



Palfrey Infants

Attendance & Punctuality Policy

RESPONSIBILITY: Headteacher

Governor: M Parekh

Last reviewed on:	27 th September 2023 (Curriculum & Standards)
Next review due by:	September 2024

M. H. Parekh

M. Parekh

Introduction

The Governors and staff at Palfrey Infants are united in their belief that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them. Helping them to become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

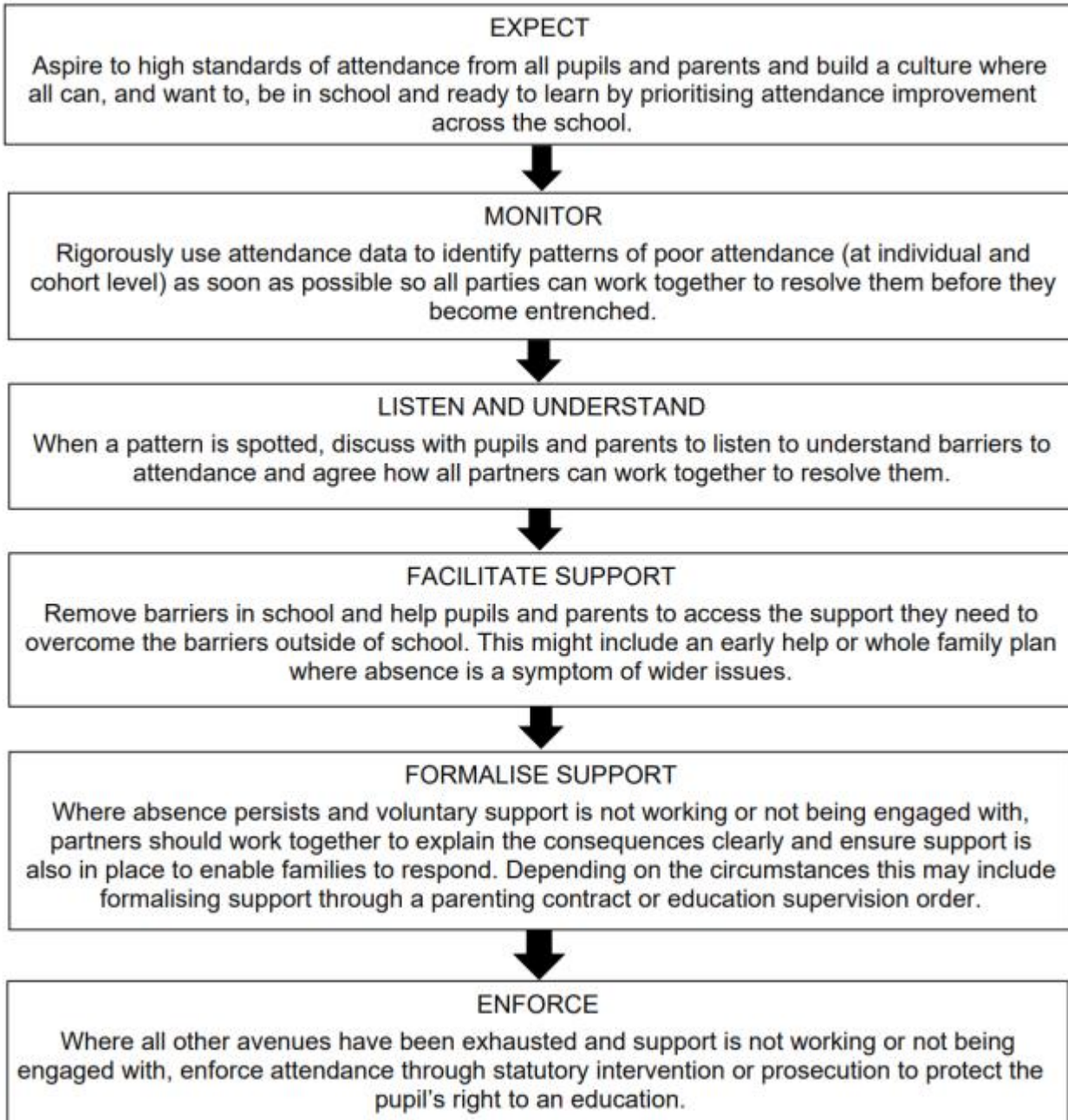
Palfrey Infants values all children. As set out in this policy we will work with families to identify the barriers to achieving and maintaining excellent attendance and offer the right service at the right time to try to resolve any difficulties. Our school motto 'Happy Children , Aiming High' requires parents , pupils and staff to work together to enable this. This includes in our aspiration for excellent school attendance to ensure best outcomes.

The Attendance Team will monitor attendance and use data to identify any patterns of concern, whilst also celebrating success! Attendance concerns will be raised with parents and information may be shared with the Local Authority. Where we have concerns, or lack of engagement from families to improve attendance, we will follow the school's escalated approach to improving attendance. The escalated approach is child-centred and prioritises support and developing strong working relationships with families. We will use the early help process to provide support prior to escalation and consider how we can work with families to enable your child to access their right to education.

Our aim is to always to work in partnership with parents and any referral for consideration of a penalty notice is deemed to be a last resort. Attendance figures for each child will be reported to parents each half term and as part of the annual report, we will also share a child's attendance profile if we have concerns regarding a child's attendance. Throughout the school year the Attendance Team will report on the overall attendance figures for groups of children, this will be closely monitored for support and reported to the Governing Body.

The new government guidance 'Working Together to Improve Attendance' 2022 states :

Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively with, not against families. All partners should work together to:

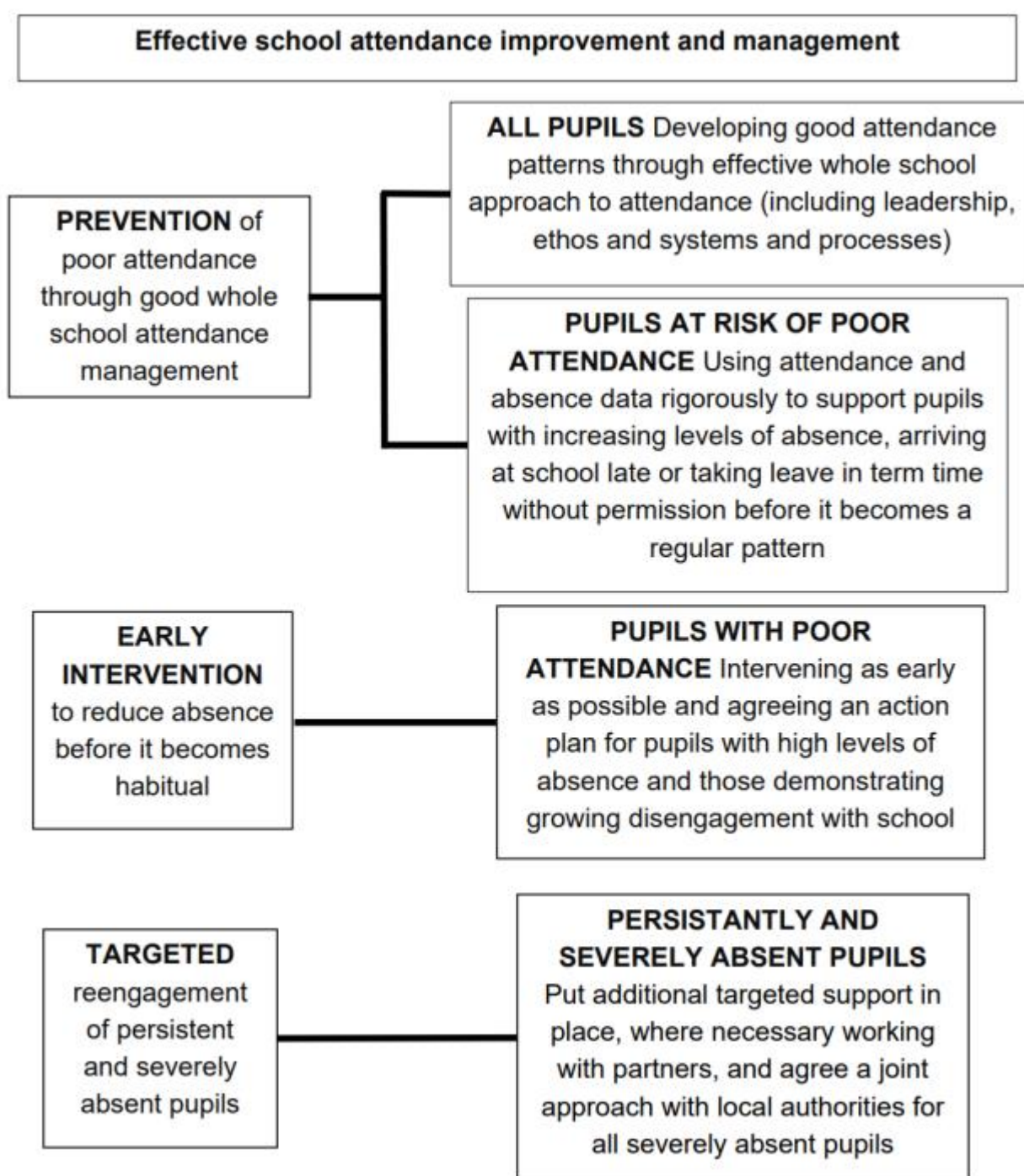


Attendance Report Card

97-100% Excellent	93-96% Be Careful	90-92% Improvement Needed	Less than 90% Persistent Absentee	Around 50% Severe Concern
✓				

To support good attendance, and safeguarding, at Palfrey we:

- Ensure the school is welcoming and every child feels a sense of belonging and connectedness.
- Ensure the school site is open at the stated times.
- Ensure the regular, efficient, and accurate recording of attendance is complete by every class teacher each day. This further supports our approach to safeguarding within the school.
- Take safeguarding seriously and we will always contact you on the first day that your child is absent from school. If your child arrives late after the close of registration, we will record their arrival at reception and transition the child to class.
- Consider any requests for leave in term time individually. This will be aligned to the Local Authority code of conduct.
- Inform the Local Authority of children whose parents have notified the school in writing and have opted for Elective Home Education.
- Work closely with the School Attendance Support Team.
- Notify the Local Authority of Children Missing in Education – aligned to the DfE 2022 Attendance paper.



Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2022)

A school approach to supporting attendance at Palfrey Infants

Securing good attendance at Palfrey Infants cannot be achieved in isolation, and effective practices for improvement will involve working closely with other Leaders within the school. The Attendance Team will work alongside the Senior Leadership Team, Inclusion Lead and Pastoral Team to facilitate a whole school approach.

The Attendance Team comprises of School Admin (Miss Davies/ Miss Glover) , Attendance Lead (Mrs Adams), Headteacher (Mrs Walsh)

Aims

- Increase school Attendance and reduce Persistent Absence to meet set targets.
- Ensure Attendance is well managed within the school, with the appropriate level of resources allocated.
- Enable the school to make informed use of attendance data to target interventions appropriately, focusing on the key demographic groups highlighted in the 2022 DFE attendance paper. (These include boys/ girls, year groups, pupils with SEN, pupils with a social worker, pupils who are looked after by the local authority, pupils eligible for free school meals, and ethnicity.)

Objectives

- create an ethos within the school in which good attendance is recognised as the norm and every child aims for excellent attendance. Our attendance target is 96%.
- make attendance and punctuality a priority.
- set focused targets to improve individual attendance and whole school attendance levels.
- record and monitor attendance and absenteeism and apply appropriate strategies to minimise absenteeism.
- develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing relevant attendance data.
- provide support, advice and guidance to; parents, children and develop mutual cooperation between home and the school in encouraging good attendance and in addressing identified attendance issues.
- demonstrate, using rewards, that the school recognises good attendance and punctuality are achievements in themselves.

Partnership with parents

Palfrey Infants recognises that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life and their lived experience. This may be related to problems at home or in school. Parents should inform the school of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school to identify any additional early help that may be required. Safeguarding is a priority, concerns for any child at any time will be reported to the Designated Senior Lead for Child Protection (Mrs Walsh). We will always follow Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022 and our Child Protection Policy.

Some children are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, children who are vulnerable, have a medical need or EHCP plan will be monitored and supported in school. At Palfrey Infants we will proactively identify and follow up on a child's non-attendance and gather information about the child. This will result in taking early action to prevent non-attendance developing and monitoring the impact of targeted support.

The Attendance Lead will initially:

- Check records, including any from other schools which the child has attended previously.
- Discuss with staff how the child is coping with the curriculum
- Speak to the Special Educational Needs Coordinator to establish whether the child is on the Special Educational needs register.
- Take into account the voice of the child and understand any difficulties, e.g. curriculum or bullying and their views on the issue could be addressed.

Our school Attendance Lead is **Mary Adams** and can be contacted via madams@palfreyinfant.co.uk . Staff, parents and pupils will be expected to contact the attendance officer for queries or concerns about attendance.

Attendance Support Map.

We will always support children during each stage of our Attendance Support Map. If there is lack of engagement, or concerns regarding the reason for absence, we will follow the Attendance Map to ensure we prioritise a child's learning and right to education.

Palfrey Infants Attendance Map

Everyone	5 days absence	8 days absence	10 days absence	14 days absence	16 days absence	19 days Absence or more
<p>Palfrey is a place where every child belongs.</p> <p>We create welcoming environments to allow all pupils to gain a sense of belonging and ultimately achieve academically through regular school attendance.</p>	<p>Concerning levels of child absence.</p> <p>Internal monitoring and communication with parents.</p> <p>Stage 1 letter may be sent to parents.</p> <p>Early Intervention considered as a preventative measure.</p> <p>Possible Early help support offered.</p>	<p>Serious concerns regarding attendance.</p> <p>Stage 2 letter may be sent to parents.</p> <p>Meeting with Attendance Lead.</p> <p>Explore barriers and implement a programme to remove barriers.</p> <p>Early Help reviewed or offered.</p>	<p>The child is a high risk of Persistent Absence.</p> <p>Stage 3 letter may be sent to parents.</p> <p>Attendance Leader meeting with parents.</p> <p>Review of Early Help and intervention programmes.</p> <p>Consider the support of external services. (EWO)</p>	<p>The child is at serious risk of Persistent Absence.</p> <p>Formal warning notice may be sent to parents.</p> <p>Continued internal and external programmes of support.</p> <p>Parenting contract or supervision order considered at this stage.</p> <p>A multi-disciplinary approach to be considered and offered.</p>	<p>The school will work closely with the LA.</p> <p>All avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with.</p> <p>The school will now enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupils right to an education.</p> <p>All support and offer of support to be reviewed.</p> <p>Continued support of the child and family.</p>	<p>The child is now considered a Persistently Absent child.</p> <p>Persistent Absent is when a pupil enrolments overall absence equates to 10% or more of their possible sessions.</p> <p>Over an academic year this equates to 19 days (38 sessions) At this stage the child will be PA for the remainder of the school year.</p> <p>Safeguarding referrals at this stage can be made.</p> <p>The child and family continue to be supported.</p>
EXPECT	MONITOR	LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND	FACILITATE SUPPORT	FORMALISE SUPPORT	ENFORCE	
A culture where all children can and want to be in school	Use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance	Understand barriers to attendance work together to remove them	Access support to overcome barriers outside of school	This may include formalising through a parenting contract or education supervision order	Statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupils right to education where there is no other option.	

First Day Contact

At Palfrey Infants we expect our parents to make contact at the earliest opportunity on the first day of any absence (01922 720713). If we have not heard from you we will make contact by calling/ texting primary contacts, these will be logged on our SIMS system. Where we have on-going concerns regarding your child's attendance, we will visit your home address and write to you. We may even invite you to meet with a member of staff to discuss any on-going concerns regarding attendance. It is important that you talk to us first; you are legally responsible under Education Act 1996 for ensuring that your child is in school every day and on time. If we cannot make contact with you, we will continue to make home visits and refer the matter to the local authority or police for safe and well checks to be carried out.

Parents are responsible for securing full-time education

Parents are responsible for ensuring their children receive a full-time education. Each situation will be dealt with on an individual basis, fairly and equitably always remembering the welfare and safety of the child is the paramount concern.

The term 'parent' includes those who are not a natural parent but have parental responsibility for the child as defined by the Children's Act 1989 or have care of the child as defined by the Education Act 1996.

- Absence can only be authorised by the school; parents do not have this authority. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless satisfactory evidence for the child's absence has been received. In the first instance contact from the parent will be accepted as evidence. However, if a child's attendance continues to cause concern, parents may be asked to provide medical evidence where absences occur repeatedly due to reported illness. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescriptions etc. Absence may be coded as unauthorised without evidence.
- Parents should wherever possible make all medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, children should attend school for part of the day. Appointment cards should always be provided as evidence of medical/dental appointments.
- Unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and it has been accepted by the school absence will not be authorised.

Please view the list of responsibilities and expectations regarding parents.

Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:

- A child's/family member's birthday.
- Shopping for uniform.
- Having their hair cut.
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET or other purposes.
- "Couldn't get up" or feeling tired.
- Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school without medical authority and in the absence of a communicable disease.
- Leave during term time taken without authorisation of the school
- Head lice – let the school know and letters will then be sent to all parents in a confidential manner.

Punctuality

Reception – Year 2 pupils.

Whitehall Road Gates open for children at 08.45am, gates will close at 08.55am. (Latecomers must enter via Bescot Street Entrance) The class register will close at 09.05 am. Children arriving after the close of registration will be recorded as late. Punctuality is recorded and this will be added to your child's record of attendance, a letter will be sent to parents every half term regarding attendance concerns of a child. If a child arrives at school from 09:30am they will be U coded – this will count as an absence for the AM session unless it can be demonstrated that there is a legitimate reason for the child arriving at school after the register closed e.g. A medical or dental appointment where proof is provided.

Most children will remain on site during the lunch time period. Any child returning from an absence should arrive at the prescribed time. Afternoon registration for Nursery and Reception is 12.30pm, Year 1, 2 is 1.00pm Children arriving within 30 mins of these times will be marked with an L code.

After 5 recorded lates you will receive a 'Lates letter' to remind you of the importance punctuality to prevent lost learning .

4+ day absences

If a child has been absent for 4 or more days the school reserves the right to ask for medical confirmation of the absence in line with local authority policy - if this is not available the absence will be unauthorised and details will be passed to the pastoral team who may make a visit to the home.

Transition following long term absence or illness

Absence can significantly interrupt the continuity of children's learning. During any long-term absence, **Palfrey Infants** will:

- Maintain contact with the child.
- Carefully plan the transition back to school, ensuring your child feels welcome and gains a sense of belonging.
- Ensure the child once again feels safe in school and if they experience any concerns, they will have an appointed member of staff to work with.

Leave during Term Time

From 1st September 2013, the Government amended the England (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. Head teachers may only grant leave in 'exceptional circumstances' only. Palfrey Infants observes Walsall Councils 'Leave in Term Time Guidance for Schools and Academies'.

Parents wishing to apply for leave during term time must send a written request for the attention of the Headteacher before making any arrangements. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised. Each leave during term time request will be considered on an individual basis.

Only in **exceptional circumstances** will absence be agreed. In all cases, parents will be required to justify why the leave needs to be taken during term time and this will be considered along with the child's:

- current attendance figure
- any previous requests for emergency term time absence

- previous annual attendance patterns.

If a child fails to return and contact with the parent has not been made or received, school may take the child off the school's roll in compliance with the Education (Pupil registration, England) Regulations 2006. This means that the child may lose their school place.

If the permission to take leave is not granted and the child is still absent from school, the absence will be **unauthorised**. In such cases the absence may lead to legal action.

Nursery Attendance

Although education for Nursery aged pupils is not compulsory, at Palfrey Infants we see full attendance in our Nursery setting as essential for a successful start of their school life. Where attendance falls below 92% parents will be called to a meeting with the Attendance Lead/ Class Teacher to discuss the child's attendance. If Nursery attendance falls **below 85%** we will reserve the right to take the child off roll and the place will be offered to the next child on our Nursery waiting list. However, this action will only be done in cases where the school can demonstrate that parents have NOT engaged with the school to improve their child's attendance.

Using attendance data

Children's attendance will be monitored and shared with other agencies and the DfE.

Regular attendance meetings will be held between the Attendance Lead and the Attendance Team. Meetings will focus on agreed actions for those children of concern. The purpose of each meeting will be to understand the progress the school is making when supporting identified individuals or groups of children.

Attendance data will be used to identify emerging patterns and trends to inform whole school strategies to improve attendance and attainment.

It is the responsibility of school Governors to challenge and support the school regarding overall attendance, regular reports will be presented to this body. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided for them and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as can be.

Persistent Absence

At Palfrey we aim to communicate the importance of attendance with parents and children. We have a particular focus on reducing Persistent Absenteeism at the school. The Persistent Absence threshold for children is currently 10% and Ofsted will use this threshold in its inspection of schools.

The threshold means that any child will be classed as **Persistently Absent** when they have missed 38 or more sessions. This equates to 19, or more, missed days during the academic year - which is as little as 6 days over each of the three Terms. We will use a 19-day tracking system to make you aware of the number of days your child has missed in education. This will allow us to work together to reduce the number of days and attempt to prevent your child from reaching this number.

Once a child has reached 38 sessions, or 19 days absence, they will be classified as Persistently Absent from school and we will report this to the Local Authority and follow external legal proceedings.

Statutory Duty

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and ability and any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday.

Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement. Palfrey Infants recognises Walsall Council's attendance procedures and will implement prosecution where it is appropriate to do so.

In accordance with the regulations regarding pupils' attendance at school, Palfrey Infants keeps an attendance register on which at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session children are marked present or absent. The marks are electronically processed and stored on the school's central administrative system Arbor. This information is shared with the Department for Education weekly.

Legal Sanctions

There are several sanctions that school can take to address the issue of non-attendance. We will always try to talk to families to identify the reason for absence. Palfrey Infants will always focus on the support a child needs at each stage of the attendance map. However, for lack of engagement in attendance support there are sanctions that will be followed:

Penalty Notices (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003)

Penalty Notices will be considered when:

- A child is absent from school for the purpose of a Leave of Absence in term time and the absence has not been authorised by the school.
- A child has accumulated at least ten sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence and further absence has occurred following written warning to improve

Penalty Notices will be used in accordance with Walsall Council.

Prosecution

Where intervention through the school's process fails to bring about an improvement in attendance, the local authority will be notified and legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court may be taken. The school will provide the Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution under section 444/4441 (a) of the Education Act 1996 and will appear as a prosecution witness if required by the court. This is to ensure that parents realise their own responsibilities in ensuring their child's attendance at school.

Section 4441(a) of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child if he/she is a registered pupil at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence.

Schools and local authorities are expected to work together and make use of the full range of legal interventions rather than relying solely on fixed penalty notices or prosecution. It is for individual schools

and local authorities to decide whether to use them in an individual case after considering the individual circumstances of a family. These are:

- Parenting contracts and action plans
- Education supervision orders
- Attendance prosecution
- Parenting orders
- Fixed penalty notices
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Please refer to section 6 of the DFE Working together to improve school attendance 2022 for more information.

Children at risk of Missing in Education (CME)

Children Missing Education (CME) are a vulnerable group of children. All agencies who work with children have a duty to support the Local Authority in ensuring all children are safe and looked after appropriately. (refer to DFE guidance on Children Missing Education)

CME includes those children who are **missing** (family whereabouts unknown), and are children who are registered on a school roll / alternative provision. This might be a child who is not at their last known address **and either**

- has not taken up an allocated school place as expected, or
- has 5 or more days of continuous absence from school without explanation, or
- left school suddenly and the destination is unknown

It is our responsibility as a school to work with the LA Education and Inclusion team, by making referrals.

Celebrating Success

At Palfrey we feel it is important to reward children who have achieved good or improved attendance.

We notify parents of our whole school attendance percentage in our attendance newsletter and advise you when we have school attendance campaign weeks. The weekly 96% Attendance challenge allows classes to celebrate their collective attendance successes. When a class achieves 96% or above, they will receive a sticker, when classes gain 10 stickers, they can enjoy a free play session!

The class with the highest termly attendance wins 30 minutes of 'Golden Time'.

Pupils with 100% term attendance win a badge to attach to their reading bag. Pupils with 96% attendance will be awarded a certificate. Pupils with a significant improvement will get a certificate.

Palfrey Infants will always challenge falling attendance and reward improvements. We are committed to the future of all children that attend Palfrey, and by working in partnership with the school community we believe that together we can achieve more!

We can only achieve this by working in partnership with you, if you have any concerns or anything that prevents your child from attending school or if you would like to discuss our approach to attendance please initially contact the school office and an appropriate member of staff will return your call

Other Policies supporting attendance.

Behaviour & Relationships Policy

Teaching and Learning Policy.

SEND Offer

Pupil Premium Statement.

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Roles and Responsibilities

Palfrey Infants expectations – Parents:

- i Parents are legally responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly and may risk prosecution if they fail in this responsibility.
- ii Parents should ensure that their children arrive at school on time, with the correct equipment and in full school uniform.
- iii Parents should support the school by avoiding, if possible, non-emergency medical/dental appointments for their child during Academy time.
- iv ***Parents should be aware that they do not have the automatic right to take their child out of school for a holiday during term time. This results in lost learning that cannot be recaptured.***
- v It is the parents' responsibility to inform the school of the reason for a child's absence on the first day of absence.
- vi All unexplained attendances will be monitored and parents will be kept informed about any attendance concerns relating to their own child. Parents are expected to attend meetings when requested and support the school in responding to ongoing attendance concerns.

Palfrey Infants expectations – Children:

- i. All children should aim to have an excellent attendance and punctuality record for which there will be appropriate rewards.
- ii. All children are expected to be at school on time and ready to learn.
- iii. Children who arrive at school late must follow the correct procedures for recording their lateness and entering their lesson.
- iv. Children must not leave school without permission; this will be seen by the school as a Safeguarding and Health and Safety concern.

Palfrey Infants expectations - Class Teacher

The Class Teacher is the key staff members in promoting regular punctual attendance.

The Class Teacher will:

- i. provide a good example by always being punctual to registration and greeting children – providing a welcoming environment;
- ii. keep an accurate and up-to-date register of attendance;
- iii. follow the Attendance Policy procedures when dealing with absences and punctuality;
- iv. maintain swift action and effective communication with Key Stage Leaders and School Attendance Leads on all attendance matters concerning the class group;
- v. ensure that children and young people are aware of the importance of the school attendance target and their own individual attendance targets - where appropriate assist them in monitoring their own attendance rates;
- vi. ensure children receive rewards in relation to attendance and punctuality success – aligned to the Attendance Policy;
- vii. build a welcoming atmosphere in the classroom and provide support as necessary when children return after an absence.

Palfrey Infants expectations - Pastoral team.

The Pastoral team take responsibility for monitoring the attendance of key children and regularly promote the importance of attendance and punctuality. They will:

- i. ensure that their team is aware of their responsibilities with respect to promoting attendance and punctuality and adherence to the attendance policy and procedures;
- ii. ensure that rewards and sanctions for attendance and punctuality follow agreed procedures and align to the School Attendance Policy;
- iii. monitor the attendance of individuals;
- iv. liaise effectively with the Attendance Leader and work together on ensuring that appropriate action is taken in the management of absenteeism and poor punctuality;
- v. have attendance as a regular item during pastoral meetings;
- vi. ensure contact is made with parents of poor attendees – always placing support before sanction.

Palfrey Infants expectations - Attendance Officers (Miss Davies/ Miss Glover (Admin)

The Attendance Officer is responsible for regularly checking attendance data and ensuring data is accurate and up to date. The Attendance Officer will:

- i. ensure that data is input daily into the attendance management system;
- ii. ensure that parents of absent children are contacted where notification of absence has not been received;
- iii. respond to any parent seeking support on attendance concerns;
- iv. provide regular attendance and punctuality data for relevant staff and external agencies in line with the agreed procedures and timescales;
- v. be responsible for disseminating important attendance information including informing the Attendance Lead of which children are of concern; in-line with the agreed procedures and timescales;
- vi. be responsible for keeping a record of the interventions in place to encourage attendance and for generating all documentation including letters to parents;
- vii. be responsible for managing and maintaining attendance records and systems.
- viii. be responsible to create the half termly attendance overview of key groups for discussion with the Attendance Lead & Headteacher

Palfrey expectations – Attendance Leads (Mrs Adams , pastoral. Reporting to Mrs Walsh , DSL/ Headteacher)

The Senior Leader responsible for Attendance will promote good attendance and punctuality. They will:

- i. regularly meet with the attendance reporting on progress and next steps planning;
- ii. schedule school attendance meetings;
- iii. provide training and support to staff;
- iv. participate in pre-legal meetings;
- v. lead attendance reward assemblies;
- vi. be responsible for liaising closely with the Local Authority's Attendance Team to ensure appropriate levels of intervention take place; referrals are made, and attendance meetings are set up.
- vii. ensure that reference to attendance is included in all school documentation e.g. school newsletters, letters to parents, school prospectus, information for booklets;

Relevant legislation

The Education Act 1996

The Children Act 1989

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998

The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003

The Education and Inspections Act 2006

The Sentencing Act 2020 The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007

Relevant government guidance

Parental responsibility measures for attendance and behaviour

Children missing education

Keeping children safe in education 2023

Working together to safeguard children

Elective home education

Alternative provision: statutory guidance for local authorities

Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England

Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions

Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs

Promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges

Approaches to preventing and tackling bullying