



St Peter's C.E. Primary School

Attendance Policy

January 2022

Our Christian Vision

As a Christian family at St Peter's School, we create a unique place of learning, nurturing the gifts that God in His awesomeness has given us. We encourage every child and prepare them for life's journey, inspiring them to fulfil their potential, their dreams and their aspirations.

Sowing the seeds of tomorrow.

(Matthew 13:1-23)

At St Peter's we have a commitment to ensure regular, punctual attendance of pupils by:

- ❖ Encouraging each family to ensure that their child or children attend school every day, alert and ready for the day ahead. This enables them to achieve their full potential by having full access to a broad and balanced curriculum.
- ❖ Encouraging good habits of attendance and punctuality.
- ❖ Achieving a prompt and effective start to all school sessions.
- ❖ Keeping records of attendance in line with the current DfE requirements.
- ❖ Employing an active and effective monitoring system with strategies for encouraging good attendance.
- ❖ Following up any poor attendance, supporting to improve standards

Why Regular Attendance is so important:

Learning

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Pupil absence also disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Safeguarding

Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses:-

- ❖ Attendance
- ❖ Behaviour Management
- ❖ Health and Safety
- ❖ Access to the Curriculum
- ❖ Anti- bullying

Failing to attend school on a regular basis may be considered as a safeguarding matter.

Legally

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

At St Peter's we aim for 95% attendance from all children over the academic year. When a child's attendance falls below 90% the procedures in this policy will become active.

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable -

- (a) to his/her age, ability and aptitude, and
- (b) to any special educational needs he/she may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise

If parents do not carry out this responsibility, they may be prosecuted. Depending on the offence, the maximum fine per parent, per child is £1000 or £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

It is imperative that up-to-date contact numbers and details are provided to the school.

School is required to hold more than one emergency contact per child (Department for Education, Keeping children safe in education, 2019) Emergency contact numbers should be provided and updated by the parent with whom the pupil normally resides.

What is 'Persistent Absence'?

A pupil is defined as a 'Persistent Absentee' if they miss approximately 10% or more of all possible school sessions, regardless of whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Step 1

Any attendance less than 90% will result in a phone call from our attendance monitoring team, stating that the school expect to see some improvement and that attendance is now being monitored. If attendance continues to be a cause for concern a first letter will be sent out, notifying the parents that a possible referral to the Local Authority Inclusion Officer may be made if no further improvement is seen.

Step 2

If attendance remains below 90%, staff will be asking parents to attend school for a meeting to discuss any further support that may be required from the school's Family Wellbeing Co-ordinator to discuss possible issues and an action plan will be drawn up with strategies to support and improve further attendance.

Step 3

If there is no improvement then a referral to the Local Authority Inclusion Officer will be made and a letter sent out outlining these actions which may result in the issue of a penalty notice through the Local Authority.

Registration

Children MUST arrive at school between 8.45 and 8.55am when registers will be taken. This time includes a 'start of day activity' (SODA) to enable Worship to begin promptly at 9.00 am. It is important that the guidelines are followed and that registers are filled in accurately and sent to the office. Phone calls received from home on the day of absence are recorded on the duplicate message pad by the office staff. Letters will be initialled and dated by the teacher taking the register and sent to the office. They are collected and filed by the office staff each week. Letters can be collected up to 3 weeks after the absence.

Parents are asked to contact the school before 9am on the first day of illness. The office staff will telephone and/or text the parent of a child who is absent and for whom we have no phone call or letter. Failure to supply any reason for absences will result in an entry for unauthorised absence. Penalty Notices may be issued if there are more than 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absences in any term or 14 sessions (7 days) over 2 terms.

Documentation may be asked for in advance:

- ❖ To prove appointments i.e medical letters if a child is to be taken out of school before 3.30pm.
- ❖ There are frequent one-day absences due to reported illness.
- ❖ The same reasons for absence are frequently repeated.
- ❖ Where there is a particular medical problem, the school may need evidence in order to seek additional support or provide support.

This will also be monitored and followed up by the Family Wellbeing Co-ordinator.

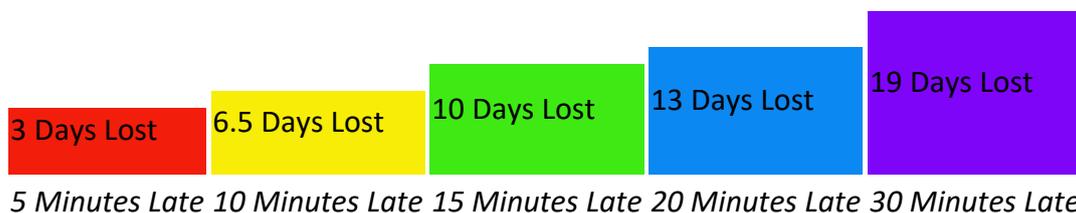
If staff are concerned about a child’s absence or there is no response to text messages, they could carry out any of the following: telephone calls to parents, other emergency contacts, home visits, referrals to the local authority Inclusion Officer or to the police for a welfare check.

When pupils arrive late they will be enter via the main entrance, speak to the office staff who will then complete the ‘Late book’. Teachers will follow up lateness with a conversation with parents at the end of the day or as soon as practical.

Persistent lateness is reported to the Family Wellbeing Co-ordinator who may contact parents via the telephone. If lateness continues to be an issue then parents will be invited to school to discuss any issues and support that can be given to improve punctuality. Punctuality can also become a safeguarding concern and in this event will be reported to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL).

Registers close after 9:30am. If a child turns up after this time this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence unless there is a valid reason. If a child is on school dinners and arrives after 10.00am in the morning they may be required to bring a packed lunch if the kitchen have begun cooking meals.

If a pupil arrives late to school every day, their learning begins to suffer. Below is a graph showing how being late to school every day over a school year adds up to lost learning time.



Religious observance

St Peters school acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that, on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance. It is reasonable for a parent to allow their children not to attend school on any day of religious observance if recognised by the parent’s religious body. However, parents are requested to give advance notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent. Religious bodies may be contacted to verify these occasions.

Traveller absence

Our school's aim for Traveller children, as for all other children, is that they will attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible.

The school can only operate effectively as the child's base school if it is engaged in ongoing dialogue with Traveller families. This means that parents must advise the school of their forthcoming travelling patterns before they happen and inform the school regarding proposed return dates.

The school will authorise absence of Traveller children if their parents are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel from place to place and have indicated that they intend to return.

Where Traveller children are registered pupils at a school and are known to be present either at a site (official or otherwise) or in a house and are not attending school, the absence will be investigated in the same way as that for any pupil.

Transfer to another school

If a child starts at a new school all information will be sent electronically to their new school once they have been admitted. Transfer and receipt of information is recorded on our electronic system.

Transfer to St Peter's from another school

When a child transfers to us the office administrators have a responsibility to ensure information is transferred from the previous school.

Holidays

Parents are expected to take children on holiday ONLY during the school holidays. Holidays in term time will not be authorised unless there are exceptional circumstances. If a request is made, a reply will be sent in writing to the parent to communicate the decision. This will be recorded as a G on the school register. Fixed penalty fines may be issued by the Inclusion officer at the Local Authority to any parent of a child who has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence in one term or 14 or more across 2 consecutive terms.

Reporting to Parents

The number of sessions of attendance, lateness and unauthorised absence are reported annually on the child's report in July. Parents will be contacted if there are any particular concerns regarding the number of absences a child has.

Role of the Family Wellbeing Co-ordinator

The Family Wellbeing Co-ordinator will be a point of contact for parents if they have any attendance issues within school. Part of their role is to monitor lateness and absences on a regular basis. This may result in a phone call to ask for reasons for absence. The FWC will also support families in their efforts to get the children to school, wherever possible.

Role of Local Authority Inclusion Officer

The Inclusion Officer will work closely with the school and will become involved when unauthorised attendance falls below 85%. The Inclusion Officer will follow up any difficulties of attendance or communication with parents. The official referral forms will be used for this process and records of visits kept confidentially in school.

Penalty Notices

Requests for penalty notices will be submitted to the local authority no later than 6 weeks after the original offence, or at the end of the subsequent half term, whichever is shorter. The local authority will issue the penalty notice by first class post. These are sent to each parent and should be paid within a 21 day period. Failure to do so will result in an increased fine and possible court proceedings.

Attendance Rewards

Each week class attendance is celebrated in Monday morning worship. The infant class and junior class with the highest attendance are given a teddy prize to look after for the week. Every term, all children with 100% attendance get a certificate. At the end of the year, there will be a prize draw for 100% attenders over the full year and every child will be celebrated with a certificate.

Role of the Governors

Attendance figures for staff and pupils are reported and challenged at termly governors meetings.

Signed:

Date: