



# Attendance Policy

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## Overview

If learners are to get the greatest benefit from their education, it is important that they have good attendance and arrive punctually.

As learners grow and prepare for their next stages of education and employment they need to see good attendance and punctuality as important qualities valued by others, particularly employers. We will do all we can to encourage good attendance and punctuality. Where learners are not conforming to our high expectations for attendance and punctuality we will put into place effective strategies whenever possible to bring about improvement.

There is an obvious link between 'safeguarding' pupils and 'attendance'. It is vital that attendance is monitored and action taken as needed.

Communication with the home school is paramount as responsibilities for education provision, outcomes, attendance and safeguarding remains firmly with them. The pupil remains on their roll.

## Context

This attendance policy is written in the context of pupils having complex medical needs (e.g. oncology, transplant, kidney failure) and/or significant mental health difficulties which inevitably impact on attendance. Furthermore, difficulties are frequently chronic, entrenched and longstanding. Pupils may well have had months or years of 'poor' or 'non-school' attendance before our service becomes involved. As a result, the education offer is personalised to individual pupils based on advice from health and other professionals and is reviewed on a half termly basis.

The management of attendance procedures provides guidance but should be used sensitively, in light of the current medical/mental health need status of the child.

## Objectives

1. To ensure that all learners have excellent attendance relative to their medical need.
2. To ensure that all learners arrive punctually and that they are ready for the transport that collects them (if appropriate) according to their timetabled sessions.
3. To gain the support of parents / carers in ensuring that their son / daughter attends timetabled sessions at Park School.
4. To keep accurate records of attendance through SIMS registers and to take prompt action to follow up absences.
5. To investigate and act immediately where unauthorised or condoned absence is suspected or confirmed.
6. To work effectively with the mainstream school, the LA and other agencies to follow up attendance issues promptly and efficiently.
7. To monitor closely pupils with attendance and punctuality issues and to work with parents/carers and where appropriate, other agencies to bring about improvement.

## Background

Pupils may be taught as part of a small group in our school setting or on E5 at Bolton hospital.

Parents/carers are provided with a detailed timetable which outlines when the sessions will be, where they will take place and who will be teaching them. This will have been decided through multi-agency discussions when developing a Personalised timetable for the pupil and is reviewed termly or earlier if needed.

Transition support is available when pupils move from one pathway to another, which sometimes occurs based on medical advice.

We **aim** for consistency of timetabled sessions.

Parents/carers are made aware of their legal responsibilities regarding the education provision made which is deemed as an *appropriate education provision* based on the pupil's medical need. They are also made aware of our attendance policy.

## **Expectations**

### **Park School**

Pupils are expected to arrive for lessons on time. If they are unable to attend, parents/carers should contact the Centre as early as possible so that taxis can be cancelled or re-arranged if appropriate. Parents should explain the reason for absence. If the absence is due to illness or some other authorised circumstances, it will be recorded on our registers as an **illness or authorised absence**.

If there is no reason provided for absence or the pupil is choosing to do something else instead of accessing education it will be recorded on our register as **unauthorised absence**. A meeting will then be called to discuss attendance with parents/ carers, the referring school and other agencies involved.

### **Celebrating Excellent or Improved Attendance**

We strive to encourage excellent attendance through positive feedback and comments. Phone calls or text messages home are a great way in which we communicate excellent attendance. We do not have a specific reward scheme for 100% attendance, or high attendance, because all of our students attend Park school due to medical reasons and therefore this may have an effect on their attendance, any absence is usually out of their control. We do have a separate reward scheme and we incorporate any good attendance into this.

### **Recording Attendance**

The form tutor is responsible for updating their own form group's SIMS register three times a day: during morning registration, during break time and during afternoon reading time. It is the teacher's responsibility to update the register at the start of every lesson and be aware of where their students whereabouts during the lesson. Each time they update their register they must report any absences/concerns, via email, to the school administrator who will then contact the parent/carer. Any comments/reasons for absence will then be recorded on SIMS and CPOMS. If a student is absent from the class, however they are marked present on SIMS, the DSL must be informed immediately.

If a pupil has been absent for more than four consecutive days a welfare visit will be undertaken and relevant work taken to complete where feasible. If we haven't had, or cannot make contact with, a parent or carer for absent pupils safeguarding procedures are followed.

On a daily basis, the office administrator is responsible for informing mainstream schools, via email, of their pupil's daily attendance.

The school's deputy academy lead is responsible for overseeing this procedure, identifying any patterns and trends and any concerns should be passed on for her to make the relevant enquiries.

### **Procedures**

If a pupil's attendance has deteriorated or is unsatisfactory (in relation to their medical need) attendance will be discussed by senior leaders and appropriate intervention strategies actioned.

If attendance does not improve a meeting is arranged whereby parents/carers, and mainstream school, are invited into school to discuss the concerns and put in any intervention that may be needed.

If there is still no improvement an Early Help form will be used to request support from external agencies.

If there is still no further improvement the case will be discussed with the Local Authority, mainstream school Inclusion Manager and action agreed.

## **Absconding**

This section of the policy is written to guide staff in the event of a student going missing on the premises, going missing outside of the school or having absconded. Staff are reminded to read the following school policies and practice guidelines in conjunction with this policy –

Safeguarding Policy

Behaviour Policy

Enhanced Risk Assessments (if applicable)

The purpose of this policy is to set out clearly for all stakeholders, the process that will take place should a child abscond from school.

To abscond is to 'leave without permission'. Under Section 3 of the Health and Safety at Work Act, 1974 and in Common Law, schools and other education settings owe a duty of care towards their pupils. This duty of care requires that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure that pupils are safe and remain within the care of the school at all times throughout the school day and during school led activities.

It is important for Park School as a school to maintain a caring, welcoming ethos which establishes a safe, secure and stable environment to enable pupils to grow, develop and learn.

## **PROCEDURES**

**Where a pupil marked present, is found to be absent from school without authorisation the following safeguarding procedures must be followed:**

1. Member of staff to inform Head Teacher, member of SLT, designated staff and main office.
2. Head Teacher or member of SLT organises search of buildings and known places that the pupil may have gone to.
3. If the pupil is not found then all available staff to complete a more thorough sweep of the school and check the perimeter of the grounds.
4. School office must phone the police when area has been fully checked if the child is not found.
5. School office to immediately contact parents/carers and inform them of the situation when the Police have been informed. Always keep parents updated.
6. Consideration will be given to whether the search should be extended beyond the school perimeter. This decision will be based on staff's knowledge of the child and on the levels of risk, any active risk assessment and on what action is in the child's best interests. Liaise with the police at all times.
7. Any staff who leave school grounds must take a mobile phone to contact school. Staff should where possible leave the site accompanied by another member of staff.
8. Once a pupil has been found then the lead SLT member will use their professional judgement to outline the response towards the pupil and the support the pupil will need in the future.
9. A report on CPOMS must be filed on the incident.
10. Member of SLT must brief police and parents.

**Where a pupil attempts or is seen to be leaving the school premises without authorisation the following procedures must be followed:**

1. Staff must follow the student to the perimeter fence or gate and must try to persuade the student to stay in the school.
2. De-escalation techniques must be attempted. In such stressful circumstances it is important that staff remain as calm as possible and follow procedures. (See Appendix 1)
3. If a student is deemed to be a high risk to themselves or other people then staff should adhere to the Positive Handling Strategies as per MAPA training.
4. At all times staff must be aware that active pursuit may encourage the student to leave the immediate vicinity of the school and may also cause the pupil to panic, possibly putting them at risk by running onto a busy road, for example.
5. If the student has left the immediate vicinity of the school the Head teacher or SLT members must be contacted immediately and the lead person will direct the course of action.
6. Staff will follow the student and engage in a local search, following the student at a safe distance if in view.
7. The SLT lead may direct additional staff to join the search in a vehicle, taking a mobile phone to contact school.
8. If the searching staff lose sight of, or are concerned for the safety of the student or themselves, they must contact the school office giving current details of their location and the clothes which the student is wearing.
9. The SLT or designated staff must contact the Police and student's parents/carers immediately. These phone calls must be made concurrently.
10. If the pupil(s) has left the immediate vicinity of the school grounds and are no longer visible then the SLT will make a decision as to how to take matters further which will take into account the age of the student, the prevailing weather conditions, the nature of the incident which led to the pupil absconding, the pupil's previous history of being involved in episodes of absconding and their outcomes.
11. If the student returns of their own volition, parents/carers and the police will be informed as soon as possible.
12. Upon his or her return to school, and when the student is calm, the student should be seen by the SLT so that the reasons for absconding may be discussed in detail if this is appropriate. At this point a decision will be made as to the appropriateness of further actions.
13. A report on CPOMS must be filed on the incident.
14. It is important that following an incident the issues that arise are addressed and staff must:
  - Consider an individual risk assessment for the student involved. If there is a second incident within an academic year then a risk assessment must be completed.
  - Where appropriate, talk through the incident with the student and parents involved. Ensure that a record is kept of the discussion held with the student and parents.

- Complete an incident on CPOMS which can be actioned by the staff member completing the follow up meeting.
- Keep all colleagues informed and discuss the incident in staff meetings.
- Review procedures for the individual every half term to ensure appropriate control measures are in place and that all staff are fully informed.

## **INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS**

What happens if you / your child / goes missing?

**What is meant by “missing”?** You will be considered missing if members of staff do not know where you are.

**What is meant by “absconding”?** You have absconded if you deliberately go off site or from where you should be without telling a member of staff or without a member of staff giving you permission.

**What will happen if you go missing?** The people looking after you have a responsibility to know where you are and to make sure you are safe. If you are ‘missing’ they will speak to your friends, teachers and family to see if they can help. If there is concern for your safety then staff will need to search for clues as to where you are. The Police may be informed that you are missing and they and the school staff will look for you.

**What happens if you can’t be found?** A meeting will be held between the school and the Police to plan how to search for you. Your name, description and a photograph will be given to the Police in order to help them with their search.

**What happens when you are found?** You will be returned to a safe place and will be asked about the reasons for you going missing. This is to try and find out if anything is troubling you and to see if anyone can help. You do not have to run away to talk to someone. If you want to talk to someone outside of school, this can be arranged. You may also be visited by a Police Officer who will check that you are back. This is called a “Safe and Well Check”. You will be able to speak to the Police Officer without any member of staff present if you wish to do so.

**Will anything else happen?** If you are injured or unwell then you will be checked by a Doctor or Nurse. Your teacher or mentor will want to talk to you about going missing. If you have deliberately run away (absconded) then the people responsible for your safety will meet to discuss ways in which such incidents can be prevented by looking at the reasons for your actions.

Remember - You have the right to use a telephone to talk to someone. If you are worried about something or just want to talk, the school counsellor or nurse may be available.

The national ChildLine number is 0800 1111.

## **De-escalation and Positive Handling**

We aim to create safe and secure school environments where violence, threatening behaviour or abuse to any member of the community is able to be managed in a therapeutic way to maintain the child's dignity whilst keeping staff and other pupils safe.

We take seriously all acts of violence and aggression against anyone and we will do everything reasonably practicable to reduce risk.

We expect all parents/carers and other visitors to behave in a reasonable and acceptable manner towards all staff.

We expect all staff to behave professionally at all times and when confronted with difficult situations to attempt to defuse them.

**At all times our collective aim should be to seek to reduce the necessity for physical intervention as, depending on the type of restrictive practice used, serious physical injury and psychological harm can occur. Psychological harm may include trauma, fear, shame, anxiety, depression and loss of dignity.**

**As a result, physical intervention at Park School is avoided unless completely necessary.**

### **De-escalation strategies**

Below are a range of strategies that could be employed, if the situation allows it, in order to prevent the situation from escalating:

- Don't try to reason
- Do not pursue
- Offer a safe space
- Wait
- Use silence and allow the child to regulate
- Avoid making demands
- Don't yell over a screaming child
- Validate their feelings, not their actions
- Respect personal space
- Give time for reflection
- Be aware of your body language
- Be non-judgemental
- Use a distraction
- Decrease stimulation
- Use a calming tone
- Breathing exercises

### **What 4 things should you consider before using a physical intervention?**

For the intervention to be justified there must be a belief that Injury or Damage is likely in the Predictable Future; The intervention must be Immediately Necessary; The actions or interventions taken must be a Last Resort; Any force or intervention used must be the Minimum Necessary to achieve the objective.

## **Emergency Seclusion**

Emergency seclusion is the supervised containment of a person in a room, which may be locked, or equipment is used to prevent it being opened, to protect others from significant harm. This would include staff or a person blocking the exit with their body or ANY item

This is an extreme form of restraint. Staff are NOT permitted to use seclusion because the child/young person becomes aggressive, for not complying with rules, as a punishment or any other reason.

## **MAPA Decision – Making Matrix**

Staff are trained to undertake a risk assessment regarding physical risk behaviour in order to support their critical decision making during a crisis event.

Developing critical decision making enables staff to remain in control of their own emotions and behaviour in order to make appropriate judgements about the necessary action required.

Staff are trained to determine the necessary physical interventions and the level of restriction that may be appropriate to keep people safe making decisions objectively rather than subjectively.

The MAPA Decision Making Matrix is a tool which staff use to reach objective critical decisions about risk.

**Risk:** The chance that an event or behaviour may occur Everyday life involves some degree of risk which can be viewed along a continuum from lower risk to higher risk.

When reaching a decision about risk, it is important that we objectively consider two key variables;

**Likelihood:** The chance an event or behaviour may occur. This is viewed along a continuum from unlikely to likely.

**Outcome:** The severity of harm if the event or behaviour does occur. Outcome can be viewed along a continuum from low-severity to high severity.

## **When can reasonable force be used?**

- Reasonable force can be used to prevent children from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder.
- In the school, force can be used for two main purposes – to control children or to restrain them.
- The decision on whether or not to physically intervene is down to the professional judgment of the staff member concerned and should always depend on individual circumstances.



## Appendix 2

### SIMS CODES:

Key to codes		
Code		Example
/	Present (AM)	Present in Centre
\	Present (PM)	Present in centre
B	Educated off site (not Dual reg.)	When a member of staff is physically in the home either teaching or for a pastoral visit.
C	Other authorised circumstances	When a student is set work to be completed in the home.
D	Dual registration	When a pupil attends their mainstream school
E	Excluded	When a pupil is excluded from school
G	Family holiday (not agreed)	Requires SLT approval
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Requires SLT approval
I	Illness	-
J	Interview	Either for a voluntary job or for a post 16 provision
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Requires SLT approval
N	No reason yet provided for absence	-
O	Unauthorised Abs	Requires SLT approval
P	Approved sporting activity	-
R	Religious observance	-
S	Study leave	-
V	Educational visit or trip	For students who are on a school trip or any other educational visit
W	Work experience	Approved work placements provided by ether Park school or mainstream school. Requires SLT approval
#	Planned whole or partial school closure	These are inputted onto SIMS automatically.