

# **St.Peter's C.E. Primary School**



## **Attendance and Punctuality Policy**

Updated: September 2022

To be reviewed: July 2023



## **Attendance and Punctuality Policy**

*It is law that all children attend school. We expect all children to be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. However, we will challenge the behaviour of children and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.*

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## 1. Introduction

1.1 At St.Peter's we expect all pupils to:

- Attend every school day
- Attend school punctually
- Attend school prepared for the day

1.2 We believe that attending school, on time, is key to enabling children to make the most of the opportunities we offer to prepare them for their future.

1.3 We will work in partnership with our families to identify the reasons for poor attendance; supporting them in addressing any barriers to attendance for their child.

1.4 Promoting good attendance is a matter for the whole school community. This policy sets out our expectations and our approach. Our approach is in line with the Department for Education's guidance (May 2022) 'Working together to improve school attendance' which applies from September 2022.

1.5 Our approach to securing good attendance, in line with Ofsted's research, can be summarised as *'Listen, understand, empathise and support – but do not tolerate.'*

1.6 Every pupil should be able learn in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from harm. Attending school regularly promotes the welfare and safety of children whilst they are not in the care of their parents/carers.

1.7 In the case of specific illnesses that require pupils to be kept off school, parents should follow public health advice to ensure the wellbeing of the whole school community. These illnesses are Chickenpox, Diarrhoea and Vomiting, Impetigo, Measles, Mumps, Scabies, Scarlet Fever and Whooping Cough – see '[How long should you keep your child off school – checklist poster](#)'

1.8 This policy will be applied consistently and fairly. In applying this policy, we will take into account the needs of individual pupils.

1.9 This policy is supported by other school policies and procedures e.g., admissions, safeguarding and child protection, anti-bullying, behaviour and inclusive practice.

1.10 This policy takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equalities Act 2010, the Race Relations Act 2000 and the 1996 Education Act.

## 2. Expectations

- 2.1 It is our responsibility to maintain a culture that promotes good attendance which is supported by consistently applied systems.
- 2.2 Our dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing, improving and supporting parents with their child's attendance is Miss Hannah Whiteside: 0161-764-2017.
- 2.3 Other staff in school who support attendance on a day to day basis are Michelle Haworth, Carly Gardner (administration staff), Emma Rushton (attendance support)
- 2.4 Parents/ carers must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs they may have, by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- 2.5 We are committed to working with parents to promote positive attendance. We expect all our **parents** to:
- Maintain effective routines at home to support good attendance
  - Contact the school as soon as possible if your child is absent to let us know the reason for the absence and the expected date of return.
  - Avoid unnecessary absences. For example, pre-planned medical/ dental appointments should take place outside of school hours.
  - Inform us of any change in circumstances that may impact on your child's attendance.
  - Support us by becoming involved in your child's education, acknowledging the value of education and the importance of children receiving the same messages from home and school
  - Work with us to address any barriers to attendance for your child including attending all meetings requested to discuss attendance issues.
- 2.7 We expect all our **pupils** to:
- Be aware of when they should attend school
  - Attend all lessons on time and be ready to learn
  - Speak to a member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance
  - Communicate with parents/ carers to encourage a written explanation to be shared with school to explain any absence that has happened or is foreseen
  - Follow the school procedure if they arrive late

### **3. Reporting absence**

3.1 If a child is to be absent from school, parents should report absence by contacting the school office before 9.30am to report the absence. Contact must be made in one of the following ways:

- Telephone 0161 764 2017
- Email [stpeters@bury.gov.uk](mailto:stpeters@bury.gov.uk)
- In person at the school office.

3.2 Our procedures are as follows;

- If a reason for absence has not been provided before 9:30am a text will be sent out to remind you to contact school.
- If no contact has been made by 10:00am school will telephone to establish a reason for absence.
- If there is no reply on the telephone and we still have no reason for your child's absence, a member of staff will conduct a home visit to check that all is well.

This is what currently happens:

Vulnerable children – text before 10am, phone call in the afternoon, no contact results in home visit

Not vulnerable – text before 10am, phone call if no contact the next day, no contact next day home visit made

3.3 If an absence is expected to continue beyond three days, parents are asked to maintain daily contact with the school to indicate how long the child is likely to remain absent. The school's attendance lead may contact you beforehand to discuss your child's absence and any ways that the school can provide support. If the family is supported by a social worker, then the social worker will be informed of the absence.

3.4 When a child returns from an absence, medical evidence needs to be provided for any absence longer than 3 days.

Please note: parents must provide school with at least two contact numbers.

### **4. Family Holidays**

4.1 Family holidays should be arranged during school holidays. All absence is bad for a child's education. Due to Government guidelines, from September 2013 (updated October 2018), the Headteacher cannot authorise any holidays in term time (except in very exceptional circumstances).

4.2 Parents must request permission from the Headteacher in advance of the holiday in writing. All requests are considered by the Headteacher whose decision it is to authorise the absence or not.

4.3 In cases where a pupil is absent from school, without permission of the school, the parent/carer of the pupil may be issued with a £60.00 Penalty Notice per parent per child. If the notice remains unpaid after 21 days, the penalty increases to £120.00. If the notice remains unpaid after 28 days, the

Local Authority may commence proceedings under section 444(1) of the 1996 Education Act in the Magistrates Court. In cases where the parents are no longer together and the child lives predominantly with one, the fine can still be issued to both parents. This is on the understanding that the parent the child lives with would need to consent to the holiday in order for the other parent to take them away.

4.4 In the event of an extended, unauthorised period of absence, the school will act in accordance with government regulations and local authority policy, which may result in a child being removed from the school roll.

## **5. Requesting leave of absence**

5.1 A leave of absence will only be granted (authorised) under exceptional circumstances. It is therefore unlikely that a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday. In making our decision we will take into account the specific circumstances and context behind the request. If a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school. Requests for a leave of absence should be made in writing to the head teacher giving as much notice as possible.

## **6. Managing Attendance**

6.1 We will inform parents half-termly, if we are concerned, about their child's attendance, highlighting any amount of time missed and the impact on learning.

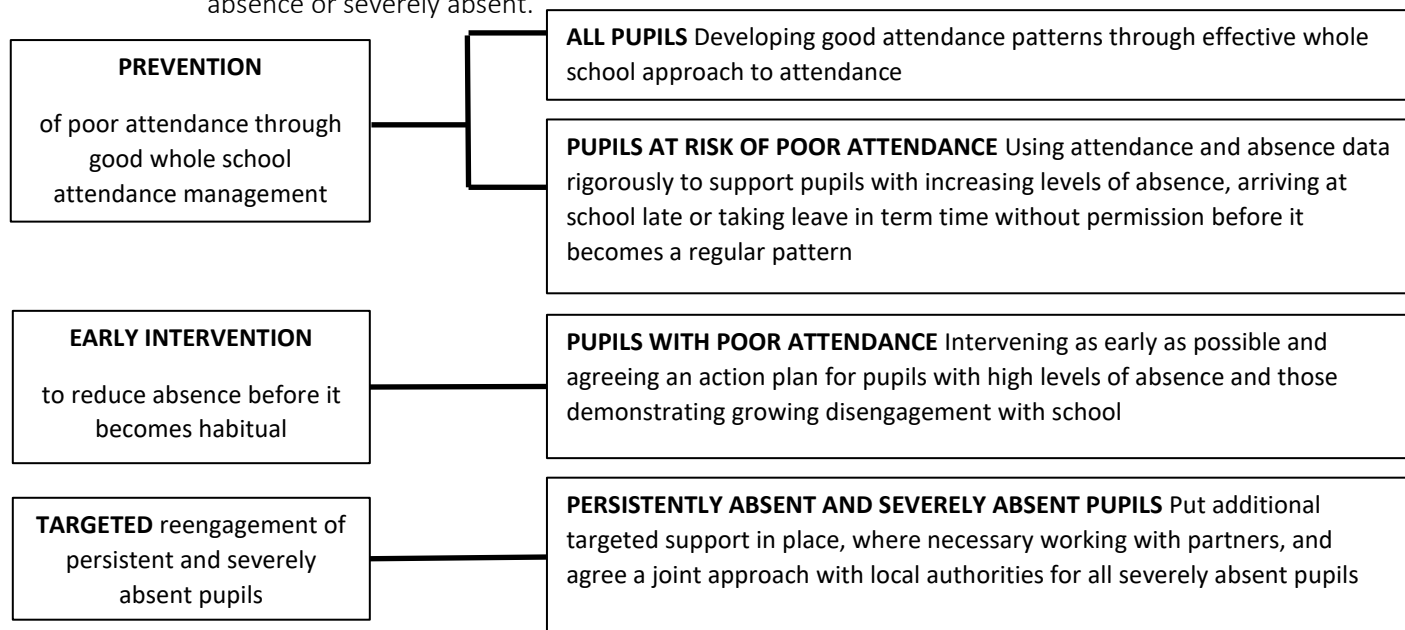
6.2 We value and recognise the importance of good attendance. We use the following to promote and celebrate good attendance:

- Celebrating attendance and punctuality in weekly whole school assemblies
- recording excellent attendance on individual pupil records
- Reward pupils with excellent attendance
- Provide reward systems for any pupil defined to have made a special effort in attendance
- 100% attendance rewarded each term
- Children who achieve 100% attendance over the whole school year receive an award for excellent attendance
- Giving parents and children the opportunity to work with the attendance lead to raise their levels of attendance
- Meeting with parents who are concerned that their child may be experiencing difficulties which may hinder their child's attendance at school
- Regular Attendance Reports to be sent home
- Regular Meetings with the attendance lead
- Incentive prizes for parents on a half-termly basis for 100% attendance and most improved attendance

6.3 We will regularly analyse attendance data to identify pupils who have consistently high attendance, those who have shown improvements in their attendance and to identify pupils who may be vulnerable (see 6.4 below). We will also analyse specific groups, classes, year groups to inform our strategy in promoting good attendance.

6.4 Our approach to attendance management is based on prevention, early intervention and targeted support. We will regularly analyse attendance data to identify pupils who are at risk

of poor attendance, have poor attendance or are identified as being either persistently absent or severely absent.



6.5 Our strategy for using data to target our work on attendance, including reducing persistent absence (pupils who are absent for 10% or more sessions) and severe absence (pupils who are absent for 50% or more sessions) don't know what to change this to? is based on the table below:

0 – 4 days missed	98 – 100% attendance	<b>PREVENTION</b>  Whole school approach/ celebrating good attendance	Initial contact with parents and child; discussion alongside the policy.
5 – 9 days missed	95– 97.9% attendance	<b>PREVENTION</b>  Pupils at risk of poor attendance	Increased communication with parents, discussion around implications of persistent absences, reminder to child about rewards for attendance.
10– 19 days missed	90.1 –94.9% attendance	<b>EARLY INTERVENTION</b>  Pupils with poor attendance	Meeting with attendance lead, increased communication with parents on the first instance of a new illness, discuss risk of fine.
20 or more days missed	90% or below attendance	<b>PERSISTENTLY ABSENT</b>  10% or more absence  <b>SEVERELY ABSENT</b>	Meeting with attendance support, close communication with parents on the first instance of illness, issue fine.

- 6.6 We will regularly analyse attendance data to identify pupils or cohorts of pupils that need support. We will focus staff efforts on developing targeted actions for those cases. We recognise that poor attendance can be an indication of difficulties and trauma in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and/or in school. Parents should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help us to identify any additional support that may be needed.
- It is expected that the child and their family work collaboratively with us to identify the most appropriate support. Where relevant, the support would involve following the Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) pathway. There are a number of EBSA resources that school use to pinpoint the feelings of the child and parents and we use this alongside information from the class teacher to, as appropriate, create a 'wobble plan'. This highlights clear steps and expectations of all parties involved in the child's attendance.
- 6.7 If we have concerns about a pupil's attendance and/ or their punctuality then we will work in partnership with parents to support improvements. This may involve a meeting in school to support the family in identifying, and addressing, the barriers to attending school and/ or attending school on time. Where a child has had an extended time off due to a medical issue or prolonged illness, we will keep in regular email and telephone contact with the parent/carer and work will be provided by school. Well-being home visits will also be made to ensure school are maintaining their safeguarding policies and procedures.
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- 6.9 We recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those pupils with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee pupils and looked after children.
- 6.10 The School Attendance Service will advise school where difficulties remain unresolved.
- 6.11 If ways to improve the child's attendance have failed, the attendance lead can use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2,500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.



- 6.12 We will hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) consider to be vulnerable to discuss attendance at, and engagement with, school. This will include pupils who are classed as being persistently absent (10% or more absence), those who are severely absent (50% or more absence), those with patterns of absence and pupils who show an unexpected or unexplained dip in attendance.
- 6.13 Working with parents, we will identify pupils who need support from wider partners and will make the necessary referrals as quickly as possible. With parental consent, this may include exploring Early Help support through the completion of the 'Story So Far' tool, or through discussion within a team around the school meeting.
- 6.14 We will support pupils back into school following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- 6.15 If we have any concerns about the welfare and wellbeing of a pupil then, in line with our safeguarding responsibilities, we will make any necessary referrals.
- 6.16 If we have been unable to contact the family, and have not seen the pupil, then we will inform the Local Authority so that joint enquiries can be made to establish the whereabouts of the child through Children Missing Education procedures
- 6.17 Where a child has had an extended time off due to a medical issue we will keep in regular email and telephone contact with the parent/carer and work will be provided by school. Home visits will also be made at least fortnightly to ensure school are maintaining their safeguarding policies and procedures.

## 7. Punctuality

7.1 We expect all parents and carers to ensure that children arrive at school on time. The school day starts as follows:

Year group	Doors open	Start time
Nursery morning session	8.40 am	8.40 am
Nursery afternoon session	12.10pm	12.10pm
Reception, Year 1 and Year 2	8.40 am	8.45am
Year 3, 4, 5, and 6	8.45am	8.50am

The responsibility for lateness and attendance rests with the parent and any concerns are raised with the parent and not with the child.

7.2 If a child arrives after the start time, they will be recorded as late. Registers close at 9.30am and any child arriving after this time is treated as being late after registration which is recorded as an unauthorised absence. Doors are closed promptly 5 minutes after the start time. If a child is late for school, the child should be taken to the school office where their attendance can be recorded and any school meals orders taken. Each school day has two sessions and a separate attendance mark is

obtained for each session. Afternoon registration is at 1pm for Key stage one and 1:15pm for Key stage two.

## **8 Fixed penalty notices**

- 8.1 School and the local authority will have regard to our safeguarding duties as set out in the statutory guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education.
- 8.2 Fixed penalty notices will be served on parents as an alternative to prosecution where parents have failed to ensure that their child regularly attends the school. Fixed penalty notices will be used where the pupil's absence has not been authorised by the school and the absence constitutes an offence. Fixed penalty notices can be issued to each parent liable for the attendance offence/s, which should usually be the parent or parents with day to day responsibility for the pupil's attendance.
- 8.3 We will only use a fixed penalty notice, in line with the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, where support to secure regular attendance has not been successful. Fixed penalty notices will be issued for unauthorised holiday in term time.
- 8.4 Fixed penalty notices can be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first 5 days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion. The parents must have been notified by the school at the time of the exclusion the days that the child must not be present in a public place.

## **9. Medical Evidence**

- Medical appointment card with pupil's name, date, and one appointment detailed
- Print screen of AskMyGP website where you have contacted your GP
- Evidence of a consultation with NHS 111
- Medication prescribed by a GP, with the dispensing label attached
- Copy of prescription
- Screen print of medical notes
- Letters concerning hospital appointments
- Slip with date, pupils name and surgery stamp, signed by Receptionist
- Letter from a professional such as a hospital Consultant or Psychologist
- Screen print of telephone log showing you have sought advice

***Doctors or GP 'sick' notes are not required. Please do not request them from your GP.***

***Receipts of medication bought from the pharmacy non-prescribed are NOT medical evidence.***

