | Medical or dental appointment |
| J1 | Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employments or for admission to another educational institute |
| S | Studying for a public examination |
| X | Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school |
| C2 | Compulsory school aged pupil subject to a part-time timetable |
| C | Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance |
| Absent (other authorised reasons) | |
| T | Parent travelling for occupational purposes |
| R | Religious observance |
| I | Illness (not medical or dental appointment) |
| E | Suspended or permanently excluded and not alternative provision made |
| Q | Unable to attend school due to lack of access arrangements |
| 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 premises being closed |
| Y4 | Unable to attend due to whole school site being unexpectedly closed |
| Y5 | Unable to attend due as pupil is in the criminal justice detention |
| Y6 | Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law |
| Y7 | Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause |
| Absent (UNAUTHORISED) | |
| G | Holiday not granted by the school |
| N | Reason for absence not yet established (to be given for a maximum of 5 days) THREE DAYS OF ABSENCE WITH NO CONTACT, ALERT DSL FOR A WELFARE CHECK TO BE COMPLETED |
| O | Absent in other or unknown circumstances |

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| | *No reason for absence is established or the school is not satisfied at the reason given |
| U | Arrived in school after register closed (9.30am and 30 minutes after the year group lunchtime ends) |
| Administrative Codes | |
| Z | Prospective pupil not on admission register |
| # | Planned whole school closure |

The Impact of Absence

To put things into perspective this table will evidence how much learning time can be lost through lack of attendance.

| Attendance in school | Days attended in school * | Days absent |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| 100% | 190 | 0 |
| 95% | 180 | 10 |
| 90% | 171 | 20 |
| 85% | 161 | 30 |
| 80% | 152 | 40 |
| 75% | 143 | 50 |

***190 days in each school year**

Being **LATE** for school reduces learning time.

If a child is late **5 minutes** every day, they **MISS 3 DAYS** of learning each year

If a child is late **15 minutes** every day, they **MISS 2 WEEKS** of learning each year

We understand that there are occasions when children are absent, or late into school, and we would like to support families so children do not miss important learning and social time from school. Please approach us as soon as possible if you are experiencing difficulty.

Penalty Notices

Parkwood Primary School will always strive to overcome barriers to good attendance with informal or formal support from the school. However, the 1996 Education Act clearly states, 'If any child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at school, fails to attend regularly, the parents/carers of the child are guilty of an offence.' The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 also introduced the use of penalty notices as an additional sanction to address the problem of poor school attendance. Failure to ensure your child regularly attends school may result in prosecution in the courts or a penalty notice issued.

If a child has 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence within a 10-week period, the child's parent(s)/carer(s) may receive a '**Notice to Improve**' notification sent via email, app or letter. Each day of absence is recorded as two sessions (morning and afternoon). Unauthorised absences include:

- unauthorised absence (where there is no reasonable circumstance for the absence taking place, O code),
- arriving late after the register has closed (U Code),

- or a combination of these with holidays taken during term time (unauthorised holiday: G code)

These 10 weeks can span different terms and even different educational settings, such as transitions in-year school changes and alternative provision. For instance, if your child misses 3 days of school for a holiday in September (6 sessions) and is late after the register closes on 4 occasions (4 sessions) between September and October, you may be issued a 'Notice to Improve' notification.

The 'Notice to Improve' notification will set out the expectations and period notice for the improvement of attendance such as 'no further unauthorised absences in the next six weeks'. Should the expectations not be met in the improvement period, then a **penalty notice** may then be requested by the school and issued by the Local Authority (LA) to each parent/carer responsible for the child.

A maximum of two penalty notices within a rolling three-year period will be issued.

- First offence: the first time a penalty notice is issued. The amount will be £80 per parent, per child paid within 21 days. This increases to £160 per parent, per child if paid after day 21, until day 28. Any non-payment of the penalty notice may be referred to the Magistrates Court.
- Second Offence (within 3 years): the second time a penalty notice is issued, the amount will be £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days. Any non-payment of the penalty notice may be referred to the Magistrates Court.
- 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 may be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court under s.444 of the Education Act (1996) or other legal interventions considered. The Magistrates' Court can order fines up to £2500 per parent, per child.

Parents with parental responsibility, and adults residing with the child, including for example, stepparents who have day-to-day responsibility for the child, may be fined, and this applies to each child who is absent. For example, if two adults take two children out of school, the total fines would be £640 (reduced to £320 for a first offence paid within 21days).

AASAA are responsible on behalf of Medway council to prosecute or issue a penalty notice to parents/carers who fail to send their children to school regularly.

Children who are absent from education:

Children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation - particularly county lines. It is therefore important that the school responds to persistently absent pupils and children missing education as it supports identifying such abuse, and in the case of absent pupils, helps prevent the risk of them becoming a child missing education in the future. This includes when problems are first emerging but also where children are already known to local authority children's social care and need a social worker (such as a child who is a child in need or who has a child protection plan, or is a looked after child), where being absent from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community.

Leavers and children who cease to attend without prior notice (CME)

Parents must inform the school in writing if they are planning to remove their child from Parkwood Primary School. This must include the details of the new school the child is planning to attend or that they are exercising their right to educate their child otherwise. All Education Otherwise information will be passed onto Medway Council, who are responsible for monitoring all children who are educated otherwise. If, after ten days continuous absence, the school has been unable to ascertain the whereabouts of a pupil, they will refer the child's details to the Local Authority in order to perform further checks that are not available to school.

Pupils who are allocated places in schools but fail to start are also treated as CME. If the school has been unable to make contact with the family during a ten-day period after their expected arrival, they will refer the pupils to the Local Authority for further checks.

Long-term illness:

We will ensure a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs. We will work together with the local authority and other relevant professionals to ensure any child who is going to be absent for longer than 15 days due to medical reasons either consecutively or cumulatively will have access to relevant and appropriate education.

Reluctant attenders/school refusal:

You should do everything possible to encourage your child to attend. However, if the reason for their reluctance appears to be school-based, such as difficulty with work, or bullying, please discuss this with the school at the earliest opportunity and the school will do everything possible to resolve. Being accepting of your child's reluctance to attend is likely to make the matter worse. School refusal/school phobia is a psychological condition that usually has been medically diagnosed. Other arrangements may be put in place for a child with genuine school phobia

Mental health, emotionally based school avoidance and wellbeing:

Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) is a broad umbrella term used to describe a group of children and young people who have severe difficulty in attending school due to emotional factors, often resulting in prolonged absences from school. The impact of EBSA on children is far-reaching, it has been linked to seriously hampering children's psychological, social, and academic performance and subsequently performance in exams and employment opportunities. Parents who have concerns about their child's mental wellbeing can contact our school's pastoral lead for further information on the support available. Many children will experience normal but difficult emotions that make them nervous about attending school, such as worries about friendships, schoolwork, tests or variable mood. It is important to note that these pupils are still expected to attend school regularly.

Reduced Timetables

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary reduced timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition

prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package.

A reduced timetable must only be in place for the shortest time necessary and not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement should have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend fulltime, either at school or alternative provision. There should also be formal arrangements in place for regularly reviewing it with the pupil and their parents. In agreeing to a reduced timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must treat absence as authorised and code in the register as a C, which is an authorised absence

Vulnerable Children

Children who are Looked After (LAC), subject to a Child Protection Plan (CP) or Children in Need (CIN) will be treated with highest priority and will be known to the Attendance Improvement Coordinator. Any unexplained absence will be followed up immediately by a telephone call to the home. Any outside professionals who are also working with the children and family will also be notified of the absence. Children with Special Educational Needs (SEND) will be treated with similar priority in order that their time in school can be maximised, and their learning supported to the greatest extent possible.

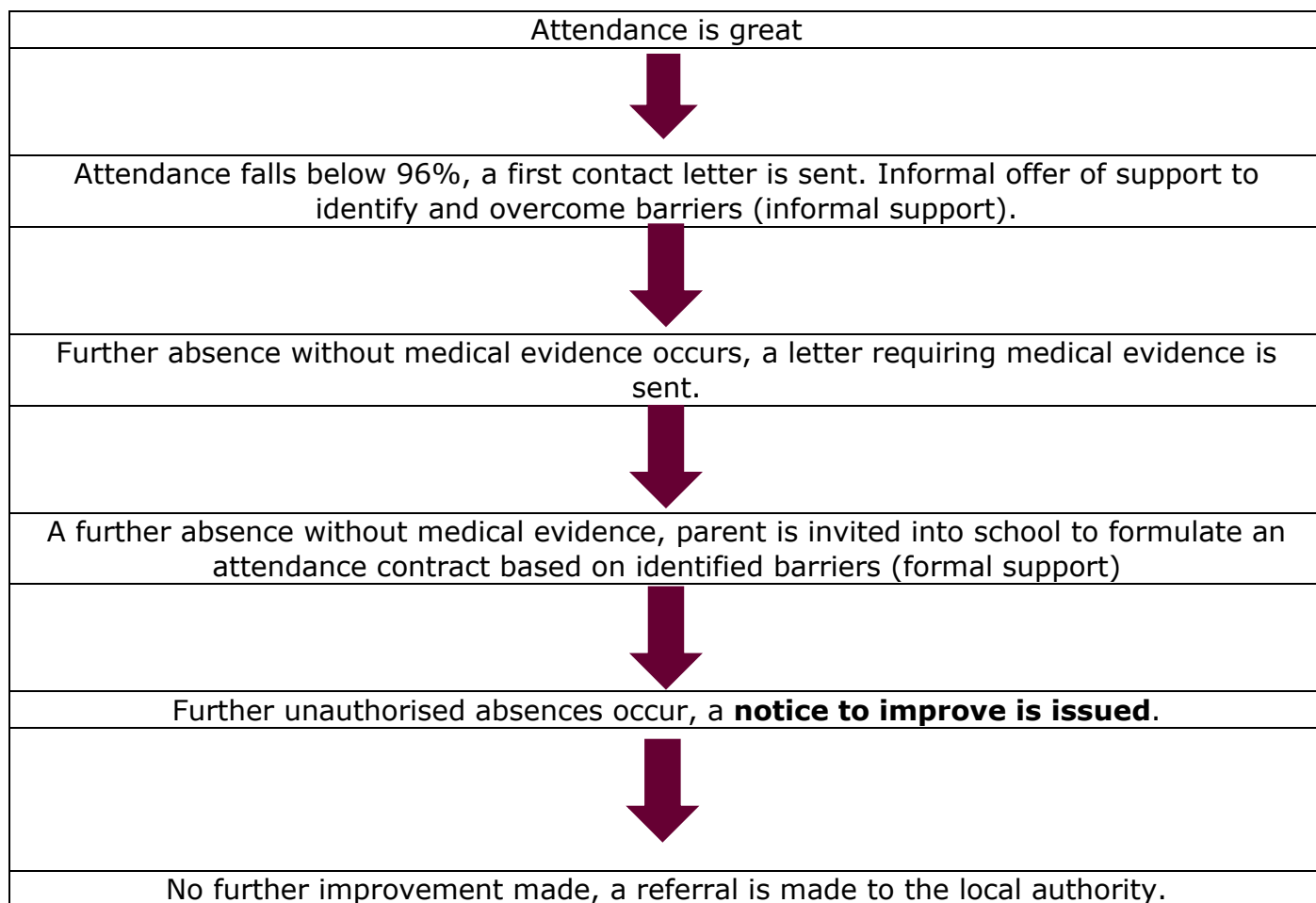
Holiday Leave

All pupils are encouraged to attend school every day of the 190 days that school is open. The register is called twice daily and pupils are expected to be present for the 380 sessions, or half days. That leaves 175 days for family holidays, shopping trips and other needs.

As a school we prioritise teaching and learning, therefore, in accordance with the local and national guidelines, Parkwood Primary School does not authorise holidays during term time. Permission, however, may be granted only in exceptional circumstances, when the benefit of the absence far outweighs the benefit of school attendance. A request for such absence should be made in writing to the Headteacher. When requesting leave of absence during term time may you be reminded that 10 days of absence equates to 20 sessions missed schooling, which is equivalent to 5.2% of absence.

Any holiday-related absence taken that includes 10 sessions in 10 weeks, may result in a **penalty notice**. In this instance, a 'Notice to Improve' notification **will not** be issued beforehand.

Steps leading to a local authority referral:



| Absence as number of days missed | Attendance as a percentage | What does this show? | Action taken by school |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|---|--|
| 0 days off 190 days attended | 100% | PERFECTION! AN EXCELLENT ACHIEVEMENT | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Celebrate excellent attendance! Communicate success to parent and pupil |
| 4 school days off each year | 98% | IMPRESSIVE | |
| 7 school days off each year | 96% | Nearly there | |
| 9 school days off each year | 95% | Can be improved (up your child's attendance to give them the best chance of succeeding) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cause for concern Parents to be notified (informal support letter) Informal support Patterns will be tracked Medical evidence may be requested (medical evidence letter) Formal school support (letter to notify) Notice to improve issued LA referral (ASSA) Potential penalty notice |
| 11 school days off each year | 94% | Needs to improve | |
| 20 school days off each year | 90% | SERIOUS CONCERNS | |
| | | | |
| 30 school days off each year | 85% | RISK OF PROSECUTION (this can be damaging to your child's social, emotional and mental well-being as well as their academic learning) | Statutory action Court warning Penalty notice |
| 38 school days off each year | 80% | | |
| | | | |

Monitoring arrangements review

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and, as a minimum, yearly by the senior designated leader. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

Appendix A: Identifying Barriers (informal support from FLO)

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| Name of pupil | |
| Child's DOB | |
| Schools | |
| Year group | |
| Class | |

| Difficulties the child is facing/experiencing | | |
|--|--|--|
| | | |
| Attendance data | | |
| | | |
| | Factors pushing them towards school | Factors pulling them away from school |
| Child | | |
| Parent/carer | | |
| Trusted adult in school | | |

Appendix B Individual Attendance Contract (formal support)

| | |
|--|--|
| Name of pupil | |
| Child's DOB | |
| Schools | |
| Year group | |
| Class | |
| Parents' full name and address | |
| Parents' telephone numbers | |
| Parents' email addresses | |
| Staff supporting attendance plan/roles (overall/day to day) | |
| Child's current attendance | |
| Missed sessions so far this year | |
| Authorised absences so far | |
| Unauthorised absences so far | |
| Number of lates | |
| Missed learning minutes as a result of lates | |
| Date plan was agreed | |
| Attendance history | |
| Include details of attendance percentages (broken down by attendance code where appropriate), details of trends or patterns over time and any historical factors that might be relevant. | |

| |
|--|
| Reasons for absence from parents' view points |
| |
| Reasons for absence from your child's view points |
| |
| Targets |
| |
| To achieve these targets parents will... |
| |
| To achieve these targets the school will... |
| |
| To achieve these targets the school will... |
| |
| External Support recommendations |
| |

This contract will be reviewed regularly.

If the contract is being adhered to, the school give recognition to the child and family.

If the contract is not being adhered to, the school will notify the Local Authority, where next steps will be considered, including progression to attendance legal processes

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>I/we have agreed to this attendance contract and will:</p> <p>(a) work with the school (and council) as detailed above, to improve my/our child's school attendance, and</p> <p>(b) carry out what we have promised to do.</p> <p>(c) I/we also agree to information being shared with other professionals and agencies as required to help us.</p> <p>(d) I/we understand that if my child has any further unauthorised absences from school a Notice to Improve, Penalty Notice or prosecution may follow without further warning. This agreement may be given as part of the evidence.</p> | <p>Signed by parents:</p> |
| | <p>Signed by child (age appropriate):</p> |
| | <p>Signed by the school:</p> |

Appendix C

First Contact: informal support



PARKWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL

DEANWOOD DRIVE

RAINHAM, KENT

ME8 9LP

HEADTEACHER: MRS MCCORMACK



Tel: 01634 234699

Email: office@parkwoodprimary.org.uk

Date

Dear _____,

Name:

DOB:

Here at Parkwood Primary School, we believe that it is vital that children attend school regularly and on time every day so that they can achieve their full academic potential. Regular attendance also benefits emotional and social well-being. We do appreciate that some absences are unavoidable. The school's expectation for pupil's attendance is at least **96%**.

We are required to monitor children's attendance and punctuality in consultation with Medway Local Authority. The Attendance Advisory Service to Schools and Academies (AASSA) monitors school attendance records and are notified should attendance not improve.

During a recent attendance review, it was noticed that your child's attendance is _____% which is below the 96% threshold.

It is important for us to monitor attendance levels and we hope that _____'s attendance improves during the remainder of the academic year.

We encourage parents/carers to work with us as a partnership to continue to improve attendance for the benefit of your child's education. If you wish to discuss the support we can offer as a school, request a meeting with our family liaison officer via the school office.

Yours sincerely,
Mrs McCormack
Headteacher

Medical evidence request



PARKWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL

DEANWOOD DRIVE
RAINHAM, KENT
ME8 9LP

HEADTEACHER: MRS MCCORMACK



Tel: 01634 234699

Email: office@parkwoodprimary.org.uk

Date _____

Dear _____,

Additional information required to authorise absence

Name: _____

DOB: _____

Further to a meeting with our Attendance Advisory Service representative, Mrs Behan, I am writing to advise you that we now require medical evidence for any future absences for _____. Such evidence will include any of the following: a GP appointment card, letter regarding a hospital appointment, copy of a prescription or packaging/labels from medication bought from pharmacy with a dated receipt.

At present, _____'s attendance is only _____% which is well below the expected threshold of 96%.

We encourage parents/carers to work with us as a partnership to continue to improve attendance for the benefit of your child's education. If you wish to discuss the support we can offer as a school, request a meeting with our family liaison officer via the school office.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs McCormack
Headteacher

Attendance improvement letter



PARKWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL

DEANWOOD DRIVE

RAINHAM, KENT

ME8 9LP

ACTING HEADTEACHER: MRS MCCORMACK



Tel: 01634 234699

Email: office@parkwoodprimary.org.uk

Dear _____,

We recently wrote to you, in order to let you know that _____'s attendance was at _____% and therefore we were keen to work with you in order to improve this so that _____ gets more learning time in school.

I am pleased to let you know that _____'s attendance has now gone up since our previous letter and is now at _____%

This is really good news and we wanted to share this with you and thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely

Mrs McCormack
Headteacher

No improvement in attendance letter



PARKWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL

DEANWOOD DRIVE
RAINHAM, KENT
ME8 9LP

HEADTEACHER: MRS MCCORMACK



Tel: 01634 234699

Email: office@parkwoodprimary.org.uk

Date _____

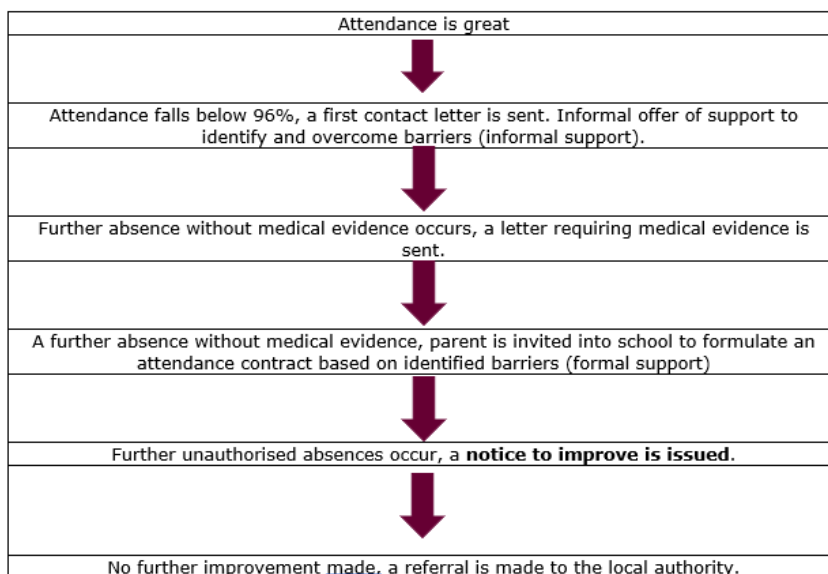
Dear _____,

Here at Parkwood Primary School, we believe that it is vital that children attend regularly and on time every day to reach their full potential. We understand that some absences and late arrivals can be unavoidable, however absence does result in lost learning.

At Parkwood, we expect our children's attendance to be at least **96% or above**. A medical evidence letter sent out to you recently indicated that _____'s was a concern at _____% with _____ of unauthorised absences recorded. Please see a copy of your child's attendance record attached. Unfortunately, the school has not seen any improvement so we would now like to invite you into school on _____ at _____ to discuss your child's attendance and offer more formal support.

Parkwood are required to monitor children's punctuality and attendance in consultation with Medway Local Authority. The Attendance Advisory Practitioner monitors school attendance records and are notified should attendance not improve. If following the meeting there is no satisfactory improvement shown, an official notice to improve will be issued which may result in a referral to the Attendance Advisory Service. This service will investigate the case and have the authority to issue penalty notices to families.

Steps leading to a local authority referral:



Here at Parkwood, we are keen to work with families to ensure a child's education provision is maintained and will support families where we can.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs McCormack
Headteacher

Holiday letter 1



PARKWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL

DEANWOOD DRIVE
RAINHAM, KENT
ME8 9LP

HEADTEACHER: MRS MCCORMACK



Tel: 01634 234699

Email: office@parkwoodprimary.org.uk

Parent/Carer Name
Parent/Carer Address
Date:

Dear _____,

Declining leave of absence

Name:

DOB:

Class:

Thank you for your letter regarding absence from school from **date** to **date**.

I am sure you will agree that it is important that your child's education is consistent and uninterrupted. We are unable to authorise term time holidays during the 190 days each year designated for school. We ask parents/carers to use the thirteen weeks school holidays available during the year.

The Department of Education (DfE) and Local Authority states that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless in exceptional circumstances. Although we sympathise with your situation, unfortunately it is not exceptional. If your decision remains unchanged and you decide to take your child out of school, it will be recorded as unauthorised and may be subject to a penalty notice.

From August 2024, the DfE amended the Education Regulations 2024 so that each parent/carers who receives their first penalty notice for taking their child out of school during term time has to pay £80 within 21 days or £160 within 28 days. Please be aware, non-payment of penalty notices, may result in prosecution.

In line with our school attendance policy, Medway Council issue penalty notices on our behalf, after the holiday is taken to each parent/carers per child.

If you wish to appeal the decision and you feel that the reason for leave of absence fulfils the exceptional circumstances criteria, then you should write to me upon receipt of this letter.

Kind regards,
Mrs McCormack
Headteacher

First offence

Parent/carers are required to pay this penalty notice (£80) within 21 days, or the amount will increase (£160) and is expected to be settled within 28 days.

Second offence

If a parent receives a second penalty notice for the same child within any three-year period, the charge will be a flat rate of £160; there will be no reduction if paid within 21 days. Penalty notices for absence before the 2024-25 school year do not count.

Third offence

A parent cannot receive more than two penalty notices for the same child within any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, prosecution will be considered.

Holiday letter 2



PARKWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL

DEANWOOD DRIVE
RAINHAM, KENT
ME8 9LP

HEADTEACHER: MRS MCCORMACK



Tel: 01634 234699

Email: office@parkwoodprimary.org.uk

Parent/Carer Name
Parent/Carer Address
Date:

Dear _____,

Declining leave of absence

Name:
DOB:
Class:

You applied for leave of absence for your child between **date** to **date** which, as we informed you (**insert date of letter**), was not authorised by the Headteacher.

The leave of absence has now been taken. It has been recorded as an unauthorised absence and your child has returned to school. The details have been passed to the Attendance Advisory Service for Schools and Academies (AASSA), Medway Council for the issue of a Penalty Notice/s.

The Education Regulations 2024 state that parent/carers who receives their first penalty notice for taking their child out of school during term time are required to pay this fine (£80) within 21 days or the amount will increase (£160) and is expected to be settled within 28 days. Please be aware non-payment of these penalty notices may result in prosecution.

Kind regards,

Mrs McCormack
Headteacher

First offence

Parent/carers are required to pay this penalty notice (£80) within 21 days, or the amount will increase (£160) and is expected to be settled within 28 days.

Second offence

If a parent receives a second penalty notice for the same child within any three-year period, the charge will be a flat rate of £160; there will be no reduction if paid within 21 days. Penalty notices for absence before the 2024-25 school year do not count.

Third offence

A parent cannot receive more than two penalty notices for the same child within any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, prosecution will be considered.

Holiday letter 3



PARKWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL

DEANWOOD DRIVE

RAINHAM, KENT

ME8 9LP

HEADTEACHER: MRS MCCORMACK



Tel: 01634 234699

Email: office@parkwoodprimary.org.uk

Parent/Carer Name

Parent/Carer Address

Date:

Dear _____,

SCHOOL ABSENCE (INSERT DATES)

Name:

DOB:

Class:

NAME OF PUPIL was absent from school during the above dates and the school have been made aware that the reason for **NAME's** absence was due to a family holiday. If you feel the school has been misinformed, please provide the necessary medical evidence now requested in order for the absence to be authorised.

Failure to produce the medical evidence by **DATE MONTH YEAR**, we will assume that an unauthorised holiday was taken. In line with the school's attendance policy, for holidays taken during term time, a referral will be made to Medway Council, with a view to issuing a Penalty Notice/s, in line with the Education Regulations 2024.

If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, the parent is guilty of an offence under s.444 (1) Education Act 1996.

I look forward to hearing from you by **DATE MONTH YEAR**

Kind regards,

Mrs McCormack
Headteacher

First offence

Parent/carers are required to pay this penalty notice (£80) within 21 days, or the amount will increase (£160) and is expected to be settled within 28 days.

Second offence

If a parent receives a second penalty notice for the same child within any three-year period, the charge will be a flat rate of £160; there will be no reduction if paid within 21 days. Penalty notices for absence before the 2024-25 school year do not count.

Third offence

A parent cannot receive more than two penalty notices for the same child within any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, prosecution will be considered.

Declining requested holiday/absence



PARKWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL

DEANWOOD DRIVE

RAINHAM, KENT

ME8 9LP

HEADTEACHER: MRS MCCORMACK



Tel: 01634 234699

Email: office@parkwoodprimary.org.uk

Date

Dear _____,

Declining leave of absence

Name:

DOB:

Class:

Thank you for your letter regarding absence from school from _____ to _____

At Parkwood we understand the impact of good attendance. We are unable to authorise term time holidays during the 190 days each year designated for schooling.

The Department of Education (DfE) and Local Authority states that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless in exceptional circumstances. Although we sympathise with your situation, unfortunately the circumstances identified are not exceptional. If your decision remains unchanged and you decide to take your child out of school, it will be recorded as unauthorised and **may** be subject to a penalty notice.

From September 2013, the DfE amended the Education Regulations England 2007 so that each parent/carers who receives a penalty notice for taking their child out of school during term time has to pay £80 within 21 days or £160 within 28 days. Please be aware, non-payment of penalty notices **will** result in court proceedings.

In line with our school attendance policy, the Attendance Advisory Service for Schools and Academies (AASSA), may issue penalty notices after the holiday is taken to each parent/carers per child.

You are able to appeal the decision if you feel that the reason for leave of absence fulfils the exceptional circumstances criteria.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs McCormack
Headteacher

Unauthorised holiday penalty notice letter



PARKWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL

DEANWOOD DRIVE
RAINHAM, KENT
ME8 9LP
HEADTEACHER: MRS MCCORMACK



Tel: 01634 234699

Email: office@parkwoodprimary.org.uk

Dear _____,

Name:

DOB:

Class:

You applied for leave of absence for your child between _____ to _____. This has not been authorised.

The leave of absence has now been taken and it has been recorded as unauthorised absence. Now that your child has returned to school, the details have been passed to the Attendance Advisory Service for Schools and Academies (AASSA) for the issue of a penalty notice.

The Department for Education (2007 regulations) state that parent/carers who receive a penalty notice for taking their child out of school during term time are required to pay this fine (£80) within 21 days or the amount will increase (£160) and is expected to be settled within 28 days. Please be aware non-payment of these penalty notices will result in court proceedings.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs McCormack
Headteacher

Lateness letter



PARKWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL

DEANWOOD DRIVE

RAINHAM, KENT

ME8 9LP

HEADTEACHER: MRS MCCORMACK



Tel: 01634 234699

Email: office@parkwoodprimary.org.uk

Date _____

Dear _____,

I am writing to inform you that _____ has been late _____ times since the beginning of the academic year.

It is the responsibility of the parents/carer to ensure that children attend school regularly and on time. Being late into school has an impact on your child's learning time and children miss vital class teacher input.

- If a child misses **5 minutes** every day, they **miss 3 days** of learning a year.
- If a child is late **15 minutes** every day, they **miss 2 weeks** of learning each year.

Late arrivals can disrupt lessons for the whole class and this can often be unsettling for the child. Being on time encourages good habits and life skills for their future.

Please find our current start and end of day times below:

| Line starts/doors open | Registration starts (line walks in/younger children should be in classrooms) | A late mark (L) is given if the child arrives after: | Unauthorised absence mark (U) is given if the child arrives after the register has closed. | End of day collection time |
|------------------------|--|--|--|----------------------------|
| 8.35am | 8.40am | 8.45am | 9.15am | 3.10pm |

*Parents with multiple drop-offs are given a ten-minute buffer from 8.35am until 8.45am. Children who arrive after this time, must go directly to the office.

We do understand that there will be occasions when children are late. We would like to support families so children do not miss important learning and social time.

If you would like to discuss this further, please contact Mrs Williams, the family liaison officer, via the school office.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs McCormack
Headteacher