

St Peter's School

Attendance Policy

Aims

To provide clear guidelines about how the school promotes and attains high levels of pupil attendance. This will ensure that all stakeholders understand the school's expectations of themselves, and each other, and strive to attain them.

Objectives

1. to achieve a 95% + attendance rate
2. to promote partnership between parents and school, working for the benefit of the children's learning
3. to involve other agencies when all possible school based supportive measures have been put in place.

The policy will give clear guidance on expectations and procedures for:

- Pupils
- Parents
- Staff
- Governors

Procedures for implementation

Expectations of pupils:

- that they will attend school regularly, aiming for an attendance rate of 95 – 100%
- that they will arrive on time and appropriately prepared for the day.

Expectations of parents:

- That they will ensure their child/ren attend school, aiming for a 95 – 100% attendance rate
- That they will contact school by 8.30am at the latest, whenever their child is unable to attend
- That any absence is followed by a written explanation of why the child was absent, and for what period of time, if it is more than one day
- To ensure that their child arrives in school on time and is well prepared for the school day
- To contact the school, in confidence, whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school
- To report to the office and complete the Signing In/Out Sheet if their child needs to be taken out of school or arrives in school, for any reason, at any time other than at the start and end of the normal school day.
- To only take a child out of school for occasional days or parts of days, when there are exceptional circumstances,
- When there are exceptional circumstances, to complete the schools 'Request for Leave of Absence' form and return it to the school office at least fourteen days prior to the date/s requested for consideration.

Expectations of school:

- To ensure regular, efficient and accurate recording of presence/absence
- To make early contact with parents when a child fails to attend
- To refer to appropriate support agencies as required
- To communicate clear expectations of what is good attendance
- To give clear guidance as to how good attendance is promoted

Expectations of governors:

- To deploy an attendance committee with specific responsibility for supporting the headteacher in achieving the highest possible attendance rate for all pupils
- To monitor the effectiveness of the policy through reports to the full governing body at meetings.
- To communicate effectively with parents about the benefits of regular and punctual attendance.
- To work with other agencies as appropriate

School Procedures related to attendance:

Our school day begins at 8.30 am and anyone who arrives after that time is late.

Registration

- registers are taken at 8.30am and 1.00pm
- registers are completed and returned to the office at the end of registration
- registers will be completed using the required codes
- If no information, regarding the absence of a child, has been received by 8.30 am, the secretary will telephone the parent as soon as possible to check the reason for absence
- If there is no initial reason given for the absence, or letter of explanation on the child's return, this will be recorded as unauthorised absence
- If a child arrives late for registration i.e. after 8.30am, the parent will sign the Late Arrivals Sheet held in the office giving the time of arrival and the reason for arriving late, and the child will go straight to their class.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

The decision to authorise an absence is taken by the Attendance Committee, following the school's policy on attendance.

Authorised absence

- Absence will be authorised if the school has notification from the parents that the child is ill. This should usually take the form of an initial notification at the beginning of the period of absence and a note of confirmation on the child's return, if the absence is longer than one day.
- If the child has a medical appointment with the doctor or dentist that cannot be made outside school hours, this will be considered as an authorised absence. Parents must inform the school in advance.
- If the absence has been requested and approved in line with the school procedures then this will be an authorised absence.

An absence may not be authorised, even if the parents give a reason, if the absences are persistent. In the case of repeated absence due to illness, the school will request confirmation from the GP that the child has a medical condition that seriously impacts on their ability to attend school regularly.

Unauthorised absence

Absences will not be authorised for the following:

- Unexplained absence
- Absence for a shopping trip
- A trip or holiday
- Any absence that is not considered by the Attendance Committee to be as the result of exceptional circumstances
- Arriving at school after 8.45 am

Persistent lateness

If a child arrives after 8.30 they will be recorded as having arrived late in the registers and if they arrive after 8.45, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, unless there are exceptional circumstances. If the lateness is persistent and parents/carers fail to work with school to address the issues, the matter can be referred to the Attendance Officer, who will offer support. If there is still no improvement, a Penalty Notice could be issued.

Response to non attendance:

- If a child is absent, and contact is not received from the parents, the parents will be contacted on the first day of absence by telephone. If no contact can be made, either through work or mobile numbers, the school will use the contacts list provided by parents.
- Where there has been no response, or explanation, the school will post a letter to the parents/carers requesting information regarding the absence.
- Where there continues to be no response to the school intervention, and the absence has persisted without explanation, the school will refer the issue to the Attendance Officer.
- If a child's attendance slips below 90%, or a child is repeatedly late (on time less than 80% of the time), the school will initially approach the parents/carers expressing concerns about levels of attendance and offering support if required. If the situation does not improve, the headteacher will invite the parents to a Parent Contract Meeting to discuss the issue and discuss any support required. The school may request the support of the Attendance Officer, if appropriate.
- In extreme circumstances, where the issue cannot be resolved between school and parents, with the support of the Attendance Officer, the school will refer the matter formally to the County Attendance Team and, where necessary, Penalty Notices may be issued in line with Oxfordshire County Council's Code of Conduct (January 2015).

Legal proceedings

Regular and punctual attendance at school is both a legal requirement, and essential for pupils in order to maximise their educational opportunities. The Education Act 1996, Section 444A and 444B, the Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003, Section 23, Section 105 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 gives powers for a range of procedures to be initiated if parents/carers fail to secure a child's attendance at school.

Incentives for good attendance:

- Attendance data will be checked regularly (three times a year) by the Governing Body to identify any issues
- Attendance will be discussed at regular staff meetings where staff have the opportunity to express any concerns
- Reasons for regular attendance and arriving on time, well prepared for school will be raised in assemblies and PSHCE sessions
- Parents will receive reports on their child's level of attendance on the annual report at the end of the school year.

Monitoring and evaluating effectiveness

- The Governing Body will analyse attendance data three times a year to identify issues and trends
- The school will work closely with the Attendance Officer in their monitoring of the attendance and registration procedures in the school
- The school will evaluate the success of the procedures by measuring the annual attendance % against that of previous years.

Summary

Through the implementation of the policy, the following will be achieved:

- a 95% + attendance rate
- a positive partnership between parents and school, working together to improve attendance for the benefit of the children's learning
- clear and transparent procedures and expectations understood by all stakeholders