



Attendance Policy

St Peter's Eaton Square C of E Primary School

St Peter's School is a place where every person has the right to be themselves and to be included in a safe and happy environment. We believe in inclusion, equal opportunities and respect for diversity and difference.

Together, we will realise the potential God has given us.

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1. Statutory framework

In line with the 1996 Education Act, we expect all children on roll to attend school every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We will endeavour to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures.

We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to create a happy and rewarding environment for all where the children want to come to learn. We will make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

We recognise that children alone cannot ensure their regular and punctual attendance at school. At all times, parents are encouraged to take an active role in the school life and to share and support their children's learning. Through our home-school agreement, parents agree to ensuring their child's the regular and punctual attendance. As part of our annual written reports to parents, the children's attendance records are shared.

2. Aims

St Peter's Eaton Square C of E Primary School wants all children to have the best possible attendance at school to enable them to reach their full potential. There is a strong link between good school attendance and achieving good results for children. Children who frequently miss school may fall behind in their learning and development, which may affect their future prospects. Absence may also have an impact on friendships. Young people who are frequently absent from schools are more likely to become involved in, or be a victim of crime and anti-social behaviour. At St Peter's Eaton Square C of E Primary School we want to work closely with families to support them to achieve the best possible outcomes for the children.

The school aims to;

- To achieve an attendance target of 97% or above.
- To work closely with parents to monitor the attendance of children and respond to concerns about levels of absence promptly.
- To encourage parents to ensure children's punctual attendance every day.

3. Punctuality and lateness

It is important that classes make a prompt and effective start of the school day. Children may arrive at school from 8.45 or earlier if they attend Breakfast Club. Registers are taken at 9:00 AM and after lunch. Arrival after 9:10 AM is marked as 'late'.

Parents must register their child at the school office if arriving after the playground gate has been closed.

Where there are concerns about punctuality, the school will make verbal contact with parents/carers. If the concerns persist, the Head teacher will write to the parents/carers. If

there is no improvement, the school will arrange a meeting with the parent/carer. In the event of persistent lateness, the school may make a formal referral to the ACE team. Parents/carers may access information and support from ACE at <https://www.westminster.gov.uk/ace>

4. Promoting and monitoring good attendance and punctuality

Good class attendance and punctuality is promoted and celebrated by;

- celebrating the best class attendance and punctuality each week and communicating this all to parents through the Newsletter;
- at the end of each term, parents of children with unauthorised or unexplained absences will receive an attendance letter;
- parents will be offered the opportunity to talk to the Head teacher or an assistant Head teacher about their child's attendance as a means of support;
- end of year school reports include an overall attendance percentage;
- parents may ask for a record of attendance at any time.

Attendance Register

- Teachers take the Attendance Registers twice a day.
- Registers are checked by the Office.
- When the register closes, the Office checks for any messages from parents regarding absence. If a pupil is absent and the school has not been contacted, then the school office will telephone parents to check on why a pupil is not in school.
- All absences and persistent lateness are investigated.

Why attendance matters:

- Less than 5 days absence = 98%+ attendance
- 14 days absence (approx.) = 93.5% attendance
- 20 days absence (approx.) = 90% attendance
- 30 days absence (approx.) = 88% attendance

If a child achieves 80% attendance this means that they have missed approximately 40 days of education over the academic year, averaging 1 day per week.

At St Peter's Eaton Square School the staff and Governors endeavour to support parents in the responsibility of attendance by:-

- creating an environment in which pupils feel welcomed and valued; the school's ethos demonstrates that pupils feel that their presence in school is important, that they will be missed when they are absent/late and that follow up action will be taken;
- making every effort to match learning tasks to pupils' needs;
- collating attendance data regularly and analysing it in order to help identify patterns, set targets, correlate attendance with achievement, and support and inform policy/practice;
- parents are reminded regularly of the importance of good attendance (via newsletters, the school portal, parents' evenings etc.);
- the Head teacher will make a termly report to governors on attendance;
- the Head teacher and SENCo may liaise with other agencies when this may serve to support and assist pupils who are experiencing difficulties;

- some secondary schools make links with the school and the Year 6 pupils to help with a smooth transfer to their school. Discussions will identify those pupils who may require extra support during this process;
- references for pupils in Year 6 from other schools often ask for information regarding attendance and punctuality.

Monitoring Attendance

The school regularly monitors attendance for all pupils whose attendance has fallen between 90-95%. Attendance and individual cases are discussed within the school senior leadership, which looks for emerging trends and patterns. Families may be contacted to offer support and advice.

The following groups will be used for tracking attendance on a termly basis:

- Below 90%– persistent absentees
- 90-92.9% - cause for concern
- 93-94% - below average attendance

Letter system

1. First letter is sent to these parents informing them of their child's attendance and recommending improvement.
2. If this pattern of poor attendance persists or drops further a second letter will be sent inviting the parents to meeting to discuss ways of improving attendance.
3. If there is little or no improvement or the pupil's attendance does improve but this is not sustained the school will issue a third letter from the Chair of Governors informing the parents that the matter may be referred to the ACE team (see below).
4. Should the pupil's attendance still fail to improve or should it fall to a lower level, the school will make a formal referral to the ACE team

ACE Team role and referrals

On those occasions when a pattern of poor attendance or lateness is developing the Head teacher will work directly with the family to seek solutions. Should the problem drop below 85% then a referral to the Westminster City Council's Attendance Compliance and Enforcement team (ACE) will follow. The function of ACE at this stage is the Compliance / Enforcement part of the service which delivers the Local Authorities statutory response where attendance has fallen below 85%.

Should the pupil have been absent for two continuous weeks without a satisfactory explanation having been received, or should there be child protection or other immediate welfare concerns then the school may of course make an earlier referral to the ACE team and possibly contact the Child Protection team at Children's Services. If the child is on the Child Protection or Child in Need Register, the child's social worker will be notified immediately.

Returns of school data are made annually to the DfE and benchmark data exists to compare our school within local and national contexts.

5. Absence during Term Time

Absence during term-time as a result of term-time holidays interrupts continuity of teaching and learning, disrupts the educational progress of individual children and creates disruption in school. St Peter's C of E Primary therefore aims to discourage parents from arranging family holidays during term time.

The vast majority of parents arrange annual family holidays to take place within the published dates for school holidays.

We understand that for some parents the issue of choosing when to arrange annual family holidays may be problematic due to work, finance or particular issues. Some parents may mistakenly believe that they have a 10-day holiday 'entitlement'. This is compounded by holiday companies offering out-of-season (i.e. outside of school holidays) bargains.

6. Authorised and unauthorised attendance

Only the school, within the context of the law, can approve absence and it is a statutory requirement for the head teacher to decide with every absence whether it is authorised or unauthorised. Wherever reasonably possible, we expect parents to make routine appointments (e.g. medical, dental) outside of school time, if this is not possible please give plenty of written notice and a copy of the appointment slip. The codes for absences are included in each register.

If a child is absent from school for whatever reason the parent must inform the school in person, in writing, email or by telephone as soon as possible. The normal routine is to telephone the school on the first morning of absence and each day thereafter. Such calls are always logged and the class teacher informed.

For the avoidance of doubt, **authorised absences** will include sickness, medical appointments, visits, interviews and test at other schools and other circumstances agreed by the Head or delegate.

Unauthorised absences are those absences which the Head has not agreed, for which the school has not received a reason/explanation or if the school has good reason to doubt the explanation given.

7. Leave of Absence.

The Government have issued new regulations in September 2013 regarding Leave of Absence; The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013.

- The Head teachers will only grant any Leave of Absence during term time if it is considered there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application. **Exceptional circumstances** are defined as being of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child which outweighs the loss of teaching time.
- Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time.

- The Head Teacher will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave of absence is granted.
- Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance using the Leave of Absence form available from the school office and failure to do so will result in the absence being unauthorised.
- The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent.
- Where an applications for Leave of Absence has been refused but the child is still absent the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
- The school is able to apply to Westminster City Council for a Fixed Penalty Notice under S444 of Education Act 1996.

Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on a case by case basis and on its own merits.

St Peter's Eaton Square C of E Primary School understands that holidays are generally less expensive during term time but this does NOT count as an exceptional circumstance.

Leave which is taken for the following reasons **will not be authorised**:

- Availability of cheaper holidays
- Availability of desired accommodation
- Poor weather experienced in school holidays
- Overlap with beginning or end of term
- Booked the wrong dates by mistake
- Booked by another family member
- Attending weddings or funerals that are not of immediate family
- Family birthdays

8. Role of the Governing body

The Governing body will act alongside the Head teacher to monitor the attendance of all children and vulnerable groups (Pupil Premium, FSM, SEN etc.) and ensure that this policy is being followed.

10. Data Analysis

The school collects and stores attendance data using the management information systems (SIMs). The school provides attendance data to the DFE, using SIMs to send data about the school census. The figures returned are then published by the DFE as part of the annual publication of school statistics. The school uses the attendance data to identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern and to track the attendance of individual pupils. Where attendance is a concern, the school will use data to analyse attendance by year group, classes, groups of pupils for example ethnicity or gender. The school uses attendance data to identify the main causes of absences within the school and to take action to address and improve those areas. The school will use data to monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support.

Attendance Letter example

Dear xxxxxxxx ,

Attendance Record update

Up to and including xx xxxx 2018 xxxxx's attendance was xx %. I have enclosed the current record of attendance and punctuality.

- Below 90%– persistent absentees
- 90-92.9% - cause for concern
- 93-94% - below average attendance

93%-95% Below average attendance.	Your child is currently below our 97% attendance target. We understand this may be due to a couple of days of sickness absence. We hope their attendance picks up.
90% to 92.9% Cause for concern.	
Below 90% Persistent absentee.	Your child's attendance is well below the 96% threshold. Unless a rapid improvement is made you will be invited to meet with me to discuss attendance and your case may be referred to the ACE team at Westminster City Council.

Did you know that;

- 98%+ attendance = less than 5 days absence
- 93.5% attendance = 14 days absence
- 90% attendance = 20 days absence
- 88% attendance = 30 days absence
- 80% attendance = 40 days absence or 1 day per week

We do appreciate that there may be unavoidable situations, such as sickness, medical appointments or personal circumstances beyond your control. When informed and agreed, we can record these as authorised absences. We also understand that traffic, public transport and other factors can contribute to children being late for school.

Research shows a clear link between full attendance, punctuality and a child's successful progress and wellbeing at school.

It can be distressing and disruptive for children when they miss lessons or are late. The additional teacher time spent on catch up also has a detrimental impact on the learning for other children.

We aim for every child in the school, as far as possible, to have full attendance or certainly reach our target of 97%. Please be aware that we monitor attendance regularly and will make contact with you at any point if we feel that your child's attendance pattern needs to be looked into for any reason.

Yours sincerely,

Miles Ridley
Head



PUPIL ABSENCE REQUEST FORM

Name/s of child/children:	
First day of absence (include time if leaving school early):	
Date of first day back in school:	
Total number of school days absent from school:	

Why are you requesting this absence? Please give reasons

Signed: _____(parent) Date: _____

PLEASE NOTE: the school cannot authorise holidays in term time except in exceptional circumstances. Absences not authorised by the school or extended beyond the agreed return date may make parents liable to a Fixed Penalty notice from the local authority.

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:

Above absence authorised: YES / NO Code (if authorised):

Issue letter: YES / NO

Refer for Penalty Notice: YES / NO

Comments:

Signed: (Head) Date: