



Palmers Cross Primary school

Attendance and punctuality Policy

Reviewed June 2015

Attendance and punctuality policy

Introduction

Regular attendance at school is essential to ensure uninterrupted progress and to enable pupils to reach their full potential. The attendance pattern for all children is monitored bi-weekly with the school seeking to work actively with parents to ensure a regular pattern is maintained. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place the appropriate procedures to support this. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school and learning.

Aims

- To ensure each child has full access to all areas of the curriculum and the education they are entitled to
- To endeavour to provide support and guidance where appropriate to improve children's attendance and punctuality.
- To monitor and identify patterns in individual children's attendance and punctuality throughout the year, pinpointing irregularities and cause for concern.
- To provide information on which to base target setting for future attendance returns.
- To provide evidence and information for reporting to Parents/Carers, Governing body, LA and DFE.
- To improve attendance to a minimum of 96% and reduce lateness
- To comply with the legal requirements of the Education Act 1996

Each child's attendance can be summarised as:

100%	Outstanding
96%+	Excellent – Well done! This will help all aspects of your children's progress and life in school.
94%/95%	Average – Well done, strive to build on this
85%-93%	Poor – Absence is now affecting attainment and progress at school. Please work with the school to improve the situation
Below 85%	Unacceptable – absence is causing serious concern. It is affecting attainment and progress and is disrupting your child's learning. We will work with you and the education Welfare Officer (EWO) to improve your child's attendance

Whole School Involvement

The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of the staff. However, in order to achieve our aims, specific staff have more involvement in the implementation of this policy. These include – Class teachers and teaching assistants, Children, Parents/Carers, School Administration Staff, Head teacher and Senior Leadership Team, along with the Education Welfare Service and School Governor.

The Legal Position

Under section 7 of the Education Act 1996, the 'parent' is responsible for making sure that their child of compulsory school age receives efficient full-time education that is suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude.

Compulsory school age is defined as beginning from the term in which a child turns five. Prosecutions are brought under S440 of the Education Act 1996

Registers

Registers are STATUTORY LEGAL DOCUMENTS, which must be completed accurately by a member of teaching staff. Attendance registers are taken twice a day: at the start of the morning session and afternoon sessions.

Instructions for completing registers must be followed. The office staff will find out the reason for absences and enter the correct code. If they are in any doubt they will contact Deputy/Head for clarification.

Absences

Absences can only be authorised once the attendance team or Head/Deputy head teacher are satisfied that an acceptable explanation has been provided by parent/carer regarding the absence. It is important that absences can only be authorised by the school and not by the parent/carer.

If a member of staff is in doubt about whether an absence should be authorised, then this should be referred to the Head/Deputy head teacher.

If a valid reason is given verbally or in writing by a Parent/Carer then the absence may be authorised. If the reason is unacceptable or not validated then it should be referred to attendance staff to investigate further.

Marking the school register with a, N, is acceptable until the absence is clarified, but this should be removed within two weeks of the absence. Unauthorised absence should be recorded if no reason is supplied.

Procedures for Authorising Absence

- Parents are required to contact school before 9.30am on the first day of absence to confirm the reason of absence and its likely duration.
- If a child is not in school and no reason for absence has been supplied, parents are contacted to clarify the reason for absence.
- Parents who routinely fail to make contact with the school will have all absences unauthorised and a referral to the Education Welfare Service may be made.
- If an absent child is subject to a Child Protection Plan or is a Child in Need attendance staff should inform Head/Deputy head immediately that the child is absent.

Acceptable Reason for Absence

- Illness (evidence may be asked for)
- Days agreed by school as Religious observance

Unacceptable Reasons for Absence

- Truancy (absence without knowledge of Parents/Carers)
- Minding the House
- Shopping/running errands (e.g. buying new shoes clothes)
- Looking after sick relatives
- Looking after brothers or sisters
- School clothing in the wash
- Oversleeping
- Head lice
- Birthday
- Parent's illness
- Children in another school on an Inset Day
- Last day of term
- Child tells the parent/carer that they do not want to go to school
- Holiday: whole weeks and odd days
- Routine medical and dental appointments are discouraged in school time (school are happy to support parents if they are having difficulties obtaining appointments outside of school hours.)
- Any other reason that the Head teacher deems unacceptable

Leave of absence during term time

New legislation introduced in September 2013 states that parents do not have the right to take their child(ren) out of school during term time, parents can be fined for doing so except in exceptional circumstances. By law you must ask permission for your child to miss school. If you don't you risk being served a penalty notice from the local authority. It is recognised that absence from school directly impacts on learning. If a child misses a step; the next step of learning becomes much more difficult.

Special requests for leave of absence during term time should be made to the Deputy/Head teacher in person. Parents have no entitlement to leave of absence and authorisation will only be given for exceptional circumstances.

Monitoring Attendance

- All children's attendance figures will be printed weekly
- Attendance staff will meet weekly to analyse attendance patterns
- Individual and whole school attendance, punctuality figures discussed and ways forward suggested.
- Children causing concern will be discussed along with actions taken and progress towards targets.
- All parents receive a letter if attendance falls below 95%.
- Children with attendance less than 90% are identified as causing concern and from September 2015 these pupils will be identified as persistent absence pupils
- Children who are regularly late are also identified as causing concern and parents will receive letters if their child has been late for more than 4 sessions in a two week period.

Procedures for when attendance is causing concern

- If at the attendance meeting the child's attendance/punctuality continues to cause concern. parents/carers are invited to attend an attendance/punctuality meeting in school where a Parenting Contract or EHA(Early Help Assessment) will be offered
- The pupils attendance/punctuality will be monitored until it is no longer a concern
- Regular meeting with the Education Welfare Officer will discuss attendance issues and advice sort on appropriate action.
- If a child's absence remains a cause of concern and after intervention by the school which will include unauthorised absences then a referral to the Education Welfare Service' may be made.
- The Education Welfare Officer will ask to meet with parents and school along with other professionals such as the school nurse to discuss absence issues.
- If parents/carers fail to attend meetings to discuss attendance issues and attendance or punctuality does not improve within a specific time a Penalty Notice could be served.

Lost Children's Database

If a child has not been present at school for four weeks and no contact has been made with school, following lengthy enquiries by the Education Welfare officer, the child will be off registered from school and will become part of the Lost Children's database.

Lateness

- Lateness in attending school is an unauthorised absence. The school day begins at 8.45am.
- Children who are late must enter via the school reception.
- Parents need to sign children in using the electronic system.
- Where a child has been late for more than 4 sessions during a two week period then a letter reminding parents about the importance of punctuality and offering any additional support will be sent.

If punctuality issues continue a referral may be made to the Education Welfare Service who may take legal action which could result in a fine.

Celebrating Good Attendance

We work hard to ensure our school's attendance improves and are keen to reward our pupil's for their excellent attendance.

- Attendance certificates and prizes are awarded termly by the school in assemblies
- Class teachers are encouraged to praise individuals and class attendance regularly.
- Weekly class rewards for 100% attendance are awarded
- Attendance staff will regularly report attendance to other school staff to raise awareness and encourage good attendance.
- Parents are also kept informed through a termly newsletter

Setting Targets

The Local Authority sets target for all schools based upon past performance and national expectations. However the DfE and OFSTED have specific targets which place schools into national categories and tables which will be published for parental scrutiny each year.

Race Equality & Equal Opportunities

All children have equal access to a full education regardless of their gender, disability or ability. We are committed to providing a safe and happy school free from racist intimidation or harassment of any kind and for all our children to achieve their full potential.

Reporting Attendance

Attendance is reported to pupil and parents in a variety of ways:

- Annually on the annual academic report
- Attendance issues will be addressed by teachers during parent evenings
- Through ongoing intervention throughout the year
- By publishing attendance and punctuality results on the school web site and newsletters
- Letters sent home for under 95% attendance.

Information is transferred to other schools by way of;

- Electronic data systems
- Common Transfer forms
- National Curriculum assessment records
- Passing on of annual reports

The school is required to make attendance returns to the DfE and the LA

Roles and Responsibilities

The Headteacher should:

- Ensure legal requirements are being met with regard to attendance and punctuality
- Be responsible for the operational management of the attendance policy
- To review policy and procedures at least annually with all staff
- To discuss attendance and punctuality with new Parents/Carers and children
- To analyse authorised and unauthorised absence regularly with attendance staff and EWO to discuss any attendance issues
- Reward and celebrate attendance
- Send letters home regarding attendance and lateness
- Identify and monitor individual absences and lateness, identifying patterns and trends and target improvements
- Make the school Attendance and Punctuality Policy available to parents
- Hold regular meetings to address attendance issues and implement strategies to increase attendance and reduce Persistent Absence

The Governing Body should:

- Know and understand the schools policy and procedures for absence and lateness
- Have a designated governor responsible for monitoring and supporting the school with attendance and punctuality.
- Our designated governor is Charlotte Johns (IEB member)

Attendance Staff Should:

- Monitor individual attendance and lateness daily, identifying any patterns and absences
- Liaise with the Head teacher and education Welfare officer regarding absence and lateness
- Produce reports for the Head teacher and Governors summarising individual and whole school attendance.
- Communicate with Parents/Carers on attendance and punctuality
- Record and store contact with parents in an appropriate manner
- Follow up data and reports with regards to less than 95% attendance
- Follow up poor punctuality and communicate with parents and children to identify solutions
- Hold regular meetings with Head/Leadership team regarding attendance.
- Update attendance log for children causing concern.

Class teachers should:

- Ensure that registers are completed in accordance with Attendance and Punctuality procedures
- Date any written letters received from parents/cares regarding lateness or attendance and file in register wallet
- Record any verbal messages from parents/carers regarding attendance or lateness and send to the Attendance Office.
- Raise any concerns regarding attendance or lateness with attendance staff.
- Complete register by 8.45am and 1.00pm and return promptly to the attendance office.

Parents and Carers should:

- Parents should ensure children attend school every day and punctually
- Parents should follow the schools policy and procedures
- Contact school to inform of any absences by phone or letter on the first day of the child's absence
- Provide evidence of medical conditions which may affect a child's attendance
- Inform school of any changes in family circumstances particularly new addresses or telephone numbers.

The relationships developed between parents and school is essential to reinforce positive attitudes to teaching and learning which will therefore encourage positive attendance.