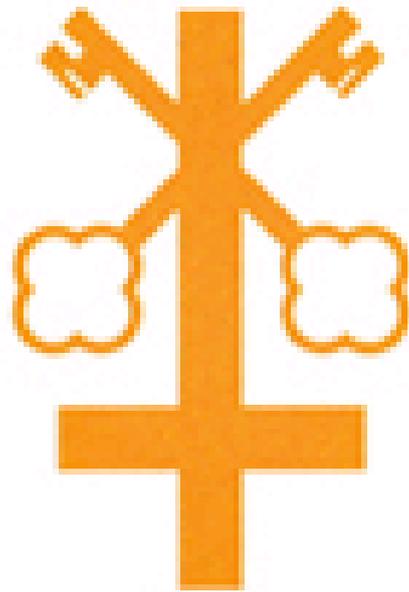




**St Peter's C of E Primary School**

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# **Attendance Policy**

## St. Peter's C.E. School Attendance Policy



One hundred per cent (100%) attendance is certainly possible and that is what we all aim for at St. Peter's, but as a school we understand that there are circumstances that may hinder this. In the event of your child being away from school it is essential that you, the parent/guardian, inform the school of the reasons for your child's absence.

### POLICY AIMS

- To ensure that every child attends St. Peter's School on time and regularly so that they get full access to the curriculum we deliver and make excellent progress in all subjects.
- To work in partnership with parents to ensure the highest possible punctuality and attendance rate for their child.
- To set high standards and expectations for children's punctuality and attendance.

### RATIONALE:

- **There is a clear connection between regular attendance and achievement.**
- The Education Act 1996 requires parents and carers to ensure their child receives efficient fulltime education, suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Under current government legislation, all absence figures, together with the reasons for absence have to be reported to the Schools Governing Body, Local Authority (LA), and the Department for Education (DfE).
- Parents, guardians and carers must ensure that they are fully aware of the school's attendance policy as any absence will have a huge impact on your child's learning. Regular school attendance is essential and parents, guardians and carers, together with our school staff all have a part to play in ensuring their full potential is achieved.
- Pupils are expected to attend school for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence. There are two main categories of absences – **Authorised** and **Unauthorised**

**Authorised Absence:** is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence, or given approval in advance for such an absence.

"Schools can no longer authorise absence for reasons **other than illness** unless the parent has applied in advance and the head teacher considers that there are **exceptional** circumstances to warrant granting it. Otherwise holidays taken during term time have to be recorded as unauthorised absence" Document dated 30 August 2013.

The above DfE reference is on:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/behaviour/attendance/f00221879/school-attendance> .

As a school, we believe the following reasons are valid ones for authorised absence: -

- Illness
- Hospital appointments (we encourage parents to make all appointments outside of the school day).
- Bereavement
- Sitting external exams
- Religious observance
- Attendance at another school/educational setting
- Visiting other schools
- Domestic upheaval or family upset

**Unauthorised Absence:** is when the school has **not** received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's absence from school after a parent's request. (See next below)

#### **ABSENCES DURING TERM TIME- Revised 2013 ( see paragraph in appendix 1 below)**

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**' 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**'. Parents will be informed within 7 school days as to whether the request has been authorised or unauthorised.

- **There are approximately 195 school days (390 sessions) a year which your child is expected to attend.**
- **There are also approximately 71 days (142 sessions) of school holidays.**
- **This is over 13 school weeks.**

**Please ensure that your holidays are taken during this period.**

#### **PROMOTING GOOD ATTENDANCE – we are proud of our current high attendance!**

We encourage pupils, parents and staff to work hard to achieve high attendance rates at St. Peter's and we regularly celebrate our good attendance by:

- Awarding the 9'Clock Cup to any class with 100% Punctuality for the week or highest attendance if there isn't one with 100%
- By awarding a certificate to pupils with 100% and improved attendance each term
- By awarding individual certificates/stickers to children who have improved punctuality or attendance.

- Verbal praise on a daily basis to pupils and parents who make every effort to get their children to school on time every day

### **SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES**

- To communicate clearly the attendance procedure and expectations of the school.
- Maintain appropriate attendance data.
- Have appropriate registration processes in place.
- To follow up absences and lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school: initially with a first-day absence telephone call.
- Inform parents/carers of what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absences.
- To have systematic and consistent daily records which chart absence and lateness.
- To report to the EWO (Educational Welfare Officer) and support their work with pupils as necessary.
- To report to the Government on attendance twice a year.
- To consistently administer the attendance procedure.
- To ensure that registers are taken twice daily: at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions
- To promote excellent attendance

### **PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

- To have children in line ready to go up to class by the start of the day at 8.55a.m.
- To inform school on **every** day of any absence.( by telephone or in person)
- To make applications for leave in writing on the school's '**Leave Of Absence Form**' giving the reason for the request.
- To work with the school and EWO to improve lateness and attendance – where necessary.
- To avoid medical and dental appointments during the school day.

If parents, guardians or carers are worried about their child's attendance at school they should:

- Talk to their child's class teacher in the first instance.
- Talk to their child; it may be something simple that needs their help in resolving

### **MONITORING ATTENDANCE**

The school Attendance Officer ( Mrs McInroy) will log instances of absence and lateness and discuss weekly with the Head Teacher and class teacher.

A record of children's annual authorised and unauthorised absences and lateness will be put on the end of the school year report.

The headteacher's termly report to governors will contain termly figures of overall rates of authorised an unauthorised absence for the whole school.

Where issues persist the following will be initiated:

- Where there are concerns about attendance and punctuality( below 90% attendance) the school will write to the parents/carers and make verbal contact with home.
- If the concerns persist the school will arrange a meeting between the parent/carer and Head teacher or member of the senior Leadership Team.
- If the concerns persist the school will make a formal referral to the Local Authority EWO and Attendance Panel
- All unauthorised leave during term time can lead to Penalty Notices (A Fine – see below) being issued by the LA.

Should concerns persist, the EWO will agree action (as above) and where necessary meet with the parents/carers.

## **PUNCTUALITY**

**We believe that punctuality is a very important skill for life!**

Children must be in their class line by **8.55 a.m.** each day. Registers will be taken *by 9.00am*. Children will be marked late if they arrive at school after 9.00am.

**The school gates will be open from 8.30am and shut by 9.00am.** Children who arrive after that time must come into the building via the main office, where they will be entered into the late book (kept in the office) – Two or more lates a week will result in a letter being sent home to parents reminding them to reinforce good attendance and punctuality and discuss any difficulties in a meeting with the head teacher if the lateness persists.

- If the arrival at school is after the registers have closed at 9.30am, the pupil will receive a 'U'. This equates to an absence although we are aware that the pupil is on the school premises in accordance with health and safety.
- If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence coded 'M'. If a child is absent because they are too unwell to attend school, they will receive an authorised absence coded 'I'.
- Please be advised that where possible doctors and dentists appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays.

Parents are to ensure that children are collected from the class lines at the end of the day by 3.30pm. Any child not collected by **3.40pm** will be taken to the school office and their parents will be contacted immediately. This will be recorded in our late book and parents will be asked to specify why they are late to collect.

If late collection persists there will be a follow up meeting with the Head teacher.

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other pupils. Lateness is considered to be an equally serious absence. Parents, guardians or carers of pupils who seem to be developing patterns of lateness will be reminded by letter of the importance of good time keeping. If lateness persists, parents, guardians or carers will be invited to discuss any difficulties with the Head teacher and or EWO (see below) where necessary.

**SICKNESS**

- Please notify the school on each day of your child's absence.
- The school can request a doctor's/consultant's letter regarding recurring and frequent illness.

**Fixed Penalty Notice**

Under the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2013, Penalty Notices are issued in cases of unauthorised absence from school. A Penalty Notice imposes a financial penalty of *up to* £120 which, if paid, discharges liability for conviction for the offence to which the Penalty Notice relates (S444 (1a) Education Act 1996). Use of Penalty Notices will be restricted to one per parent per academic year. Repeat breaches of term time leave may result in direct prosecution and not further issue of Penalty Notices.

The Early Help Service delivers this LA responsibility in Southwark. The Early Help Attendance Strategy is the LA's strategic framework for the promotion of improved school attendance and punctuality and for the reduction of levels of unauthorised absence. Enforcement of attendance through sanctions of any nature are used only where parental co operation is either absent or deemed insufficient to resolve the presenting problem. The LA never use such sanctions as a punishment, but as a means of enforcing attendance where there is a reasonable expectation that their use will secure an improvement through engagement with parents. Full details of the LA's Penalty Notice Protocol can be found on the Southwark website and on the school website.

**THE EDUCATION WELFARE OFFICER (EWO)**

The Education Welfare Officer is part of the LA's Early Help Service. The EWO strives to support schools, parents and pupils with the aim of ensuring and promoting good attendance and punctuality. However, the Early Help Attendance Service also has a statutory responsibility under the Education Act 1996 to pursue non-school attendance and persistent lateness. Section 444 of the Education Act states that "if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school, the parents are guilty of an offence."

**GOVERNORS**

It is the Governing Body's legal responsibility to monitor and evaluate the attendance in St Peter's School. This school's attendance figures are presented to the Governing Body on a termly basis.

As a Southwark school, we follow Southwark Education Department's procedures for completing registers.

**This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis**

**LEAVE OF ABSENCE FORM****Appendix 1**

**PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING BEFORE COMPLETING THIS FORM AND READ INFORMATION OVERLEAF:**

**The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013: 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.**

<b>PART A: FOR PARENT TO COMPLETE</b>	
Pupil Name:	
Class/Form/Year:	
Name of parent (who child lives with)	
Home Address:	
First Date of absence	
Date of return:	
No. school days to be absent:	
Is your child missing any tests or assessments?	
Is your child's attendance above 95% over the last 12 months?	
Has your child taken leave during the term time in the last 12 months?	
Reason for absence:	
Signature of parent	
<b>PART B: FOR HEAD TEACHER TO COMPLETE</b>	
DATE RECEIVED	

<b>THIS ABSENCE HAS BEEN AUTHORISED / NOT AUTHORISED.</b>	
NAME	
Signature	
DATE PARENT INFORMED	

Parents/guardians must ask permission for their child to be absent during term time, and it is at the Head teacher's discretion to decide whether or not the absence will be authorised. The Head teacher may authorise leave during term time for exceptional circumstances. If leave is taken without permission, or no application is made, parents risk being issued with a Penalty Notice or being prosecuted on their return. Parents wishing to apply for their child to have leave from school should complete this form and return it to school for authorisation at least 2 weeks before the proposed leave.

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.

Leave of absence taken without authorisation may be referred to the Education Welfare Service. This may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued or prosecution proceedings under S444(1) or (1a) of the Education Act 1996.