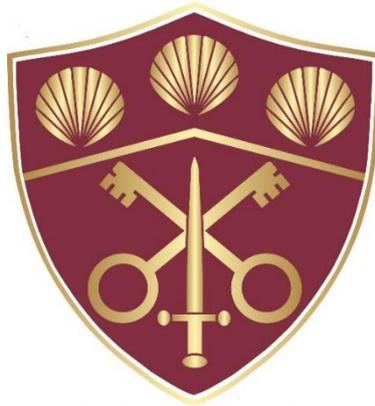


Ad Gloriam Dei et Servitium Omnium

ATTENDANCE POLICY

The Palmer Catholic Academy

MISSION STATEMENT



Ad Gloriam Dei et Servitium Omnium

The Academy's Mission promotes the academic and personal development of each member of its community, both students and staff alike.

We serve Christ in each other to the Glory of God and Service of all.



Adoption by Governing Body of The Palmer Catholic Academy:

Date of Implementation: November 2021

Signature of Chair of Governors:

Signature of Headteacher:

Review Date: November 2022

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1. Introduction

Every child has a fundamental right to be educated. Parents/carers and teachers have a duty to ensure maximum attendance at school.

Young people with a good school attendance record are setting themselves up for a better future when they leave school. Employers want staff that are reliable and good attendance is a sign that your child can be trusted. It is in your interest to make sure that your child has a good school attendance record. If your child misses school regularly (whether you know about it or not) the Local Authority may consider taking legal action against you.

Any future reference for your child's attendance/punctuality is always required to be commented upon.

Being on time is also vital. Arriving late at school can be very disruptive for your child, the teacher and other children in the class.

2. Aims

To enable maximum student attendance through valuing high attendance rates.

To encourage students to take full advantage of their educational opportunity by attending regularly.

To recognise the external factors which influence student attendance and work in partnership with parents/carers and the EWO (Education Welfare Officer) to address difficulties.

3. Objectives

Governors and staff remain committed to developing the best outcomes for all students within the academy. To help ensure this the objectives of this Policy are:-

- To monitor attendance across all year groups and seek ways to improve it continually.
- To monitor persistent absentees and improve their attendance
- To monitor the attendance of particular groups of students
- To work closely with the Local Authority EWO in order to achieve the target of a minimum 95% attendance.

4. Legal Context

School attendance is also important because the law requires it. As a parent/carer, you are legally responsible for making sure your child gets a full-time education. This means registering the child at school and making sure they attend.

- A child of compulsory school age who's registered at school must by law attend regularly.
- Only schools can authorise the absence of a registered child.
- The Education Act 1996 and the Education Act 2006 state that:

- 1) If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered student at a school fails to attend regularly at school, the parent/carer is guilty of an offence.
 - a) If in the circumstance mentioned in subsection (1) the parent/carer knows that the child is failing to attend regularly at the school and fails to cause the child to do so, they are guilty of an offence.
 - b) With regards to (1a) above parents/carers must prove that there was a reasonable justification for their failure to ensure the child to attending regularly.
- 2) Subsections (2a) and (3) below apply in proceedings for an offence under this section in respect of a child who is not a boarder at the school at which they are a registered student.
 - a) The child shall not be taken as failing to attend school by reason of the absence from the school at any time if the parent/carer proves that at that time the child was prevented from attending by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause.
- 3) The child shall not be taken to have failed to attend regularly at the school by reason of their absence from the school. With authorised leave of absence, these may include days of religious observance.

5. Practice

Students are required to attend the academy regularly and punctually. Any absence must be covered by a note, given to the Form Teacher on return. Absence notes should clearly identify the date(s) of the absence and be written dated and signed by a parent/carer. Absence notes are not to be written into student planner as all absence notes are retained and filed for reference.

On the first day of absence, and each subsequent day, the parent/carer is expected to telephone the academy to inform the academy of the reason for absence. The academy should be contacted as early as possible so that the absence can be accounted for.

Dental or medical appointments or a request to leave early must be supported by a prior note from a parent/carer. The note, presented to the Head of Year, will result in a pass being given; no student should leave early without one. It is expected that all non-emergency appointments, as far as possible, be made after school hours and that students who do leave during school hours, return to the academy once the appointment is completed.

Failure to produce an absence note will be regarded as an **unauthorised absence**.

Unauthorised absences will result in parents/carers being called into the academy for a meeting with the Head of Year.

The academy works closely with the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) who comes into the academy on a weekly basis to meet with individual Heads of Year in order to closely monitor attendance.

6. Role of the Education Welfare Service (EWS)

The Local Authority has a statutory responsibility under the Education Act 1996 to enforce regular attendance of registered students at school, which is carried out by the Redbridge EWS working with schools.

The academy provides the local authority with attendance data on a termly basis.

- This allows the analysis of school level data.
- Provides information to allow schools to take action to improve attendance and review school targets on a half-termly basis.
- Ensures effective and regular liaison between the EWS, school management teams and other key agencies or organisations.

7. EWS - Direct intervention with students and/or Parents/Carers

The EWO aims to:

- Provide direct intervention with students who fall below target levels of attendance and devising strategies to improve their attendance in partnership with schools.
- Ensure that the school policy on attendance is implemented appropriately in each individual case including the use of legal action against parents/carers where they are failing to fulfil their child's regular school attendance.
- Work closely with the main feeder schools to ensure that identified vulnerable children are provided with all possible support to reduce the likelihood of increased non-attendance, where necessary working and liaising with partner agencies.

8. Academy Policy on Leave

"Leave" in relation to the academy means leave granted by any person authorised to do so by our governing body. This responsibility may be delegated to the Headteacher.

The academy will implement procedures where parents/carers must apply for permission to authorise a term-time absence in advance. **Permission will not be granted after the absence has been taken.** All requests should be made in writing by using a designated 'academy' standard form obtained from reception. All decisions are recorded.

The academy is committed to a policy to minimise unavoidable absence from the academy during term time. The academy does not expect children to take leave of absence or a holiday during term time.

9. Exceptional Circumstances and Special Considerations

The Governing Body provides within this policy a guide to parents/carers by which the academy may use its discretion.

- Bereavement of parent, grandparent, and sibling. To be agreed with by the Headteacher.
- Sudden loss of housing through eviction or domestic violence up to a maximum of 3 days.
- Teenage parents responsible for the care of their own child.
- Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sports operating at a high standard of achievement and agreed by the Local Authority (LA) The EWS will advise schools on individual circumstances.
- Time off relating to Children Entertainment Performances, which is subject to a licence being issued by EWS.
- Other circumstances may include a child being involved in Licensed Child Entertainment Performances, religious observations and other circumstances.

Leave of absence must be discussed and agreed with the Headteacher **before** leave is taken. In cases where leave is taken without permission or when the academy is informed after the event, the absence will be recorded as **unauthorised absence** and reported to the EWS.

Where the Headteacher is exercising discretion, this is subject to the proviso of “avoidable absence”, which should only be authorised for exceptional circumstances.

The Local Authority has determined with the academy that leave taken without the permission of the Headteacher will be recorded as “unauthorised” and you may be liable to a Fixed Penalty Notice resulting in a fine, extended leave may result in your child being removed from the school roll.

10. Absence due to ill health

Any absence relating to illness of 5 days or more must be supported by medical evidence. Prescriptions will not be accepted for the medication of paracetamol or calpol, as these can be self-administered within the academy environment.

11. Authorised Absence

Authorised absence is defined as:

- When a student is absent as a result of illness and an acceptable explanation has been received.
- Religious observation – a maximum of three days will be considered for religious observance only in any one academic year (a leave of absence is required before the observance)
- Where a child has been temporarily excluded from the academy
- Medical/dental appointments (include cards) must be supported by a note from the parent/carer. Appointments are to be made outside of school hours wherever possible and the minimum amount of time should be taken.
- Exceptional circumstances (unavoidable absence)

12. Academy Lateness Policy

Persistent lateness does not constitute as full school attendance at school (Education Act, 1996)

The academy will accept exceptional circumstances but persistent lateness is unacceptable. Students will receive a 1 hour detention (on the same day) for lateness to the academy that is not supported by information provided from bus/train companies as the academy requests. Parents/carers will be notified of this detention via a text message or phone call home.

Students arriving up to 30 minutes late after the opening of registration at 8.45am will receive a 'L' (late) code. Students arriving after the 31st minute after the opening of the register will receive an unauthorised absence 'U' coding. Any genuine reason for lateness must be supported by a parental note.

Parents/carers of children who are persistently late to the academy could receive a penalty notice.

13. Sanctions for an unauthorised leave of absence without permission

Attendance at The Palmer Catholic Academy is very good. It is only in very rare occasions that the academy will need to implement legal sanctions. However, it is important that parents/carers be aware of the legal sanctions available to the academy.

A Penalty Notice may be issued for unauthorised leave of absence taken without permission after they return from the leave of absence. It will be issued by the Education Welfare Service following discussion with the Headteacher.

This will incur a fine of £120 per parent being imposed, if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, is reduced to £60. Failure to pay this fine may result in prosecution at the Magistrates Court. If prosecuted and convicted, parents/carers will have a criminal record.

Prosecutions are brought under the Education Act 1996. There is no statutory right of appeal against the issuing of a Penalty Notice. Arrangements for payment will be detailed on the penalty notice. This will be reviewed on an annual basis.

In cases where unauthorised leave has been taken without permission, which are over an extended period, the academy will advise the EWS in order that steps can be implemented with a view to removing the child from roll. (The EWS has a checklist of requirements before a student can be removed from the school roll). A decision will be taken by the EWS whether to implement legal proceedings under the Education Act 1996.

Parents/carers can be fined up to £2,500 and in extreme cases there is a penalty of up to three months imprisonment for failing to ensure that their child attends school regularly.

Magistrates can also impose a parenting order, which mean that the parent/carer has to attend a parenting class.

14. Children Missing Education – CME

Parents/carers are expected to notify the academy in writing if their child is leaving the academy. If a child leaves the academy without notice, or without notification which new school the child is to attend or, when the child is not confirmed on roll at a new provision, (including where the child moves abroad) the academy will make all possible enquiries to establish the child or young person's whereabouts. The will result in a referral to the Redbridge CME team if a child's whereabouts is not known.