



Attendance Policy

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| Review Cycle | 3 years | |
| Owned By | Asst HT (JSuffield) | |
| Document History / Action | Who | Date |
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Attendance Policy - Palmerston School

Introduction

Palmerston School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

The whole school community has a responsibility for promoting excellent attendance: parents, carers, pupils and all school staff.

School's Roles and Responsibilities

All staff at Palmerston School have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all pupils are able to learn and feel valued members of the school community. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

The school will review this policy each year.

Registration

The school is required to mark the attendance register twice each day: at the start of the day and at the start of the afternoon session. Class teachers are responsible for completing the attendance registers using the prescribed codes (attached).

Registers will be called promptly at 9.15 and 1.30 by the class teacher.

Registers will close at 9.30 and 1.45.

Categorising Absence

A mark will be made in respect of each pupil during registration. Any pupil who is not present at this time will be marked unauthorised absent unless leave has been granted by the school in advance or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended in such a way that the original entry and the amendment / correction are distinguishable.

School staff will amend the registers to indicate lateness if a pupil arrives after the register closes.

School recognises the clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding children. If absence is frequent or continuous, and except where a pupil is clearly unwell, staff at Palmerston School will challenge parents about the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a child's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school.

Collection and Analysis of Data

A member of the school's office staff will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to the Headteacher.

Accurate attendance returns are made to the DfE within the stipulated time frame.

Systems and Strategies for Managing and Improving Pupil Attendance

1. On a daily basis office staff will go through the registers between 9.30 am and 10.00 and any absences will be noted. If no explanation has been received, the class team will attempt to contact the parent/carer.
2. If the child returns to school with no explanation of the absence from their parent/carer, a phone call will be made or a note will be sent to the parent/carer requesting this information.
3. If a pattern of concern re attendance is developing, the Key Stage Manager or Attendance Coordinator will speak to the parent/carer about their child's pattern of absences.
4. If there is no significant improvement, a member of SMT will contact the parents/carers and invite them into school to discuss ways to support attendance.

Parents' / Carers' Responsibilities

The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parents/carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child), who will be supported and encouraged by Palmerston School.

The Education Act 1996 states that all children should attend school regularly and punctually. Section 444 of the Act says :-

“If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence”.

Palmerston School expects parents/carers will:

- ensure their children attend the school regularly;
- support their children's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum;
- not expect the school to automatically agree any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from school.
- Parents/carers will also be expected to:
- notify school by telephone on the first day of absence
- ensure their child arrives at school on time, properly dressed and with the right equipment for the day
- work in partnership with the school, for example by attending parents'/carers' meetings and consultations, taking an interest in their child's work and activities;
- contact the school without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their child's school life. Palmerston School will endeavour to support parents/carers to address their concerns.

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS/CARERS

1. When does my child need to be in school?
School opens for pupils at 8.50 a.m. Your child should be ready in good time for the school transport to ensure that they arrive on time.
2. Does the school need letters explaining my child's absence or will a phone call do?
We would expect a parent/carer to telephone the school on the first day of absence before 9.30am. If you do not phone us, we will try to contact you.

If we do not receive an explanation, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, we will not authorise the absence, and this will be shown on your child's end of year report.

3. What reasons will the school accept for absences?

- Illness
- Dental/medical appointment (Please make routine appointments after school or during the holidays, wherever possible)
- Day of religious observance
- Family bereavement
- Exceptional special occasions, eg a family wedding, where permission has been granted in advance using a Special Leave of Absence Request form
- Other exceptional circumstances, where permission has been granted in advance using a Special Leave of Absence Request form
- Attending an interview e.g. for college

Except in the case of illness, you should ask for permission for your child to miss school well in advance, giving full details. In cases of recurring absences through illness you may be asked to produce a medical certificate.

4. Will the school contact me if my child is absent?

We would expect a parent/carer to telephone the school before 9.30am on the first day of absence. If you do not phone us, we will try to contact you. This is to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance. If we do not receive an explanation, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, we will not authorise the absence, and this will be shown on your child's Annual Review report.

If we are concerned about aspects of your child's attendance or punctuality we will contact you to discuss the best way forward.

5. My child is reluctant to come to school. What should I do?

Contact your child's teacher and openly discuss your worries. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to resolve the problem. In some cases you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with outside support such as CAMHS or a social worker.