

Parson Street Primary School

Attendance Policy
2023–2024



This will be on the website and the policy will be attached:

The Staff and Governing Body at Parson Street Primary School give a high priority to its pupils' educational achievement and believe that maximum pupil attendance and punctuality are essential in order for all children to achieve their full potential. Your child should attend school every day unless there is an unavoidable cause such as illness. We seek to ensure that all our pupils receive a full-time education which creates opportunities for lifelong learners. We strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels valued, safe and secure.

Parents and carers must ensure that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly equipped and ready to learn. If your child is unable to attend school for any reason, or is likely to be late, parents and carers should notify the school by 9.30am on the first day – by telephone 0117 903 0226 and press option 1.

We will contact parents and carers if a child is not present at morning or afternoon registration to ensure that the child is safe. Parents and carers are responsible for responding to calls and for ensuring school has up to date contact details. A pupil's absence from school will be considered unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is received.

All school staff will work with pupils and their families to ensure that each pupil attends school regularly and punctually. The school will establish an effective system which acknowledges the efforts of pupils and their parents/carers to improve attendance and punctuality, and will challenge those pupils and parents/carers who give low priority to attendance and punctuality. To meet these objectives we will establish an effective and efficient system of communication with pupils and parents/carers, including signposting and making referrals to appropriate external agencies to provide additional support.

Further information is available in the full policy.

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Bristol
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Head Teacher – Laurie Munro
Deputy Head Teacher– Gemma James
Inclusion Lead– Laura Ellis
SENDCo – Harriet Bigwood and Hannah Read



Parson Street Primary School is a large Academy, which makes provision for children from Nursery to Year 6. As part of Trust in Learning Academies (TiLA), we aim to continue to develop and share good practice with other good and outstanding schools.

At Parson Street Primary School, we strive to support all our children and enable them to reach their full potential. In order to do this, many steps are taken to support them through their learning journey. High Quality Teaching is vital; however, for some children there are occasions when further additional support may be needed to help them achieve their targets. We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, with all staff and volunteers sharing this commitment.

Empowering all to create opportunities for life– long learners in our communities.

This underpins every aspect of school life. At the heart of our vision is that our children enjoy their learning and that they can expect teaching and learning activities that are inspiring and engaging. There is a high level of commitment from children, teaching and non-teaching staff, governors and parents to strive for:



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Company Number: 8089704. Registered Office: Trust in Learning (Academies), Trust House, Teyfant Road, Bristol, BS13 ORG

All children of compulsory school age (between 5 and 16) are required to receive an education. It is a parent/carer's responsibility to ensure that their child has an education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude and any special educational needs that they may have.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 requires schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and once again at the start of the afternoon session.

The Government expects schools to promote good attendance and reduce absence and act early to address patterns of absence. It expects parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children attend school regularly and that all pupils will be punctual.

On 1st September 2013 the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 came into force amending the 2006 regulations and changing the law about pupils taking leave during term-time. The Education Act 1996, section 444(1) states that an offence is committed if a parent or guardian fails to "secure regular attendance at school" for their child or children. "If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence"

Whilst compulsory school age is between 5 and 16, all parents who choose Parson Street for Nursery and Reception are expected to comply with the guidance set out in this attendance policy.

1. Types of Absence

Attendance is recorded in two sessions a day; morning and afternoon. Each half-day absence must be recorded by the school as either an authorised or unauthorised session. Absence will only be authorised if it is unavoidable, such as illness or a medical appointment which cannot be made outside of school time. In these circumstances, proof such as a hospital letter or prescription may be requested.

If no reason is given for an absence, this will be recorded as unauthorised. It is the responsibility of the parent to notify the school of any absences and give valid reasons for them. Failure to report absences within the guidelines set out in this policy will automatically result in that absence being recorded in the register as unauthorised. This may result in further action being taken if we are not informed of the whereabouts of the child and could possibly result in a missing child referral.

1.1 Illness

Parents must inform the school by 8.50am when their child is ill and will not be attending school. Where an absence hasn't been reported, parents will be contacted by a text message during the morning requesting a response and reason for absence. Where this is not forthcoming, the absence will be classed as unauthorised and further action could be taken.

If your child is absent from school due to illness, you must telephone the school before 8:50am on the day your child is absent using the Attendance Line: 0117 903 0226 Press Option 1.

Wherever possible, all medical and dental appointments should be made outside of school time. Also, it is expected that every effort is made to minimise the amount of time that the child is absent for the appointment, i.e. not leaving until just before the appointment and returning immediately afterwards. If an appointment is unavoidable, siblings must not be taken out of school. If they are taken out of school, this would be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Where the school is concerned about the child's attendance, they may request confirmation of medical appointments or medical support of illness or injury. Medical evidence can include items such as a GP slip or letter, appointment card or letter, the original prescribed medication or the prescription itself. Parents should note that not all illnesses or injuries require a child to be absent from school. Further information about whether an illness requires time off from school or not can be found on the NHS website.

1.2 Exceptional Circumstances Leave

Absences from school for the purposes of a term-time holiday will not be authorised. The law does not grant parents the automatic right to take their child out of school during term time and the judgement of the Supreme Court in the case of *R v Platt* [2017] asserts that even one day of missed school could be an infraction of the law.

It is a legal requirement that parents/carers obtain the permission of the Head Teacher before removing their child from school. If a parent/carer wishes to make an application for a term-time absence, this must be done in advance of the absence by the parent/carer with whom the child normally lives. This request must be made in writing to the Head Teacher at least two weeks in advance by completing a Leave of Absence Request Form (Appendix 1). The Head Teacher will formally reply to any applications within 7 days upon receiving this. This reply will explain whether the

absence is authorised or not and explain any action needed, e.g. contact with the Head Teacher to sign a Home School Contract.

The Head Teacher (or a representative of the Head Teacher) and the Governing Body are within their rights to turn an application down and refuse permission for parents/carers to take their children out of school during term time. Such a decision will have been made in the best interest of the pupils' educational progress and attainment and with due regard to their previous attendance record. If the child is subsequently taken out of school this absence will be recorded as 'unauthorised'.

Parents who take their children out of school during term time without the authorisation of the Head teacher not only damage their children's educational opportunities but also risk being issued with a penalty notice, being prosecuted in court and losing the child's place at the school.

In line with the Department of Education regulations, which came into effect in September 2013, the Head Teacher may only grant a leave of absence during term time if there are exceptional circumstances, these include:

- Death of parent/carer or sibling of the pupil
- Life threatening or critical illness of parent or sibling of the pupil
- Parent/carer recuperation and convalescence from critical illness or surgery (leave request to be made within 6 months of recovery and medical evidence required)
- Leave for armed forces personnel who are prevented by operational duties to take leave at any other time
- Leave of absence already granted by a previous school or local authority (granted within the last six months and supported by documentation from the previous school)

Where absence has been authorised, failure to agree and/or return a home-school contract, or not return to school by the agreed date, could cause further action to be taken, including the pupil losing his/her place at the school.

Family emergencies need careful consideration. It is not always in the best interests of the child nor wholly appropriate for them to miss school for family emergencies that are being dealt with by adult members. School and school friendships/relationships can provide the children with stability and care during difficult times. The routine of school can provide a safe and familiar anchor to life during times of upheaval. However, where the Head Teacher judges there to be genuine and pressing reasons for a child to be absent during term time, they may only agree up to a maximum of 5 consecutive days absence in any one school year.

Such a decision will have been made in the best interest of the pupils' educational progress and attainment and with due regard to their previous attendance record.

If your child is involved in a sporting event or a performance which requires time out of school then a license may need to be applied for. In this situation, please write to the Head Teacher with the details. For more information please see: <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/social-care-health/child-employment>

At the Head Teacher's discretion, a limited amount of time may be authorised for religious observance.

1.3 Punctuality

School starts at 9:00am, although children are welcome to arrive at any time from 8:50am when the gates open. The registers close at 9:10am and if your child arrives after this time, it will be marked as an unauthorised absence for the morning session, regardless of the reason.

Punctuality will be monitored closely alongside attendance and action for unauthorised absences due to arriving late past the register will be the same as an unauthorised session. If children are collected before the end of the day, their afternoon session may be marked as unauthorised.

2. Stages

At Parson Street, we understand that attendance is everyone's business. We want to work together to support all with attendance.

Stage one:

If a child's attendance is below 90%, our attendance officer will monitor attendance and support with communications home. This will be over a 4-week period. Parents/carers will be informed if their child has 90% or below attendance as a letter will come home. As part of this monitoring process, any absences will need to have medical proof.

Stage two:

If attendance does not improve, a supportive meeting will be put in place with our attendance officer and parents/carers of the child. An action plan will be put into place.

Stage three:

If a child's attendance still does not improve after monitoring alongside the action plan, our attendance officer will monitor attendance for a further 4-week period. Parents/carers will be contacted regarding this. As part of this monitoring process, any absences will need to have medical proof. After this monitoring process, a formal meeting will be arranged. If attendance does not improve, the school will seek advice and involvement from Education Welfare.

3. Penalty Notices

Penalty Notices may be issued to parents by Bristol City Council, on behalf of the school, for any unauthorised absences of 8 or more sessions (4 or more days) in any 10-week period, including, but not limited to, absences for term-time holidays, sporadic unauthorised absences or illness where supporting medical evidence has been requested by the school but not supplied by the parents/s. The amount of a Penalty Notice is £60 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid between 22 and 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid the parent may be prosecuted for the offence of failing to ensure their child's regular attendance at school. Any parents with parental responsibility, even if they are currently living at a different address, may be liable.

Section 23(1) Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2007:

Penalty notices may be issued to the parent of pupils who have unauthorised absence from school. The amount of the penalty is £60.

oIf this is not paid within 21 days the amount rises to £120.

oIf not paid within 28 days the Local Authority will prosecute under section 444(1) unless it comes to our attention that the penalty notice had been issued in error.

Section 444(1) Education Act 1996:

"If you are the parent of a child of compulsory school age who fails to attend school regularly, you are guilty of an offence."

The court can fine each parent up to £1,000 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs and/or make a Parenting Order.

These prosecutions are criminal proceedings and could result in you having a criminal record.

4. Impact on Learning

The Governors, Head Teacher and Staff acknowledge that there is a strong and proven link between pupil attendance and educational achievement. Attendance is an important indicator of the success of other school policies, e.g. SEND & Inclusion.

Attendance of less than 95% (i.e. absences of 9.5 days or more out of the 190 pupil days in the school year) has been shown to compromise pupil attainment. At 90% attendance pupils miss the equivalent of almost 4 weeks education (19 days) and only 10% of pupils who are persistently absent from school achieve expected levels at GCSE. We do not want children to get to this point.

5.Attendance Strategies

At Parson Street Primary School we use a variety of strategies to maximise attendance and punctuality.

- Class attendance award of a large amethyst for any class that achieves 100% attendance over three days consecutively.
- Mention of attendance in assemblies and newsletters.
- Use of an 'Attendance Matters' poster to promote attendance within class.
- Use of the 'Sol Tracker' to monitor attendance of the whole school.
- Attendance leader to have meetings, calls and write letters to parents when attendance becomes a concern.

6 .Responsibilities

Parents will:

- Plan holidays outside of term time
- Consider whether it is wholly appropriate for the child/children to accompany adults in some circumstances
- Weigh the benefits to the family of term time absences against detriment to the child's/children's educational progress & attainment
- Avoid requesting term time absences during periods where there are public examinations and National Curriculum assessments
- Make arrangements to complete course-work or curriculum work if an extended period of absence is sought.
- Attempt to ensure their child attends school regularly in accordance with the signed whole school agreement.
- Notify the school by phone/letter by 8.50am on the day when their child is absent from school using the Attendance Line – 0117 903 0226 (e.g. sickness).

The Every Child Matters Team & Head Teacher will:

- Monitor attendance and, where concerns are identified, consult with parents/ outside agencies to agree actions to address identified issues.
- In consultation with SIO and Governors, set annual targets for attendance.
- Inform governors of attendance data through head teacher reports.
- Inform parents of attendance percentages for their child/ren at the end of the school year.

Class Teachers will:

- Ensure that registers are taken at the start of each session.
- Report any concerns relating to attendance to the ECM Team or Head teacher.

Attendance Leader will:

- Input attendance data on a daily basis
- Provide data each week for monitoring by the Every Child Matters team or Head Teacher.
- Support the Head Teacher in monitoring and identifying levels of absence/lateness causing concern.
- Promote and reward excellent attendance by pupils.
- Meet with parents to discuss attendance concerns and agree upon actions.

The Governing Body will:

- Monitor the school's procedures for managing pupil attendance.
- Annually review the attendance policy.

7. Children Missing Education (CME)

Definition

Children are classed as missing education when they are not registered at a school or receiving suitable provision elsewhere and are of compulsory school age. To avoid children becoming CME, it is important that they are placed on and off a school roll according to Department for Education (DfE) guidelines. It is vital that schools and local authorities work together to safeguard children and ensure that they receive their educational entitlement. At Parson Street Primary School, we work closely with

the local authority and inform them when we have concerns over a child missing education.

These are the practices that we have put in place in order to safeguard children from becoming CME:

- Pupils are entered onto the admission register at the beginning of the first day that child is due to attend. If the child fails to attend then enquiries will be made to establish their whereabouts and Bristol County Council (BCC) will be notified.
- If a place is enquired about for a child who is not currently on roll at a Bristol school, and a place is not available, the school will notify BCC.
- If a pupil does not return to school for ten days after an authorised leave of absence, or is absent without authorisation for twenty days, the pupil can be removed from the admission register. This can only be done if the school and BCC have made reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the child.
- If a child is temporarily excluded from school for more than five days, the governing body will arrange suitable alternative full-time education. This must begin no later than the sixth day of exclusion. For permanent exclusions, the local authority will provide alternative education.
- Attendance will be monitored through our daily registers and any unexplained absences will be investigated as part of our safeguarding duty.
- The school will notify BCC when a pupil's name is removed from the school admission register at non-standard transition points.
- The school will notify BCC within five days of adding a pupil's name to the admission register at a non-standard transition point.
- If the school cannot locate a pupil by reasonable enquiries (emergency contacts, home visits, contacting other professionals involved with the family), then a Pupil Tracking Referral must be made.

For more information on Children Missing Education, please see:
<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/schools-learning-early-years/children-missing-education-cme>

EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES – LEAVE IN TERM TIME REQUEST

Pupil's Name D.O.B Class.....

Pupil's Name D.O.B Class.....

Pupil's Name D.O.B Class.....

Pupil's Name D.O.B Class.....

I request permission for the above named pupil(s) to be granted leave during the school term.

Reason for request

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Dates of Absence

From To No of school days

I/We understand that if leave is agreed:

- If travelling abroad, I / we will supply a copy of the return travel documentation.
- I / we will supply the name and phone number of a contact person whilst abroad.

If I / we do not return at the agreed time; I / we am / are aware that I / we may be issued with a penalty notice, and could be fined £60 or £120 depending on how soon payment is made. If I do not pay the fine, I / we could then be required to attend Court; this could result in a fine of up to £1000 per child and having a criminal record.

- After four weeks of absence my / our child/ren may be removed from the school register and I / we will then be responsible for finding a new school on my / our return.

Parent/Carer Name

.....

DOB.....

Address.....

.....

Signature.....

Date.....

Request agreed / denied

Signed Head Teacher