



Attendance policy

Palace Fields Primary School

COVID-19 Amendment September 2021

Approved by: Governing Body

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Contents

1. Aims.....	2
2. Legislation and guidance	2
3. School procedures	3
4. Authorised and unauthorised absence	4
5. Strategies for promoting attendance	5
6. Attendance monitoring	6
7. Roles and responsibilities	6
8. Monitoring arrangements	7
9. Links with other policies	7
Appendix 1: attendance codes.....	8

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1. Aims

At Palace Fields Primary School we are committed to promoting positive attendance across the school to ensure that children are in school to learn. We aim to achieve a whole school target of at least 96% and celebrate with children who achieve at least 97% over a year (5 days or less of absence during the school year).

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled **whether that be in school or via home learning (due to latest guidance directing self-isolation)**
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association?

3. School procedures

3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:50am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:50am and will be kept open until 9:30am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1:05pm and will be kept open until 1:10pm.

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health **or is self-isolating in line with latest government guidance** – by 9:10am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6). Parents may either **call in to school**, telephone the office or email to make communication regarding absence.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness and/or the child has been set an attendance target for a period of time.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

All children are expected to attend in all year groups, unless they are self-isolating or there are specific reasons for absence.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

A punctuality target may be set regarding children with a repeated pattern of late arrivals as part of a discussion of support to promote punctuality.

3.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

3.6 Reporting to parents

Parents will be provided with a copy of their child's attendance record at each parent's evening as well as in the summer term as part of the annual written end-of-year report.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

As of 1st September 2013 The Education Regulations 2013 (Pupil registration amendment) amends the 2006 Regulations and makes it clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

Palace Fields Primary School will not grant permission for leave of absence (including holidays) to be taken in term time, consideration will only be given to requests made under exceptional circumstances.

The school accepts that parents may apply for leave of absence for activities such as:

- Student participation in a sporting event.
- Attendance at a family wedding
- Attendance at a family graduation
- Attendance at family holidays.

The Principal or person designated by the Principal will ultimately decide whether the circumstances are deemed to be exceptional. It is important to note that each application will be considered on an individual basis.

NB. Holidays in term time will not be granted unless the circumstances are deemed to be exceptional by the school.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

4.2 Legal sanctions

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

At Palace Fields Primary School we celebrate and promote positive attendance across the school. We do this by:-

- Contacting parents on the first day of a pupil's absence, where no notification has been received from the parent/carer to ensure the safety of the pupil.
- Analyse individual attendance pupil data to identify patterns of absence causing concern
- Invite parents in to school for a discussion when a pupil's attendance is below 94%.
- Invite parents to an Attendance Meeting with Principal, Education Welfare Officer where attendance falls below 90%.
- Consider referral to Education Welfare when school action has failed to bring about an improvement in the pupil's attendance
- Use Individual Attendance Support Plans for pupils with attendance difficulties
- Use Parenting Contracts where exclusion or behavioural issues are affecting a pupil's attendance in school
- In partnership with LA use a full range of strategies, including legal interventions, to support improvement to attendance
- Provide appropriate support to pupils to ensure successful reintegration following long term absence
- Complete a Common Assessment where complex and significant factors requiring a multi-agency response is identified
- Work proactively to engage with parents and carers to resolve any difficulties which may be affecting school attendance, through parents evenings, pupil reviews and home-school agreements
- Provide a full and diverse curriculum to engage and motivate pupils, including use of SEAL to promote emotional well-being
- Make parents aware of the impact of poor attendance on attainment

- Implement a range of rewards for pupils with high levels of attendance and those improving attendance:-
 - 1) Holding attendance focus weeks throughout the year such as “spot on” weeks promoting attendance and punctuality.
 - 2) Have a weekly class attendance competition with a trophy and party for the class with the best attendance during a week.
 - 3) Recognising children who achieve 100% attendance for each half-term period with a certificate and the opportunity to win prizes from the attendance draw.
 - 4) Recognising children who achieve 97% attendance for a term with a certificate and a prize.
 - 5) Recognising children who achieve 100% attendance for a year with a badge.

Improved attendance:-

- 6) Recognising significantly improved attendance for individuals with a certificate and prize. (It will be the child's choice as to whether this is given in an assembly or not)
- 7) Recognising “most improved” class attendance when appropriate.

(Please note that additional rewards may be used at the discretion of the Principal in order to promote positive attendance and punctuality as part of our ongoing attendance reviews)

Attendance rewards remain suspended during covid-19 however acknowledgement will be made for pupils who attend school regularly. This will be continued to be reviewed during the year depending on the level of impact of covid-19 on the school community.

6. Attendance monitoring

Palace Fields Primary School monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2).

Parents are expected to make contact each day a child is ill, unless agreed with the school.

If a pupil's absence goes above 3 days we may contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continue to rise, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

Palace Fields uses attendance data to track the attendance of individual pupils, identify whether or not there are any particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern, and monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

7.2 The principal

The principal is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The principal also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

7.3 The attendance officer

The attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the principal
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the principal when to issue fixed-penalty notices

7.4 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

7.5 Office staff

Office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system. **Office staff will complete and DFE and/or LA returns as required regarding attendance.**

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the principal. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy and leave of absence policy.

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment

R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

NB Registers will be completed using the relevant DFE guidance codes.