

# Palatine Primary School

# Attendance Policy



**Reviewed: October 16**

**Ratified by the Management Committee: December 2016**

**Date of next Review: October 2017**

# Palatine Primary School: Attendance Policy

## 1. Principles

Education is important. Missing school means missing out. Students should be at school, on time and ready to learn, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent or carer that can result in legal action by the Local Authority. Palatine Primary school wishes to promote the best level of attendance achievable by our students. We recognise that promoting good attendance is one of the school's duties of care for its students and facilitates effective learning.

Ideally all students should achieve a good level of attendance (over 95%) with as many achieving 100% as possible.

Within our school we recognise that:

- 1) Some students at our school have significant medical conditions that make it unlikely they will achieve attendance at this level. The school does not consider it appropriate or beneficial for students who are unwell to attend school.
- 2) Sometimes students are unhappy about attending school. Families may be going through unsettled times that can make regular school attendance difficult. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents or carers and their child at an early stage.

Every half day absence from school has to be recorded by staff at the school as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. That is why information about the cause of each absence is always required.

**Authorised absences** are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness or other unavoidable causes.

**Unauthorised absences** are those which the staff at school do not consider reasonable for which '**no leave**' has been given. These are an offence by the parent or carer and include:

- Keeping students off school without a good reason.
- Absences which have never been properly explained.
- Students who arrive too late at school to get a mark.
- Taking holidays that have not been approved by the school in advance.
- Should a student accrue 10 sessions of unauthorised absence a fixed **Penalty Notice** may be requested.

Parents and carers are expected to contact school staff and to work with them in resolving any problems together.

## 2. Procedures

The school has a special responsibility to reduce the number of students whose attendance is below 90% over the school year. These are called '**Persistent Absentees**' by the Government, whatever the reason for their absence. The school monitors these students closely on a case by case basis.

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences and lateness:

- The school day starts at 8.50 a.m. and we expect your child to be in class at that time.
- Registers are marked by 9.05 a.m. and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time (except for students who are on arrival/departure plans as agreed with parents linked to their SEN).
- At 10.00am the registers will be closed. In accordance with the regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.
- Parents and carers are expected to telephone school staff on the day that their child is not able to come to school and any subsequent days that their child is absent.
- Parents and carers are expected to inform staff verbally or by note of prior appointments e.g. medical. Students are encouraged to return to school after medical appointments as it is always better to attend school for some of the time rather than missing the whole day.
- Any requests for exceptional leave should be made by letter to the Head teacher.
- School staff will telephone home when we have not heard from parents or carers on the first day of a student's absence.
- Welfare Team staff will send absence monitoring letters home for pupils whose attendance falls below 90% and meet with parents or carers where there has been no improvement in a student's attendance or punctuality. This will be on an individual case basis.

## Term Time leave

Leave *may* be granted in exceptional circumstances on an individual basis but arrangements should not be made **without** the school's agreement in advance. **The Head teacher has the power to grant leave in exceptional circumstances only.** These might include:

- Leave granted on compassionate grounds for sudden unexpected incidents e.g. when a family member dies or is very ill or other compassionate grounds.
- Special 'one off' family events such as weddings, funerals and other occasional celebrations (but not just because it is the student's birthday).
- Family holidays which have to be taken at certain times e.g. parents or carers work shifts or because their job requires them to work when the school is closed e.g. farming, tourism, emergency services. We also recognise the individual needs of our students e.g. when going on holiday at busy periods could be extremely traumatic to a student's wellbeing.
- The Head teacher will also take into account whether leave will fall before and during assessment periods or examinations, whether a student's attendance record

already includes any level of unauthorised absence and whether a pupil's attendance rate is already below 90% or will fall below that level as a result of leave and **may not** grant leave if this is the case.

- Taking leave without permission is 'unauthorised' absence and can be subject to a **Penalty Notice** fine or other legal proceedings by the Local Authority. If you think the Head teacher's decision not to authorise the absence is unreasonable you have the right to make representations to the Chair of Governors, but the final decision over any action to be taken lies with the Head teacher and the LA.
- The school will celebrate the achievement of students who achieve good attendance (above 95%) both through internal school rewards and at the Durrington Family Group 100% attendance annual award ceremony.

**The people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:**

**Rosemary Needs, Assistant Head**

**Catriona Goldsmith, Head Teacher**

The school has a legal duty to promote good attendance. Equally parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend regularly. At Palatine School we are committed to working closely with parents to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible is achieved for our students. **Please work with us.**

## **APPENDIX 1**

The school has adopted the following attendance targets for 16/17:

- Overall whole school attendance to be 93% or better (whole school attendance for 15/16 was 92.49%).
- Persistent absence to be at or above 15/16 National Special School Statistical First Release data (for 14/15 this was set at 15.4% with Persistent Absence set at 85%).
- There will be no gaps between vulnerable groups and their peer's attendance (Pupil Premium, CLA).