

Polesden Lacey Infant School



Attendance and Lateness Policy

Status	Non - Statutory
Review Cycle	Three Years
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Signature Headteacher:

Date:

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ATTENDANCE AND LATENESS POLICY

1. Aims of the Policy

At Polesden Lacey Infant School, it is our aim that all of our pupils achieve their full potential throughout their time at our school. We believe that pupils need to attend school every day to give each of them the chance to take advantage of the educational opportunities we offer. We strive to work with both parents, pupils and where appropriate the Inclusion Service to achieve every pupil's best attendance throughout each academic year. Ultimately, missing lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind; research demonstrates that children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school. It is our expectation at Polesden Lacey Infant School that pupils will achieve an attendance of at least 96% each year.

This policy has been written in conjunction with the DFE Guidance on School Attendance published in September 2018 and outlines our procedures for supporting and improving good attendance and punctuality.

2. Principles

It is the legal responsibility of every parent to ensure that their child attends school regularly and it is an offence to condone absence from school without just cause.

These requirements are contained in:

- The Education Act 1996 – sections 434 (1) (3) (4) & (6) and 458 (4) & (5)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016

3. Our objectives are as follows:

1. To follow an effective, efficient yet supportive system for monitoring attendance, including persistent absence.
2. To maintain high levels of attendance throughout the school, identifying any concerns early on and acting to improve attendance and lateness.
3. To recognise the external factors which influence pupil attendance and to work with parents and the Inclusion Officer to achieve a higher level of attendance for identified families.
4. To encourage all our pupils and parents to understand the importance of coming to school every day and be on time, every day.

4. Attendance

4.1 Punctuality - Good time keeping is an important life skill. It is the expectation at our school that all pupils are in school on time every day. If a child is not present at the start of the day, they can miss the input for the lesson as well as disrupting the lesson for others, as the teacher has to explain what the class are doing to the child who arrives late. The self-esteem of the pupil can also be affected as all their peers notice their late entry into the classroom.

If, within a half term, a child is late more than once a letter will be sent home explaining the problems which lateness can cause and asking parents to ensure their child is in school on time. (See Appendix 1)

The expectation is that punctuality will improve rapidly after the initial lateness letter is sent. If however, it continues then the Head teacher will request a meeting with the parents to identify ways of ensuring the child is in school on time, every day. If the lateness continues then a referral will be made to the Inclusion Officer.

At Polesden Lacey Infant School, class registers are marked promptly at the times listed below. Registers are open until 9.10am for each year group.

	AM	PM
Reception, Year 1 and Year 2	8.55am	1.00pm

Pupils who arrive at school after the register has started are marked as late; this will be recorded as an L. If a pupil arrives after the register has closed, they will be marked with a U, which denotes an unauthorised absence for the morning session. The Department for Education guidance states clearly that a child must not be marked present if they are not in school during registration.

4.2 Authorised and unauthorised absence from school - The expectation of the staff and Governors at Polesden Lacey Infant School is that every child will attend school unless they are not well enough to do so. Absence from school for reasons other than illness may also be authorised if they are for one of the following reasons:

- Unavoidable medical/dental appointments
- Days of religious observance (up to 2 days only)
- Exceptional family circumstances, such as a family bereavement / funeral.
- Junior transfer School visits and tours

We do require sight of appointment cards for medical and dental appointments. These should be shown to a member of the administrative team in the school office who will note this on our attendance monitoring system.

4.3 Holidays during term-time - Parents must avoid booking family holidays during term time. The pupils are at school for just under 37 weeks each year which means the school has 13 weeks holiday every academic year and the expectation is that family holidays will be booked during these times. Pupils who miss weeks of school due to a holiday being taken during term time lose out on key aspects of the planned learning. It is our policy that class teachers do not set 'catch up' work for pupils to take on holiday.

4.4 Exceptional Leave - Very occasionally, parents may request an extended period of leave for their child. If parents need to remove their child from school during term time, they must complete a "Leave of Absence form" which will be passed to the Headteacher (**See Appendix 2**). The Headteacher considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

For each leave of absence request advice will be sought from the Inclusion Officer. If the Head teacher agrees the request, the parents must be aware that robust procedures, including the possible removal of the child's name from the school register, will be enforced if the child does not return to school by the agreed date.

Please note **Family holidays and excursions will not be authorised** (**See Appendix 2**). **If the request is refused but the leave of absence nonetheless taken, it will be marked as unauthorised and will be referred to the Inclusion Officer.**

4.4 Persistent Absence – If an individual pupil's absence rate is 10% or higher, he/she is classified as a persistent absentee. Persistent absence will be dealt with by the Headteacher who will contact parents in order to see if there is a specific difficulty for the family which the school may be able to help with. If parents are having difficulties in getting a child to school, it is helpful that the school knows about it as soon as possible so that we may be able to assist where appropriate, this may involve meetings with the School Nurse, Inclusion Officer or the Headteacher.

Where attendance falls below 90%, parents/guardians will be issued with an attendance letter. (**See Appendix 3**). Any further absence without there being an acceptable reason (e.g. long-term sickness) will be brought to the attention of the Inclusion Officer.

Where there is a notable pattern of absence e.g. every Monday or Friday, with no obvious explanation, the Inclusion Officer will be consulted.

If, in spite of the support of the school and Inclusion Officer, attendance does not improve, there may be a need to send a letter warning of legal action. Any such action will be in accordance with Section 3 of the DFE School Attendance Guidance.

4.6 Appointments during the school day - Parents are expected to make appointments outside school hours. Where a child has an appointment during a school day s/he should come to school for the remainder of the day, leaving only for the time of the appointment. Written notification by letter or email is required when a child is to go off site during the day. Sight of the appointment card is acceptable.

4.7 The Final Week of Term Pupils at Polesden Lacey Infant School work up to and including the last day of each term. It is not our policy to occupy pupils with DVDs and playing board games in the final few days of term. Every single teaching day is used for just that; to teach in order to maximise learning. All pupils are therefore expected to attend everyday including the last day of each term.

4.8 The last day of half term and the last day of term - The school finishes at the following times throughout the school term;

Age Group	Finish time at the end of the day
Reception, Year 1 and Year 2	3.00pm

The only exceptions to this are the end of each term when the school finishes at 1.00pm. The last day of each half term finishes at the normal time.

5. Communication of Absences

5.1 Notifying the School of a child's absence - If a child is going to be absent from school, the Parent/Carer must either telephone school, or email the school on info@polesdenlaceyinfant.surrey.sch.uk by 10.00am on each day that their child is absent. Parents are required to give a specific reason for their child's absence, rather than just a communication about being a child being ill.

6. Monitoring of Attendance - The School Office monitors attendance daily, all absences, and their reasons are recorded. The school operates a 'Red Hot List' system where when a child's absence falls below 95%, this results in a phone call from the Head teacher to the parent to ascertain strategies to rapidly improve their child's attendance. Further absences may result in a referral to the Inclusion Officer.

The Head teacher is informed of absences of vulnerable children and their parents are contacted to check the reason for absence. Where necessary social services are then informed.

The Head teacher meets regularly with the Inclusion Officer to review attendance within the school. The Inclusion Officer, in consultation with the school, will contact parents where there is a difficulty.

During the Spring Term, letters are sent to parents informing them of their child's attendance. The letters are colour coded depending on the attendance percentage. **(See Appendix 4)**

When the school does not receive a reason for absence, there will be a follow up phone call to ascertain the reason. If the parents cannot be contacted a letter will be emailed requested a written response. **(See Appendix 5)**

6.1 Inclusion Officer - The Inclusion Officer comes into school once every half term. The EWO will look at the registers to check absences of individual children whose attendance is below 95%. During these meetings, the Head teacher and Inclusion Officer discuss any

concerns over individual pupils' attendance, persistent absence, broken weeks and the actions, which have already been taken. The Head teacher will refer to the Inclusion Officer if there are concerns over the attendance of a pupil.

7. Pupils transferring to and from other schools – When pupils join Polesden Lacey Infant School from other schools during the school year, we expect that there will be a minimal gap between the date they finish at their previous school and when they start at Polesden Lacey. This will be agreed with parents when they accept the place and the admissions team at the Local Authority will be notified. In the event that a pupil is not present on the agreed start date, the admin team will contact both the child's parents that day and the previous school to ascertain the reasons for the non-attendance. If they are unable to contact the parents and have no explanation, advice will be sought from the Inclusion Officer. When a pupil leaves to join another school the school must be provided with the name, address and contact details for the school. A date will be agreed for the last day at Polesden Lacey Infant School and the new school will be contacted to inform them of the day that the child will be starting.

8. Children in Entertainment – Pupils who are taking part in a performance will need to have a licence granted by the Local Authority. As part of this, the Headteacher of the school the child attends will be consulted to decide whether or not to issue the license. Licences are granted where the Local Authority is satisfied about the child's fitness and about the provisions made for the child's safety and education. If the Headteacher is concerned that having a license will be detrimental to the education of a child, it will not be granted. If an application for a license is made for a child whose attendance is under 95% the Headteacher may refuse the license. The school attendance of pupils in entertainment is closely monitored by the Inclusion Officer.

9. Long Term Absence - When children are likely to be absent for more than one week on medical grounds, a valid sick certificate or doctors letter is required.

10. Strategies for promoting attendance – At Polesden Lacey Infant School we believe it is important to celebrate good attendance. At the end of each term, pupils with 100% attendance will receive a certificate, which is presented in the end of term assembly. A cup is also presented, on a weekly basis, to the class with the best attendance and the winning class is announced in the weekly newsletter to parents.

11. Home Educated Pupils/Removal of pupils from the school register

If a parent decides to home educate their child, they are required to put this in writing to the Headteacher. The Headteacher will inform the Local Authority.

The school will, first and foremost, seek to work with parents prior to any such decision taking place, however the school does recognise that parents do have the right to home education without the agreement of either the school or the Local Authority. The DFE guidance states clearly that parents have a duty to ensure their child receives suitable full time education but this does not have to be at school.

Policy written October 2019.

APPENDIX 1

Insert date

Dear Parent/Carer

RE: School Attendance – Lateness

I am writing to you regarding your child's lateness over the last half term. Our records show that your child has been late on ____ occasions. We are concerned that _____ is missing an important part of the school day when this happens. It is our aim that we work closely with our pupils, their parents and the Inclusion Service and other necessary outside agencies to achieve every pupils' best possible attendance and punctuality throughout each academic year.

The following information will help you to ensure your child is at school on time every day, at Polesden Lacey Infant School class registers are marked promptly at the following times;

Age group	Morning Registration	Afternoon Registration
Reception , Year 1 and Year 2	8.55am	1.00pm

Pupils who arrive at school after the register has closed are marked as late; this will be recorded as an L. The DFE guidance states clearly that a child must not be marked present if they are not in school during registration.

We understand that school mornings can be hectic, but when your child is late for school, they are missing out vital parts of their education.

If for any reason you are experiencing difficulties in getting your child to school on time, please contact us as soon as possible so that we can agree a strategy for improving this.

Thank you for your continued support in these matters. I am sure we will see a marked improvement.

Yours sincerely

Rebecca Mole
Head Teacher

APPENDIX 2

POLESDEN LACEY INFANT SCHOOL

Application for leave of absence for exceptional circumstances

Please read the following guidance carefully.

As parents, you have a legal responsibility to ensure your child's attendance at school. During the academic year, pupils are at school for 190 days and at home for 175 days.

Parents must avoid booking family holidays during term time. The school has 13 weeks holiday every academic year and the expectation is that family holidays will be booked during these times.

A Leave of Absence request must be made to the Headteacher at least 7 days in advance. Leave of absence will only be granted where the Headteacher considers it is due to 'exceptional' circumstances. If the request is refused but the leave of absence nonetheless taken, it will be marked as unauthorised.

Please be aware that The Education (Pupil Registration) (England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, which become law on 1st September 2013 state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher is also required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.

Please complete and submit this form if you want the Headteacher to consider your request for your child's leave of absence for exceptional circumstances. We may ask for proof to back up your request.

The Headteacher will consider the reasons for the request carefully and will notify you of the decision. For Further information, please refer to our School Attendance Policy.

Name of Child:	Class:
I am applying for leave of absence for my child for	
From:	to:
Number of school days:	
The exceptional circumstances for which leave is requested:	

Has your child already had leave of absence in this school year?		YES / NO
If YES, please give dates and details:		
I also have children at...		
Signed: (Parent/Carer)		Date:
To be completed by the Headteacher		
Child's attendance level over the last 12 months:		
Overall school target for attendance this year is:		
Having considered your request carefully, my decision is that leave of absence is:		
Approved		The absence will be recorded as authorised.
Not approved		The absence will be recorded as unauthorised
Explanatory notes:		
Signed:		(Headteacher) Date:

APPENDIX 3

Insert Date

Dear Parent / Carer

RE: Absence Monitoring

In our regular monitoring of absence.....(Childs Name)..... appeared on our list of pupils whose attendance is below 90%.

.....(Childs Name)..... attendance is currently (insert%) for the period (insert date) to (insert date).

This percentage equates to... x..... sessions missed. A session being half a day.

If this pattern of absence was to continue for the remainder of the school year.....(Childs Name).... would not be able to keep up with their work.

If there are any concerns or circumstances affecting your child's attendance that we should be aware of, please ensure that you make an appointment to see Ms Mole at your earliest convenience.

Yours Sincerely

Amanda Scott
Administrative Officer

APPENDIX 4

Red absence letter – below 85%

Dear Parents and Carers

Good attendance and punctuality at school are crucial for your child's success both personally and academically. Our expectation is that all children will achieve a level of at least 95%+ attendance with fewer than 5 late marks. Polesden Lacey Infant School is committed to both maintaining and raising levels of attendance and punctuality in school to ensure all children have the best opportunity to learn and achieve their full potential, both academically and within their friendship groups.

Our school works closely with parents and, when necessary, with the Inclusion Service to promote and monitor good habits of attendance and punctuality. Every year, we send out a colour coded letter to inform parents of their child's attendance and, if that letter is orange or red, we send home a print out of your child's attendance with the letter to help you understand how we measure overall attendance. We understand that most absence is due to illness but we do have a duty to inform parents of our concern if their attendance and or punctuality fall below acceptable standards.

Your letter is red which means:

Your child's attendance is a cause for concern (below 85%), equivalent to up to at least to 30 days absence a year (or a yearly total of 6 weeks out of school). This is highly likely to impact on your child's overall progress.

Each morning and afternoon session counts for one attendance mark, so the possible number of attendances for children who are in school full time will be twice the number of possible school days.

Each stage of a child's education is of equal significance and very young children are often prone to infection and illness. It is therefore all the more important that other planned absences, such as holidays, odd days or appointments, are avoided as the cumulative effect has a detrimental effect on overall attendance and therefore on children's learning. We expect that holidays will be taken only during the 175 non-school days a year, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Please be aware, where pupils are persistently late or there are a number of unexplained or unauthorised absences, the Inclusion Office will contact families directly.

Yours sincerely

Rebecca Mole, Headteacher

APPENDIX 4

Orange attendance letter – between 85% and 94.9%

Dear Parents and Carers

Good attendance and punctuality at school are crucial for your child's success both personally and academically. Our expectation is that all children will achieve a level of at least 95%+ attendance with fewer than 5 late marks. Polesden Lacey Infant School is committed to both maintaining and raising levels of attendance and punctuality in school to ensure all children have the best opportunity to learn and achieve their full potential, both academically and within their friendship groups.

Our school works closely with parents and, when necessary, with the Inclusion service to promote and monitor good habits of attendance and punctuality. Every year, we send out a colour coded letter to inform parents of their child's attendance and, if that letter is orange or red, we send home a print out of your child's attendance with the letter to help you understand how we measure overall attendance. We understand that most absence is due to illness but we do have a duty to inform parents of our concern if their attendance and or punctuality fall below acceptable standards.

Your letter is orange which means:

Your child's attendance is a cause for concern (85% - 94.9%), equivalent to up to 25 days absence a year (or a yearly total of 5 weeks out of school). This is likely to impact on your child's overall progress and may result in your child not achieving their best.

Each morning and afternoon session counts for one attendance mark, so the possible number of attendances for children who are in school full time will be twice the number of possible school days.

Each stage of a child's education is of equal significance and very young children are often prone to infection and illness. It is therefore all the more important that other planned absences, such as holidays, odd days or appointments, are avoided as the cumulative effect has a detrimental effect on overall attendance and therefore on children's learning. We expect that holidays will be taken only during the 175 non-school days a year, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

If you wish to discuss any issues associated with your child's attendance, please make an appointment to see me via the school office.

Yours sincerely

Rebecca Mole, Headteacher

APPENDIX 4

Green attendance letter - 95% and above

Dear Parents/Carers

Good attendance and punctuality at school are crucial for your child's success both personally and academically. Polesden Lacey Infant School is committed to both maintaining and raising levels of attendance and punctuality in school to ensure all children have the best opportunity to learn and achieve their full potential, both academically and within their friendship groups.

Our expectation is that all children will achieve a level of at least 95%+ attendance with fewer than 5 late marks across an academic year.

At Polesden Lacey Infant School we always aim to work closely with parents to ensure their child's attendance is at the level expected. When necessary, we also work with the Inclusion Service to promote and monitor good habits of attendance and punctuality. To ensure clear communication with parents regarding their child's attendance, each year at this time we send out a colour coded letter, which shows the level of attendance for a child. At this point, we are nearly half way through the academic year.

Your letter is green which means:

Congratulations! Your child's overall level of attendance for this year from September until present is over 95%, meaning that their attendance is excellent, with less than 5 days absence so far this year. Your child will have the best chance of achievement and success

Each stage of a child's education is of equal significance and very young children are often prone to infection and illness. It is therefore all the more important that other planned absences, such as holidays, odd days or appointments, are avoided as the cumulative effect has a detrimental effect on overall attendance and therefore on children's learning. We expect that holidays will be taken only during the 175 non-school days a year, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Yours sincerely

Rebecca Mole
Headteacher

APPENDIX 5

Insert today's Date:

Dear Parent,

Clarification for non-attendance at school

Re:

At Polesden Lacey Infant School it is our aim that all staff work closely with our pupils and parents to achieve the best possible attendance throughout each academic year.

As per the Attendance and Lateness policy, we are committed to monitoring all children's attendance, therefore please can you advise why your child was absent from school on

.....

Thank you for your co-operation

Yours sincerely

Amanda Scott
Administrative Officer

APPENDIX 6

Absence and Attendance Codes (DFE Guidance September 2018)

The Admin Officer is responsible for ensuring the correct code is entered to record the reason for a child's absence as follows:

- **∧ indicate present at school**
- **L indicates a late arrival but before register closed**
- **B indicates that the child is present at an off-site educational activity that has been approved by the school**
- **D indicates that the child is Dual Registered at another educational establishment**
- **J indicates that a pupil is attending an interview with another educational establishment**
- **P indicates that the pupil is taking part in a supervised sporting activity**
- **V indicates an educational trip or visit (including residential trips)**
- **I indicates absence due to illness (not medical or dental appointments)**
- **E excluded but no alternative provision made**
- **H indicates a holiday authorised by the school**
- **C indicates a leave of absence authorised by the school due to other circumstances**
- **M indicates medical or dental appointments**
- **R Religious observance**
- **G indicates holiday not authorised by the Headteacher**
- **N indicates reason for absence not yet provided**
- **O indicates absence from school without authorisation**
- **U indicates arrival in school after registration closed**
- **Y indicates that pupils are unable attend due to exceptional circumstances such as the school site being closed.**
- **Z indicates that the pupil is not yet on the admission register but is going to be joining the school.**