



# Attendance Policy

Committee Responsible – CC&SL  
Last review: Spring 2019  
Next Review: Spring 2020

## POLICY STATEMENT

### **Aims**

The school Mission Statement declares that 'St Peter's is a Catholic school and our goal is to be Christ to all and to create a purposeful, accepting, caring and Christian community.'

As such we aim to be a beacon of hospitality to the local community welcoming all who apply. To those who are accepted, in partnership with parents, governors and the Local Education Authority, we commit ourselves to service.

We firmly believe that all students benefit from full and regular school attendance. We promote good attendance and do all we can to achieve it as a purposeful goal in itself and because we recognise its effect on achievement. To this end we positively support and encourage full attendance and encourage parents/carers to ensure that children in their care achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems which prevent full attendance are identified and acted upon promptly. We particularly endeavour to support students who experience difficulties which prevent full attendance.

### **Understanding Types of Absence**

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get an attendance mark (see **Registration and Lateness** on the following page)
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Excessive illness without medical evidence
- Day trips and holidays in term time

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, the parents should not cover up their absence or give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes matters worse.

The Education Welfare Service acting on behalf of Surrey County Council may issue Penalty Notices for poor attendance at school; these may incur fines for each parent/carer. Please read Appendix 2: Penalty Notices, for further information.

## **Registration and Lateness**

The school day begins at 8.45am. Morning registration will take place at 8.45am the registers will remain open until the end of registration at 9.05am. Any student who arrives within this period will be marked present. However after 8.45am they will be marked as present but late. Any student arriving after 9.05am should sign in at reception and will be marked as having an unauthorised absence unless there is an acceptable explanation i.e. school transport was delayed. In cases for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorized absence code will be entered (See Appendix 1). Any student who arrives late to school without an acceptable explanation will receive a 20 minute lunchtime detention.

The afternoon registration will be taken at the beginning of lesson 4 which begins at 1.15 pm.

Students should leave school by 3:25pm unless:

- They attend Homework Club
- They are involved in an after-school activity organised and supervised by a member of staff

At the end of these activities students should leave the site. Please see Appendix 2 Extended Hours Procedures, regarding any student on premises after-school hours.

## **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 is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects; missing school seriously affects children's longer term life opportunities and we need parents/carers fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor 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 you will be informed of this immediately. PA students are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system.

If attendance at school continues to worsen we will make a referral to the Education Welfare Service who offer support to parents/carers and to the school to ensure the student attends regularly. If necessary the Education Welfare Service will arrange home visits and/or contact other agencies to meet with the family to ensure attendance improves.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

We expect students to:

- Attend school regularly
- Attend school punctually
- Attend school appropriately prepared for the day
- Discuss promptly with her/his form tutor any problems that deter her/him from attending school.

We expect that parents/carers will:

- Encourage full school attendance and emphasise its importance; also to be aware of their legal responsibility for their child's attendance at school.
- Ensure that the children in their care arrive in school punctually, prepared for the school day
- Ensure students do not participate in after-school (evening) activities if these activities might affect attendance in lessons the following day
- Ensure that they contact the school at the beginning of each day of absence
- Send a note to explain the absence on the students return to school
- Contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may impede attendance
- Arrange medical/dental appointments out of school hours as far as practical

We expect the school staff will:

- Promote full attendance
- Keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all students at least twice daily
- Monitor every student's attendance
- Contact parents - using 'Truancy Call' - as soon as possible when a student fails to attend or where no message has been received to explain the absence
- Follow up all unexplained absence to obtain notes authorising the absence
- Make initial enquiries of parents/carers of students who are not attending regularly, express their concern and clarify the school's and the LEA's expectations with regard to regular school attendance
- Maintain good and regular communications with the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) and refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the Educational Welfare Service (EWS).

### **Encouraging Attendance**

St Peter's encourages full and regular attendance in the following ways:

- By providing a caring and welcoming learning environment
- By encouraging students to be aware of the importance of their own attendance and punctuality
- By responding promptly to a student's or a parent's concern
- By marking registers accurately and punctually during the morning and afternoon. (If a student arrives at school after the close of the register without a written explanation, the lateness will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and the student must record her/his name in the 'Late Book' in case of a fire procedure)
- By monitoring students, informing parents/carers of irregular attendance, arranging meetings with them if necessary and referring the family to the EWS if the irregular attendance continues
- By providing a broad and balanced curriculum, appropriately differentiated and well delivered.

## **Responding to Non-Attendance**

St Peter's will respond in the following way when a student does not attend school:

- On each day of absence, if no note or telephone call is received from the parent/carer by 9.15 the school will endeavour to contact them that day for an explanation
- If there is a failure to comply with the expectations set by the EWS further action may be taken in the form of an application for an Educational Supervision Order or a court prosecution

St Peter's has the following responsibilities:

### Headteacher, Governors and Attendance Officer (Deputy Headteacher):

- Adopt this policy
- Ensure that the registration procedures are carried out efficiently and that appropriate resources are provided
- Maintain a scheme for contacting parents on the first day of absence
- Ensure that key staff have time-tabled periods for liaison and follow up work with the EWS and appropriate access to attendance data
- Have systems in place which will identify students who are 'at risk'
- Consult and liaise closely with the EWS on a regular basis and take responsibility for ensuring appropriate students are identified and referred without delay
- Work in close collaboration with the EWS during their half-term/termly register analysis
- Monitor and evaluate attendance with the EWS
- A celebration assembly which will acknowledge high standards of attendance with certificates

### Pastoral Support Team

- To oversee the registration process and ensure that registers are completed accurately and punctually
- To reinforce and promote good practice at year group meetings
- To liaise with the EWS regularly
- To share form tutors concerns regarding the early identification of disaffection with the EWS

### Form Tutors and Class Teachers

- To complete registers accurately and punctually at least twice daily (tutors during tutorial time and class teachers at the beginning of every lesson)
- To follow up any unexplained non-attendance
- To record all reasons for absences
- To inform the Head of Year/the designated person in charge of overall attendance of particular concerns
- To be alert to early signs of disaffection which could culminate in non-attendance and to report concerns as soon as possible to the Head of Year

## **Work Experience and Alternative Education Arrangements**

Students attending any of the above must inform both St Peter's and their alternative location on each and every day of absence. St Peter's will expect the normal attendance policy to be followed.

## **Leave of absence in Term Time**

Taking a leave of absence in term time will affect a child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents/carers to help us by not taking children away in school time. Remember that any savings parents may think they may make is offset by the cost to the child's education.

The DfE advises that following the 2006 Education Act and its amendment on Student Registration (England) 2013, Headteachers should not authorise any leave of absence in term time. Such instances should be regarded as unauthorised absence unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classified as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

## **Penalty Notices**

The Education Welfare Service, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school and requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount. The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.

If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority must prosecute the parent/carer for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

## **Circumstances when a Penalty Notices may be issued**

- Students identified by police and education welfare officers engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences.
- **The Education (Student Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.**

Where a child is taken out of school for 10 sessions or more and the 'leave of absence' is without the authority of the Headteacher, **each parent** is liable to receive a penalty notice for **each child** who is absent. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised and that they will be liable to receive a Penalty Notice if the leave of absence is taken.

- The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where a student has incurred 7 or more unauthorised sessions during the preceding 6 school weeks. The parents' failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school or Education Welfare will be a factor when considering the issue of a Penalty Notice. Unauthorised absence will include late arrival after the close of registration without good reason.

**With the exception of unauthorised leave of absence taken in term time, parents will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.**

### **Changing Schools**

Anyone choosing to remove their child from St Peter's School must inform the Headteacher in writing as soon as possible giving the following details:

- The date the student will be leaving St Peter's and starting at the new school
- The name and address of the new school, or if home-schooling is intended (for future education of the student)
- The student's home address

# Appendix 1

## Codes

### **Attendance (Present) Codes:**

/	Present AM
\	Present PM
B	Educated off site (not dual registration)
D	Dual Registration
J	Interview
L	Late (before registration closes)
P	Approved sporting activity
W	Work experience
V	Educational visit or trip

### Absence Codes:

C	Other authorised Absence circumstances
E	Excluded
G	Family Holiday (not agreed)
I	Illness
M	Medical/Dental appointments
N	No reason yet provided for absence
O	Unauthorised Abs (not covered by other code)
R	Religious observance
S	Study Leave
T	Traveller absence
U	Late (after register close)

### Other codes:

X	DfES School closed to students
Y	Enforced Closure
!	DfES Non compulsory school age absence
#	School closed to students and staff
*	DfES Z: Student not on roll
-	All should attend/ No mark recorded