



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Introduction:

At St. Peter's Church of England Primary School we strive to achieve excellent attendance for all our pupils and our first aim is 'Expecting the best from all'. We work closely with children and parents in connection with attendance so that each child can reach their full potential. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this policy sets out how we can achieve this together.

Why Regular Attendance is so important:

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will not only disrupt your child's learning, but also their friendships in school and their self esteem. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so also affects the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Promoting Regular Attendance:

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give you details on attendance in our regular school newsletter;
- Report to you when your child's attendance is causing concern;
- Celebrate good or improving attendance by displaying class achievements;
- Reward good attendance through class competitions, certificates and events.
- All children who have 100 per cent attendance in any one term will receive an excellence certificate for attendance, awarded at the last assembly of the term. There are special certificates for any child who has 100 per cent attendance for a whole term and year.
- We have a weekly attendance and punctuality prize of an extra play time for the class with the best attendance and punctuality for the week. This is announced during 'Good News' assembly on a Friday to signify the importance to pupils and parents.

Understanding types of absence:

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absences when you are ill or a sibling is ill
- Day trips and holidays in term time.

Sometimes children can be reluctant to attend school for a variety of reasons. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

School targets, projects and special initiatives:

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

The minimum level of attendance for this school is 95% attendance and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares.

Our target is to achieve better than this however because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe our pupils can be amongst the best in the area.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made. Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided in our newsletter and we ask for your full support.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 15% or more schooling across the school year **for whatever reason**, including authorised absences. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents full support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority.

All our PA pupils and their parents will be invited to the school for a meeting where an

Action Plan will be put together. All cases of PA are also automatically made known to our Education Welfare Officer.

Children will be placed into category bands according to their attendance and punctuality rates, to determine the action taken by school;

CATEGORY BAND	LEVELS	ACTION
GOLD BAND	Attendance/ Punctuality 100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent attendance/punctuality will be celebrated.
GREEN BAND	Attendance/ Punctuality 100% to 96%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good attendance/punctuality will be celebrated.
YELLOW BAND 'BEGINNING TO CAUSE CONCERN'	Attendance/ Punctuality 96% to 93%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BEGINNING TO CAUSE CONCERN • Parents will receive a letter highlighting their child's low attendance/punctuality and asking for improvement to bring their child's attendance/punctuality to above 95%. • Parents may be called in for a meeting about their child's low attendance/ punctuality.
ORANGE BAND 'SERIOUS CONCERNS OVER ATTENDANCE'	Attendance/ Punctuality 93% to 90%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SERIOUS CONCERNS OVER ATTENDANCE • Parents will be called in for a meeting about their child's low attendance/ punctuality to identify reasons and discuss the effect of the absence on their child's progress. • A parental/school agreement/contract will be drawn up to improve attendance/ punctuality. • A FIXED PENALTY NOTICE MAY BE ISSUED.
RED BAND 'PUPIL IDENTIFIED AS PERSISTENTLY ABSENT AND IS IN A HIGH RISK GROUP'	Attendance/ Punctuality BELOW 90%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PUPIL IDENTIFIED AS PERSISTENTLY ABSENT AND IS IN A HIGH RISK GROUP • The child is classed as 'Persistently Absent'. A 'Common Assessment Framework' (CAF) may be drawn up to include all relevant agencies required to improve attendance/punctuality eg. Social Services, Educational Welfare, Family Support Service, Health Services, Police, etc. • A FIXED PENALTY NOTICE MAY BE ISSUED.

Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence;
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence and/or an medical note or appointment card;
- Or, you can call into school and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with you.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence - if we have not heard from you by 10am;

- If there is no reply from the initial text or phone call by 10.30am, a further phone call will be made to the phone numbers on the system;
- If there is still no response, this may trigger a home visit made by the Learning Mentors, Deputy Headteacher or Headteacher.

If your child is absent we will also:

- Write letters home to draw your attention to your child's attendance;
- Invite you into school to discuss the situation through our half termly Attendance Surgery;
- Refer the matter to the Education Welfare Officer if attendance becomes a problem.

Telephone numbers:

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

The Education Welfare Officer:

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the LA Education Welfare Officer. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Local Authority.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the Education Welfare Officer themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Education Authority.

Lateness:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

If your child is late, please bring them to reception so they can receive their mark for that session.

How we manage lateness:

The school day starts promptly at **8.50am** and we expect your child to be in class at that time.

Registers are marked by **9.00am** and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Attendance Officer to resolve the problem. This may also mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

Holidays in Term Time:

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time.

Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education. There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

Local Authority guidelines indicate that **no** holiday or extended leave can be authorised in term time.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Miss K. Hardman, Deputy Headteacher & Attendance Officer
Mr A. Whelan, Head Teacher
Mrs M. Sutton, Attendance Governor

Summary:

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.