



Introduction

St Peter's is committed to working in partnership with parents to ensure pupils reach their full potential. Children only get one chance at school, and their chance of a successful future may be affected by not attending school regularly. Poor attendees may not be able to keep up with school work or miss out on parts of the curriculum. This can affect their rate of progress and overall level of attainment. It is not only the academic work: missing out on the social side of school life can affect children's ability to make and keep friendships. Setting good attendance patterns from an early age will also help children later on at secondary school. Being on time is also vital. Arriving late at school can be very disruptive for the late child, the teacher and other children in the class.

This policy follows the advised procedures and legislation that The Government outlined within 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' (August 2024).

Expectations

We expect that all pupils will:

- Attend school regularly.
- Attend school punctually.
- Attend school appropriately prepared for the day.

We expect all parents and carers to:

- Encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities (please contact the school office if you require full details of these).
- **Ensure that their child(ren) arrive punctually by 8.45 a.m. and are prepared for the school day.**

Pupils arriving after 8:50am are marked as late (Code L). Any pupils arriving after 9:20am have a half day unauthorised absence recorded (Code U).

- Contact the school whenever the child(ren) is unable to attend school.
- Inform the school by 9.20am, at the very latest, on each day of the child's absence unless pre-planned medical absence has already been agreed.
- Contact the school whenever any problems occur that may keep the child away from school.
- Only book family holidays during school holidays.
- Arrange wherever possible for medical appointments to be made outside school hours. If this is unavoidable then the child should be removed from school for the minimum amount of time possible.
- Discuss any issues that may affect attendance with a child's teacher or the Headteacher so we can work together to solve difficulties in partnership.

We expect the school (staff and governors) to:

- Encourage good school attendance and provide a safe and welcoming learning environment.
- Keep regular and accurate records of attendance and monitor all pupils' attendance.
- School will contact parents or carers in the morning of the first day of absence if no call has been received by 9:20am and/or the absence seems unexpected and irregular.
- Work with parents to improve their child's attendance in cases that cause concern. The Headteacher may refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the PUPIL ENTITLEMENT TEAM.
- Keep parents informed about attendance issues and report annually to them on their child(rens) attendance record.
- Keep to DfE and LA guidelines:
 - The school adheres to the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.
 - The advised procedures and legislation from The Government outlined within 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' (August 2024).

- Cooperate with the LA to provide evidence (in a case file) when it becomes necessary to take an attendance issue further (i.e. LA court prosecution of parent/s).

The LA (Local Authority), and St Peter's School, expect each child to have an attendance average of at least 95%. This allows for an average of 9½ days of authorised absence per child in each school year. This should cover **all** absence including sickness and medical appointments. OfSTED will pay special attention to primary schools that have an overall attendance rate of less than 95%.

Regulations on Term Time Holidays

All schools can grant a leave of absence when a pupil needs to be absent from school with permission. All schools are expected to restrict leaves of absence to the specific exceptional circumstances set out in regulation 11 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

Generally, the DfE does not consider a need, or desire, for a holiday (or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation) to be an exceptional circumstance. Leave of absence should not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours either. In the case of Term Time Holiday, St Peter's follows the National Framework for issuing penalty notices and our practice reflects the changes to the law introduced through the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024.

The definition of 'exceptional circumstances' is determined by The Headteacher and may include:

- Funerals of immediate relatives
- Religious observance on U.K. calendared festival days
- Family weddings of immediate relatives
- Dental and Medical appointments that cannot be arranged outside the school day
- Music / dance exams
- Educational / Interview visits to other schools
- Compassionate leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable

Genuine illness will, of course, be authorised although the school may seek consent from parents to contact a child's relevant medical professional/s who are involved in the child's care (or see official NHS appointment confirmations) for confirmation of the need for the absence.

Holiday or other unacceptable reasons for absence will be classed as unauthorised. The consequence of a child's level of unauthorised absence building up to be over 10 half day sessions (or 5 full days over a ten week period) is that the headteacher may ask the Local Authority to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice and fine. Currently, the fine is £80 per child, per parent, if paid within 28 days and £160 – after 28 days.

i.e. – a 2 parent family with 2 children would be fined £320 if they pay within 28 days.

Late arrival after 9:20am without prior request for absence, or without an acceptable reason, will also be classified as unauthorised.

If a child does not return to school within 20 days following the stated return to school date (on the front of the Request for Absence from Learning Form) parents should be aware that this period of non-attendance may act as a contributing factor towards the school making the decision to remove the child from its roll and the child may lose their school place. Removal from roll will always be done in consultation with the Local Authority Admissions Team and, if there has been no contact / forwarding address, the Children Missing Education Team (see our internal safeguarding flowchart for CME referrals- St Peter's CEP School, Cowfold-Absent Pupil -procedures-flowchart-March 2025-2026).

Encouraging Attendance

The school will ensure that parents are well-informed about attendance issues through:

- Letters to parents (half-termly attendance percentages will be sent home for those pupils below 90%).
- Parent consultation evenings
- End of Year School reports

The school will support good attendance through a range of strategies including:

- Awarding reward certificates for 100% and 99% attendance.
- Awarding reward postcards for those pupils with attendance below 95% who improve their attendance significantly.
- Specifically referencing attendance percentages for the academic year in end of year reports.
- Working with individual pupils (and families) - to give one-to-one support, advice, incentives, motivation to attend school.
- Using our Learning Mentor to assist with the above.
- Referral to Early Help Family Link workers and the WSCC Pupil Entitlement Service.

School Organisation and Procedures. (For school use only)

Class teachers will:

- Keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils twice a day. The register should be taken by 9.05am in the morning and by 1.15pm after lunch.
- Ensure any children who arrive late after the register has been taken have signed in at the office.
- Record in the registers any reasons for lateness or absence.
- Inform the office of any unexplained lateness or absence that needs further follow up.
- Be alert to any patterns of poor attendance and signs of reluctance to attend school and report this to appropriate senior staff.
- Inform the head of any unexplained lateness or absence that warrants serious concern or requires further investigation within the school.

The Office staff will:

Registers Procedure

- Ensure class registers have been taken by 9.05am in the morning and by 1.15pm after lunch and collect them if they are not.
- Ensure any children who arrive late sign in at the office.
- Record in the registers any reasons received by the office for lateness or absence and ensure teachers have done the same.
- By 9:20am ensure the class register lists are printed out from Bromcom and put in the class communication folders for the Fire Roll Call. The same will be done again by 1:30pm.
- Follow up any unexplained lateness or absence with a phone call by 10:30am.
- If contact has not been possible by the end of the day the office will alert a senior member of staff (Head or Deputy/Senior_Teacher) and try to make contact through other channels (i.e. contacting other family members or parents who know the family in question).
- If contact has not been possible by the end of the second day the senior member of staff (Head or Deputy/Senior_Teacher) will take responsibility for contacting the parents and will send a letter and/or email and/or try to make contact by phone or make a home visit.
- Senior members of staff will use their discretion about at what stage they alert the PUPIL ENTITLEMENT TEAM about any non-attendance without explanation based on their background knowledge of the child(ren) and family in question.

- After 10 days without any explanation for absence of a child the school are legally required to inform the PUPIL ENTITLEMENT TEAM but the school will always do this before this time has passed if there's any concern about a child's safety.

For further details - (see our internal safeguarding flowchart for CME referrals- St Peter's CEP School, Cowfold-Absent Pupil -procedures-flowchart-March 2025-2026).

Other responsibilities

- Monitor and record the type of absence for each child.
- Make a half termly report on attendance highlighting all children whose attendance is below 95% and/or have been late on a frequent basis.
- Inform the Head/Deputy or Senior_Teacher of any unexplained lateness or absence that warrants serious concern or requires further investigation within the school.

The Head will:

- Ensure that the above procedures are adhered to.
- Highlight school attendance in assemblies, newsletters, publications etc.
- Support staff in encouraging and maintaining good attendance.
- Follow up any unexplained lateness or absence that warrants serious concern or requires further investigation within the school.
- Monitor overall attendance in conjunction with the governing body.
- Evaluate policy including effect of pupil incentives and parent information.
- Frequently and regularly, compare the schools attendance record with similar schools, the LA average and nationwide data using the VYED tool on the .gov site. Report this to the Governing Body in every Full Governors Meeting.
- Pay particular attention to the attendance of dis-advantaged pupils and take timely action to support those pupils below 95%.
- Liaise with the Pupil Entitlement Team about persistent unauthorized late comers or non-attenders about whom the Head is concerned.
- Use the LA self-review/action plan materials.
- Set attendance targets for each academic year in conjunction with the governing body.

The Governing Body will:

- Monitor attendance - overall figures – provided by The Headteacher in FGB Meetings.
- Evaluate the effect of this policy on attendance figures.
- Review the attendance policy regularly.

Leavers - Removal from Roll procedure

St Peter's CE Primary School realises the responsibility we have towards children who are leaving us or who have already left our school and our safeguarding procedures extends to them. We will adhere to the Removal from Roll procedures as set out in the Children Missing Education and Removal from Roll Process Guide, a document issued by West Sussex County Council (WSCC) to all schools in West Sussex. We will also comply with The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and the 2016 Amended Regulations, legislation which sets out when a child can and cannot be removed from a school's roll. We will inform West Sussex County Council of every leaver on the day they leave by a Removal From Roll Form, and in cases of concern we will seek advice prior to the child being removed from roll. We will ensure we have all the necessary information **before** the form needs to be submitted: i.e. we expect parents to have both sought and secured access new to educational provision for their child (normally another school place) before they leave our school. (Ideally there should be continuous enrolment with no period of time where children are not on the roll of one school or another, or are without access to education as this is a legal requirement.) Parents are expected to inform us of their child's on-going provision, and new address if moving, in writing as they leave us. We will check with WSCC Admissions and/or any named on-going school to confirm whether a child has been offered a new school place and is starting with them. If the stated new provision cannot be confirmed we will consult with CME.

Office staff will ensure that Removal from Roll forms are returned to CME promptly for every leaver and we will fully cooperate in responding to any enquiry CME Officers may need to make in order to locate a child and learn of their new educational provision. In this way we will work in partnership with West Sussex County Council's Education & Skills department to safeguard all of our leavers.

St. Peter's – Policy Summary

Policy Title:	Attendance Policy	Ratified by FGB:	n/a
Scope:	Pupils	Review Cycle:	Annual
Reviewed by:	FGB	New Review:	January 2027
Last Approved:	29 th January 2026		
FGB Approved:	N/a		
