

Attendance and Punctuality Policy



Values:

‘Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school’.

School Attendance: Statutory guidance and departmental advice, DFE Aug 2016

The Palmer Academy expects the highest attendance and punctuality from all pupils, at all times. We support pupils and their families to ensure that excellent attendance is achieved. The minimum expected attendance at The Palmer Academy is 97% or better.

Attendance	Description	Approx. days lost per year	Approx. weeks lost per year
99-100%	Excellent	0-4	Less than 1
97-98%	Good	5-9	1-2
96%	Satisfactory	10-13	2-3
90-95%	Unsatisfactory	14-18	3-4
Below 90%	Persistent Absence	More than 19 Equivalent to 38 sessions	More than 4

Overall Aims:

- To ensure that every child is safeguarded and their right to education is protected.
- To ensure the school attendance target is achieved, through rewards and incentives for good attendance and punctuality.
- To raise standards and ensure every child reaches their full educational potential, through a high level of school attendance and punctuality.
- To ensure all the stakeholders, governors, parents, pupils and staff receive regular communication, about the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- To keep accurate, up-to-date records and have a robust and rigorous system for analysing attendance.
- To identify causes of low attendance/punctuality with individuals, classes and groups of pupils and address them.
- To work with external agencies, in order to address barriers to attendance and overcome them.

Rights and responsibilities for attendance/punctuality:

The Legal Framework:

There are legal obligations on:

- The parent(s) to secure education for their children, whether at school or otherwise, to send them to school regularly once they are on the register.

Academies must ensure:

- Appropriate staff are able to provide evidence and reports sufficient for court purposes. This will include evidence of actions taken to address attendance-related issues as agreed with the LA.
- They comply with local protocols relating to any assessment that the LA is obliged to carry out relating to a pupil's non-attendance.
- Where a court grants a Parental Order the academy can make a financial contribution to the LA towards meeting the costs of implementing the PO, typically by contributing to the costs of parenting classes.
- Any penalty notice issued, or requests to the LA for these to be issued, comply with the local code of conduct, including the payment of all monies to go to the LA.
- They are able to provide the LA with the required information in cases where a penalty notice is not paid and prosecution has to be commenced.

Roles and Responsibilities

Senior Leadership Team (SLT):

- To be responsible for the overall management and implementation of the policy.
- To deal with parental requests for extended leave in line with Reading Local Authority policies and procedures.
- To consider the use of Penalty Notices, in line with Reading Local Authority policies and procedures.
- To lead on/take responsibility for attendance/punctuality, on a day-to-day basis, including liaising with/responding to parental enquiries.
- To oversee the analysis of/analyse weekly/termly/yearly data and respond to findings.
- To meet with the School Administrator to monitor the systems and structures, ensuring they are having an impact on pupil attendance and punctuality.
- To liaise with external agencies such as the Education Welfare Officer and make referrals where necessary.
- To ensure that rewards and incentives for attendance and punctuality are being used.
- Work with the teachers, to plan for the reintegration of pupils after long-term absence.
- To revise and amend the policy, as required.

Admin Team:

- To carry out and record the outcome of first day calls, when a child doesn't arrive at school when no reason has been received by 10:00am.
- To monitor weekly attendance data for their year groups.
- To check the school answer phone and take messages from parents/carers about pupil absence.
- To promptly inform the SLT if there are any concerns relating to attendance/punctuality

- To produce weekly/termly/yearly data for SLT as requested.
- To record reasons for absence and updating class registers.
- To implement the daily checking of INTEGRIS registers after the morning and afternoon registration sessions.
- To contact parents/carers by letter if attendance drops below 95%.
- To maintain Integris attendance records in line with this policy.
- To liaise with and report to with outside agencies such as the Education Welfare Service.
- To report to the Local Authority, as requested.
- To maintain clear communication with the SLT regarding attendance and punctuality within their year groups.
- To oversee the admission and induction of new pupils.
- To support SLT with the promotion good attendance and punctuality, through finding/organising incentives.
- To ensure staff are following the registration systems and structures in this policy.
- Inform parents of school procedures, when parents have failed to inform the school.

Safeguarding Team:

- To carry out and record the outcome of first day calls, when a child doesn't arrive at school when no reason has been received by 10:00am.
- To liaise with SLT and the Designated Safeguarding Lead where appropriate.

Staff:

- **To complete the daily class attendance chart with the pupils (Attendance and Evacuation Form).**
- To ensure quality first teaching every day with lessons that are well planned and resourced so that they challenge, inspire and meet their learners' needs.
- To keep accurate and up-to-date daily records of pupil attendance through the INTEGRIS register system taking a formal register of all pupils twice a day by 9.00am (and saving) and closing at 9:20am (and saving) and 12:50pm or 1.20pm.
- To mark pupils as 'L' from 9:00am – 9:20am. To mark any pupils that have not been seen by the teacher as 'N'. To add a note of any information or parent communication in the 'notes' section.
- To regularly remind children and parents about the importance of good attendance.
- To follow up on pupil absence by ensuring reasons for absence are sought. Direct parents to either complete the online 'Absence Reporting' form on the school website or telephone the school.
- Provide a welcoming and safe environment, which encourages attendance and promotes the best performance from children.
- Establish good and effective communication links with parents/carers and work collaboratively in meeting the child's needs.
- If required, to work collaboratively with other agencies to assist them in fulfilling their statutory duties, regarding for example, child protection
- Work with pupils and their families where attendance is a concern, identifying barriers to good attendance and working to overcome these.
- **To promptly inform the SLT, of pupils who persist with poor attendance.**

- To feed back to parents about pupil attendance and punctuality regularly and at Parents Evenings.

Parents:

Children should only be kept at home if they have a serious illness or injury. If this is the case, parents should contact the school first thing. **If a child has a minor illness e.g. mild headache, stomach aches etc. parents should inform the school and bring them in. If they don't get any better, school will contact parents straight away, to collect them.** If pupils' have a dental, clinic or hospital appointment, parents should let the school know. Pupils' should be brought child back to school after appointments. **Pupils should miss as little time as possible.**

Therefore, parents are expected to:

- **Ensure their child attends school and arrives on time – by 8:50am – every day.**
- Promote a good attitude to learning by ensuring their children attend school in the correct uniform and with the basic equipment required for lessons.
- Not arrange medical and dental appointments in school time wherever possible. Where this can't be avoided bring in the appointment letter.
- Complete the online 'Absence Reporting' form on the school website or telephone to inform the school on the first day and each subsequent day of absence for their child or confirm diagnosis and days required to recover having sought medical advice.
- When absence is known in advance (E.g. known medical appointment), provide a written explanation of absence, including dates of absence.
- Work in partnership with the school and other agencies in the best interests of their child; this includes informing the school about significant influences and changes in the child's life, which may impact on learning.

Pupils:

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, we request that pupils:

- Ensure they are punctual, and regular attendance is maintained at the highest level.
- Attend all their lessons on time and be ready to learn.
- On those occasions that they return to school from an absence they must bring a written explanation to their class teacher.
- Inform their class teacher if they are experiencing difficulties with their attendance in the first instance.

The Local Authority, through the Educational Welfare Service, is expected to:

- Support the school in improving attendance, through whole school initiatives and individual pupil interventions.
- Work with families and other agencies to remove barriers to good attendance.
- Ensure that parents are informed of their responsibilities in relation to attendance.
- Uphold and enforce the law in respect of attendance, child employment, and involvement in entertainment and child protection.

Understanding Types of Absence

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to authorise any child's absence from school. Therefore, absences will be treated as unauthorised until the school is satisfied that I should be authorised. ***Parents/carers cannot authorise absences and should be aware that while calling the school or providing a note for an absence complies with safeguarding procedures, it does not automatically mean an absence will be authorised.***

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school as AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED.

Authorised Absence

There may be some exceptional circumstances where the school will authorise absence such as:

- Illness - High temperature/vomiting and diarrhoea, emergency medical/dental appointments which unavoidably falls in school time. While pupils should not be sent to school if they are genuinely unwell, if their illness is not sufficient to go and consult a doctor then parents/carers are advised to send them to school in the first instance, where they can be monitored. Should the need arise parents/carers can then be contacted and arrangements made to send pupils home.
- Religious observances.
- Family bereavement.
- Visits to prospective new schools, external exams or educational assessments.
- Exclusion from school.

Medical or dental appointments

Parents/carers should make every effort to ensure these appointments are made outside of school hours. Where it cannot be avoided, children should attend school for as much of the appointment day as possible. Medical evidence may also be required in the form of a copy of a prescription, appointment card, etc.

Religious observance

The Palmer Academy recognises that there may be times where children of different faiths observe religious festivals that fall outside of school holidays and weekends, and will allow authorised absence for these times. Parent/carers will be aware of these dates and should give the school written notification in advance.

Unauthorised Absence

Examples of types of absence that are not considered reasonable and which will not be authorised under any circumstances are:

- Going shopping, birthdays
- Looking after other younger children in the family
- Staying at home because other members in the family are disabled or unwell
- Day trips and holidays in term time that have not been agreed
- Haircut
- To get new shoes or uniform

Persistent Absence

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's education and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence and the reasons given thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the persistent absence mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and we will inform the parents/carers immediately.

Monitoring and Recording Attendance & Punctuality

Class Registers

Class registers are recorded using INTEGRIS. The system ensures that no children are missed and that pupil information can be shared quickly and securely. Registers are the only way of recording pupil attendance and must be completed accurately. This is the responsibility of whichever member of staff has been directed to take the register for that session.

Registers can be re-submitted in the case of a mistake or a pupil arriving after submission, but registers must be accurate and submitted at key times.

Morning Register

Doors open at 8:40am and the bell for lining up goes at 8:50am. Register is taken before 9:00am and saved by the teacher. Class registers remain open until 9:20am – between 9:00am – 9:20am arrivals will receive a 'L' (late) mark. At 9:20am the teacher saves their final register. If arriving after 9:00am but before 9.20am children will be recorded as late (L). If they arrive after 9:20am they will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (U) unless the reason provided for the lateness is authorised.

Afternoon Register

Registers must be submitted by teaching staff straight after lunch before afternoon lessons commence. For the Years R-3 12:50pm and Years 4-6 1:20pm

School Attendance Monitoring

The school monitors attendance of individual pupils, classes and pupil groups. We will communicate with all parents via letter if the attendance of an individual pupil falls below 97%, and absence is either unauthorised or reasons provided are questionable. Further action may be taken via school meetings and a referral to the Local Authority Education Welfare Service if attendance remains a concern. More information for parents about this process is available from a member of SLT upon request.

Punctuality

The SLT and the Admin Assistant monitor the punctuality folder regularly. This may involve speaking to parents directly, or via a phone call. Letters regarding the school's concern over lateness may also be sent; explain how much learning pupils are missing. If it does not improve, parents are invited in to school, to discuss the concerns with the SLT and plan a way forward. If lateness does not improve following the meeting and interventions by the school in partnership with the family, then the family will be referred to Children's Single Point of Access (Social Services and other professional agencies).

IMPORTANT:

Child Protection and safeguarding concerns will be acted on immediately, in line with the school Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and the Local Authority's Child Missing in Education procedures.

Monitoring First Day Absence

If a child is absent from school and the school has not received a phone call or other message from the parent/carer, a first day absence call will be made by 10:00am. The SA follows this system:

- Phone parents' contact number(s).
- Repeat this during the first morning of absence if no response.
- Phone emergency contact number(s) to get an up-to-date contact number for the parent/carer and update the school system accordingly.
- SLT to speak to the parents at home time if they are at school to pick up other children.
- Speak to the parents face-to-face or by phone the next day and establish reasons for absence and update contact numbers.
- The parent/carer is asked to provide a reason as to why the child is not in school. The absence reason is recorded next to the child's name on Integris.

The Office Manager must establish a reason for every absence. No absence should be left on the system as an 'N' (no reason given) code. If we have not been able to contact parents after 2 days, then the absence is recorded as 'O' (unauthorised).

Extended Term Time Leave

In line with Reading Local Authority, 'Leave in Term Time Guidance' and the 2013 Amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations, **leave for pupils during term time is not authorised under any circumstances**. The school recognises that taking children out of school may constitute a safeguarding risk and will make necessary enquiries, in order to be satisfied that the child is not at risk. The school may contact outside agencies in order to ensure that a visit is legitimate and safe for the child/children.

Head teachers may consider granting leave in term time where the circumstances are exceptional, for example:

- 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)

Family emergencies need careful consideration. It is not always in the best interest of the child, nor appropriate for them to miss school for family emergencies that are being dealt with by adult family members. Being at school, friendships and support from staff can provide children with stability and care during difficult times. The routine of school can provide a safe and familiar background during times of uncertainty.

If you have exceptional circumstances, which have lead you to request leave in term time for your child/children, please complete the required 'Absence from Learning' form, which you can obtain from the school office. The Executive Head or Head of School will then make a decision on whether or not the leave can be lawfully authorised and will do so only if there is a genuine, exceptional and urgent reason for a child to be absent during term time.

Penalty Notices

If a child is taken out of school without the Head Teacher's authorisation, it will be recorded as unauthorised absence. This may lead to the issuing of a penalty notice and legal action being taken.

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.

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

Please note that:

- Penalties and prosecutions are in respect of each parent for each child.
- Parent includes any person who is not a parent of the child but who has parental responsibility for the child (and applies whether or not that person lives with the child) or who has care of him/her.

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

Strategies for promoting/rewarding excellent attendance:

Aims:

- To ensure good attendance and punctuality (above 97%) is regularly promoted and supported and remains high profile across school.
- To achieve high levels of attendance and punctuality (above 97%) through rewarding good attendance and punctuality.

Weekly Assemblies

Assemblies are held every week and classes with the highest attendance/punctuality receive the Attendance bear.

School Bulletin

Each month, the school Bulletin is used to highlight the importance of good attendance and punctuality. It regularly includes sections reminding parents of our school attendance target and what that means in terms of number of days absent. It also includes information about any initiatives, which the school is using, to promote attendance and punctuality.

Breakfast Club

Daily Breakfast Club is available every day and offered free to pupil premium children. This supports parents by allowing them to drop their children off from 8.00 am ensuring they are on time for school. The club is supervised by members of school staff.

The School Learning Environment

A welcoming, organised learning environment that supports and celebrates its learners are key factors in ensuring children enjoy school and attend regularly. All staff ensure that their learning environments are of a high quality. Regular, rigorous learning walks are carried out by the SLT to ensure this.

Staff Promoting Good Attendance

It is important that teachers are regularly promoting good attendance with their classes. Good class attendance is attributed to good teaching and this is celebrated. Pupils who attend school every day each week will receive 10 house points on each Friday.

End of Term Attendance Certificates

Each child with 100% attendance receives an Attendance Certificate at a special ceremony. The SLT lead on the end of term attendance incentives

End of Term Attendance Reward Event

Each child with 100% attendance for the (long) term will be invited to take part in a reward event. The attendance of pupils with long term medical issues or unavoidable hospital appointments will be considered on an individual basis.

Sharing attendance data

Pupils are informed on a weekly basis of attendance/punctuality achievements. The class achieving the highest attendance/punctuality, and the number of pupils achieving 97% -100% attendance are shared in termly assemblies. **This engages the form teacher in conversation with their classes about attendance.**

Parent/teacher consultation evenings

This provides an opportunity for form teachers to praise and recognise excellent attendance and punctuality or share attendance concerns and discuss barriers to good attendance or punctuality. Where necessary a target

for improving attendance is set. The class teacher then monitors this. If there is no improvement in attendance/punctuality, the pupil is referred to the SLT.

February 2018.