



Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> June 2024

Dear Parents/Carers,

### Good Attendance and Punctuality – New Guidelines

At Park Hill Infant School, we aim for children to achieve at least 96% attendance for a full school year. There are clear links between poor attendance and poor attainment. If children are absent from school, they may miss key learning opportunities resulting in gaps in their knowledge and understanding. This can significantly impact upon their learning and development.

Absence from school should only occur when a child is unfit to learn, where there is an exceptional circumstance or when the child has a day of religious observance. The **Education Regulations 2013** make clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. **All family holidays and any term time leave should be arranged to be taken outside of school time.**

If you have exceptional circumstances and wish to request a leave of absence during term time, please complete the request form (available from the office and school website) and return it to the school office as far in advance of the requested leave period as possible.

We will continue to support you and your families in times of crisis and all requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis. If permission is not granted, but the leave is still taken, you may be referred to our Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and/or the local authority for consideration of a Penalty Notice.

### Changes to Penalty Notices for Non School Attendance from 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024

Under new rules, set by the Department for Education, from 19th August 2024 there will be significant changes for Penalty Notices issued for unauthorised absences from school.

#### **First Penalty Notice**

**From 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024**, under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, the first time a penalty notice is issued for unauthorised absences from school within a three-year rolling period, the amount has increased to £80 if paid within 21 days, rising to £160 if paid between 21 and 28 days. **Penalty notices are issued to each parent, for each child.** Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in the local authority taking alternative action presenting the case straight to the Magistrates' Court. Magistrates' fines can be up to £2,500 per parent, per child.

*For example: If a family with two children receive unauthorised absences from school, this would amount to £640 if paid within 28 days, reduced to £320 if paid within 21 days.*

#### **Second Penalty Notice**

**From 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024**, under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, the second time a penalty notice is issued for unauthorised absences from school within a three-year rolling period, there will now not be any discount for early payment. The penalty notice will be payable for the full amount of £160 within 28 days of the date of issue. **Penalty notices are issued to each parent, for each child.** Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in the local authority taking alternative action presenting the case straight to the Magistrates' Court. Magistrates' fines can be up to £2,500 per parent, per child.

Any further referrals for unauthorised absence within a rolling three-year period

**From 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024**, under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, in the case where the threshold for a Penalty Notice has been met for the third time in a rolling 3-year, a Penalty Notice cannot be issued, and the Education Welfare Officer may need to take alternative action including presenting the case straight to the Magistrates' Court. Magistrates' fines can be up to £2,500 per parent, per child.

Who is liable for a Penalty Notice/ Prosecution?

Penalty notices/ prosecution are issued for each parent for each child. Parent refers to anyone with parental responsibility and may include carers, step-parents, grandparents or any other adult with parental responsibility.

Reasons for Penalty Notices/Prosecution Term Time Leave of Absence

**Term time leave:** Our EWO may apply to the local authority for a penalty notice if there are 5 or more days of consecutive absence due to term time leave.

**Unauthorised Absence:** Our EWO may apply to the local authority for a penalty notice if there are 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period.

These absences can be a combination of the following codes:

- G - Term Time Leave of Absence
- O - Unauthorised Absence
- U - Unauthorised Late Arrival After the Close of Registers

Term dates

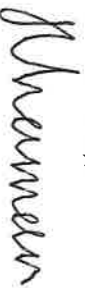
We have worked closely with Park Hill Junior School to ensure minimum disruption to families of both schools for our allocation of five INSET days (where the school is closed for staff training.) As an academy, Park Hill Junior School have more flexibility in determining their school holidays and INSET days so please be aware that our term dates are slightly different to Park Hill Junior School. Absences from our school due to the Junior school being closed will not be authorised. Our term dates and school calendar are available on our website.

Punctuality

Our school gates open at 9:00am. Children need to be in class and ready to learn by 9:10am each day, when the register is called. Regular attendance and good punctuality are important for maximising achievement and gaining the greatest benefit from education.

If there are circumstances we should be aware of in connection with your child's attendance or punctuality, please do not hesitate to contact a member of the Headship Team. All information received will be held confidentially and we will endeavour to offer support and advice where possible.

Yours sincerely,



Ms J Charman  
Headteacher