

St. Peter's Catholic Primary **Attendance Policy**

St Peter's Catholic Primary School is at the heart of a Christ-centred community where every person's uniqueness is celebrated with joy and truly valued. We foster caring, supportive relationships based on mutual respect and love. We embrace the different communities to which we all belong – home, school and parish, as well as our local, national and global families. When we welcome the child, we welcome the family. We strive for excellence in all we do; to be the best that we can be.

It is a Government legal requirement that all children attend school for 190 days. It is a Government requirement that we monitor attendance and apply the legal requirement.

At St.Peter's we believe that a high level of attendance is essential if children are to make the best progress of which they are capable, and if children are to fully realise their potential in school. Even short spells of absence can interrupt a child's progress, especially if they miss work which is essential for subsequent learning and lessons.

Absence can also result in children feeling a sense of distance from the work of the class, especially if occurring at beginning or end of terms or at times when special events are taking place at school.

Absence through illness

Whenever children are ill parents should:

- inform school of the reason for absence , usually by telephoning the school office, as soon as possible - and certainly before 10.00 on the first day of absence. Parents may also Email the school to inform of reasons for absence: attendance@st-peters.tameside.sch.uk
- Send in a written explanation for the absence on the child's return to school. This will be stored in the class register for when the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) for our school visits make their routine and regular checks

If we have not had a call by 10.00 on the first morning of absence school may phone to clarify absence. (Please note that emails may well not be checked before that time or monitored on a routine basis through the day so should not be relied upon for initial communication.)

For children expected to be absent for prolonged periods, usually through chronic illness, it may be necessary to arrange for learning to take place in hospital or at home.

Other reasons for absence

From time to time children need to be absent from school for other reasons such as medical appointments, music examinations, entrance examinations for schools etc. Such absences usually take up **only part of a day**. School should be informed of such absences in writing in advance, with accompanying documentation if applicable and children should be brought back to school afterwards

Very occasionally children perform in stage productions. It is necessary for children to have a licence to take part in such performances. Theatres and performance schools would be able to give advice on how to apply for these.

Requests for Leave of Absence

These are only authorised under exceptional circumstances. Parents should write a letter to the Headteacher addressing the following:

- the dates and how many school days will be missed
- reason for request - providing full details of circumstances

Holidays and school absences which have not been authorised will result in unauthorised absence and the percentage for the year reduced.

Definitions

Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent telephones the school to explain the absence, and confirms in writing on the child's return to school.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents and carers do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents and carers will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school.
- Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

Actions to address absence

If a child's absence falls below 95%, then parents or carers will be invited to speak with the headteacher about how school can make the best provision for that child in terms of learning. Consideration will be given to beginning an Early Help Assessment, where other agencies may be involved in supporting the family to ensure high attendance for the child. Attendance will be monitored for three weeks following this meeting.

Following an unauthorised absence, parents will be invited to speak with the headteacher, and a warning letter will be issued. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or carers will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school will then contact the Education Welfare Officer, who will visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or carers understand the seriousness of the situation.

The governors, supported by the LA, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or carers who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

Issue of Fixed Penalty Notices

Any family whose child has **10 sessions of unauthorised absence in any term will receive a Fixed Penalty Notice.**

Fixed Penalty Notices are **£60 each** and are issued **per parent per child** so 2 parents with 2 children would result in 4 penalty notices at £60 each = **£240.**

10 sessions = 5 full days (1 session is morning or afternoon).

Provision of work during or after absence from school

Whether or not absence is authorised, work will not be provided by school to cover work missed unless it is necessary for the child to isolate due to Covid-19. Any child who needs to be absent from school due to reasons associated with Covid-19 will receive home learning electronically after 2 days of absence. Teachers may require pupils, on returning to school, to take assessments they have missed, if teachers decide it is advantageous or necessary. This does not apply in the case of absence resulting from chronic illness, when other arrangements will be made.

Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report from the Headteacher. The governing body also has the

responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.

Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class, and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's absence, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the headteacher, who will contact the parents or guardians.

Katherine Ryan

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