



ST. PETER'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL & NURSERY EDGMOND

Attendance Policy

At St. Peter's CE Primary School & Nursery, we work hard to ensure that we provide a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all children want to be and are keen and ready to learn. We recognise that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, we work in partnership with children and families to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.

Why is school attendance important?

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school. Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an exceptional absence in advance from the school.

High levels of attendance are essential for children to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances. Statistics show that the pupils with the highest attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment.

How do we promote the benefits of good attendance at St. Peter's?

At St. Peter's we set high expectations of attendance for every child and communicate these expectations clearly and consistently to children and parents. We regularly analyse our data to identify patterns in order to target our improvement efforts, and work closely alongside Telford & Wrekin local authority and our local Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to overcome barriers to attendance. We understand that attendance cannot be seen in isolation and believe that the foundation to good attendance is a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment in which all pupils want to attend and can thrive, achieve and build positive relationships.

We aim to:

- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.
- Have a clear school attendance policy which all staff, pupils and parents understand.
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow up absence.
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
- Build strong relationships with families, listen to and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them.
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

Our whole school culture

We believe that good attendance at school is vital and, alongside good behaviour, make this a central part of our vision, values, ethos, and day to day life. We regularly communicate our high expectations of attendance to families through newsletters, email correspondence and face-to-face conversations in order to help parents and carers understand what is expected of them and why good attendance is so important to their child's attainment, wellbeing,



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Galatians 5:22-23

and wider development. In assemblies, we demonstrate to children the benefits of good attendance throughout their school life. Occasionally we praise and reward improvements and achievements in attendance at whole school, key stage, class or individual level. This is always done sensitively according to context and children's wishes.

Roles and responsibilities

Our Headteacher, Claire Medhurst, has overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance in school. As part of this role she offers a clear vision for attendance improvement, evaluates and monitors expectations and processes, oversees and carries out data analysis, and communicates messages regarding attendance to children and parents.

At the beginning of every school year, whole school targets are set for both improving attendance and reducing persistent absence in conjunction with our Education Welfare Officer and governing body as part of a continuous cycle of improvement and review. Attendance is formally reviewed on a half-termly basis with any concerns raised and/or actions taken recorded electronically. This system then enables us to track particular pupils or groups of children between these times should their attendance be causing concern. Attendance data is also reported to governors each term. The messages, processes, and strategies we use to promote good attendance throughout the school year are regularly reviewed and updated in order to allow us to monitor and improve attendance and reduce absence.

Alongside the Headteacher, all our teaching and non-teaching staff know the importance of good attendance, are consistent in their communication with children and families and receive the training and professional development they need.

In conjunction with other schools in the Newport cluster, we employ an Education Welfare Officer and a Family Support Worker. These staff work closely with our families, conduct home visits when necessary and work in partnership with both our school leadership team and the local authority's School Attendance Support Team. All staff working in school are regularly trained to recognise that children missing education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, sexual abuse and child sexual and criminal exploitation. Staff know that they must pass on any concerns regarding attendance to the Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible.

Expectations

Our school and nursery day begins at 8.45am. The school doors open at 8.35am and children can be dropped off and come into school and into class from this time, to enable a prompt start to sessions. For reasons of safety, children should not arrive, or be left unaccompanied on the school site, before this time. **Attendance registers are taken at 8:45am and 1pm promptly in every class.** Children arriving at school after this time will be marked as late. We offer a flexible, cost-effective drop-in Breakfast Club provision to all children from Nursery to Year 6 which runs daily from 7.30am onwards.

The school day ends at 3.15pm and the afternoon nursery session at 3:30pm. Each teacher dismisses their class to parents/carers from the main school gates at the end of the day. If parents are going to be late or there are any alterations to the usual collection arrangements, we ask that they contact school as soon as they are able to let us know what arrangements have been made. Any children who have not been collected will be cared for in After-School Club until a parent/carer or other authorised adult arrives.

Parents/carers can access attendance records for their child at any time by using the ScholarPack app which they are provided details of on admission to school.

Reporting absence

If a child is too unwell to attend school, a telephone call to the school office before 9.15am is required. Parents/carers are expected to provide details of symptoms when keeping children off school due to illness and make contact with school on a daily basis to inform us of their progress. If a child is absent from school and we have not received a



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phone call or message explaining why by 9:15am, we will always make every effort to contact parents/carers in order to ascertain the whereabouts of their child.

Absence requests

Should a child need to be absent from school for any other reason, for example a medical or dental appointment, an absence request form must be completed and returned to school in advance. These forms are available from the school office or can be downloaded from the school website. Only exceptional circumstances warrant a leave of absence. Please be aware that holidays during school term time will not be authorised and may be subject to a Fixed Penalty Notice.

What happens when absence becomes a concern?

If a child is absent, no message has been received and we have not been able to make contact with parents/carers, we will ask our Education Welfare Officer to conduct a home visit in order to carry out a safety and wellbeing check. Should an unexplained absence continue for three days or more, we will consider a referral to the local authority Attendance Support Team and/or Family Connect. After ten consecutive days of absence, school staff will initiate the Child Not Receiving Education/Child Missing from Education protocol as advised by Telford and Wrekin Council. If a parent/carer expresses their intention to remove their child from school with a view to electively home educating, a meeting will be held with parents/carers and a representative from the local authority before a final decision is made.

Persistent absence

Every half term, during our attendance review, the parents/carers of any children whose attendance drops below 90% will be contacted by our Education Welfare Officer unless there is a clear, authorised explanation as to why a child has been absent (for example, following an operation). In the first instance, this will be a telephone call during which our EWO will explain to parents why they are making contact and offer support. If a child's attendance has not improved by the date of the next attendance review, the family will receive a SAL1 letter formally recording that their child's attendance is a cause for concern and again offering support. Should attendance remain a concern, the family will receive a SAL2 letter which explains that any illnesses or medical conditions reported, for which evidence is not provided with either an official medical appointment card, copy of any prescriptions issued or proof from a GP, will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. A referral will then be made to the local authority Attendance Support Team if attendance does not significantly improve.

Support

Support with attendance is always on offer to families who need it. Should a parent/carer require support, they can make an appointment to speak to the Headteacher and/or the Education Welfare Officer or Family Support Worker by contacting the school office. We aim to apply this policy fairly and consistently but in doing so will always consider the individual needs of our children and their families who have specific barriers to attendance. We will also always be mindful of our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. We acknowledge that some children face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. Their right to an education is the same as any other child and therefore our attendance ambition for these children is the same as for any other child. However, when working with their parents to improve attendance, we will always be mindful of the barriers these pupils face and put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education.