

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

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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 9.20 a.m (to reflect staggered starts) 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 9.30am 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, ideally before 8.50am and every subsequent day that their child is absent.
- Parents and carers are expected to inform staff verbally, via email or by letter 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.
- Afternoon registers are also taken. Children are able to achieve two 'present' marks per day which leads to their overall attendance percentage.
- Requests for leave of absence must be made by completing a "Leave of Absence Request" form, which is available from the school office. All requests must be submitted at the earliest possible opportunity.
- School staff will telephone home when we have not heard from parents or carers on the first day of a student's absence.
- The Family Liaison Officer 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.

3. 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.

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- The Head teacher will also consider 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:

Catriona Goldsmith, Head Teacher

Charlotte Howling, Assistant head teacher

Kaarina Dougherty, Family Liaison Officer

The school has a legal duty to promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence. 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. We will support families to overcome barriers to attendance which could include bespoke parenting programmes, supportive strategies, formal monitoring and intervention.

APPENDIX 1 updated December 2021

The school has adopted the following attendance targets:

- Overall whole school attendance to be 92% or better
- There will be no gaps between vulnerable groups and their peer's attendance (Pupil Premium, CLA, boys, girls EAL).
- To continue to reduce the number of pupils with less than 90% PA (excluding pupils with complex medical conditions)

Palatine Primary School

Attendance Policy: Coronavirus Addendum



September 2021

Ratified by the Management Committee:

Date of next Review: July 2022

Aims and Scope

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Ensuring every child has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Supporting parents/carers and children who are concerned about the return to school due to coronavirus

This addendum applies from the start of the **Autumn term 2020** until the **end of the 2021/22 academic year**. It sets out changes to our normal attendance policy, and should be read in conjunction with that policy. Unless covered here, our normal attendance policy continues to apply.

We may need to amend or add to this addendum as circumstances or official guidance changes. We will communicate any changes to staff, parents and students.

Guidance and Definitions

This policy meets the requirements of the Department for Education's (DfE's) [guidance](#) on school attendance during the 2020/21 academic year.

In section 4.2 of this addendum, where we refer to 'close contact', this means:

- Direct close contacts: face-to-face contact with an infected individual for any length of time, within 1 metre, including being coughed on, a face-to-face conversation, or unprotected physical contact (skin-to-skin)
- Proximity contacts: extended close contact (within 1 to 2 metres for more than 15 minutes) with an infected individual
- Travelling in a small vehicle, like a car, with an infected person

This definition is from the DfE's [guidance on full reopening for schools](#) (see number 9 in 'the system of controls').

3.1 Attendance expectations

It is mandatory for all students of compulsory school age to attend school unless:

- They have been granted an authorised absence by the school in line with **section 2 (Procedures)** and **section 3 (Term Time Leave)** of our normal attendance policy
- They cannot attend school due to specific circumstances related to coronavirus (**see section 4, below**)

3.2 School arrival and departure

To support families and children to be able to socially distance, there is an arrival and departure plan. Children arriving by school transport will have staggered arrival and departure times which parents/carers will be made aware of. Likewise, there will be staggered arrival and departure times for children brought into school by parents/carers. These times will be staggered according to class and all parents/carers will be informed of where to drop off/meet their child and at what times.

4. Where 'non-attendance in relation to coronavirus' applies

We will only accept 'non-attendance in relation to coronavirus' in circumstances where a pupil's travel to, or attendance at, school would be:

- Against guidance from Public Health England and/or the Department of Health and Social Care relating to the incidence of coronavirus or its transmission
- Prohibited by any legislation or statutory directions relating to the incidence of transmission of coronavirus

4.1 Child develops symptoms or lives with someone who does

If the child's test result is negative: the child will return to school when they feel well and no longer have symptoms similar to coronavirus. They should continue to stay at home if they remain unwell (i.e. with a different illness).

4.2 Child or a 'close contact' of theirs receives a positive test result

The child's parent/carer must notify the school about the positive test result as soon as possible.

A child who tests positive must self-isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of symptoms, and must only return to school when they no longer have symptoms (other than a cough or a loss of sense of smell or taste).

If a member of the child's household or a 'close contact' tests positive, the child is able to come to school with a negative PCR result.

4.3. Child has to quarantine after travel abroad

As usual, parents should plan their holidays within school breaks and avoid seeking permission to take their children out of school during term time.

Where a child is required by legislation to quarantine after travel to a country that is not on the government's [exemptions list](#), parents/carers must notify the school immediately.

The child must quarantine for 10 days on their arrival to the UK and return to school thereafter.

4.4 Child is required to shield during a local lockdown

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Families will receive a letter if they are required to shield and parents/carers must notify the school if they are advised by the government to stay at home.

The child will stay at home until the shielding measures in the local area are paused. Once the shielding measures are lifted, we will contact the child's parent/carer to set out the expectation that they can return to school.

4.5 Remote learning provision

School will immediately provide learning resources and home learning packs to parents/carers to support their child if they are not attending school because of circumstances related to coronavirus, but where the pupil is not ill.

We understand that all of our children are different and will respond in different ways to learning from home. Some children will love these activities and others will prefer to do more familiar activities at home. Within the pack there is a document about how to engage children in learning through their interests and other ideas that you might like to try instead.

Within the pack we will be using some lessons from the Oak National Academy. This has been set up by the Government and designed by teachers to support in these challenging times. We have chosen activities which we feel will support the children in our school. For families without internet access we will provide appropriate resources that we can send out or deliver.

5. Recording attendance

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every child is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to 'exceptional circumstances' (as defined in section 3. Term time leave of our normal attendance policy)
- Unable to attend for reasons related to coronavirus (see appendix 1 for the relevant absence codes and when we will use them)

Children must arrive in school at their designated time slot on each school day as outlined in **section 3.2 of this addendum**.

6. Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, we will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent or carer by way of a phone call in the first instance
- Notify their social worker, where they have one

If a child does not attend because they, and/or their parent/carer are concerned about returning to school because of coronavirus, we will

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- Arrange a phone call/video meeting/in-school appointment between the parent/carer and a member of the SLT to explain the protective measures the school is taking to keep pupils safe

7. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from West Sussex County Council or Department for Education is updated, and as a minimum, every two months by the head teacher. At every review, it will be approved by the full governing board.

Addendum Appendix 1: pupil absence codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's addendum to their school attendance guidance for the 2020/21 academic year. If not covered here, our normal attendance codes apply.

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)	Pupil has to self-isolate because they have symptoms or live with someone who does, and are waiting for their test results
I	Illness	Pupil remains unwell following a negative test result (i.e. with a different illness)
I	Illness	Pupil has to continue to self-isolate because they tested positive
X	Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)	Pupil has to quarantine (for 10 days) after a trip to a non-exempt country
X	Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)	Pupil is required to shield in the case of a local lockdown, or lives with someone who is required to shield
X	Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)	Pupil is asked not to attend in the case of local lockdown