



Providing the keys to success for every child

Whole School Policy on:

Attendance

Version 2

Head teacher: Mr M Cowell

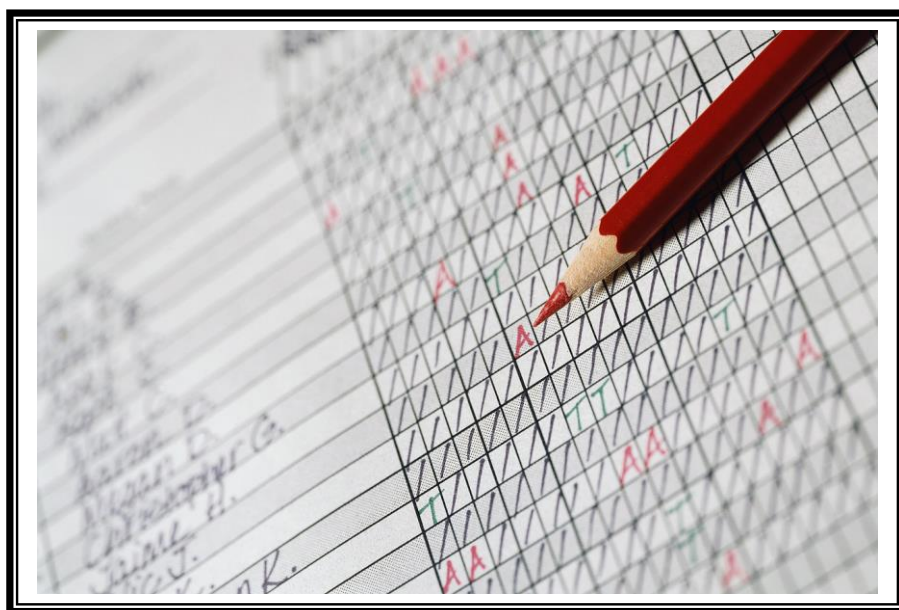
Kent County Council

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**PALM BAY PRIMARY SCHOOL'S ATTENDANCE POLICY
USES KCC'S RECOMMENDED POLICY**

Kent County Council Attendance Service

Model Attendance Policy



Palm Bay 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. We actively promote 100% attendance for all our pupils and we use a variety of weekly, termly and annual awards to promote good attendance and punctuality.

The Governors, Headteacher and Staff in partnership with parents have a duty to promote full attendance at Palm Bay Primary School.

Parental Responsibility

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child(ren) attend school regularly and arrive 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, encouraging anti-social behaviour.

It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent. This is a safeguarding issue so that all parties know that your child is safe.

Pupils are expected to arrive by 8:55 am. All pupils that arrive late must report, with their parent to the school office where the reason for lateness is recorded.

The Role of the School Staff

The 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 pupils present, absent or late. The class teacher notifies the Family Liaison Officer of children whose attendance is causing concern.

It is the responsibility of the Family Liaison Officer and the Health and Welfare Officer 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 with a seven day reply deadline before the absence is unauthorised
- The appropriate attendance code is entered into the register (National Attendance Codes)
- Parents informed termly of child's attendance figure

Timeline of School Action for Low Attendance

- 95 - 100% attendance - class teacher to investigate and notify the Family Liaison Officer of concerns
- 90 - 95% attendance - monitored through monthly attendance meetings and attendance clinics
- Below 90% - Advise Attendance Service of child's attendance and consider Attendance Service or Penalty Notice where the absences have not been authorised.

Please refer to Appendix 10 for guidance on what work should be undertaken by the school prior to referral.

Children Missing Education

No child may be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Headteacher and the Attendance Service. Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance should be followed.

Lateness

At Palm Bay Primary School the register is taken at 9:00 am and 1:00 pm (KS1) and 1:30pm (KS2). 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 9:10 am and 1:10 pm and 1:40pm. 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 at open evenings and may be referred to the Family Liaison Officer (FLO) and/or Attendance Advisory Officer (AAO). It 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 a 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, AS 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 and 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 reasons
- Child's/family birthday
- Shopping trip

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 and FLO visits as appropriate.
2. Discussion with AAO or Attendance Service Duty Staff to identify pupils with attendance below 90%, monitoring trends in pupil attendance and lateness, allocation of FLO support.
3. Invitation to meet with school staff
4. Initiate a Common Assessment (CAF)
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 **MUST** 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 10 sessions (5 days) absence in a term the school will consider the following:

Attendance Advisory Officer Actions

This may include:

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

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)

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.

Leave of Absence

The current law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child out of school during term time. Any application for leave must be in exceptional circumstances and the Headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.

Parents can be fined for taking their child out of school during term time without consent from the school.

Applications for Leave of Absence **MUST** be made at least 4 weeks in advance of the requested date.

Agreement to each request is at the discretion of the Headteacher, acting on behalf of the Governing Body (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). **The Headteacher's decision is final and once the decision to not authorise the leave is taken, it cannot be authorised retrospectively.**

If the absence is not authorised and the leave 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 21 days) to each parent for each child taken out of school.

Penalty Notice Proceedings for Unauthorised Holiday Absence

- **Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with the Attendance Service Code of Conduct.**
 - AS receives a request for an unauthorised leave of absence for 10 or more school sessions (5 days)
 - AS issue Penalty Notice(s) (one per parent per child)
 - If Penalty Notice(s) is/are not paid within 28 days of issue, AS may instigate court proceedings

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed bi-annually every 'odd' year during the Summer Term, or as and when necessary due to statutory changes to school attendance regulations.

The next review of this policy is due: Summer Term 6, 2015.

Appendix 1 Request for leave of absence in term time letter

Appendix 2 Leave of absence refusal letter

Appendix 3 Leave of absence granted letter

Appendix 4 Excessive late letter 'L'

Appendix 5 Excessive late letter 'U'

Appendix 6 Excessive absence letter

Appendix 7 Meeting letter

Appendix 8 Penalty Notice information

Appendix 9 Penalty Notice Warning Letter

Appendix 10 School Based Intervention Flow Chart

Appendix 1 - Request for leave of absence in term time letter

APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE FOR A CHILD FROM SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME

The current law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child out of school during term time. Any application for leave must be in exceptional circumstances and made at least 4 weeks in advance. The Headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.

Parents can be fined for taking their child out of school during term time without consent from the school.

Unauthorised absence will be referred to the Attendance Service who will issue a Penalty Notice for £120 (or £60 if paid within 21 days) to each parent for each child taken out of school.

Name of child / children :

.....

Date of birth:

Class.....

First date of absence.....

Date of return to school.....

Number of days absent.....

Reason for absence during term time.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

I understand that if my request is not authorised school will request the issue of a Penalty Notice.

Signed Date

Print name

Appendix 2 - Leave of absence refusal letter

Dear «Name»

I refer to your application for «name» to be absent for «no:» days for a leave of absence.

The current law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child out of school during term time. Any application for leave must be in exceptional circumstances and made at least 4 weeks in advance. I must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.

I have carefully considered your request but the circumstances are not exceptional 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 3 - Leave of absence granted letter

Application for Leave of Absence of School Child during Term time.

Dear Parent,

On this occasion your leave of absence request for (name) 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 4 - Excessive late letter 'L'

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 «Name» school the register is taken at «Time» am and at «Time» pm.

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 Family Liaison Officer, 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 Attendance Advisory Officer.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher

Appendix 5 - Excessive late letter 'U'

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 «Name» school the register is taken at «Time» am and is closed at «Time» am for the morning session and taken again at «Time» pm and closed at «Time» pm 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 Attendance Advisory Officer for further action and possible prosecution.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher

Appendix 6 - Excessive absence letter

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 Family Liaison Officer, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

Appendix 7 - Meeting letter

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 «Telephone number» 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
The School

Appendix 8 - Penalty Notice information

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
- Leave of absence in term time
- Delayed return from extended leave of absence
- 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 Palm Bay 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

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR ACT 2003 SECTION 23 PENALTY
NOTICE FOR UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE £60 PENALTY IF PAID
WITHIN 21 DAYS £120 PENALTY IF PAID AFTER 28 DAYS BUT
WITHIN 28 DAYS

Appendix 9 - Penalty Notice Warning Letter

Dear

Re (Child's Name)

At 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 10 - School Based Intervention Flow Chart

School based absence intervention

