



ST PETER'S

PREPARATORY SCHOOL

School Attendance Policy

Updated on 09 May 2023
by Mr Dan Morris
(Director of Operations & Compliance)

Approved by Head: *Charlotte P. Jones*

Date: 09/05/2023

1. Policy Scope and Rationale

St Peter's expects all enrolled pupils to attend school every day that the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. The school aims to do all we can to encourage pupils to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures to support them where this is challenging.

St Peter's believes that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy, rewarding and safe place for all our pupils. We will also make the best provision we can for those pupils who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

This policy covers all pupils of statutory school age, but we endeavour to maintain an ethos that encourages pupils in the EYFS to develop and maintain good attendance habits.

2. Statutory Obligations

The duties that govern school attendance and how they apply to schools are contained in the legislation indicated below:

- The Education Act 1996 - sections 434(1)(3)(4)&(6) and 458(4)&(5)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016

These regulations outline the School's statutory requirement for maintaining an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

3. Definitions

Authorised absence: An absence is classified as authorised when a pupil has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.

Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

Unauthorised absence: An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent. Therefore, the absence is

unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

4. Procedures for recording pupil absence

Attendance registers are completed using the codes indicated in [School attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities](#).

When a pupil is unexpectedly absent, the class teacher will record the absence code 'N' in the register. On collecting daily absence data for the school 'Day book' the school receptionist will endeavour to contact a parent or guardian to ascertain a reason for pupil absence.

If the absence reason is confirmed, the correct absence code will be recorded.

If the absence reason is unable to be ascertained, when the child returns to school, written communication is required from a parent or guardian to explain the absence.

The register may be pre-populated with the absence code by the admin team if a note has been sent to the school prior to the day of absence, e.g. if a child has a medical appointment.

If there is any doubt or confusion about the attendance or whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The Missing Child procedure will then be initiated if the Recovery Management Team deems it necessary.

5. Requests for leave of absence

St Peter's believes that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible, and maximise their learning. However, we do understand that there are circumstances under which a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child to attend, e.g. a special event.

Parents must contact the school through the [hoffice@](mailto:hoffice@st-peters-prep.co.uk) email address for absence approval by the Head at least a week in advance. Normally this request will be granted, but a pupil's attendance record may be considered in making the decision.

As a School, St Peter's naturally prefers parents to take their family holiday in the designated school holiday periods, but if this is not possible, the school is likely to grant the leave of absence. Again, this request should be sent to the Head for prior approval.

6. Short-term absence

Pupils who are not well enough to attend school due to short term illness such as Diarrhoea and Vomiting, heavy colds etc will not be offered work as St Peter's believes in this situation the pupil should rest and recuperate so they are fit to return to school. Details on illnesses that force school absences are outlined in the School [Medical Policy](#), and align with the NHS Spotty Book guidance.

7. Long-term absence

Under a School's Safeguarding duties, a child who is absent from school, without reason may be subject to 'Children Missing Education' guidelines. If a pupil is absent from school without reason for 10 days or more, the school will begin the process of enacting their duties under this legislation.

However, when an absence is a known, authorised long term absence such as an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the School will work with parents to do all it can to send material home and/or deliver learning via online learning (as appropriate to the situation) so that they can keep up with their school work.

Current Health guidance of Covid and Respiratory Illnesses states that pupils should isolate for three days should they have a confirmed infection. It is no longer school policy to provide work for pupils during absences of this nature.

Extenuating circumstances may change this school policy, and would be discussed on a case by case basis with the Head.

8. Attendance monitoring and repeated unauthorised absences

The School monitors pupil attendance and a letter will be written to parents when a pupils' attendance level falls below 80%. The school aims to work with parents on supporting pupils with high absence levels to improve attendance levels; especially those that are not attributed to a physical health condition and more related to family circumstances.

The school will also contact the parent or guardian of any pupil who has an unauthorised absence to understand the reasons behind the absence.

If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or guardians will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem.

The School has an obligation to report to the local authority any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis. Under the 'Children Missing Education' guidelines the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) would be involved in cases relating to any child missing school on regular occasions.

9. Attendance data storage

In line with ISI, GDPR and other Data Protection obligations, the school is required to keep accurate attendance records on file for 6 years from the last date of the last attendance entry. This will be stored securely as the regulations dictate. Details can be found in our [Data Protection Policy](#) and other associated GDPR policies.

This policy will be reviewed at least every two years.