

# ST PETER'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL



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Registered in England and Wales  
Company number 07939655

*St Peter's C of E school promotes Christian values and fosters an environment of spirituality, creativity and respect where everyone is valued and each child can achieve their full potential.*

## WHOLE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

St Peter's CE VA Primary School is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all. We endeavor to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. We consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity is used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance including e.g. newsletters and end of term reports.

School attendance is subject to various Education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education. The most recent of these is 'Keeping Children safe in Education' Sept 2016.

Each year the school examines its attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets. These reflect both national and Oxfordshire attendance targets. The school reviews its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals. This policy will contain within it the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

### School Procedures

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised (/ \), unauthorised (O) or as an approved educational activity (V) [attendance out of school]. Only the headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised. We use an on line registration process which allows us to track absence and add notes where appropriate.

### Lateness

Morning registration will take place at the start of school at 8.55am. The registers will remain open for 10 minutes. Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence (U) unless there is an acceptable explanation i.e. school transport was delayed. In cases for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered.

The afternoon registration will be at 1pm and the registers will close at 1.10pm.

Pupils arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be treated for statistical purposes, as present, but will be coded as late (L) before registers close.

Parents bringing a child in late will be asked to fill in the 'Late Book' and state the reason for the child being late.

When making medical appointments, every effort must be made to ensure appointments are outside school hours but we acknowledge that this is not always possible. Medical appointments must be accompanied by an appointment card or other written confirmation.

### **First Day Absence**

If a parent knows that their child will not be in school we ask that they contact the school at the earliest opportunity. The school should be telephoned and a message left if no one is available to take the call. This should be followed up by a letter explaining the absence on the child's return to school. Notification of absence is recorded electronically via our Management Information System. We operate a first day calling service so if a child is absent with no explanation we will contact parents on that day to establish the reason for absence.

On the second day of absence, if there has been no communication between home and school, then a home visit will be initiated.

On the third day of absence, if there has been no communication between home and school, the LSCC will be contacted.

### **Children Missing in Education**

The DfES have defined children missing from education as *'all children of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll, nor being educated otherwise (e.g. privately or in an alternative provision) and who have been out of any educational provision for a substantial period of time (usually four weeks or more).'*

If there are concerns that a child is missing from education then the Local Authority 'Children Missing in Education Policy' will be followed.

### **Frequent Absence**

It is the responsibility of the Head Teacher to be aware of and bring attention to, any emerging attendance concerns.

If a pupil's attendance is less than 90% the school will identify the reason for absence. If a cause for concern then parents will be contacted by phone, letter or invite to a parenting Contract Meeting to identify any support required. A home visit may be considered and an Early Help Assessment (EHA) will be completed, copies of which will be passed to the Local and Community Support Services (LCSS).

Achievable targets will be set with parents and pupil.

If the absence is due to illness over 10 days or in a regular pattern, permission will be sought from parents to contact their GP for confirmation that the pupil is too ill to attend school.

A review will be set for no more than 20 days after the initial meeting with parents.

Any pupil who has at least 10% unauthorised absence over 60 days will be referred to the County Attendance team. The school will include details of the action that they have taken. This referral is a request to initiate legal proceedings and may result in a Penalty Notice.

A Penalty Notice is a fine that the Attendance and Engagement Service may decide to issue instead of taking legal action through the Magistrates' Court system.

A Parent/ Carer can be issued with a penalty notice if:

- they fail to ensure that their child attends school, or other education provision regularly, usually defined as 10% or more unauthorised absence sessions over a 60 day period
- they allow their child to take holiday in term time without the school's authorisation
- they fail to return their child to school on an agreed date after an extended holiday
- their child persistently arrives late for school after the registration is closed

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

The school monitors 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 and parents will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully by the Head teacher and a parenting contract meeting will be offered between parent, pupil and school to try and help resolve any issues.

## **A Welcome Back**

It is important that on return from an absence that all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other pupils.

## **Absence notes**

Notes received from parents explaining absence should be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil, that may require further investigation, then the notes may need to be retained for a longer period.

## **Holidays in term time**

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 explanatory note states: Regulation 7 of the 2006 Regulations is amended to prohibit the proprietor 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.

In line with the amendments made to The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 please note the following:

- The Headteacher can now request that the local authority issue a Penalty Notice to parents, when pupils are taken out of school for 5 or more day's holiday or leave of absence without school authorisation.
- The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 when paid within 28 days.
- If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days the local authority is then obliged to prosecute for failing to ensure regular school attendance.
- Penalty notices are issued to **each** parent, for each child.

Application for term-time leave of absence must be made in advance by the parent with whom the child normally resides on the form headed 'Application for leave of absence during term time'. These may be obtained from the school office.

- Leave of absence will only be granted where the Headteacher considers it is due to 'exceptional circumstances'.
- Parent will be informed within 7 school days as to whether the request has been authorised or unauthorised.

## **Exceptional Circumstances**

The Head Teacher, in line with Oxfordshire County Council recommendations, deems the following to be examples of exceptional circumstances:

- A parent, grandparent or other close relative is seriously ill.
- There may be significant trauma in the family recently and the Head teacher may consider that an immediate holiday might enable the child to cope with the situation.
- The holiday may be a unique, one – off never- to – be – repeated occasion which can only take place in the time requested.

## Promoting Good Attendance

We believe that clear communication to parents about expectations and information sharing is the key to promoting good attendance. We publish the schools attendance figures to parents for each year group at the end of each month in the school's newsletter.

## Attendance Targets

The school sets attendance targets each year. The Governors Performance and Standards Committee analyses performance towards the targets and reports to the full Governing Body.

## Categorisation of Absence

**Any pupil who is on roll but not present in the school must be recorded within one of these categories.**

### 1. Unauthorised absence

This is for those pupils where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason this includes holidays taken in term time.

### 2. Authorised absence

This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.

### 3. Approved Educational Activity

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school.

**Note Pupils recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.**

This would include:

- Field trips and educational visits
- Sporting activities
- Link courses or approved education off site
- Most types of dual registration

## Traveller Children

The school will follow the recent advice given by Oxfordshire's Equality and Diversity Achievement Service.

Policy Review every 3 years

Signed ..... (On behalf of the Governors)

Signed .....(Headteacher)

Date.....

Date for review.....