



# St. Peter's Catholic Primary School

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

### Mission Statement

**St Peter's – building firm foundations for life**

**We care for others**

**We achieve our best**

**We grow in faith**

### **Rationale**

St Peter's Catholic Primary school promotes the view that good attendance is important to ensure the best possible learning outcomes for all of our children. Good attendance at school establishes a positive working ethos early in life.

Pupils are expected to attend 100% of the time unless the absence has been authorised by the Head teacher (or delegated member of staff). Absence should only occur when a child is unfit to learn or has a day of religious observance. We believe that the whole school community shares responsibility for attendance. Under current government legislation, unauthorised absence is regarded as truancy and all absence figures have to be reported to the Local Authority and the Department for Education and are recorded on a child's annual report.

### **Informing the school of absence**

- Parents and carers are asked to contact the school office by phone or in person if their child is absent from school;
- If any child has not been registered or the school has not been notified about a child's absence, the office will contact the parent;
- If the parent notifies the school of a child's reason for absence, but the child continues to be absent for more than a week then an update check will be made by the school in the form of a phone call;
- On the child's return to school the parents should write a note for the register explaining the reason for absence. If no note is received the school office will remind the parents with a phone call;
- Any absence considered not to be a justified reason (e.g. parents keeping children off school unnecessarily for a birthday treat, shopping trip etc.) will remain unauthorised. A series of unauthorised absences will trigger a meeting with the Headteacher;
- Where children have persistent attendance problems the Headteacher will invite parents/carers into school to a formal meeting;
- The Inclusion Officer (formerly Education Welfare Officer) is informed of all unexplained absences. Each half- term the Inclusion Officer looks at registers and carries out attendance checks.

### **Arrival and registration**

- All children should be come into school between 8.45am and 8.55am each day ('soft start');
- The register is taken twice a day. A day counts as 2 attendances. Morning registration ends at 9.05 am;
- All children arriving after 9.05am must report to the office and will be marked in as 'late'.
- After 9.25am this will become an unauthorised absence;
- Lateness is monitored monthly. Where children have persistent lateness problems the Headteacher will invite the parents into school to a formal meeting.

## Medical appointments

- Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours;
- If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment;
- It is essential that children arriving and leaving school with a parent/guardian outside the normal hours are signed in or out from the office. The signing in/out register in the office is used in the case of fire as an appendix to class registers.

## Illness

- If your child is unwell please follow the guidance for informing the school of absence. Remember to send a letter, explaining the reason why the child is not at school, on the child's return;
- If your child has had sickness and/or diarrhoea, it is important they stay at home until 48 hours after the last episode;
- In the case of an illness which requires antibiotics or other medication, or is contagious, please follow medical advice about when your child should return to school;
- If your child seems a little off-colour but has no specific symptoms, please send him/her to school, as we will always contact you if he/she becomes unwell during the school day.

## Unauthorised Leave of Absence

The Education (Pupil Registration)(England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, which became law on 1st September 2013, state that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The head teacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted. The Headteacher/Governing Body will be responsible for deciding what they consider to be 'exceptional circumstances.

Examples of 'exceptional circumstances' might be:

- Visiting seriously ill close relatives.
- Bereavement of a close family member (but for the service only and not for extended leave).
- Important religious observances (but only for travel time and ceremony and not extended leave).

In accordance with the above Regulations, requests for leave of absence are treated sympathetically, but only in exceptional circumstances can they be approved. The policy of Surrey County Council states that parents who take their child out of school for five days or more during term time, without the authority of the Headteacher, will each be liable to receive a penalty notice. Penalty Notices will be issued by the Local Authority.

## Process for requesting absence during term time

- Requests must be made in writing by letter or email to the Headteacher;
- Permission for absence will not be granted retrospectively;
- The Headteacher, having consulted with the Chair of Governors, will respond to the parental request;
- If application for leave of absence is granted, work will not be set for completion during the holiday, but children should be encouraged to read and keep a diary of their experiences;
- Parents who decide to take a Leave of Absence without permission will incur unauthorised absences for their child. These remain on a child's record and are monitored for further action by the Inclusion Officer, which could result in the issuing of a Fixed Penalty Notice;
- The penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt of the notice. If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 28-day period the Local Authority must prosecute the recipient for failing to ensure regular school attendance under section 444 Education Act 1996;
- Please be aware that each parent is liable to receive a Penalty Notice for each child who incurs unauthorised absences, for example, if there are two parents and one child, each parent will receive one Penalty Notice;
- If there are two parents and two children incurring unauthorised absences, each parent will receive two Penalty Notices, which in this case would amount to £120 each if paid within 21 days;

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

- Registers of all classes are kept and monitored by the office staff daily;
- A log is kept of all children who arrive late;
- A record is kept of all children daily for whom no notification for absence has been received and of phone calls made to parents;
- Registers are checked regularly by the Inclusion Officer to ensure they are kept accurately by teachers and to assess the reasons and incidence of any absences;
- Children with attendance between 90% and 92% will have their reasons for absence monitored;
- Any child with an attendance of under 90% will have their records examined and if need be drawn to the attention of the Inclusion Officer.

Governors are mindful that even 10% absence represents, over the entire school career for a pupil, missing in excess of a whole year of learning.

## **Attendance Target**

Attendance targets are set annually and are included in the school's monitoring programme.

This policy and practices will be reviewed annually.

**Policy Date: Summer 2021**

**Review Date: Summer 2022 Children & Learning**