

St Peter's Catholic Primary School



Attendance Policy

Approved by: The Governing Body

Date: 29.11.22

Last reviewed on: November 2022

Next review due by: November 2024



Attendance Policy

To ensure children make good progress at St. Peter's, attendance at school is vital. Independent evidence shows that if a child's attendance drops to 90% or less, there is a significant impact with underachievement. This revised Attendance Policy ensures that St. Peter's continues to be in line with the DfE and Hampshire County Council common approach. The headteacher is responsible for the strategic overview of attendance at St Peter's School.

Attendance

It is the responsibility of parents or carers that their child attends the school day and to inform the school if their child is absent.

The Attendance Register is an important legal document and attendance of all children is marked twice a day by the class teacher. Children are marked either present, late or absent. There are Absence and Attendance Codes as set out by the Department for Education. We have included these for reference in this policy.

In the morning, the register is open in class at 8.50am and closed at 9.00am. If the child comes in after this time, they must sign in late at the office. The child will be marked with 'L', meaning that they are late after the register closed at 9.00am. The number of late marks are reported as part of the end of year statement to parents.

Children arriving after 9.20am report to the office and be marked 'U' (unauthorised absence) for that morning session, meaning they are late and arrived after the register closed (unless the lateness is due to an authorised/valid reason eg. a medical appointment).

In the afternoon the register opens at the start of the afternoon session and closes 20 minutes later – Start of afternoon sessions: 1.00pm for Yr R and KS1 and 1.10pm for KS2.

Further guidance on attendance and lateness can be found in our information leaflet for parents entitled *Attendance Guide*.

Non-Attendance (Absence)

Parents are responsible for informing the school office of any absences [including absence due to illness] from school before 9.30am by:

- a) reporting through the dedicated absence line on the school's phone system. The number is the same as the school number (01962 852820) and the absence reporting facility can be selected.
- b) Emailing admin@st-peters.hants.sch.uk
- c) If a child has a medical appointment, then this must be recorded on our 'Notification of absence from school due to Medical Appointments Form' (Appendix C) preferably before the event, but if unable to do so can be completed upon return, but the office must be informed by 9.30am on the date of absence.
- d) Completing a 'Request to authorise absence from school due to exceptional circumstances'. This will be considered and signed by our Headteacher.

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If a child is absent and the school office has not been informed by 9.30am then the following action is taken:

1. There is a designated attendance monitor in the office who works their way through each register ensuring all children are accounted for. All unaccounted for children will be followed up starting with all known vulnerable children. This role is a priority in the office and we aim for completion between 10-10.30am.
2. The School Office will contact the first designated parent/contact. If the school receives no reply then second designated parent/contact is rung, until all contacts have been exhausted.
3. If no contact can be made then a home visit may ensue.
4. If contact is unsuccessful, the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL/ Child and Family Support Worker (CFSW) will be informed and the appropriate action will be taken. The DSL or Deputy DSL/CFSW will act to resolve the issue, however, if not resolved, outside agencies will be contacted as appropriate.
5. If contact cannot be made the school will be following the Child Missing in Education guidelines – completing all actions.
6. Actions with rationale will be recorded in on CPOMS.

Parents are responsible for keeping the school informed about any absence of their child from school. The school must report all absences to the Department for Education and an electronic record is maintained for each child.

Authorised Absence

A child may be absent from school for a number of valid reasons, e.g. illness, medical appointments etc. There is a code for each - see Absence and Attendance Codes from Hampshire Code of Practice included in this policy (Appendix A).

Unauthorised Absence

If a child is absent without having informed the school of the reason an unauthorised mark will be recorded against the child's attendance record.

If a child receives any unauthorised absences for 10 sessions (5 school days) during any 100 sessions (10 weeks) period, a Penalty Notice will be issued by Hampshire County Council and confirmed by the Head teacher (Section 444A of the Education Act 1996).

A Penalty Notice is a fine which may be issued as an alternative to prosecution. Its intention is to help parents and carers improve their child's school attendance.

We will continue to work closely with families where absence or lateness is a concern. We will support to help improve attendance so that a Penalty Notice can be avoided.

The main reasons for the issue of a Penalty Notice will be:

- 'U' Late and arrived after the register closed
- 'O' Other unauthorised (not covered by other codes or descriptions)
- 'G' Family Holiday (not agreed or sessions in excess of agreement)
- If a child is persistently late before the close of register 'L'. In this case, the school will meet to support parents with their child attending school on time. If

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after an agreed period lateness continues to be persistent, further lateness will be unauthorised with code 'O' and a Penalty Notice issued after 10 late sessions.

- If a child is marked with an unauthorised absence for one session during the week of formal testing (SATs).

In most cases, a warning notification will be given to parents or carers by the school of a Penalty Notice being issued.

If a Penalty Notice is issued, there is no right of appeal for parents or carers.

Hampshire County Council information and advice for parents and carers on Penalty Notices for non-attendance at school is included with this policy. Alternatively it can be downloaded from www.hants.gov.uk.

Non-attendance – Exceptional Circumstances

Parents or carers can request to authorise absence from school due to Exceptional Circumstances by completing the corresponding form. This form details whether a request has been approved or not approved. If the request in whole or in part is not approved, then the number of sessions unauthorised will be stated. This form will also constitute a warning towards procedures for a Penalty Notice.

What constitutes an 'exceptional' request is decided at the discretion of the Head teacher. These are usually circumstances where there is a need to exercise compassion e.g. a family bereavement. Each request is considered on its individual merit. Term time holidays/family events will not be authorised unless these too are for an exceptional reason (we are no longer able to authorise a day's grace for a holiday/family event). Other requests that are not considered 'exceptional', will be unauthorised.

Parents and carers should also use this form to request absence from school for any one or more sessions e.g. a medical appointment.

A copy of this updated request form is also included in this policy (Appendix B).

Non-attendance – Exceptional Circumstances

Parents or carers can request to authorise absence

Promotion and Celebration of Good Attendance

We celebrate high attendance for year groups and/or classes through certificates presented in assembly, additional breaks, newsletter announcements etc.

Meanwhile we celebrate improvement in attendance, for example children on individual support plans will have rewards while those with more general improvement within the wider school may also be celebrated.

Monitoring Attendance

We have invested in Arbor as our school Management Information Systems. This allows for efficient and effective monitoring of individual and group attendance.

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Please refer to the 'General Procedures for Encouraging Good Attendance' within the appendix of this policy for greater detail with regards monitoring and follow up.

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APPENDIX A

Code	Description	Meaning
/	Present (morning session). Present	Present
\	Present (afternoon session). Present.	Present
B	Educated off site (not dual registered)	(Present at an) approved educational activity.
C	Other authorised circumstance (not covered by any other code). This code is used for the absence through agreed part-time pupils and pupils on flexi-schooling (see flexi-schooling guidance).	Authorised absence.
D	Dual registration, ie pupil is registered at more than one school and is attending another establishment.	Not counted in possible sessions' attendance for the child or school.
E	Excluded (no alternative provision)	Authorised absence.
G	Family holiday (not agreed or days in excess of agreement).	Unauthorised absence
H	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointments).	Authorised absence
J	Interview.	(Present at an) approved educational activity
L	Late (before register closes).	Present
M	Medical/dental appointment.	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence.	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code).	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity.	Present at an) approved educational activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after register closes).	Unauthorised absence
V	Education visit or trip.	(Present at an) approved educational activity
W	Work experience.	(Present at an) approved educational activity
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced enclosure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll.	Not counted in possible attendances
#	Planned school closure to pupils, such as INSET days or school used as a polling station.	Not counted in possible attendance

Request to authorise absence from school due to exceptional circumstances

Schools are only able to authorise absence from school in exceptional circumstances. In making a request for an authorised absence from school you will need to explain why the circumstances are exceptional. Please note there is no general right to authorise absence for a family holiday and if you take your child out of school without permission the absence will be unauthorised and we will consider legal action.

You are advised not to make any arrangements until your request has been considered.

Section A – to the Headteacher, I wish to apply for

Child's name: _____ Class: _____

To be authorised as absent from school (please include dates and time):

from _____ to _____ Total No. of Days: _____
(inclusive dates)

If your child has siblings in another primary/secondary school that are also applying for leave of absence please enter their name and school below. This is so that we can ensure that both schools are equally informed:

Child's name(s): _____ School(s): _____

Section B

Please explain why you are applying for an authorised absence and the circumstances which make your application exceptional; and therefore why the leave cannot be taken within the normal 13 weeks annual holiday your child already has from school. If you are requesting authorisation to attend a specific event, for example a funeral, please confirm the date of the event and explain your travel arrangements. If you require additional space please continue on the other side of the page.

Section C

I am the parent/carer with whom the pupil normally resides. The information I have given on this form is correct.

Signature (parent/carer): _____ Date: _____

Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 have been amended (as of 1 September 2013) to prohibit the proprietor (Headteacher) of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

Section D – for school use only

Tick as appropriate

Applied for _____ Sessions Dates: _____

Request approved for _____ number of Sessions

Request not approved for _____ [number of sessions] as the circumstances are not considered to constitute an exceptional reason and/or the impact of this absence will affect your child's educational progress.

A personal discussion with you is requested. Please contact the Headteacher, for an appointment.

Date Arranged for: _____

Current attendance rate: _____ %

Sessions already taken this academic Year: _____

PLEASE NOTE: This leave of absence form serves as a Penalty Notice Warning letter to parent/carers. Any unauthorised absence during this period of time may be subject to a Penalty Notice for non-attendance being issued.

Headteacher

Date: _____

Notification of absence from school due to Medical Appointments

This form should be completed if you wish to take your child(ren) out of school for any medical appointment. The school has a legal requirement to keep a record of all absences.

It would be helpful if you could give advance notice of forthcoming appointments

Section A – to the Headteacher, I wish to inform you that:

Child's name: _____ Class: _____

To be authorised as absent from school (please include dates and time):

From Date: _____ Time: _____

To Date: _____ Time: _____
(inclusive dates)

Section B

Please give reason for appointment:

Section C

I am the parent/carer with whom the pupil normally resides. The information I have given on this form is correct.

Signature (parent/carer): _____ Date: _____

Section D – for School use only:

Total Hours:



St Peter's Catholic Primary School Encouraging Good Attendance

General Procedures

Daily

- Daily Register AM & PM accurately taken by class teacher
- First morning of absence not notified, generates contact by admin staff- following days depending on circumstance
- Staff to inform, head teacher, DSLs or Child and Family Support Worker (CFSW) of any concerns- who will follow up accordingly
- Please refer to attendance policy for all timings

Weekly

- Weekly attendance data provided by admin- through Arbor
- Weekly welfare check on children with social workers including attendance by, head teacher or CFSW
- Office have basic knowledge of above children and will notify, head teacher if they are away – and everyone aware of the 10 day absence rule - need to inform Hants.

Half termly

- Monitoring of below 90%, letters (2), (3) or (4) depending

Half -Yearly (February)

- Write to all below 90% child's parents using letter (2)

Lateness

- If persistent lateness, head teacher to send punctuality letter (5)
- Discuss lateness with parents
- If no improvement, make referrals as appropriate.
- Please refer to attendance policy for timings

Requests for leave of term time absences

- Requests for medical appointments are scrutinised to minimise absence
- Headteacher should only grant leave of absence in exceptional circumstances.

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Under 90%

- Consider illness absence not being authorised
- Send letters (2), (3) or (4) depending
- Headteacher meet with parents depending on circumstance of absence and history
- Plan immediate improvement- with support from the CFSW
- Discuss with relevant agencies eg Early Help Hub
- If absence still occurs consider fine

The Headteacher and Child and Family Support Worker (CFSW) will:

- Be responsible for pupil and school attendance data and meeting local and national targets
- Monitor local and national attendance levels
- Ensure parents are aware of the importance of attendance
- Send letter (1) to all families at the beginning of each school year stating expectations
- Send expectation letter (1) included in all induction packs and for new starters- including in-year
- Celebrate good attendance in the school community through weekly newsletter, certificates, social media
- Ensure parents are informed of current attendance at parent's evenings and with children's annual written report
- Devise individual attendance support plans
- Co- ordinate and monitor all of the above.
- Ensure escalation process is consistently followed with discretion where appropriate.
- Organise home visit with pupil and CFSW if required
- Make inter agency referrals where appropriate
- Work with local King's partnership to drive improvement and work in partnership to support shared families
- Work within the structure set by Hants for improving school attendance
- Monitor attendance of vulnerable groups – SEN/LAC/PP/EAL/Forces
- Decide if referring to the Attendance Legal Panel (ALP), or issue a penalty notice, when there are 10 or more unauthorised sessions of absence, across 100 sessions (50 days).

Celebration of Good Attendance

- Highest attendance – year groups/classes celebrated through certificates presented in assembly, additional breaks, newsletter announcements
- Celebration of improvement in attendance – for children on individual support plans or general improvement within the wider school

Letter 1

Dear Parents

Attendance

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education.

Once parents decide to have their child registered at a school, they then have a **legal duty** to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of exceptional circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in **advance** from the school.

Children are given thirteen weeks off school therefore holidays should be taken during the school holiday period. As such, schools may **not legally** grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are 'exceptional circumstances' which are at the discretion of the headteacher. The headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant granting of leave, normally where the situation is both essential and completely out of the control of the family.

If a request for leave of absence is not granted by the headteacher and the pupil does not attend school at this time, their absence will be recorded as unauthorised and the school may seek legal intervention, with the backing of the local authority. It is likely that a penalty notice will be issued and the matter will be pursued legally.

Please be aware that a maximum of five days, ten school sessions, can be authorised for 'exceptional circumstance' at the discretion of the headteacher. Should your child be away from school unauthorised for five days/ten sessions within a 50 day/100 sessions period then a Penalty Notice will be generated and you may be fined by the Local Authority.

Thank you for your understanding and your support in ensuring that children receive the best possible education by attending school regularly.

Yours faithfully



Louise Buxton
Headteacher

Letter 2

Recipient(s) Title Recipient(s) Last Name

Recipient(s) Postal Address

Current Date (Long)

Student(s) Full Name Student(s) Year Group Student(s) Registration Form Student(s) Date of Birth

Dear Recipient(s) Title Recipient(s) Last Name

I am writing to you because I am concerned about the low attendance of your child, *Student(s) First Name*, which is currently below 90%. This figure is below the nationally agreed figure of 96% which recognises 'good' attendance. Children with a percentage below 90% are regarded as persistent absentees.

As a parent you are legally obliged to ensure that your child attends school regularly, we also have a legal obligation to follow up on low attendance.

Poor attendance at school can have a substantial negative impact on a child's learning, we would like to support you to ensure that *Student(s) First Name* has every chance to succeed in their education, we will now be closely monitoring *his/her/their* attendance. Please find attached a copy of the latest attendance certificate for *Student(s) First Name* for your perusal.

If there are any special circumstances with regards *Student(s) First Name*, please do get in touch so we can discuss this further.

Yours sincerely

Louise Buxton
Headteacher

Letter 3

Recipient(s) Title Recipient(s) Last Name

Recipient(s) Postal Address

Current Date (Long)

Student(s) Full Name Student(s) Year Group Student(s) Registration Form Student(s) Date of Birth

Dear Recipient(s) Title Recipient(s) Last Name

I am writing to you because I am concerned about the low attendance of your child, *Student(s) First Name*, which is currently below 90%. This figure is below the nationally agreed figure of 96% which recognises 'good attendance'. Children with percentages below 90% are regarded as 'persistent absentees'.

As a parent you are legally obliged to ensure that your child attends school regularly, we also have a legal obligation to follow up any low attendance.

Poor attendance at school can have a substantial negative impact on a child's learning, we would like to support you to ensure that *Student(s) First Name* has every chance to succeed in their education, we will now be closely monitoring *his/her/their* attendance. Please find attached a copy of the latest attendance certificate for *Student(s) First Name* for your perusal.

I would appreciate it if you could contact the office and make an appointment so we can discuss ways to help *Student(s) First Name* improve *his/her/their* attendance.

Yours sincerely

Louise Buxton
Headteacher

Letter 4

Recipient(s) Title Recipient(s) Last Name

Recipient(s) Postal Address

Current Date (Long)

Student(s) Full Name Student(s) Year Group Student(s) Registration Form Student(s) Date of Birth

Dear Recipient(s) Title Recipient(s) Last Name

I am writing to you because I am concerned about the low attendance of your child, *Student(s) First Name*, which is currently below 90%. This figure is below the nationally agreed figure of 96% which recognises 'good attendance'. Children with percentages below 90% are regarded as 'persistent absentees'.

As a parent you are legally obliged to ensure that your child attends school regularly, we also have a legal obligation to follow up any low attendance.

Poor attendance at school can have a substantial negative impact on a child's learning, we would like to support you to ensure that *Student(s) First Name* has every chance to succeed in *his/her/their* education, we will now be closely monitoring *his/her/their* attendance. Please find attached a copy of the latest attendance certificate for *Student(s) First Name* for your perusal.

Whilst we fully accept that in many circumstances, illness is a genuine and unavoidable reason for absence we do feel it is important for you to understand the impact of school days missed. Please therefore be aware that any attendance lower than 90% will now be unauthorised, unless supported by medical evidence. Any further unauthorised absence may be subject to a Penalty Notice or referral to the Attendance Legal Panel.

Thank you for your continued support in working together with us to improve attendance and to enable *Student(s) First Name* to reach *his/her/their* full potential.

Yours sincerely

Louise Buxton
Headteacher

Letter 5

Recipient(s) Title Recipient(s) Last Name

Recipient(s) Postal Address

Current Date (Long)

Student(s) Full Name Student(s) Date of Birth Student(s) Year Group Student(s) Registration Form

Dear Recipient(s) Title Recipient(s) Last Name

I am writing to you with regards punctuality. Since September, Student(s) First Name has been late a number of times, this includes a late mark (L) for arriving between 9 and 9.20am or an unauthorised absence (U) because he/she/they arrived after the register closed at 9.20am.

The classroom doors open at 8.40am and close at 8.50am. As a parent you are legally obliged to ensure that your child arrives to school on time, we also have a legal obligation to follow up any low attendance.

Persistent lateness at school can have a substantial negative impact on a child's learning, as well as being disruptive to other class members. We would like to support you in ensuring that Student(s) First Name has every chance to succeed at school and as such will be closely monitoring his/her/their attendance. Please find attached a copy of the latest certificate for your perusal.

If there are any special circumstances that we should be aware of, please do get in touch.

Yours sincerely

Louise Buxton
Headteacher