

ATTENDANCE POLICY including COVID-19 ADDENDUM

Key Manager	Pastoral Officer
Ratified by	Principal
Review Dates	Annually
Location of Policy	School website
Access to Policy	Open
Policy Context	This policy applies to all staff and students of the school and to those others offered access to such school resources.

Revision History

Revision Date	Description	Sections Affected	Revised By	Approved By
January 2021	Updated policy	All	K Jones	J Casswell

1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)

- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [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](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. School Procedures

3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:40am on each school day. School gates open between 8.20am – 8.40am and pupils can enter the school during this time.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:40am and will close at 8.45am. *Early Morning Work begins promptly at 8.45am.*

The register for the second session will be taken between 12.45pm and 1.15pm depending on year group.

3.2 Unplanned absence procedure

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – **by 9:00am or as soon as practically possible** (see also section 5).

Parents can notify the school either by phone by calling our main reception on 01933 622400 or by email on enquiries@stpetersschoolraunds.co.uk.

If a pupil continues to be absent after the first day, please ensure you contact the school **EVERY DAY by 9:00am** to report the absence.

Schools have a safeguarding duty, under Section 175 Education Act 2002, to investigate any unexplained absences.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

If a pupil is absent and we have not heard from parents/carers by 9.00am, we will:

- Check the school database to confirm if the pupil has a planned appointment.
- Telephone parents/carers if we have not heard from them.
- If we are unable to get hold of the parents/carers, we will phone any other contacts on their emergency contact list.
- If the school is unable to contact anyone on the contact list, then members of staff will visit the home of the pupil to make contact.
- If there is no one home and after searching the local vicinity the child is not located within 45 minutes, the school will notify the police on 101, and if appropriate, social services and the Chair of Governors to inform of the child's absence.
- The school will then follow the instructions from the police regarding the continuation of the search for the child.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Please inform the school either by writing a note in your child's planner, by contacting the school office or by email at enquiries@stpetersschoolraunds.co.uk .

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

The gate closes at 8.40am. Register is taken between 8.40am and 8.45am. A pupil who arrives after the register (**8.45am**) has closed must report to the school office where their name and time of arrival will be noted in the lateness folder. An adequate reason for lateness may be authorised, but children and parents/carers who fail to provide an adequate explanation for the lateness must be marked as an unauthorised absence for that session. This lateness will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

There are three ways lateness can be recorded:

1. If a child arrives in class as the register is being taken and they have been marked absent, but are still in the process of doing the register the teacher can mark the present column as well.
2. If the register has been 'closed' the 'L' code will be used in the register by the admin staff. Pupils will need signing in and a reason given for the lateness.
3. If a child arrives after **9.00am**, the code 'U' will be used. This will then be recorded as unauthorised. Parents/carers need to sign them in and give a reason for their lateness.

Lateness Procedure

If a child is late for three mornings in a week, unless there are exceptional circumstances, the parent will be contacted by written and/or verbal communication.

If a child is late more than six times in a three-week period, the Pastoral Support Officer (PSO) will send out a letter of concern and will monitor punctuality over the next four weeks.

If a child is late more than ten times in an academic year, the PSO and class teacher will invite, parent(s)/carer(s) in for a meeting. PSO will continue to monitor.

Lateness letters will be sent out in line with the attendance percentage monitoring cycle.

Late Collection Procedure

Children should always be collected punctually between the collection times of 3:00pm – 3:20pm. If parents/carers have an emergency that means they are going to be significantly late, school should be informed as soon as possible and attempt to make alternative collection arrangements.

If a child is not collected they are taken to the school office at 3.20pm and their name is recorded in the late collection folder.

Parents/carers will be asked to record a reason for their lateness. Emergency contact numbers will be used if we are unable to contact parents/carers. Social care will be informed if any child is left uncollected after 4.20pm.

3.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensuring proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

If an acceptable reason for absence is given and accepted by the school the absence may be marked as 'authorised'. The school are under no obligation to accept the reason given for absence when there is doubt as to its validity.

3.6 Reporting to parents

All absences both authorised, unauthorised absence and lateness will be reported to the parent/carer termly during parent consultation meetings and at the end of the academic year as part of their child's report. The report may contain a comment on the impact of the pupil's attendance during the year.

Where attendance drops below 90% parents will be informed of this through a standard letter explaining that while we acknowledge these absences are authorised we are still required to monitor and report on them.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Principals may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider them to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Principal's discretion. The parent/carer may be required to have a meeting with the Principal to discuss the request. Authorisation is not guaranteed.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people)

and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

Holidays in term time

There is no lawful entitlement to take time off during term time to go on holiday. Amendments to the 2006 Education Act make it clear that from September 2013 the Principal may not grant any leave of absence other than in exceptional circumstances.

The Principal will determine the amount of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. The school will consider the circumstances of each application individually.

Special Leave of Absence forms are available from the office and must be completed in advance.

Leave will not be granted under the following circumstances:

- When a student is just starting the school. This is very important as your child needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible.
- Immediately before and during assessment periods and end of Key Stage Two assessments.
- When a student's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and the Educational Inclusion and Partnership Team (EIP) will be informed. This may result in sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

4.2 Legal sanctions

The school can put a referral in to the EIP for the unauthorised absence of the child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

The decision on whether or not to refer to the EIP ultimately rests with the Principal, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices.

This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason.

The fixed penalty tariff by Northamptonshire County Council is £60 per parent/per child (two parents/two children = £240). This figure will be doubled if not paid in 21 days.

Northamptonshire County Council will issue fixed penalty notices in the following circumstances:

- Where a child misses five consecutive school days (10 sessions) that the school has not authorised.
- Where a child misses the equivalent of five school days (10 sessions) in a six week period that are not authorised. This would include unauthorised lates after 9:00am which are classed as absence.
- An accumulation of unauthorised absence leading to an attendance of 90% or less.

5. Attendance monitoring

The PSO monitors pupil absence on a weekly basis.

Parents are expected to contact the school by **9:00am** if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2).

The PSO will review all pupils whose attendance falls below 95% and assess the reasons given for the absence.

Attendance between 93 – 94.9% will be monitored on a 6-weekly block.

If the attendance fails to improve or the attendance falls lower, a letter will be sent out to invite parents/carers in for a meeting to discuss support and strategies to help the pupil with their attendance.

Attendance that falls below 90% may be referred to the Education Welfare Officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Persistent absenteeism (PA)

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level can do considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we request the full support of parents and guardians 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/guardians will be informed of this immediately.

PA students are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

The school will contact home if any student has reached below the 90% attendance rate so that intervention strategies can be put in place before the student moves into the PA range.

6. Roles and responsibilities

6.1 The Trust Board

The Trust Board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis via the Principal's Report. It also holds the Principal to account for the implementation of this policy.

6.2 The Principal

The Principal is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The Principal also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

6.3 The Attendance Officer

The Pastoral Support Officer acts as the Attendance Officer in this setting.

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Principal
- Works with Education Welfare Officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the Principal when to issue fixed-penalty notices

6.4 Class Teacher

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

6.5 Office staff

Office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

6.6 The Education Welfare Officer

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with staff in resolving any problems. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer from the Local Authority. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement, but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these officers can use sanctions such as penalty notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court.

7. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Principal. At every review, the policy will be shared with the Trust Board and Local Advisory Board.

8. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness

M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Attendance policy: coronavirus addendum

Last Reviewed: March 2021

1. Aims and scope

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Supporting parents/carers and pupils who are concerned about the return to school due to coronavirus

This addendum applies from the start of the Autumn term 2020 until the end of the 2020/21 academic year. It sets out changes to our normal attendance policy, and should be read in conjunction with that policy. Unless covered here, our normal attendance policy continues to apply.

We may need to amend or add to this addendum as circumstances or official guidance changes. We will communicate any changes to staff, parents and pupils.

2. Guidance and definitions

This policy meets the requirements of the Department for Education's [guidance](#) on school attendance during the 2020/21 academic year.

In section 4.2 of this addendum, where we refer to 'close contact', this means:

- Direct close contacts: face-to-face contact with an infected individual for any length of time, within 1 metre, including being coughed on, a face-to-face conversation, or unprotected physical contact (skin-to-skin)
- Proximity contacts: extended close contact (within 1 to 2 metres for more than 15 minutes) with an infected individual
- Travelling in a small vehicle, like a car, with an infected person

This definition is from the DfE's [guidance on full reopening for schools](#) (see number 9 in 'the system of controls').

3. Attendance expectations

It is mandatory for all pupils of compulsory school age to attend school unless:

- They have been granted an authorised absence by the school in line with section 4.1 of our normal attendance policy
- They cannot attend school due to specific circumstances related to coronavirus (see section 4, below)

4. Where 'non-attendance in relation to coronavirus' applies

We will only accept 'non-attendance in relation to coronavirus' in circumstances where a pupil's travel to, or attendance at, school would be:

- Against guidance from Public Health England and/or the Department of Health and Social Care relating to the incidence of coronavirus or its transmission
- Prohibited by any legislation or statutory directions relating to the incidence of transmission of coronavirus

4.1 Pupil develops symptoms or lives with someone who does

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day that their child needs to self-isolate. The pupil will stay at home until they or the symptomatic person they live with receives their coronavirus test results.

If the pupil's test result is negative: the pupil will return to school when they feel well and no longer have symptoms similar to coronavirus. They should continue to stay at home if they remain unwell (i.e. with a different illness).

If the person the pupil lives with tests negative: the pupil will stop self-isolating and return to school

4.2 Pupil or a 'close contact' of theirs receives a positive test result

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school about the positive test result as soon as possible. Please contact the school office on 01933 622400.

Pupils who test positive must self-isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of symptoms, and must only return to school when they no longer have symptoms (other than a cough or a loss of sense of smell or taste).

If a member of the pupil's household or a 'close contact' tests positive, the pupil must also self-isolate for 10 days. The pupil must do this from when the member of their household first had symptoms, or the day the pupil last met with the 'close contact' who received the positive result.

See the definition for 'close contact' in section 2 of this addendum.

4.3. Pupil has to quarantine after travel abroad

The parent/carer must notify the school if their child has to quarantine after travel to a country that is not on the government's [exemptions list](#).

The pupil must quarantine for 10 days on their arrival to the UK, take two COVID tests as per the government guidance and return to school thereafter.

4.4 Pupil is required to shield during a local lockdown

The parent/carer will notify the school if they are advised by the government to stay at home and will provide proof of their shielding letter by sending a scan of the letter to enquiries@stpetersschoolraunds.co.uk or a photocopy of the letter to the school address.

The pupil will stay at home until the shielding measures in the local area are paused. Once the shielding measures are lifted, we will contact the pupil's parent/carer to set the expectation that they can return to school.

4.5 Remote learning provision

If a pupil is not attending school because of circumstances related to coronavirus, but where the pupil is not ill, the school will provide the pupil access to remote education.

Please see our remote learning plan explaining our remote learning provision on the school website [here](#).

5. Recording attendance

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to 'exceptional circumstances' (as defined in section 4.1 of our normal attendance policy)
- Unable to attend for reasons related to coronavirus (see appendix 1 for the relevant absence codes and when we will use them)

Pupils must arrive in school by **8:40am** each school day. The school gates will open between **8:20am – 8:40am**.

The register for the first session will be taken at **8.40am** and will be kept open until **8.45am**.

6. Following up absence

When a child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, we will:

- Follow up on their initial absence with their parent or carer by phone
- Notify their social worker, where they have one

If a pupil does not attend because they, and/or their parent/carer are concerned about returning to school because of coronavirus, we will:

- Arrange a phone call/video meeting/in-school appointment between the parent/carer and the class teacher to explain the protective measures the school is taking to keep pupils safe. Further calls may be made by members of the SLT or Pastoral Officer if required.

6. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed each time the guidance from the DFE is updated, and as a minimum every 2 months during term time. At every review, the Trust Board and Local Advisory Board will be informed.

Appendix 1: pupil absence codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's addendum to their school attendance guidance for the 2020/21 academic year. If not covered here, our normal attendance codes apply.

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)	Pupil has to self-isolate because they have symptoms or live with someone who does, and are waiting for their test results
I	Illness	Pupil remains unwell following a negative test result (i.e. with a different illness)
I	Illness	Pupil has to continue to self-isolate because they tested positive
X	Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)	Pupil has to self-isolate (for 14 days) because someone they live with tested positive
X	Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)	Pupil has to self-isolate (for 14 days) because they are a close contact of someone who tested positive
X	Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)	Pupil has to quarantine (for 14 days) after a trip to a non-exempt country
X	Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)	Pupil is required to shield in the case of a local lockdown, or lives with someone who is required to shield
X	Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)	Pupil is asked not to attend in the case of local lockdown