








Palisades Middle School (PALMS) – Frequently Asked Questions and Answers for Parents (revised 8/3/2023)

Question	Answer	Contact/See
<p>What time does the school day start?</p> <p>And what time does it end?</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students <u>must be seated in their homerooms by 7:32 am.</u> School begins at 7:32 am. A regular school day at PALMS ends at 2:32 pm. If you are planning to drive your child to school, be sure to allow enough time so that your child is able to be seated in his/her homeroom by 7:32 am. 	
May I drop my child off early for school?	Students may not be dropped off prior to 7:05 am.	
How do I report that my child will be absent today?	Call 610-847-5131, ext. 1305; leave a message. A signed excuse must be submitted even though you called the absence reporting line. [Automated messages are still sent to parents/guardians when an absence has been reported.]	<p>• PALMS Absence Reporting Line: 610-847-5131, ext. 1305</p>
Where can I read about attendance/ absence, late (tardy), and leaving early (post-tardy), and pre-planned absence procedures at PALMS?	<p>Please see the table of contents in the PALMS Student/Parent Handbook which is available on the middle school section of the district website.</p> 	<p>• PALMS Student/Parent Handbook which is online at www.palisd.org (click on the <u>Middle School</u> section)</p>
Do I still need to send in a note even if I left a telephone message that my child is absent ?	YES! All parents/legal guardians are required to send a written and signed excuse note to school within THREE days of their child's return to school in order to prevent the absence/s from being marked unexcused. Please refer to the PALMS Student/Parent Handbook for further details regarding this issue. [See information in answer below about automated absence notes.]	<p>• PALMS Student/Parent Handbook at www.palisd.org (click on the <u>Middle School</u> section)</p> <p>• 610-847-5131, Ms. Gledhill, ext. 1005</p>
<p>Why do I get the automated notification that my child is absent if I already called the school and reported my child absent or if my child came to school late or if my child is on a pre-approved vacation?</p> 	<p>The automated call/message is generated in the morning based upon the list of students who are marked absent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It states that your child was marked <u>absent during homeroom</u>. It <u>reminds</u> parents that a <u>signed absence excuse note is needed</u> within three days of an absence in order to prevent that absence from being marked unexcused. It is helpful to parents who might not otherwise be aware of their child's absence. [Messages left on the school's absence reporting line are not always left by the custodial parent/legal guardian. In fact, there have been times when children have self-reported or have had a sibling call in for them.] Automated email notifications to parents provide a link to a dedicated absence form for completion by the parent if they so wish. <u>An email</u> to the school does not suffice as an absence excuse but the completed online form which was initiated via our automated absence notification usually does suffice (unless a note from a physician is required for absences). Please read more about requirements for absences in the absences section of the handbook. <p>When your child's absence was pre-approved, or when they have signed in late, the attendance code for the day will be changed as soon as time allows.</p>	
Why are letters/notifications sent to me about my child's attendance ?	Letters are sent in compliance with the compulsory attendance laws for <i>the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania</i> .	The PALMS attendance officer is Mr. Spering, 610-847-5131, ext. 1002.
<p>What is the Daily Schedule at PALMS?</p> 	The regular schedule includes 8 class periods per day (five academic and two exploratory classes plus resource, home-room, lunch, and mentoring periods). Each class period is approximately 45 minutes. The schedule operates on a six day cycle with particular attention to odd or even days.	





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<p>What must my child do when arriving late to school?</p> 	<p>Students who arrive to school at or after 7:32 am for <u>any reason</u> (including transportation issues) MUST FIRST go directly to the PALMS Student Office to SIGN IN and see Ms. Gledhill (Student Office Secretary). The student must bring a signed and dated note (by the custodial parent/legal guardian) which states why the student is late.</p> <p>NOTE: <i>Whenever a child is tardy due to a doctor or dentist appointment <u>be sure to send in a signed and dated note from the doctor or dentist so that the occurrence can be excused.</u></i></p>	<p>•PALMS Student/Parent Handbook which is online at www.palisd.org (click on the <u>Middle School</u> section)</p> <p>•610-847-5131, Ms. Gledhill, ext. 1005</p>
<p>Dismissal Time?</p>	<p>PALMS regular school day dismissal time is at 2:32 pm.</p>	
<p>Leaving Early: I need to take my child out of school prior to dismissal time, what do I do?</p> <p>Relatable Post #1063</p> <p>When you have a reason to leave class early.</p> 	<p>Notify the school in advance and in writing whenever this <u>will occur</u>. Your child should bring the note to the student office in the morning. It MUST include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your child's full name (first and last) • Your child's grade level • The reason for leaving early • When/exact time the child will be picked up • Who will pick the child up. Important: If the person picking your child up <u>is not</u> the custodial parent with whom the student primarily resides or legal guardian, you MUST state within the note that you give permission for that specific person to pick up your child. • <u>Dated signature of custodial parent/legal guardian</u> <p>Whenever a student leaves prior to dismissal time the occurrence is reflected in the student's attendance record will show either the ½ day absence or a post-tardy. The occurrences are included in total absences/tardy tallies on a report card and are generally unexcused unless a note is received from a doctor or dentist. Remember that total accumulated time missed may be added to equal and mark full and half days absent from school.</p>	<p>•PALMS Student/Parent Handbook located online at www.palisd.org (click on the <u>Middle School</u> section)</p> <p>•610-847-5131, Ms. Gledhill, ext. 1005</p>
<p>Leaving school due to illness</p> 	<p>Students must go to the school nurse to be excused from school due to illness. The school nurse will contact the parent and/or the emergency contact person when a child is too ill to remain in school. Time missed on that school day will be excused by the school nurse.</p> <p>If your child contacts you because he/she feels ill, <u>direct your child to go to the school nurse.</u> <u>If a student leaves school early due to illness but was not dismissed by the school nurse, time missed will be marked unexcused.</u></p>	<p>•PALMS Student/Parent Handbook which is online at www.palisd.org (click on the <u>Middle School</u> section)</p>
<p>Leaving Early for an Emergency Appointment:</p> <p>I just made an emergency appointment for my child and have to pick him/her up early and was unable to notify the school in advance as per procedures, now what do I do?</p>	<p>Whenever possible, please plan early dismissals in advance and send a note in advance so that the process of picking up your child is streamlined and interruptions to an entire class are minimized.</p> <p>Should the occurrence of a true emergency appointment arise, the custodial parent/legal guardian must go to the <u>main office</u> at PALMS <u>to sign the child out</u> from school.</p> <p>The custodial parent/legal guardian <u>must</u> provide a written note (as outlined in the section entitled "leaving early" on this FAQ page). Student attendance records reflect incidents of leaving prior to dismissal time. (Helpful hints: don't forget to bring your ID. Don't forget to get an excuse note from the doctor/dentist and send it to school with your child.)</p>	<p>•PALMS Student/Parent Handbook which is online at www.palisd.org (click on the <u>Middle School</u> section) 610-847-5131, Ms. Gledhill, ext. 1005</p>




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Is my child permitted to participate in afterschool activities/events/programs (including sports practices and competitions) on a school day when my child arrived late or left early?	A signed note from a licensed medical doctor or dentist must be submitted to the student office upon arrival/ departure in order for a student to be permitted to participate in afterschool events/activities/programs (including sports). However, students who miss more than a half day of school are not permitted to participate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •PALMS Parent/Student Handbook: www.palisd.org (click on the <u>Middle School</u> section) and/or the District Handbook for Interscholastic Athletics located in Athletics section of website: Student-Athlete Section.
<p>I want to take my child on an educational trip (vacation) on a school day or days, what do I do?</p>  <div style="border: 2px solid blue; border-radius: 50%; padding: 10px; margin: 10px; background-color: #fff9c4;"> <p>PLEASE NOTE:</p> <p>Be sure to keep PSSA testing dates in mind whenever planning <u>any</u> absences. <u>Absences during PSSA testing window dates, for any reason other than those that we receive a doctor note, will be marked unexcused.</u></p> </div>	<p>There are many holidays and days off for students during the school year. Please plan your trips/vacations so they occur on one of these days or during the summer break. Should you still need to take your child out of school due to an <u>educational family trip</u> (even if only ½ day in length or less), <u>preapproval for an excused absence is needed from the Assistant Principal.</u> Requests for pre-approved absences must be in writing <u>at least 10 days prior</u> to the date that you plan to have your child miss school. Your request should be addressed to <u>Mr. Spering, Assistant Principal.</u></p> <p>The request must state the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your child's full name • Your child's grade and homeroom number • The dates you plan to have your child miss school • The reason your child will miss school • The request must be signed by the legal guardian/ custodial parent with whom the child resides. • The note should be given to Ms. Gledhill in the student office. • Students are responsible for contacting their teachers and gathering up the work they will miss prior to the trip and all make up work being submitted with- in the time allotted by their teachers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •PALMS Student/Parent Handbook which is online at www.palisd.org (click on the <u>Middle School</u> section) • Mr. Spering: 610-847-5131, ext. 1002 •Check the District Calendar for PSSA and other testing window dates. •An absence preapproval request (Vacation Request) form is provided on the website under the Palisades Middle School section on the Assistant Principal page for you to download, print, complete and send to the PALMS student office.
<p>Ride Home: Can't I just call or send an e-mail to give permission for my child to be picked up by a friend or a grandparent, etc.?</p>  <p>But what if the person is listed as an <u>emergency contact</u> on my child's record?</p>	<p>NO - If the person picking your child up is <u>not</u> the custodial parent with whom the student primarily resides or legal guardian, you <u>MUST provide written/signed permission allowing that person to pick up your child.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency Contacts who you list when you complete a school medical information form may pick your child up when there is a <u>school emergency</u> or <u>if the child is being sent home by the school nurse</u> because he/she is too ill to remain at school. • Whenever a child is to be picked up by a person who is listed as an emergency contact but it is for a reason <i>other than a <u>school</u> emergency</i>, a signed note authorizing the school to release your child to the person must be provided. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Spering, Assistant Principal: 610-847-5131, ext. 1002
<p>My child's sibling is in high school or is older; can he/she just pick up my middle school child?</p> 	<p>NO, siblings may not unless the sibling is a legal guardian of the student to be picked up. As with any other non-legal guardian, siblings may ONLY pick a student up WHEN a signed note stating and giving permission for such is submitted to the middle school in advance by the legal guardian/custodial parent.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Mr. Spering, Assistant Principal: 610-847-5131, ext. 1002

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I need to change my child's daily bus to or from school.	<p>You must complete a bus stop exception form. You can pick this up at the Main Office or you may contact the transportation department.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Gerry Giarratana at Transportation Services: 610-847-5131, ext. 5002 • www.palisd.org : Click on Departments, then <i>Transportation Services</i>
<p>Is my child allowed to walk to the high school after school?</p> 	<p>Students who are not supervised by a responsible adult are not permitted to walk across the street to the high school. Middle school students must have permission to be at the high school after school and must be supervised by a responsible adult while there. Please send a signed note permitting your child to ride a school bus to PHS after school. The dated note must state the reason that the child is going to the high school, who will be in charge of the student, and give permission for the district to provide bus transportation to PHS for your child. The note should go to Ms. Gledhill in the student office or to Mr. Spering and it must be dropped off during resource period.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Mr. Spering, Assistant Principal: 610-847-5131, ext. 1002
My child forgot something at home, can I drop it off?	<p>There is a table in the captured vestibule of the school. Please leave the forgotten item on that table. It is the student's responsibility to check and see if items were dropped off for them. The secretaries do not call students down to pick up their forgotten items.</p>	
<p>What is the cost of student breakfast and lunch?</p> 	<p>Middle school breakfast is offered for FREE this year. The price of a full lunch is \$3.25.</p> <p>There are also a la carte menu items available for purchase.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Director of Food/ Transportation: Mr. Giarratana: 610-847-5131, ext. 5002 •www.palisd.org : Click on Departments, then <i>Food Services</i>.
<p>How are payments for my child's lunches handled?</p> 	<p>Your child can bring money to school for lunch or you can set up an online account whereby you pre-load an available balance from which your child draws each time that he/she purchases lunch or a la carte items from the cafeteria. Please go to the district website to read about the lunch payment program.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Director of Food/ Transportation: Mr. Giarratana: 610-847-5131, ext. 5002 •www.palisd.org : Click on Departments, then <i>Food Services</i>.
I need to change information (home phone number, emergency contact) which is listed in the school records regarding my child.	<p>You must contact the school or send a signed note in with your child. Your child should bring it to Mrs. Fleck in the Main Office.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Mrs. Fleck: 610-847-5131, PALMS Main Office, ext. 1000
We moved and need to change our residential address – what do I do?	<p>You must go to the Main Office of the school and bring 3 proofs of residency for your new address. Acceptable documents include: rental agreement which states location your new residence, PPL bill, Property Tax Bill, Home Telephone bill (not cell); Agreement of Sale.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Mrs. Fleck: 610-847-5131, PALMS Main Office, ext. 1000

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<p>I heard the middle school uses SmartPass. What's that?</p>	<p>SmartPass is a digital hall pass solution with a focus on school safety. It provides teachers and administrators the whereabouts of which students are outside the classroom at any point and ensuring students who may be taking advantage of hallway privileges are where they should be in the classroom learning. In case of emergencies such as fires, severe weather, or building intruders, school personnel have real-time access to this critical information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Dr. Karl Scheibenhofer, Principal: 610-847-5131, ext. 1001
<p>Sports! My child wants to sign up - now what?</p> 	<p>Information regarding sign-ups is announced via email by the District Athletic Department. Sign ups and completion of the correct PIAA forms are mostly completed online by the custodial parent/legal guardian of the student. It will be necessary for parents to submit (to the Athletic Department) the hard copy of the completed physician's page of the PIAA form (section 6). So that there is ample time to review a student's sports paperwork before the official start of a sports season, completed forms must be returned by the date announced by the District Athletic Department.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Please contact: Ms. Tammy Labant, Athletic Secretary: 610-847-5131, ext. 2010 •The Palisades School District Athletic Office phone extensions are 2009 and 2010. •All PIAA athletic documentation will flow through the District Athletic Department which is located at Palisades High School.
<p>My child participated in a school sport already this school year – do I still have to complete paperwork?</p> 	<p>Even if your child participated in a school PIAA sport during the same school year and is now interested in participating in another sport in a different season of the same school year, the appropriate section of the PIAA form will need to be completed by the parent/legal guardian and returned to the District Athletic Department.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Please contact: Ms. Labant, Athletic Secretary •District Athletic Office phone extensions are 2009 and 2010.
<p>My child is in grade 6, is he/she allowed to play on one of the school PIAA sports teams or at least be a mascot or manager?</p>	<p>No. Unfortunately, 6th grade students are not permitted to participate in official school PIAA sports in any capacity. At times, there are out of season open gym events for basketball or another sport which the coaches will plan. If 6th graders are invited to participate in a non PIAA sport or event it will be stated during the morning announcements.</p>	
<p>Do I have to pay for my child to participate in a PALMS PIAA sport?</p>	<p>No, PALMS PIAA athletes do not pay to participate. However, please make sure that all uniforms and equipment which are lent to your child by the district are returned to the coach at the end of the season in order to prevent being billed for unreturned items/articles.</p>	
 <p>What about sports equipment and uniforms which had been distributed to my child at start of the sports season?</p>	<p>All equipment and uniforms which were loaned to your child in order to participate in a specific sport must be returned to the coach on or before the last day of the season for that sport. Please do so at the end of the season so that there will be ample time for cleaning and preparing the equipment/uniform for future use. <i>A debt (to be paid by the student/student's parent/legal guardian) will be incurred and remain on the student's record for any unreturned equipment, uniforms, or unpaid debt.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Please contact: Ms. Labant, Athletic Secretary •District Athletic Office phone extensions are 2009 and 2010.