Parkhead Community Primary School

Dear Parents/Carer

Re: Important Information About School Attendance

At Parkhead Community Primary School, we want every child to have the best possible experience of school. Regular attendance plays a key role in helping children achieve their full potential, build friendships, develop confidence and make academic progress.

We are writing to inform all parents and carers about the national school attendance guidance and the process that applies for children with unauthorised absences from school.

Why Attendance Matters?

Every day in school counts. Missing school can affect a child's learning, wellbeing and sense of belonging. Research consistently shows that pupils with higher attendance are more likely to achieve better outcomes and feel more connected to school.

We understand that children can sometimes be unwell or that families may face challenges. Our aim is always to work in partnership with families to support good attendance wherever possible.

What Is an Unauthorised Absence?

An absence is classed as unauthorised when the school has not agreed that the reason given is acceptable under attendance regulations.

Examples may include:

- Taking holidays during term time without authorisation.
- Keeping a child off school unnecessarily.
- Arriving after registers have closed.
- Not providing an acceptable reason for an absence when requested.
- Persistent absences that the school is unable to authorise.

What Is the National Threshold?

Under the national attendance framework, if a child has **10 unauthorised sessions within a rolling 10-school-week period**, the school may refer into the Local Authority to consider taking formal action.

A school session means:

- Morning registration = 1 session
- Afternoon registration = 1 session

10 unauthorised sessions are equivalent to 5 school days, these absences do not need to be taken consecutively, the 10-school-week period is "rolling", meaning attendance is monitored continuously throughout the year rather than within a single half-term or term.

What Happens If the Threshold Is Reached?

Where a pupil reaches the 10 unauthorised sessions in 10 weeks national threshold, the school will review the circumstances and may make a referral to the Local Authority. The Local Authority will decide whether further action is appropriate. This could include the issue of a Penalty Notice.

First Penalty Notice

- £80 if paid within 21 days.
- £160 if paid between 22 and 28 days.

Second Penalty Notice

If another offence occurs within three years:

- £160 payable within 28 days.
- No reduced payment option is available.

Third Offence

A maximum of two Penalty Notices can be issued to the same parent for the same child within a three-year period. Where a further offence occurs, other legal interventions may be considered, including prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Unauthorised holiday leave of absences form part of the same national framework used to determine first, second and subsequent offences.

How Can Parents Help?

Parents can support good attendance by:

- Ensuring their child attends school every day whenever possible.
- Avoiding making routine appointments during the school day.
- Contacting school as soon as possible if their child is unable to attend.
- Working with school staff where attendance concerns arise.
- Avoiding booking family holidays during term time.

Frequently Asked Questions

My child is ill. Will this count towards the threshold?

No. Genuine illness, where reported appropriately and authorised by the school, does not count as unauthorised absence. School may ask for medical evidence to be provided for the illness.

What does "rolling 10 school weeks" mean?

The 10-week period is counted continuously throughout the school year. It is not linked to school terms or half-terms.

Example: Your child has 4 unauthorised sessions during the last 3 weeks of the Autumn term. When the Spring term begins, those 4 sessions are still counted because they fall within the previous 10 school weeks.

Will I automatically receive a Penalty Notice when my child reaches 10 sessions?

No. The Local Authority will issue a Notice to Improve. The Notice to Improve gives parents an opportunity to improve their child's attendance before any formal action is taken. During this period, your child's attendance will be closely monitored by the Local Authority for 4 school weeks. To avoid further action, there must be a clear and sustained improvement in attendance.

Please note: Where parents have previously received Penalty Notices for the same child, the Local Authority may consider alternative action in accordance with the National Framework for Penalty Notices.

What if my family is experiencing difficulties?

Please speak to us as soon as possible. We are committed to working with families and can often provide support or signpost to other services where attendance is being affected by difficult circumstances.

Our priority is to support pupils to attend school regularly and succeed. We value the partnership we have with parents and carers and thank you for your continued support in helping your child achieve the very best from their education.

If you have any questions regarding attendance, please contact the school office.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs H. Chard
Headteacher
Parkhead Community Primary School