



**The Park Federation Academy Trust
Western House Academy**

Attendance Policy

2016 - 2018

Approval

Signed by CEO and Federation Principal on behalf of the Board of Directors	Dr. Martin Young
Date of approval	September 2016
Date of review	September 2018
Updated <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Amendments to Absence Procedures.- Updated Attendance Service email address.- Times changed in managing lateness section.- New attendance celebration paragraph added.	March 2017

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ATTENDANCE POLICY

The Park Federation Academy Trust Western House Academy

Introduction:

This is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Why Regular Attendance is so important:

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Promoting Regular Attendance:

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give you details on attendance in our monthly newsletter;
- Report to you regularly on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainment;
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements;
- Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions and certificates.
- Run promotional events when parents, pupils and staff can work together on raising attendance levels across the school.

Understanding types of absence:

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority, through its Attendance Service (AS) using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark in the register
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time
- excessive illness without medical evidence

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never a good idea to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse.

You can support your child by:

Ensuring regular and early bed times

Helping with homework

Having uniform and equipment prepared the night before

Providing a healthy breakfast

Reporting any academic or social concerns promptly to the school

Retaining open and honest communication with your child's school

Being positive about school (even if your own experience was less than positive)

Encouraging your child to invite friends home for play dates

Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 25 days schooling (50 sessions) across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us by telephone or using the school app as soon as possible on the first day of absence and keep the school regularly informed, preferably daily.
- Or, you can call into school and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with you.

If your child is absent we will:

Day 1

- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you.

Day 2

- If we still have no contact with you a second telephone call will be made.

Day 4

- If your child is still absent we will make a follow up phone call.

Further Contact

- If attendance falls below 95% an initial warning letter will be sent.
- If attendance does not improve we will invite you in to discuss the situation with our attendance officer or the Principal or one of the Vice Principals if absences persist;
- We will refer the matter to the Pupil Attendance and Attendance Improvement Officer if attendance moves below 90%.

Telephone numbers:

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

The Attendance Improvement Officer:

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO) from the Local Authority. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. The legislation is the Education Act

1996 sec. 44.1 and 44.1.a.

“If any child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence.”

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the Attendance Service themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is 01753 787669 or attendance@slough.gov.uk.

Regulations have been amended regarding the payment of Penalty Notices (fines). The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 states that parents, from the 1st of September 2013, must pay £120.00 per parent, per child should they receive a Penalty Notice.

Lateness:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

How we manage lateness:

The school day starts at **8.55 am for Reception to Year 6** and we expect your child to be in class at that time. Your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At **9.15 am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the one of the Deputy/Vice Principals and/or Attendance Officer to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

The start time for the **Morning Nursery is 9am** and for the **Afternoon Nursery it is 1pm**.

Exceptional Leave:

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time.

Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

- It is widely known that the link between a student's attendance and attainment is irrefutable.
- Early poor attendance habits follow through into secondary school and employment.
- Graduates earn an average of £15.01 per hour. Young people that leave school with no qualifications earn an average of £7.44 per hour.
- All Slough schools are encouraged to adopt a policy of not authorising Exceptional Leave. The Principal will not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. You may be asked to provide evidence in support of your request.
- Reasons for Exceptional Leave will be logged on the pupil's record and shared as part of the transfer/transition process.
- The Attendance Service can issue Fixed Penalty Notices for any unauthorised absence.

From September 2013 any unauthorised exceptional leave that takes place will result in a referral to the Attendance Improvement Officer and they can issue a fine to the family. This fine or penalty notice is £120.00 per parent, per child.

Academy targets, projects and special initiatives:

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

The minimum level of attendance for this school is 95% attendance and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares. When attendance drops below 95% an initial warning letter will be sent to parents.

Our target is to achieve better than this however because we know that good attendance is one of the keys to successful schooling and we believe our pupils can be amongst the best in Slough.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made. All staff are made aware of the attendance figures in weekly briefings. The Senior Leadership Team and the Attendance Officer meet with any parents whose child's attendance falls below 95%.

Attendance is celebrated weekly and termly. The Principal awards weekly certificates and stars to the class in each phase with the best attendance. Any classes who achieve 100% will earn a mufti-day. Any pupils with 100% attendance in a term are also celebrated.

Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided in our newsletter and we ask for your full support.

Those people responsible for attendance management in this school are:

Coral Snowden (Principal) Focus: Attendance and punctuality

Attendance Officer Focus: Attendance and punctuality

Vice Principals' Focus: Attendance and punctuality

Summary:

The academy has a legal duty to publish its absence figures and its attendance policy to parents and to promote attendance. School attendance data must be available to the Local Authority and the Department for Education (DfE). Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible. Regular attendance supports and optimises your child's attainment. It is also a fundamental part of the Every Child Matters intentions to:

- Being Healthy
- Being Safe
- Enjoying & Achieving
- Making a positive contribution
- Achieving economic well-being

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Western House Academy

I have read and understood the terms and conditions of the attendance policy at Western House Academy.

Child's Name:

Parent's or Carer's Name:

Signed:

School year of your child:

Thank you.