



**ST PETER'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

'Be the Good Soil' Mark 4: 1-20

'In Jesus we learn, love and grow together'

ATTENDANCE POLICY



St Peter's Church of England Primary School

Attendance Policy

Introduction:

At St. Peter's Church of England Primary School, we strive to achieve excellent attendance for all our pupils. 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.

"Attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all pupils and should therefore be seen as everyone's responsibility" (Department for Education, 2022)

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.

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.

Authorised absences are a morning or afternoon off school for a good reason such as;

Illness – this will be reviewed dependent on the reason for absence

Medical appointments – Evidence of the appointment should be provided to authorise the absence. Parents would also be expected to bring the child before the appointment and

after where this is possible.

Religious Observance – The head teacher will authorise 1 day where this falls in school time following guidance from the Local Authority or school community. In this instance, a letter will be sent out to parents to inform them of this.

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

The following are not acceptable reasons to be absent from school and will be unauthorised:

- Absences when a parent/carer is ill or a sibling is ill
- Day trips and holidays in term time.
- Shopping
- Birthdays
- Looking after family or siblings
- Having a haircut
- Visiting relatives
- Parents/carers keeping children off school because they said school was closed
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late
- Thought school was still closed following a half term holiday

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 96% 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 Absentees (PA):

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% 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 'Early Health Assessment' (EHA) 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 by telephone before 9am on the first day of absence;
- Or, you can call into school and report the absence at the school office.

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 Pastoral Officer, Deputy Headteacher or Headteacher.

If your child's levels of absence are becoming a concern, we will:

- Write letters home to draw your attention to your child's attendance;
- Invite you into school to discuss recurring absences and how we could offer support;
- Have discussions with the Education Welfare Officer regarding additional support.

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 the earliest opportunity to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful.

If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school may refer the child to the Local Authority Education Welfare Officer. He/she will work with parents through an individual attendance plan.

In some circumstances where this level of intervention is unsuccessful, these officers can use further sanctions such as legal panels and prosecutions in court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are stated in the DFE guidance 2022, Working Together to Improve School Attendance.

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 miss vital information that is the initial input to the morning lesson. Late arriving pupils also disrupt assemblies and lessons, which 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 Pastoral Officer or discuss with the Education Welfare Officer to resolve the problem. Continual lateness could also result in a Penalty Notice.

Holidays/Extended Leave During Term Time:

Taking holidays in term time has a detrimental affect on 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.

Extended leave must be requested through the specific request form held at the school office at least 28 days prior to the first day of absence. Any additional documentation to support the request must also be provided. The request should be completed in full and state where the pupil will be located during the period of absence, in line with safeguarding procedures.

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 or even loss of your child's school place.

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Mr D. Wood, Deputy Headteacher & Attendance Officer

Mr A. Whelan, Head Teacher

Mrs M. Sutton, Attendance Governor

Mrs F. Dawson, Pastoral Officer

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.

"The foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn"
(Department for Education, 2022)

COVID-19 Addendum to the Attendance Policy

Version 1.0 - June 2020

Context

On 20th March 2020, as a result of Covid-19 and the Government's resulting social distancing strategy schools closed to all learners except those of critical workers, those with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and those learners categorised as vulnerable. As such, although St Peter's Church of England Primary School has never fully closed and has remained open initially to children of critical/keyworkers and those deemed vulnerable, there are many learners who have not been in school for some time.

We have committed to the wider opening of our schools based on the condition that there will be sound national medical and scientific evidence that it is safe to do so. 'Wider Opening' means a resumption of our core business of education, rather than the current limited arrangements which are, in effect, organised as childcare for key workers and vulnerable pupils. We want our children back in school so that we can support them more effectively from an academic, social and welfare perspective.

This addendum supports our school's attendance policy in clearly outlining the processes that will be followed in recording attendance, in line with the Government's guidance, as well as ensuring school attendance is maximised for those groups expected to be in school.

This addendum applies from 24/06/20 and will be in operation until further notice and will be reviewed in line with the Government's reviews of legislation and guidance in the coming weeks and months.

There may be circumstances where it is necessary for the school to close to some or all groups of pupils, i.e. where we are instructed to close by the Local Authority in the event of a localised Coronavirus outbreak. In the event of this happening, the provisions of this addendum will be suspended in part or whole for the duration of the school closure.

Our Guiding Principles

1. We will follow Government guidance on the wider opening of our school; however, we have made local decisions about the extent of provision that can be offered to families. This is to maintain the health and safety of our children and staff and is a function of the school building(s) as well as the resources available to us.

2. We will continue to provide provision at school for the families of critical/key worker children and those identified as vulnerable.

3. We will prioritise educational provision in this order: vulnerable pupils and children with EHCPs; children of critical/key workers then children of core year groups and other children. This will apply where the Headteacher identifies a high risk of limited capacity in school, this may be due to staff absence or where the anticipated number of children arriving in school is too high to maintain a safe adult to child ratio. Government guidance states that settings have the flexibility to focus first on continuing to provide places for priority groups and then to other children ¹.

1. Government guidance on group or class sizes

4. We will follow existing Government guidance on attendance and absence and the provisions of the Coronavirus Act 2020. We will not penalise parents if their child or children do not attend school. All absence will be authorised in line with Government guidance.

5. We will follow the Government's guidance in recording and reporting on attendance as our school opens its doors to more pupils.

This addendum will be reviewed following any Government review of the guidance (the next review date will be before 1 July 2020)².

² Attendance guidance link

This addendum relates to recording and reporting on the attendance and absence of five groups of pupils:

1. Children of critical/key workers, some of whom may not be on this school's roll ordinarily.
2. Vulnerable children
3. Children with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)
4. Other children, i.e. those in reception, year 1 and 6 in primary schools, any child requiring a place in a special school, and year 10 and 12 in secondary schools.
5. Children whose education is being supported remotely at home who are not in one of the groups identified above.

NB These groups are not mutually exclusive.

The Government guidance issued on 28 May 2020 (3) stated that from the point at which they open to wider groups of pupils schools will need to do the following:

- Schools should resume taking an attendance register for all pupils.
- Schools should use the codes suggested in the guidance to record attendance and absence in the attendance register.
- All settings should submit daily attendance figures to the Department for Education using the educational setting status form by midday every day.

Recording pupil attendance on the school's attendance register

From 23rd March 2020 to the **15th June 2020** the following applies to **St Peter's Church of England Primary School**.

- Use # for all pupils on the attendance register.
- Complete and submit attendance data to the DfE using the relevant form, including staff numbers in school/on site.

³ Link to DfE guidance issued 28 May 2020

- Share this information with the schools / Trusts Data manager / attendance leader / administrative manager who collates and shares this information with the Local Authority as and when required.

From the date the school opens to wider groups of pupils dependent on inductions and phasing for students taking place if applicable, following guidance applies. This supersedes the processes outlined above.

Pupils who are eligible to attend and do attend, i.e. pupils in one or more of groups above.

- Use / = am \ = pm.

Pupils who are not eligible to attend a session, i.e. those in group 5 above who will not return to school nor in groups above.

- Use X on the attendance register.

Pupils who are eligible to attend a session but do not, apply the following code on the attendance register dependent on circumstances. The Government guidance states that 'at this time, all absence should be regarded as authorised'.

- Use Y (pupil absence due to exceptional circumstances) where (a) a child is shielding, (b) a child is self-isolating or (c) have an EHCP and a risk assessment has determined that their needs cannot be met in school. See below for further information. Temporary codes have also been created in sims to allow for more accurate recording.
- Use I (illness) where a child is too ill to attend school.
- Use C (authorised absence) where a child who is expected to be in school does not attend.

The child may be in any one or more of groups above.

Pupils who are not ordinarily on your school roll should be added to your register as a guest pupil, and attendance codes recorded as above. These pupils should continue to be added to the form submitted to DfE on a daily basis. The home school will need to record the pupil as B (approved off site educational provision) and the attendance or absence of these pupils should be shared with the home school.

Pupils on your school roll who are currently dual registered, e.g. with a PRU or in Alternative Provision, should be recorded as a D code for the sessions they are attending AP or a PRU/another school.

Absence due to other reasons

- Use the appropriate code to record absence of pupils due to other circumstances, e.g. M for medical appointments, etc. This applies to only those pupils who are expected in school.

4 See Note 1 on the DfE guidance

Deep Cleans

Where a school has a planned or sudden closure in order to undertake a deep clean, pupils should be coded as X code given that pupils are not expected to attend

Partial timetables

Where a partial timetable has been agreed for an individual pupil who falls into one or more of groups above the X code should be used on the sessions where the pupil is not expected to attend.

Staggered start times

Where a staggered start time is in place, pupils arriving within the timescales agreed with parents or carers use the attendance codes as normal. For pupils arriving later than 30 minutes after their agreed start time the L code should be used.

Pupils who are unable to attend school

'Extremely clinically vulnerable' (5) pupils - these children have been advised to shield and relevant medical advice should be followed. Please indicate in the notes (code Y).

Pupils with EHCPs whose needs are unable to be met at this time, following a risk assessment. The RA should be reviewed periodically. Please indicate in the notes (code Y).

Pupils living in 'shielding households'. At present, Government advice is that pupils living in a household with someone who is extremely clinically vulnerable should attend school only if all pupils in their 'bubble' can adhere to stringent social distancing. This may not be possible. Please indicate in the notes (code Y).

Pupils who are self-isolating. This will be a temporary absence of at least 14 days. Please indicate in the notes (code Y).

Pupils who do not attend for other reasons

We anticipate that a significant minority of pupils of those who can return to school on the **16th June 2020** will not do so. In these circumstances we are sympathetic to parents' views and the decision they have made with regard to their child or children returning to school. Efforts should be made by teaching and pastoral staff to encourage children to return to school, focused on vulnerable children and those with EHCPs. In the interim, work should continue to be provided for children to undertake at home, in line with the school's plans for providing remote learning for all pupils.

5 Link to Government guidance on extreme clinical vulnerability and shielding

Recording attendance in temporary staffing groups

Pupils in our school will be taught in class sizes of no more than 10-15 in line with Government guidance; in practice, the size of the group or 'bubbles' are likely to be smaller than 15.

Our school will follow all relevant guidance for maintaining the safety of pupils in school and will review and adapt provision should the guidance change (6).

We will adapt our school registers as needed to enable staff to record attendance accurately and efficiently, this may include creating new groupings for the pupils expected to attend. We will also adapt our reporting facility in SIMs, as necessary, to enable school leaders to accurately track and monitor the attendance and absence of pupils. This, in turn, will support the school in providing information to its senior leadership team, the DfE, the Trust (if applicable) and the LA. There is no expectation that attendance or absence figures will be used for accountability purposes for the duration of the provisions of this addendum, in line with the Government's statement (7).

Reporting on pupil attendance and absence to DfE, the Trust (if applicable) and the Local Authority

Schools should continue to provide information to DfE by midday on a daily basis via the online Form (8).

6 Implementing protective measures in schools

7 See Attendance reporting

8 <https://form.education.gov.uk/service/educational-setting-status>

Links to relevant Government guidance and legislation

Government guidance on recording attendance and absence, covering the wider opening of schools from 1 June 2020

Attendance guidance for schools (with reference to updates to legislation regarding attendance and registration)

Further information can be found here:

- Attendance legislation (from 1 June 2020)
- Link to Attendance legislation disapplication at gov.uk page
- School registration legislation (from 1 June 2020)
- Link to School Registration modification notice at gov.uk page