



Attendance policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1** We believe that good attendance plays a key part in ensuring personal development, learning and achievement in all areas. Parents, carers and teachers have a duty to encourage maximum attendance at school.

2. Rationale

- 2.1** At our schools we are committed to:

- a) Valuing and rewarding high attendance rates;
- b) Good practice, which encourages children to take a pride in their attendance and punctuality rates;
- c) A partnership with parents to ensure understanding, support and co-operation about high attendance rates;
- d) Encouraging children/students to take full advantage of their educational opportunities by attending regularly;
- e) Working in partnership with parents, carers, the school office staff with responsibility for attendance and the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) to address difficulties and recognise external factors which influence pupil attendance;
- f) Identifying patterns of non-attendance at an early stage and working to resolve personal/social difficulties;
- g) Following efficiently the school systems for accurate recording and monitoring of attendance and punctuality.

3 Definitions

3.1 Authorised absence

- a) An absence is classified as authorised when a child/student has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child/student has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence;
- b) Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

3.2 Unauthorised absence

- a) An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent;
- b) Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent;

4. Procedures

- 4.1** The following procedures are printed in the school prospectuses:

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- 4.2** “Children who attend schools within The Pegasus Academy Trust must attend their school punctually and regularly. Parents and Children/students new to any of our schools should ensure that they familiarise themselves with the start and end times that apply to their children.
- 4.3** A general rule which will ensure that your child is always on time throughout their time with us is to be in school from 8.45am and be in class and ready for learning by 9.00am. **Any child arriving after 9:00am is late for school.** Parents whose children arrive late must notify the appropriate school office. The child’s attendance is then amended with the appropriate mark by the office staff.”
- 4.4** If a child/student is absent, parents and carers are asked to telephone the school on the first day of absence and send a note of explanation when they return so that the absence is not recorded as “unauthorised”.
- 4.5** If we do not receive a telephone or message on the first day of absence we:
- telephone the child’s parent or carer to ask why the child is not in school;
 - follow this with a text to the parent if we are unable to contact the parent or carer by phone;
 - send an email or letter after five days to the parent or carer advising them that the absence will be recorded as ‘unauthorised’ if an absence note has still not been received.
- 4.6** If no response is receiving following these actions we notify our Education Welfare Officer. If we have previous concerns about a child’s welfare e.g. the child is on the child protection register or we believe could be in danger, we notify our EWO and/or the police or Social Services at the end of the first day of absence.
- 4.7** We clearly communicate our expectations about attendance and punctuality to all members of our schools’ community. We seek to address any emerging concerns in this respect at the earliest possible stage and work proactively, with our EWOs if appropriate, to ensure that minor problems are addressed and not allowed to escalate or become entrenched. Notwithstanding this, if a significant problem emerged and no response to the usual interventions/support packages was forthcoming, we would ask for the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN). This is issued by the local authority either for general attendance concerns or term-time holiday.
- 4.8** In the event that a FPN is not paid within a stipulated period, court action automatically follows and could lead to a Parenting Order and/or heavy fine being imposed the Court. However, we would do everything we could to avoid-the issue of an FPN

5. Exceptional leave

- 5.1** Parents receive a list of holiday dates at the beginning each academic year. These dates can also be found on the Trust’s website <http://www.pegasusacademytrust.org/term-dates>. Parents are expected to take their holidays outside term time. Children/students should attend school for the maximum number of days possible since long absences can have a detrimental effect on their learning.
- 5.2** It is the Trust’s policy in line with the Department for Education regulations not to authorise any leave during term time.
- 5.3** Any request to remove a child during term time for a period of exceptional leave should be made to the Head of School or Principal in writing using the “leave of absence in exceptional circumstances” form provided in the schools offices. (**Appendix A**)
- 5.4** We may ask for additional proof as to the reasons for absence in exceptional circumstances – for example a certificate from a GP.

6. Strategies for improving punctuality and attendance

6.1 Staff at our schools are committed to doing all they can to ensure children attend punctually and regularly but closely monitor the number of authorised and unauthorised absences and the incidence of lateness in each school.

6.2 In an attempt to improve rates of punctuality and attendance we may:

- a) speak to the parents of children who are causing concern and/or our EWO;
- b) invite the EWO into assemblies to talk about the importance of attending regularly and punctually;
- c) ask the EWO to come into school some mornings to speak to persistent latecomers or to do gate checks;
- d) send an individual certificate to each parent/carer every year to show their child's attendance and punctuality record;
- e) keep a record of those who arrive late each day;
- f) keep a record of parents and carers who have telephoned to explain their child's absence;
- g) keep a record of parents and carers whom we have telephoned or left a message on the answering service;
- h) ensure our registers are completed accurately;
- i) print out registration certificates for each class to highlight those who are persistently late or absent;
- j) when concerns arise, print out and send to parents and carers, individual registration certificates to show attendance and punctuality statistics;
- l) talk with parents and carers to identify whether support is needed for a particular problem;
- m) involve members of our academy councils in our monitoring procedures;
- o) look at what alternative measures can be put in place to support parents and carers

7 Long-term absence

7.1 When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home if requested by parent or carer, so that they can keep up with their school work.

7.2 If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

8 Monitoring and review

8.1 It is the responsibility of the local governing body (Academy Council) to monitor overall attendance. The Directors of the Academy Trust have the responsibility for this policy, and for ensuring that it is carried out. The Directors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, as well as concerns raised by local governing bodies, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be. Attendance is a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) for the Directors of the Trust.

8.2 Each school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.

8.3 Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class, and the Attendance Officers in each school within the Trust will be responsible for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's absence, they will contact the Head of School/Principal and EWO immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the

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attendance of a particular child, the Head of School/Principal and EWO, will contact the parents or guardian.

Appendix A – Exceptional leave request form.

Pegasus Academy Trust



Application for leave of absence in exceptional circumstances

School (please underline):
Whitehorse Manor Infants/ Whitehorse Manor Juniors/ Ecclesbourne Primary/Beulah Infants
/Cypress Primary/The Archbishop Lanfranc Academy

Full name of child/children:

Class/classes:

Name/s of siblings in other PAT school/s:

Home address:

Reason for application:

Dates pupil(s) will be absent from school: From _____ to _____ (inclusive)

Signature of parent/carer: _____ Date: _____

Please be aware that it is the Trust's policy in line with Department for Education regulations to not authorise **any** leave during term time. However, each request will be considered on a case by case basis.

School response

Date seen by Head of School/Principal/Attendance Officer:

Decision: Agreed Not agreed

Reasoning:

Letter attached

Signed:

Entered on computer [] Parent's copy []

Please note

If your request for exceptional leave is not agreed and you decide to go ahead regardless this absence will be noted as 'unauthorised' on your child's attendance record. This will show up on your child's end of year report and may mean that other professionals (such as the attendance officer or the Educational Welfare Officer) may wish to speak to you regarding this absence. You may also be liable for a fixed penalty notice (FPN)