

## St. Peter's Catholic Primary School 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.*

### Introduction

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, therefore 'being the best that they can be,' as stated in our mission statement. Even short spells of absence can interrupt a child's progress, especially if they miss work which is essential for subsequent learning and lessons. As well as the importance of good attendance for learning, we are also aware of the positive impact of good attendance on our children's self-esteem and confidence.

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.

We are grateful for the support of families in ensuring good attendance and punctuality.

### Objectives of our Attendance Policy

- To ensure that all children attend school well and are punctual every day.
- To work in partnership with parents/carers in ensuring that their children attend school well and that they arrive on time.
- To keep good records of attendance through the school registers and to take prompt action to follow up absences.
- To work effectively with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and other external agencies to follow up attendance issues efficiently.
- To closely monitor children with attendance and punctuality issues and to work with parents and with other agencies to bring about improvement.

### 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 10.00am on the first day of absence. Parents may also Email the school to inform of reasons for absence: [attendance@st-peters.tameside.sch.uk](mailto:attendance@st-peters.tameside.sch.uk)
- send in a written explanation for the absence on the child's return to school.

If we have not had a telephone call or Email by 10.00am on the first morning of absence, school will telephone the family to clarify absence. This is because school has a duty of care to contact families and ensure the whereabouts of the child, in line with our safeguarding duties.

### 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
- the reason for the request - providing full details of circumstances

Holidays and school absences which have not been authorised will result in unauthorised absence and the child's attendance percentage for the year will subsequently reduce.

## **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. Where attendance is causing concern, parents may be asked to provide medical evidence before an absence with illness is able to be authorised by school.

### **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.

## **Strategies to promote good attendance**

All staff will complete registers accurately for each session (morning and afternoon) and will draw to the headteacher's attention any absences that are causing concern. 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 and headteacher 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.

Children arriving late will be carefully monitored and action taken as appropriate. The school day starts at 8.50am and ends at 3.20pm.

If a child's absence falls below 95%, then a letter will be sent to parents outlining the concerns school has about the child's attendance, and about any support school can offer. 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 eight weeks following this letter.

If the pupil's attendance has not improved, a further letter will be issued asking for medical evidence to support absences caused by illness. In some cases, a meeting will be arranged to discuss further intervention and support. If applicable, a school and parental attendance agreement will be put in place to promote the good attendance of the child.

If the child's attendance does not subsequently improve, then school is obliged to refer the matter to the education welfare officer. This referral may result in a fine. The issuing of a fine or Penalty Notice is often the last resort that is used to facilitate improvement in a child's attendance, and in most cases, a range of strategies have been used before a fine or penalty notice is issued.

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 a 12-week period 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 one morning or one 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 we are supporting the child and family under our policy for 'Children with Healthcare Needs who Cannot Attend School.'

### **Monitoring and review**

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request a termly 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.

**Katherine Ryan, Headteacher**

**November, 2022**

**Review Date: November, 2025**