The Park Federation Academy Trust
The Godolphin Junior Academy

Attendance Policy

Approval

Signed by CEO and Federation Principal on behalf of the Board of Directors	Helen Abell
Date of approval	September 2026
Date of review	September 2027

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ATTENDANCE POLICY

The Park Federation Academy Trust

The Godolphin Junior 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. School attendance is mandatory from the start of the Autumn term.

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.
- Where absence is causing the school concerns, parents will be informed in writing and in some cases asked to attend a meeting with the school's Attendance Officer and the school Principal.

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 or 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 pupils defined by the DfE as being a ‘persistent absentee’ is any pupil who has 38 sessions of absence. The Attendance Service monitor pupils that are on track to become a PA by the number of sessions (2 sessions=1 day), the following guidelines are used to help schools identify these pupils at the end of term.

Identification at the end of each half term	Number of sessions of absence, at the end of the half term, to be on track for persistent absenteeism
Term 1	7 sessions
Term 2	14 sessions
Term 3	20 sessions
Term 4	25 sessions
Term 5	32 sessions

Term 6	38 sessions

Therefore, a child is a persistent absentee as defined by the DfE once they have reached 38 sessions of absence, irrespective of which part of the year we are in at the time, and for whatever reason.

For example, if a child has had a block of illness during half term 1 for 20 days, they would have been absent for 40 sessions which make them a persistent absentee in half term 1 and therefore they will remain a PA for the rest of the academic year.

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 as soon as possible on the first day of absence and keep the school regularly informed, preferably daily
- Parents and carers may report absence to the school for the first three consecutive days
- On the fourth day of absence the school will require medical evidence to support the absence period. This can be in the form of a prescription or an appointment card. Also non-attendance by day 4 ill trigger a home visit by the attendance team to discuss the illness further

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our attendance officer or the Principal or one of the Vice Principals if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the Pupil Attendance and Attendance Improvement Officer if attendance moves below 89%.

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.

In the rare event that we cannot contact you to determine an absence we will:

- Call the two remaining contact numbers to check everything is ok and ask you to make contact with the school
- Send two members of staff to the family home if we cannot make contact with all three contacts numbers held on the school system
- Contact the police immediately for a welfare check if we have failed to make contact via telephone and a home visit has taken place and been successful

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 787670.

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.

Payment of Penalty Notice

The framework for issuing penalty notices (FPN's) changed on 19th August 2024 and monitoring unauthorised absences over a three year period.

- For the first unauthorised absence in a three year period the penalty is £160 per parent per child but reduced to £80 per parent per child if paid within 21 days.
- For the second unauthorised absence in a three year period the penalty is £160 per parent per child with no reduction for early payment
- For the third unauthorised absence in a three year period no fixed penalty notice will be issued and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrate's Court. Fines can be around £2500 per parent per child.
- When FPN's are issued they will be sent via email and payment must be paid directly to the local authority
- There is no right of appeal by parents against a penalty notice. If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 28 day period, the local authority must decide either to prosecute for the original offence to which the notice applies, or withdraw the 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:

Pupils will start their day at 8:40am .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 **9.00 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 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.

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 £7.20 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.
- The Principal will meet personally with every family applying for Exceptional Leave where possible to stress the importance of good school attendance habits and links between attendance and attainment.
- 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.

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 97% attendance and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares.

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.

The Academy authorises one day per school academic year for religious observance as per Slough Borough Council's regulations.

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:

Pav Dhillon Principal)
Focus: Attendance and punctuality
Claudia Balague (Attendance Officer)
Ian Dallibar (Director of Inclusion)
Riz Hussain (Vice Principal and DSL)

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

I have read and understood the terms and conditions of the Attendance Policy at The Godolphin Junior Academy.

Child Name:	
Parent/Carer's Name:	
Signed:	
Child's Year Group	