



Attendance Policy

Statement of Intent

St Peter's Primary School is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our pupils. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them.

One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. We actively promote 100% attendance for all our pupils and we use termly and annual awards to promote good attendance and punctuality.

The Governors, Head Teacher and Staff in partnership with parents have a duty to promote full attendance at St Peter's Primary School.

Parental Responsibility

Parents/Carers have a legal duty to ensure that their child(ren) attend school regularly and arrive on time. Regular attendance is essential to the all-round development of the child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them. Poor attendance undermines their education and sometimes puts pupils at risk encouraging anti-social behaviour.

It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent with an explanation for their absence. This is a safeguarding issue requirement so that all parties know that your child is safe. Parents/Carers should regularly update the school and inform them in writing upon the child's return.

Pupils are expected to arrive by 8.40am. All pupils that arrive late must report, with their parent/carer to the school office where the reason for lateness is recorded.

The Role of the School Staff

At St Peter's Primary School there is a whole school responsibility and approach for improving school attendance, with specific staff taking individual responsibility.

The Head Teacher has overall responsibility for monitoring attendance issues.

Class teachers complete a register at the beginning of each morning and once during the afternoon session. Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. (The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006)

Teachers mark pupils present, absent or late. The class teacher notifies the Headteacher of children whose attendance is causing concern.

It is the responsibility of the School Office to ensure:

- Attendance and lateness records are up to date
- If no reason for absence has been provided, parents are contacted on the first day of absence by text message or phone call.
- Where there has been no communication, telephone calls are made/letters are sent to parents/carers requesting reasons for absence.
- The appropriate attendance code is entered into the register (National Attendance Codes)
- Parents/Carers informed twice yearly of child's attendance figure
- The Head Teacher and School Office staff monitor attendance termly and review impacts of actions and agree action points for any child(ren) with, or at risk of, low attendance and/or poor punctuality.

Timeline of School Action for Poor Attendance

- 90 - 95% attendance - school intervention letters/meeting with parents/carers – consider Penalty Notice or Early Help Notification.
- Below 90% - Where the absences have not been authorised consult with the Local Authority School Liaison Officer and a referral to PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service may be considered.

Children Missing Education

No child should be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Head Teacher and the PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service when appropriate.

Please see circumstances below:-

Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed, by completing a Child Missing Education referral for the following circumstances:-

- If the whereabouts of the child is unknown and the school have failed to locate him/her.
- The family has notified the school that they are leaving the area but no Common Transfer Form (pupil file) has been requested by another school.

Routines

At St Peter's Primary School the register is taken at 8:40 am and 1:00pm. Pupils arriving after these times must enter school by the main entrance and report to School Office where their name and reason for lateness will be recorded. The pupil will be marked as late before registration has closed (Code 'L'). The register will close at 9am and 1:10pm. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (Code 'U') and this will count as an unauthorised absence.

Frequent lateness after the register has closed (U) will be discussed with parents and could provide grounds for prosecution or a Penalty Notice.

Penalty Notice Proceedings for Lateness – Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Kent County Council's Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct effective from January 2016.

- 10 incidents of late arrival after the registers have closed during any possible 100 school sessions for a Penalty Notice Warning Letter.
- The Penalty Notice Warning Letter sets out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day period, Penalty Notice(s) will be issued (one per parent per child)
- Where a Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days of issue the Local Authority will instigate court proceedings

Authorising Absence

Only the Head Teacher can authorise absence using a consistent approach. The Head Teacher is not obliged to accept a parent/carer's explanation. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. If absences are not authorised, parents/carers will be notified.

If no explanation is received, absences will not be authorised.

Absence (leave) during term time can only be approved in "exceptional circumstances". The following reasons are examples of absence that will not be authorised:

- Persistent nonspecific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Absence due to a parent's illness
- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Child's/family birthday
- Shopping trip
- Family Holidays

Persistent unauthorised absence may result in an AS1 referral to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for consideration of prosecution. The school will follow procedures prior to referral and parents/carers will be notified in writing.

When a referral is made, the child's Registration Certificate, copies of all letters sent to parents/carers and minutes of any meetings **MUST** be attached to the completed AS1 referral form with any other relevant information.

Local Authority Action may include:-

- Attendance Improvement Meeting
- Home visits
- Liaison with other agencies
- Fast Track to Prosecution

Illness, Medical & Dental Appointments

As far as possible, medical appointments should be made outside of school hours. To enable Medical appointments to be authorised, the School Office will need to see proof of your child's appointment.

Medical evidence may be requested in the following situations in order for the absence to be authorised:

- After 5 consecutive days of absence.
- Absences either side of a school holiday
- Students who take a holiday during term time will be required to provide medical evidence for any further absences during the academic year

Medical evidence may be any of the following:

- Hospital discharge letter
- Note from your GP (dated)
- Copy of your appointment card from your GP
- Copy of the prescription or copy of the medication label
- Note from a Pharmacist (signed/stamped and dated)
- Note from any other health care professional e.g. physiotherapist, optician, podiatrist (signed/stamped and dated)

Penalty Notices Proceedings for Poor Attendance - Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Kent County Council's Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct effective from January 2016

- A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of persistent unauthorised absence or where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours.
- Absence for 10 or more half day sessions (5 school days) without authorisation during any 100 possible school sessions – these do not need to be consecutive.
- The PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service issue a warning letter setting out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day period a Penalty Notice will be issued (one per parent per child)
- Any monies collected go directly to the LA, no monies are received by the school.

Exceptional circumstances could include:

- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent/carer or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family.

Any examples provided are illustrative rather than exhaustive. It is acceptable to take a student's previous record of attendance into account when the school is making decisions. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant,

unavoidable and short. And by 'unavoidable' it implies that an event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. It is important to note that Head Teachers can agree the absence of a child in exceptional circumstances and this discretion can be used also to determine the length of the authorised absence.

Where Penalty Notices are imposed, the regulations state that the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period will result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

Leave of Absence/Holiday

From September 2013 the Department for Education have amended the Pupil Registration Regulations, removing the Head Teacher's ability to authorise leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 says that parents are **guilty** of an offence of failing to secure regular attendance at school unless they can prove that the child was absent:

- with leave (the school has given permission)
- due to sickness or any unavoidable cause (the sickness or unavoidable cause must relate to the child, not the parent)
- religious observance
- failure by the Local Authority to provide transport

In law, these are the only acceptable reasons for a child being absent from school.

The Head Teacher may authorise absence in "exceptional circumstances" but this must be requested in advance and agreement to each request is at the discretion of the Head Teacher, acting on behalf of the Governing Body (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Each case will be judged on its merits and the Head Teacher's decision is final. Once the decision not to authorise leave is taken, it cannot be authorised retrospectively.

If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken anyway, the case may be referred to the PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service who may issue a Penalty Notice to each parent for each child taken out of school.

Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period will result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

Present at an Approved Off-Site Educational Activity

An approved educational activity is where a pupil is taking part in supervised educational activity such as field trips, educational visits, work experience or alternative provision. Pupils can only be recorded as receiving off-site educational activity if the activity meets the requirements prescribed in regulation 6 (4) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. The activity must be of an educational nature approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school. The activity must take place during the session for which the mark is recorded.

The pupil must be supervised whilst undertaking the activity by someone authorised to do so by the school. When considering whether to authorise someone as a supervisor, schools must consider whether the person has the necessary skills, training, experience and knowledge to make the activity a successful, worthwhile and safe experience for the pupil. If they are concerned that the person is not suitable as a supervisor, they can decline to approve the activity.

The actual law states:

An approved educational activity is either:

- 1) an activity which takes place outside the school premises and which is:
 - approved by a person authorised in that behalf by the proprietor of the school;
 - of an educational nature, including work experience under section 560 of the Education Act 1996(a)
 - a sporting activity; supervised by a person authorised in that behalf by the proprietor or the head teacher of the school
- 2) attendance at another school at which the pupil is a registered pupil.

- Appendix 1 Late letter (Code L)**
- Appendix 2 Late letter (Code U)**
- Appendix 3 Absence Letter**
- Appendix 4 School Attendance Meeting Letter**
- Appendix 5 School Letter Warning re: Penalty Notice Referral**
- Appendix 6 Response to Leave Request (Not Authorising)**
- Appendix 7 Leave of absence confirmation of PN request**
- Appendix 8 Traveller Absence Letter**
- Appendix 9 Kent School Referral Pathway**

Appendix 1 – Code L letter

Dear «Name»

I would like to express my concern over the number of occasions that «Name» has been arriving late at school. Our school computer system indicates «Name» has been late on X occasions.

A pupil's lateness will seriously disrupt their learning and can be embarrassing for your child.

I am sure you share my concern and would wish to work with the school to improve punctuality. If we can help in any way, perhaps via our School Nurse, please do not hesitate to contact us. Should <child's> punctuality continue to be a cause for concern, I will need to inform the School Liaison Officer at Kent County Council.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

Appendix 2 - Code U letter

Dear «Name»

I would like to express my concern over the number of occasions that «Name» has been arriving late at school. Our school computer system indicates «Name» has been late, after the register has closed on X occasions.

Arriving after the register has closed is seriously disrupting your child's learning and is impacting on their overall attendance.

Persistent late arrival may lead to a referral for a Penalty Notice or a referral to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for further action and possible prosecution.

If «Name» continues to arrive late after the register has closed we will contact you to arrange a meeting at the school.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

Appendix 3 – Absence letter

Dear «Name»

We monitor attendance very closely because of the detrimental effect it can have on children's learning and academic progress. We understand that children get ill and family life can be hectic and 100% attendance can be difficult to achieve. However 95% attendance means a child is missing the equivalent of $\frac{1}{2}$ a day every two weeks and below 90% is the equivalent of $\frac{1}{2}$ a day per week.

We would like to bring to your attention that our school computerised monitoring system has shown that PUPIL currently has ?? % attendance. You may not have realised it was so low.

The care of our children is of paramount importance and we will always call for parents if a child is in discomfort or distress.

Thank you for your co-operation in this matter, if you would like any advice from the Attendance Service or the School Nurse or if you have any questions please let me know.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

Dear «Name»

Second Absence Letter

I am writing to express my continuing concern about the low percentage of attendance so far this year for PUPIL. As you can see from the attached registration certificate she has only been present for ??% of the time. If her percentage attendance does not improve the school will be unable to authorise any more absences unless medical evidence e.g. doctor's appointment card, prescription for medicine or proof of prescribed medication is provided for any future absences due to illness.

A pupil's absence can seriously disrupt their learning, not only do they miss out on teaching while they are away but they are less prepared for future lessons when they return.

I am sure you share my concern and would wish to work with the school to improve Aimee's attendance. If we can help in any way, perhaps via our School Nurse, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

Appendix 4 – Attendance Meeting Letter

Dear «Name»

Re: «Pupil's name»

Despite previous warnings, I note with concern that your child's attendance at school has made no significant improvement. «Name»'s attendance at school is currently «Number» % which means he/she has missed «Number» sessions. or «Number» days. This will have an impact on your child's education which we cannot ignore.

As there has been no improvement in «Name»'s attendance, I must advise you that further absences from school as a result of illness will require medical evidence (e.g. copy of a prescription, Doctors/Dentist appointment card.) If medical evidence is not provided, further absences will be marked as unauthorised.

I am inviting you to attend a School Attendance Meeting, the time and date have been set for «Date» at «Time». It is important that you and «Name» attend this meeting for us to explore the issues around poor attendance.

If this appointment is inconvenient, I would be grateful if you could contact the School Office on 01622 717335 so that an alternative time can be arranged.

If you do not attend this meeting and «Name»'s absence continues to deteriorate, a referral may be made to the Pupil Referral Unit, Inclusion and Attendance Service.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

Appendix 5 (Penalty Notice Referral)

Dear «Name»

Re «Child's name»

At «School Name» School we consider attendance of utmost importance and I am therefore bringing this information to your attention.

Our monitoring process has shown that «Name» has been absent from school for a total of «Number» unauthorised sessions («Number» days). I refer you to legislation regarding Penalty Notices.

'As from 2005, Kent Local Authority (LA) introduced Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence from school of at least 10 sessions (5 days) during any 100 possible school sessions.' A separate Penalty Notice can be issued to each parent and for each child.

On receipt of the Notice, the penalty will be £120, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the LA.

Please note this is a warning letter that a Penalty Notice could be requested if a total of 10 unauthorised sessions (5 days) are reached.

Should you wish to discuss this matter further please do not hesitate to contact me. If further unauthorised absence occurs you will be contacted and invited in for a meeting at the school.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

Appendix 6 (Penalty Notice)

*Holiday request – Refusal letter

Dear «Name» **PLEASE ALWAYS WRITE TO BOTH PARENTS**

Request for leave during Term-Time

«Child's Name»

I have received your request to take «Name» out of school for a family holiday between «Date» and «Date», a total of «Number» school sessions.

From September 2013 the Department for Education has amended the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 removing the Head Teacher's ability to authorise leave of absence for a family holiday. Requests for holidays in term-time will **not** be authorised as the Regulations only allow me to authorise absence (leave) in "exceptional circumstances".

The School's Attendance Policy confirms that:

- requests for absence must arrive at school at least 6 weeks before the governing body meet
- agreement to each request is at my discretion, acting on behalf of the Governing Body, following an Attendance Panel meeting comprising of two Governors and myself
- each case will be judged on its merits
- my decision is final
- leave cannot be authorised retrospectively

I have considered your request but I am writing to confirm that on this occasion the leave will not be authorised. If you decide to take «Name» out of school I will make a request for a Penalty Notice to be issued.

Or

You failed to apply in advance for permission for «Name» to be absent from school.

As stated above, I am unable to authorise leave retrospectively and I will be making a request for a Penalty Notice to be issued.

Penalty Notices are issued to **each parent** of **each child** and the amount of the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days.

Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the Attendance Service.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

Appendix 7 (Penalty Notice)

Dear

(Child's Name and Date of Birth)

With reference to our letter dated **(date)**, the leave of absence taken between **(dates)** has now been recorded as Unauthorised Absence and as a result a Penalty Notice has been requested.

A separate Penalty Notice can be issued to each parent and for each child.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

Appendix 8 – Traveller Absence

Dear «Name»

Traveller Absence

I am writing to say how concerned I am over the number of times «Name» has been absent from school. Since «Date», Name has missed «Number» half day sessions achieving an overall attendance rate of «Number»%.

Traveller children have to attend school for 380 sessions (190 days) each year, which is the same for all children and you are at risk of being referred to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer if «Name»'s attendance falls below 90%. I am unable to authorise any absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances

If «Name»'s attendance does not improve and a referral is made to the Attendance Service, you could be prosecuted in the Magistrates' Court unless you can prove that:

- the child has no fixed abode

OR

- because of the nature of your trade or business (work) you have to travel from place to place and your child has attended school as often as possible

AND

- your child has attended for at least 200 sessions in the past 12 months (for children aged 6 years and over)

If you would like to speak to our Headteachers about «Name»'s attendance, please telephone the school to make an appointment.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

Kent School Referral Pathway – Pupil Attendance

