



# Attendance Policy

## Policy Update Summary

POLICY	
Attendance	Date of review: April 2024
School: Pallister Park Primary	Date of Meeting: April 2024

CHANGES FROM PREVIOUS APPROVED POLICY	
Updates have been made on the following;	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>No changes</li></ul>	
Report provided by: H Adams	

### 1. Introduction

1.1 At Our Children 1st we recognise the importance of good attendance and punctuality. These are key factors in ensuring that your child achieves well during their time at school. This policy outlines the strategies we use to encourage high levels of attendance and good time keeping.

1.2 It is essential that home and school work together in partnership to provide every child with a high quality of education.

### 2. Our Aims

#### 2.1 Our aims are:

- To encourage regular attendance.
- To identify cases of non-attendance.
- To work with parents planning action in order to solve problems of nonattendance.

2.2 The school's Education Welfare Officer is Mike Bulmer, and he can be contacted via school reception or [pkmbulmer@oc1st.co.uk](mailto:pkmbulmer@oc1st.co.uk). Staff, parents and pupils are encouraged to contact the Education Welfare Officer for queries or concerns about attendance. Mike works closely with the schools Parents Support Adviser, Safeguarding Lead and school staff on all matters relating to school attendance and pupil welfare. The strategic lead on attendance at the school is Mrs Heather Adams.

### 3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Trustees at the school have overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance.
- Working with the senior leaders at the school to set goals for attendance and to provide support and challenge to achieve these goals.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to 'Keeping children safe in education' when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

### 3.2 The Head Teacher is responsible for:

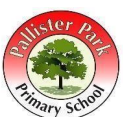
- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- The overall strategic approach to attendance in school.
- Arranging attendance training for all relevant staff that is appropriate to their role.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

### 3.3 Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.

### 3.4 The Education Welfare Officer, Safeguarding Lead and Parent Support Adviser and attendance administrator at school are responsible for:

- Developing and following clear strategies to improve attendance.
- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions.
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.
- Communicating with pupils and parents with regard to attendance.
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance and poor punctuality.
- Working closely with the LA in cases of poor attendance, children missing education and elective home education.



### 3.5 Pupils are responsible for:

- Attending school each day on time
- Following school rules.

### 3.6 Parents are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details of at least two people.
- The attendance and punctuality of their children at school.
- Avoiding taking children out of school for non-emergency or routine medical, dental or optical appointments
- Avoiding taking holidays in term time

## 4. Types of Absence

Absence from school is either authorised or unauthorised. Authorised means the school have agreed to either in advance or on the day that the child should be absent from school due to a valid reason provided. An unauthorised absence is when either a reason has not been provided or the reason provided is not deemed to be valid.

### 4.1 Persistent absence (PA)

A child is described as persistently absent if they have missed 10% or more of their time at school across the school year. This applies no matter what the reason for absence has been so will include for example absence due to holidays taken during term time. Missing 10% or more time at school will have a significant impact on a child's progress at school.

The attendance of all children at school with 90% attendance or less is tracked by the Education Welfare Officer. In the event that home visits and telephone calls home have not brought about an improvement in attendance, formal attendance procedures can be commenced at this stage.

### 4.2 Severely absence (SA)

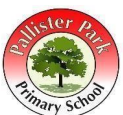
A child is described as being severely absent if they have missed 50% or more of their education across the school year regardless of the reason for absence. The government expect that agencies will be working alongside the school and parents to support improved attendance when attendance is this low.

### 4.3 SEND- and health-related absences

The school recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult.

4.3.1 The school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC plans or IHPs that have been implemented. The school will endeavour to secure additional support from external agencies to help and support a pupil's attendance where appropriate.

4.3.2 Where the school has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack



of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed.

4.3.3 If a pupil is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their health, the school will:

- Inform the LA if a pupil is likely to be away from the school for more than 15 school days.
- Provide the LA with information about the pupil's needs, capabilities and programme of work.
- Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return.
- Make sure the pupil is kept informed about school events and clubs.
- Encourage the pupil to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence.

4.3.4 The school will incorporate an action plan to help any pupils with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. Such plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the pupil is attending school as normal and there has been signs of significant improvement.

## 5. Attendance Procedures

5.1 The register is taken electronically each morning and at the start of the afternoon session after lunch by the class teacher. Registers are closed after half an hour of the school day commencing. Children arriving at school but before the register is closed will be marked as late. Any child arriving at school more than half an hour late without an authorised reason (e.g medical appointment) will be given an unauthorised absence for the session.

5.2 Attendance is regularly monitored by the Class Teacher, attendance administrator, Parent Support Adviser, Safeguarding Lead and the Education Welfare Officer and concerns highlighted.

5.3 We expect all parents to contact school on each day that their child is absent to explain and discuss the reason for the absence. This notification of absence can be done in person at the school office, via phone call or email to the school. If no reason has been provided the school will use their first day response absence calling system and endeavour to make contact with parents of all children absent without a reason provided. First contact will be made via sending a text message to the main contact for the child initially then via phone call home. If there is still no response the case will be discussed with the safeguarding team in school and a decision made as to next steps. This could include making contact with other agencies involved with the family to try to determine further information about the absence or a visit to the home address may be undertaken.

5.4 Where there is a pattern of absence or where absence is persistent formal attendance procedures will be initiated by our Education Welfare Officer.

## 6. Formal Attendance Procedures



The school works in partnership with Education Five Ltd, an independent education welfare company to support improvements in attendance at the school. Mike Bulmer is our allocated officer at Pallister Park.

6.1 The stages of attendance procedures are detailed below.

### 6.2 Initial warning letter

A letter is sent to parents informing them of the number of school weeks that have been interrupted by absence from school. Parents are informed that if attendance does not improve further action will be taken.

### 6.3 Invitation to Attendance Case Conference (ACC)

If attendance has not improved parents are invited to a formal meeting in school called an Attendance Case Conference (ACC) where absences will be discussed and a support plan to improve attendance put in place for a set period of time. Please note where attendance has historically been a concern the Education Welfare Officer may decide that it is appropriate to invite parents to ACC without first issuing the initial warning letter.

6.4 As part of any attendance plan, the EWO may ask parents to provide medical evidence to cover any absence in the future due to reason of illness. The EWO may also request that the LA issue parents with a Penalty Notice Warning Letter at this point.

### 6.5 Attendance Case Conference Review

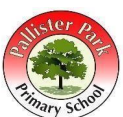
A review meeting is held with parents invited to attend to review progress made during the period of the attendance plan. A decision will be made at the meeting regarding next steps – for example if attendance has not improved and unauthorised absences have continued the EWO may ask the LA to issue parents with a Penalty Notice fine. In cases of very low and persistent non attendance the LA may decide that prosecution of parents is the most appropriate form of action. Parents will also receive a written notification of the outcome of the meeting.

6.6 The school will continue to work with parents and children to resolve any difficulties impacting on regular attendance. These formal steps are only taken as a last resort and to ensure that the education of children at the school is safeguarded.

7. Children Missing Education

7.1 Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised or notified absence, or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will report the pupil to the local authority as a missing child and may remove the pupil from the admissions register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil after making reasonable enquiries.

8. Leave of absence



- 8.1 The school will only grant a pupil a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. In order to have requests for a leave of absence considered, parents must complete a leave of absence form which is available from the school office. The school should receive these requests from parents at least two weeks prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence.
- 8.2 Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis. Where the absence is granted, the headteacher will determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from school. The school is not likely to grant leaves of absence for the purposes of family holidays.
- 8.3 Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:
- Holidays during term time due to parents work commitments/ occupation
  - Holidays during term time due to lower cost
  - Immediately before and during statutory assessment periods
  - Holidays for the purpose of visiting a sick relative, excepting where the person is seriously ill (medical evidence may be required) and alternative arrangements to look after the child cannot be reasonably made
- 8.4 If term-time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions, such as a penalty notice. The school cannot grant leaves of absence retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by the school in advance will be marked as unauthorised. Parents will be notified of the outcome of requests by letter from the school.
- 8.5 One possible outcome is that parents will be issued with a penalty notice fine. These are issued by the local authority at a rate of £60 per parent per child payable within 21 days. This fine can double to £120 per parent per child if paid between 22-28<sup>th</sup> day of issue. If parents do not pay the penalty notice fine they may be prosecuted for their child's absence from school.

## 9. Punctuality

- 9.1 Arriving at school on time is very important and as such the school will take cases of children arriving persistently late seriously. A child arriving after the register has closed (more than half an hour late) will be recorded as unauthorised absence for the session. Their presence at school is recorded for health and safety reasons.
- 9.2 Unauthorised absence can lead to formal attendance procedures being initiated.
- 9.3 Regularly arriving even a few minutes late can disrupt the class and the child that is arriving late to school. Cases of regular lateness will be discussed with parents to seek a quick resolution. If lateness continues parents may be asked to attend a meeting with the Education Welfare Officer.

## 10. Monitoring and analysing absence

The Education Welfare Officer will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address absence at the first signs.



10.1 The school will collect data regarding punctuality, authorised and unauthorised absence, for:

- The school cohort as a whole.
- Individual year groups.
- Individual pupils.
- Demographic groups, e.g. pupils from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds.
- Other groups of pupils, e.g. pupils with SEND, LAC and pupils eligible for FSM.
- Pupils at risk of being persistently absent.

10.2 The Education Welfare Officer will conduct a thorough analysis of the above data on a half termly, termly and full-year basis to identify patterns and trends. This will form a report that will be shared with staff and trustees.

10.3 The trustees will regularly review attendance data, including examinations of recent and historic trends, and will support the SLT in setting goals and prioritising areas of focus for attendance support based on this data.

10.4 The school will also benchmark its attendance data against local, regional and national level data where available to identify areas of success and areas for improvement and will share practice which has been shown to be effective with other schools.

## 11. Encouraging Regular Attendance

11.1 Teachers will take every opportunity to encourage and praise regular attendance.

11.2 Children who achieve good attendance may be awarded a prize and certificates.

