

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

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

### Revision History

Revision Date	Description	Sections Affected	Revised By	Approved By
January 2021	Updated policy	All	K Jones	J Casswell
January 2022	Updated policy	3.1	K Jones	J Casswell

This policy is written in line with the Christian values and ethos of our school.

***“Let Your Light Shine” Matthew 5:16.***

## 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 8:45am on each school day.** School gates open between 8.30am – 8.45am and pupils can enter the school during this time.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:45am and will close at 8.50am.

The register for the second session will be taken at 1.00pm and will close at 1:05pm.

### **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 6).

Parents can notify the school either by phone by calling our main reception on 01933 622400 or by email on [enquiries@stpetersschoolraunds.co.uk](mailto: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 policy 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](mailto: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**

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register 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 verbal communication.

If a child is late more than ten times in a three period, the parent will be asked to make an appointment with the Pastoral Support Officer (PSO) to discuss any problems they may be experiencing.

Lateness letters will be sent in line with the attendance percentage monitoring cycle – any pupil with more than 30 minutes late will receive a letter.

#### ***Late Collection Procedure***

Children should always be collected punctually between the collection times of 3:15pm – 3:30pm. 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 3.30pm 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 4.30pm.

### 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 there 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 EES will be informed. This may result in sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

## **4.2 Legal sanctions**

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice 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 attendance officer 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. A letter of concern may be sent out to parents.

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 Attendance Officer:

- 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
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
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

<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	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)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	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
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day