St Peter's School

Attendance Policy

(Absent Children and Attendance Policy)

Written by:	Headteacher	**This version**	September 2025
Approved by:	Governors	**Next review due:**	September 2026

Key School Contacts

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Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the statutory guidance on Working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE). We aim to achieve this through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, which includes:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils;
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance;
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence;
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled;
- Acting early to address patterns of absence;
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the DfE's statutory guidance on Working together to improve school attendance and School attendance parental responsibility measures. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Equality Act 2010

It also refers to:

- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools
- Ofsted's 2025 framework toolkit

Roles and responsibilities

The Governing Board

The governing board is responsible for:
Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents/carers

Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations, statutory duties and comply with the law on school attendance, including:

- Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
- Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils' needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance so that staff understand:
    - The importance of good attendance
    - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
    - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
    - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Working with the parents/carers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers

- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents/carers through all available channels
- Sharing information from the school register with the local authority, including:
    - Notifying the local authority when a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the school admission register outside of standard transition times
    - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who fail to attend school regularly, or who have been marked with an unauthorised absence for a continuous period of 10 school days
- Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who the school believes will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader at St Peter's School is the Headteacher, responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is our headteacher, and can be contacted via the school office.

Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1), and submitting this information to the school office following registration at 9am each school day.

Admin staff

Office staff will take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system

Transfer calls from parents/carers, where appropriate, to a member of the senior leadership team in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.

Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:
All natural parents, whether they are married or not
All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them) Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends school on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence as appropriate, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with 2 emergency contact numbers for their child. If the child is in the Preschool (EYFS) we expect more than two emergency contact numbers.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the school office in the first instance,

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:
Attend school every day, on time

Recording attendance

Attendance register

We will keep an electronic attendance register and place all pupils on this register.
We will take our attendance register at the start of each morning session of each school day and once during each afternoon session. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending a place other than school
- Absent
- Absent – unable to attend due to unavoidable causes

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.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity, where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

- The school day starts at 8.50am and ends at 3.15pm (Lower School) 3.25pm (Upper School)
- Pupils must arrive in school by 8.45am on each school day.

Registers are taken at 8.50am and immediately after lunch.

Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by or as soon as practically possible, by calling the school office.

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for 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.

Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

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.

The pupil's parent must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence via ParentMail.

Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:
Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school or preschool does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school will have no choice but to call the police.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the pupil was absent
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's social worker and/or youth offending team officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals

Reporting to parents

The school will inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via annual school reports or through targeted written or face to face conversation if an issue arises at any time during the academic year.

Authorised absence

Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 school attendance regulations

These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances
- Any absence in line with our school contract.

A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for. This is in line with the Terms and Conditions of our school contracts.

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.
The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted in writing as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, a term before the absence via ParentMail.The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Other reasons for authorised absence

Other valid reasons for authorised absence include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart for religious observance
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – a pupil is a mobile child if their parent is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. In these circumstances a pupil will be considered as a mobile child, provided they are of compulsory school age and have no fixed abode and whose parent is in a trade or business that requires them to travel from place to place
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Absences from the school site (which are not classified as absences)

The headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings. These are not classified as absences. Reasons include (but are not limited to):
Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration) Attending provision arranged by the local authority
Attending work experience
If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

Strategies for promoting attendance

We want our pupils to succeed and develop their skills. To do this, pupils need to avoid missing lessons and days of school as much as possible. As a school, we want to reward high attendance and not just penalise pupils for poor attendance. St Peter's acknowledges excellent attendance through end of year certificates which are shared with the community. Attendance also forms part of our Home/School Contract which families, staff and pupils sign at the beginning of each academic year.

Supporting pupils with poor attendance

Our school and preschool will make use of the full range of support and potential sanctions, including, but not limited to, those listed below, to tackle poor attendance. Decisions made and strategies chosen on an individual, case-by-case basis. In the first instance St Peter's School will examine the child's

context holistically and, in partnership with families, will agree a positive route forwards in the best interest of both the child and the family.

Education supervision order

In cases where voluntary early help plans or bespoke strategies have been unsuccessful, we may work with the local authority to issue an education supervision order. If an education supervision order is considered, the local authority will inform the parent(s) in writing and will set up a meeting.

An education supervision order is a formal intervention but not criminal prosecution.

An education supervision order initially lasts for 1 year, but it can be extended within the last 3 months for a period of up to 3 years at a time.

In cases where parents persistently fail to meet the directions given under the education supervision order, they may be liable to a fine of up to £1,000 upon conviction.

Notice to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

A notice to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

It will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued, or prosecution considered, if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

Penalty notices

The headteacher, local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, we will check with the local authority before doing so, and send the local authority a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a first penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.
If a second penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day).

These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process.

In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

If the school becomes aware of barriers that relate to the pupil's EHC needs, we will inform the local authority.

Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health

St Peter's School will work with families, making appropriate adjustments and /or additional support to enable the child to be in school, including offering options such as flexi-schooling.

Pupils absent due to other barriers to attendance

St Peter's School will work with families, making appropriate adjustments and /or additional support to enable the child to be in school, including offering options such as flexi-schooling.

Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

St Peter's School will work with families, making appropriate adjustments and /or additional support to enable the child to be in school including offering options such as flexi-schooling.

Prolonged absence for children in the EYFS

In cases of prolonged absence, or when a child is absent without notification, we will attempt to contact the child's parents and alternative emergency contacts.

When deciding whether a child's absence should be considered prolonged, we will consider the:

- Patterns and trends in the child's absences and their personal circumstances
- Vulnerability of the child and their parents, as well as the circumstances of their home life
- We will also implement our safeguarding procedures (see our child protection/safeguarding policy on our school website) and refer any concerns to local children's social care and/or request a police welfare check.

Attendance monitoring

Monitoring attendance

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level with any concerns shared at weekly staff meetings with the headteacher.

The school will benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement and share this with the governing board annually.

Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils we have identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severed absence, and their families
- Share attendance concerns with Class Teachers to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs coordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads).
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies where appropriate
- Share information and work collaboratively with other (senior) schools in the area, if appropriate, and local authorities where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate.

Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
    - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
    - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
    - Explain the help that is available including flexi schooling options and working in partnership with families to support children being in school
    - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
    - Review any existing actions or interventions
    - Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant

- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence Implement sanctions, where necessary

After School Clubs

Attendance by a pupil at a club is recorded on BromCom and parents receive a Clubs List if their child is due to attend a club. However, unlike during the school day (see above) parents/guardians are not contacted if a student is absent from a club.

Review

This policy is monitored, reviewed and updated regularly and its effectiveness evaluated by the Headteacher.

Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

Present Codes	
/ \	present during registration
B	educated off site and for taster days and do not fit K, V, P or W codes
K	attending provision arranged by the local authority under Section 19 of the EA 1996
L	arrived after the register has started but before it has closed
P	participation in a sporting activity with prior agreement from school
V	educational visit or trip supervised by a member of the school staff
W	attending work experience under arrangements by the school or local authority
Absent Codes	
Authorised Absences	
C	absence due to exceptional circumstances, agreed by the headteacher
C1	in a regulated performance/undertaking regulated employment abroad
C2	absent due to part-time timetable, agreed by the headteacher and parent(s)/carer(s)
D	dual registered
E	suspended or permanently excluded, and no alternative provision made
I	illness (both physical and mental health related; not medical or dental appointments)
J1	job/school/college interview
M	medical or dental appointment
Q	unable to attend because of a lack of access arrangements
R	religious observance (only 1 day allowed; any more coded as C if agreed)
S	study leave
T	parent travelling for occupational purposes
X	non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
Y1	unable to attend due to transport provided not being available
Y2	unable to attend due to widespread transport disruption
Y3	unable to attend due to part of the school premises being unexpectedly closed
Y4	unable to attend due to unexpected whole school closure
Y5	unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	unable to attend due to other avoidable cause (must affect the pupil NOT the parent)
Unauthorised Absences	
G	holiday or absence for leisure-related purposes (not agreed by the headteacher)
N	reason for absence not yet established (must be corrected within 5 days)
O	absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	late after register has closed
Administrative Codes	
Z	prospective pupil not yet on register
#	planned whole school closure (e.g., holidays, Insets and polling station days)