

# Palace Wood Primary School

## Attendance and Punctuality Policy



<b>Written by</b>	Mark Chatley
<b>Ratified by Governors</b>	Spring 2015
<b>Date for Review</b>	Spring 2018
<b>Signed – Chair of Governors</b>	
<b>Signed – Headteacher</b>	

This policy has been impact assessed by Mark Chatley in order to ensure that it does not have an adverse effect on race, gender or disability equality

## **Statement of Intent**

Palace Wood Primary School is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our pupils. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them.

One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. Class attendance is reported weekly in the school newsletter, with the winning class being awarded the attendance mascot each week in assembly. The Governors, Head Teacher and staff, in partnership with parents, have a duty to promote full attendance at Palace Wood.

## **Parental Responsibility**

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child(ren) attends school regularly and arrives on time. Full attendance is essential to the all round development of the child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them by law. Poor attendance undermines their education and sometimes, puts pupils at risk of educational under-achievement, encouraging anti-social behaviour.

It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent, before the registers are closed at 9.20. This is a safeguarding issue so that all parties know that your child is safe.

Pupils are expected to arrive at school by 8:45. Classroom doors will be open between 8:45 and 9:00. At 9:00, the register is taken. Any pupils arriving after this time will be marked as late. They must report to the school office where the reason for lateness is recorded.

## **The Role of School Staff**

Mark Chatley (Headteacher) has overall responsibility for attendance.

Class teachers complete a register at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. Teachers mark in those pupils who are present, and Jane Smith (Office Manager) /Anneke Ball (FLO) deals with any missing marks. The class teacher notifies Claire Vincett (Attendance Officer) of children whose attendance is causing concern.

It is the responsibility of The Office Manager/ FLO to ensure:

- Attendance and lateness records are up to date;
- If no reason for absence has been provided, parents are contacted on the first day of absence;
- Where there has been no communication, letters are sent to parents requesting reasons for absence within a seven day reply deadline before the absence is unauthorised;
- The appropriate attendance code is entered into the register (National Attendance Codes);
- Parents informed regularly of child's attendance figure, with their end of year report, a parents evenings or earlier if concerns have been raised.
- Any child with attendance at 90% (classed by the Government as a persistent absentee) or less will be closely monitored and discussed with the School Liaison Officer.

- Appropriate strategies are put into place to support pupils and families whose attendance is causing concern.

### **Timeline of School Action for Low Attendance**

- 95 – 100% attendance – class teachers monitor attendance. If a teacher has concerns, they must be reported to Claire Vincett.
- 90 - 95% attendance – class teacher to monitor and report those whose attendance is declining to Claire Vincett.
- Below 90% - monitored by Claire Vincett & Anneke Ball on a fortnightly basis. Consider Attendance Service referral where absences have not been authorised and referral criteria are met.

Meetings will be held between SLO, Anneke Ball and Claire Vincett to monitor and agree actions for children with attendance below 90%.

Please refer to Appendix 10 for actions to be taken by the Attendance Officer for those children whose attendance is consistently below 90%.

### **Children Missing Education**

No child may be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Head Teacher and the Attendance Service. Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed and the digital front door

### **Lateness**

At Palace Wood Primary School, the register is taken at 9:00am and 1:15pm. Pupils arriving after these times must enter school by the main entrance and report to reception where their name and reason for lateness will be recorded. The pupil will be marked as late before registration has closed (Code 'L').

The register will close at 9.20am. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (Code 'U') and this will count as an unauthorised absence.

Frequent lateness will be discussed with parents and may be referred to the Education Welfare Officer, and can provide grounds for prosecution or Penalty Notice.

### **Penalty Notice Proceedings for Lateness**

- 10 incidents of late arrival after the registers have closed in a term may lead to a referral to the Attendance Service (AS) for Penalty Notice Warning Letter;
- The Penalty Notice Warning Letter sets out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded;
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day period, Penalty Notice(s) will be issued (one per parent per child);
- Where a Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days of issue, the Attendance Service may instigate court proceedings.

## **Authorising Absence**

Only the Headteacher can authorise absence for approved reasons. Where there is doubt, the Headteacher, on behalf of the governing body, should take a consistent approach. The absence must be unavoidable. The Headteacher is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation; a letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. Absence during term time can only be approved in exceptional circumstances. If the absence is not authorised, parents will be notified.

Authorised absence codes will only be used after there has been some communication between the parent and school.

The following reasons are examples of the kinds of absence that will not be authorised:

- Persistent non-specific illness, e.g. poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reason
- Child's or family birthday
- Shopping trip
- Holidays during term time.

## **Education Welfare Officer**

Any pupil with attendance at 90% or less will be referred to or discussed with the SLO.

Penalty Notices will be issued in the following circumstances:

- Truancy
- Parentally-condoned absences
- Persistent lateness after the register has closed
- Being present in a public place without reasonable justification during the first 5 days of any fixed term or permanent exclusion.

## **Penalty Notices for Poor Attendance**

- **Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with the Attendance Service Code of Conduct.**
- The Attendance Service issue a warning letter setting out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day period a Penalty Notice will be issued (one per parent per child)

Where Penalty Notices are imposed, the regulations state that the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Penalty notices are issued to each parent of

each child. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

## **Holidays in Term Time**

**The school discourages any holiday during term time and would encourage all children to attend school regularly.**

The Head Teacher has discretion to authorise absence only in exceptional circumstances, such as:

- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family.

Any examples provided are illustrative rather than exhaustive. It is acceptable to take a student's previous record of attendance into account when the school is making decisions. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. And by 'unavoidable' it implies that an event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. It is important to note that Headteachers can agree the absence of a child in exceptional circumstances and this discretion can be used also to determine the length of the authorised absence.

If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken anyway, the case will be referred to the Attendance Service who will issue a Penalty Notice for £120 (or £60 if paid within 28 days) to each parent for each child taken out of school.

## **Attendance and Lateness**

If a new pupil has a history of poor attendance at their previous school, there will be a pre-start attendance meeting held. The school has a 'five-step' approach to monitoring absence and lateness. It will not always be appropriate to progress through all of these steps or even to carry them out in the order listed. Responsible staff will use discretion and discuss each case carefully.

### **'Five Steps'**

1. Where there has been no contact from parents, first day calling for all pupils is made by the FLO.
2. Discussion with headteacher, SLO or The Assistant Head to identify pupils with attendance below 90%, monitoring trends in pupil attendance and lateness. School Action Plan in place and letters expressing concern to parents.
3. Invitation to meet with school staff.
4. Initiate an Early Help form with support of SENCo.
5. Referral to Attendance Service.

Reasons for absence are recorded and retained by the school. When a referral to the Attendance Service is made, the child's Registration Certificate, copies of all letters sent to parents and

minutes of any meetings will be attached to the completed AS1 referral form with any other relevant information.

### **Local Authority Action**

Where there is no improvement in a pupil's attendance and/or there is at least 20 sessions (10 days) absence the school will consider the following:

### **Education Welfare Officer Actions**

This may include:

- Attendance improvement meeting
- Home visits
- Sign posting to supportive agencies e.g. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, Social Services and Family Group Conference Service.
- Fast Track to Prosecution

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Penalty Notices will be issued in the following circumstances:

- Truancy
- Parentally-condoned absences
- Persistent lateness after the register has closed
- Being present in a public place without reasonable justification during the first 5 days of any fixed term or permanent exclusion.

Where Penalty Notices are imposed, the regulations state that the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Penalty notices are issued to each parent of each child. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

**Appendix 1 Leave of absence refusal letter**

**Appendix 2 Leave of absence granted letter**

**Appendix 3 Excessive late letter 'L'**

**Appendix 4 Excessive late letter 'U'**

**Appendix 5 Excessive absence letter**

**Appendix 6 Meeting letter**

**Appendix 7 Penalty Notice information**

**Appendix 8 Penalty Notice Warning Letter**

**Appendix 9 School Based Intervention Flow Chart**

## Appendix 1

### Application for Leave of Absence of School Child to Accompany Parents on Holiday

Dear «Name»

I refer to your application for «name» to be absent for «no:» days for a family holiday.

Time off school for family holidays is not a right. Schools have discretion to allow up to 10 days absence in a school year for holiday leave in special circumstances such as:

- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family.

I have carefully considered your request but it does not meet the criteria set out above and on this particular occasion I am unable to authorise «name»'s absence. I must advise you that if you do take your child out of school for this time the Attendance Service will issue a penalty notice of £120 to each parent for each child, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. If the penalty is not paid within the time scale, the Attendance Service may institute legal proceedings against you in the Magistrates' Court under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 for failing to ensure your child/children attend(s) school regularly.

The matter will also be recorded on your child/children's school record.

If you would like to meet with me to discuss this matter, please contact me to arrange an appointment.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

## Appendix 2

### **Application for Leave of Absence of School Child to Accompany Parents on Holiday**

Dear Parent,

On this occasion your holiday request has been authorised.

Please be aware that 10 days absence means that your child will only achieve a maximum of 94.6% attendance.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher

### Appendix 3

Dear «Name»

I am writing to express my concern over the number of occasions that «Name» has been late to school. I attach for your information a summary of attendance indicating the days «Name» was late.

At Palace Wood Primary School the register is taken at 9:00am and at 1:15pm.

A pupil's lateness will seriously disrupt their learning and can be embarrassing.

I am sure you share my concern and would wish to work with the school to improve punctuality. If we can help in any way, perhaps via our School Nurse or a member of the Senior Leadership Team, please do not hesitate to contact us. Should «Name»'s punctuality however continue to be a cause for concern I will need to inform the school's Education Welfare Officer.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher

## Appendix 4

Dear «Name»

I am writing to express my concern over the number of occasions that «Name» has arrived after the register has been closed. I attach for your information a summary of attendance indicating the days «Name» was late.

At Palace Wood Primary School the register is taken at 9:00 am and is closed at 9:10 am for the morning session and taken again at 1:15pm for the afternoon session. Pupils that arrive after the register has closed will be marked 'U' which records the absence as unauthorised for that session.

Arriving after the register has closed is seriously disrupting your child's learning and is impacting on their overall attendance.

Persistent late arrival may lead to a referral to a Penalty Notice or a referral to the Education Welfare Officer for further action and possible prosecution.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher

## Appendix 5

Dear «Name»

I am writing to express my concern over the number of occasions that «Name» has been absent from school. I attach for your information a summary of attendance indicating the days «Name» was absent.

A pupil's absence can seriously disrupt their learning, not only do they miss out on teaching while they are away but they are less prepared for future lessons when they return.

I am sure you share my concern and would wish to work with the school to improve «Name»'s attendance. If we can help in any way, perhaps via our School Nurse or a member of the Senior Leadership Team, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

**Appendix 6**

Dear (Name)

**Re: (Pupil's Name)**

Despite previous attempts to advise you, I note with concern that your child's attendance at school has made no significant improvement. (Pupil's name)'s attendance at school is currently (%). This will have an impact on your child's education which we cannot ignore.

As there has been no improvement in (pupil's name)'s attendance, I must advise you that further absences from school as a result of illness will require medical evidence. If medical evidence is not provided, further absences will be marked as unauthorised.

I am inviting you to attend a School Attendance Meeting. The time and date have been set for ..... at ..... It is imperative that you and ..... attend this meeting for us to explore the issues around poor attendance. The meeting will be attended by

.....

If this appointment is inconvenient, I would be grateful if you could contact me on 01622 750084 so that a mutually convenient time can be arranged.

If you do not attend this meeting and ..... 's absence continues to deteriorate, a referral may be made to the Attendance Service.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

## Appendix 7

Dear Parent/Carer

### Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Absence

From February 2005, **Kent Local Authority (LA)** introduced Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence from school of at least 10 sessions (5 days) in a current term.

As you can see from the above we take this opportunity to remind parents (in a non-threatening way) the expectations placed upon schools from now on. Please therefore continue to read the letter and we appreciate your support in this initiative.

The following circumstances will be considered as appropriate reasons for the issuing Penalty Notices:

- Truancy including truancy sweeps
- Parentally-condoned absences
- Holidays in term time
- Delayed return from extended holidays
- Persistent lateness after the register has closed

On receipt of the Notice, the penalty will be £120 reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the LA.

At Palace Wood Primary School we consider attendance and these new legal powers very important, this is why we are bringing this to your attention.

Please ensure that your child attends school regularly and on time.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

**Appendix 8**

Dear

**Re (Child's Name)**

At Palace Wood Primary School we consider attendance of utmost importance and I am therefore bringing this information to your attention.

Our monitoring process has shown that **(Child's name)** has been absent from school for a total of ( ) unauthorised sessions ( **days**). In this regard I refer you to legislation regarding Penalty Notices.

*'As from April 2005, Kent Local Authority (LA) introduced Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence from school of at least 10 sessions (5 days) in a current term.'* A separate Penalty Notice can be issued to each parent and for each child.

*On receipt of the Notice, the penalty will be £120, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the LA.*

Please note this is a warning letter that a Penalty Notice could be requested if a total of 10 unauthorised sessions (5 days) are reached in a current term.

Should you wish to discuss this matter further please do not hesitate to contact ..... on .....

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

## Appendix 9

### School Based Intervention Flow Chart

