



**“Learn, sparkle & shine...”**

**St. Peter’s C.E. Primary School - Farnworth**

# **Attendance Policy**

Written : September 1999

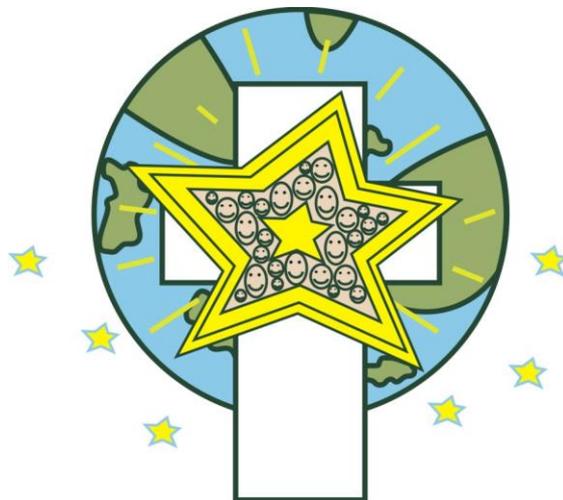
Revised: September 2002

Revised: April 2010

Revised; October 2012 (Governors pupil inclusion sub committee)

Revised; October 2013 (Governors pupil inclusion sub committee in light of Sept 2013 statutory changes)

Revised July 2018 (in light of statutory changes to Penalty Notices Code of Conduct)



## **Attendance Policy**

### **Aims**

“School attendance Matters” is the key message here at St.Peter’s – we aim to encourage high levels of attendance and punctuality to enable all pupils to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered and by doing so, help them achieve their full potential.

### **1. Rights and Responsibilities**

Under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act a pupil is required to attend regularly at the school where they are a registered pupil.

The school is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. Improving attendance at St Peter's is the responsibility of everyone in the school community – pupils, parents and all staff.

**Pupils:** All children are expected and encouraged to attend school regularly and punctually. Encouragement is given in a variety of ways over the academic year. These include certificate to the class with the highest monthly attendance; displays showing children with 100% attendance for a given period of time eg half a term; a responsibility which requires punctuality and attendance. Children who do have attendance difficulties will be carefully monitored and pastoral support will be offered, with a view to improving attendance or offering educational provision in other ways.

**Parents:** Parents are responsible for ensuring their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly dressed and in a fit condition to learn. If a child is unable to attend or is late, parents are requested to notify school as soon as possible – by phone call or preferably in writing. A pupil's absence from school is considered unauthorised until the parent gives a satisfactory explanation. If a concern arises with regard to a child's attendance or punctuality a member of staff will speak to the parent to identify the problem and also to highlight ways in which the situation might be improved. The school will then work with the parent and child to implement the plan.

**School:** Staff endeavour to encourage good attendance and punctuality through personal example. Attendance is the responsibility of all school staff. The school employs a range of strategies to encourage attendance and punctuality.

### **2. Registration – including lateness**

Registration takes place in the appropriate classroom at 8:55 am and again at 1:15 pm.. The registers are then sent to the secretary's office, but remain open until 9:30 and 1:30 respectively. If a child arrives after the register has been called, but before the register closes they are registered as present with a late arrival. However if a child arrives after the register has closed they are registered as absent – the explanation for their lateness determines whether this is authorised or not.

However, at St Peter's, we believe it is far better for a child to arrive late than not at all; the educational opportunities they would miss due to absence are far greater than those they would miss by being late.

### 3. Authorised / Unauthorised Absence

All absences must be explained by a parent in the form of either a letter or conversation with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, class teacher or the secretary. Once an absence has been explained it is then up to the school to decide whether or not to authorise the absence. A child's explanation is not always acceptable. Some absences may be followed up with a first day phone call. It is the responsibility of the parents to notify school as soon as they know their child will be absent.

Absences for the following reasons will be authorised:

- Sickness
- Unavoidable dental / medical appointments
- Religious reasons
- Exceptional family circumstances eg a bereavement, sibling graduation
- The pupil is the child of traveller parents and the conditions as stated in the Education Act 1996 Section 444 are met
- Pupil is attending a Pupil Referral Unit

Absences from school will not be authorised for:

- Shopping
- Looking after siblings or unwell parents
- Minding the house / waiting for the workman
- Birthdays
- No explanation is forthcoming
- The pupil is away from school on a family holiday for longer than the period negotiated with the school, or if the circumstances are not exceptional
- Having a haircut; a photo taken

Where possible medical and dental appointments should be made outside of school hours.

### 4. Holidays

Education regulations up to September 2013 allowed head teachers to grant leave of absence of up to ten days per year, for the purpose of a family holiday during term time, if there are "special circumstances." i.e., attendance is normally above 95%

Amendments to these regulations as from September 2013 make clear that head teachers **may not** grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**.

Exceptional circumstances means circumstances that are only ever likely to occur very rarely.

From September 2013 Bolton Council's Code of Conduct for issuing Penalty Notices for unauthorised holidays came into force. This meant that fines would be issued for

unauthorised leave of absence over 19 sessions (9.5 days) in two consecutive half terms.

From 1st September 2018, the criteria for issuing a penalty notice will be reduced and a fine will be considered where a pupil has had 10 sessions (equivalent of five days - consecutive or otherwise) of unauthorised absence over the period of two consecutive half terms.

The borough's schools and Bolton Council want all pupils to achieve the best possible results and there is a strong link between regular school attendance and attainment.

In law, an offence occurs if a parent or carer fails to secure their child's regular attendance at school and that absence is not authorised by the Headteacher.

### **5. Procedures for Following up Absence / Lateness**

Checking up on absences is critical to improving attendance. When a pupil returns to school after a period of absence and fails to bring a note or the explanation offered by the note is unsatisfactory, the school will contact the parent(s). If a child is absent without explanation the secretary or head teacher may contact the parents.

Registers are monitored on a monthly basis by the business manager and attendance team to ensure correct procedures are being followed, totals are being calculated and entered and to monitor pupil attendance and punctuality. Any child displaying a pattern of frequent absence or lateness will be identified and monitored. Such patterns may include:

- One day off each week
- Absence on the same day eg long weekend
- Lateness on the same day each week

If a child is identified for absence / lateness patterns a member of staff will speak to the parent in an encouraging manner. If no improvement is seen a letter will be sent to the parent. If there is still no improvement in attendance and punctuality it may then be necessary to refer the matter to the Early Intervention team.

Notes from parents regarding absence are kept in the appropriate register. A record is kept of the phonecall taken regarding children's absence – time of call and reason for absence are both noted.

### **6. Strategies for Promoting Attendance / Punctuality**

- St Peter's School will offer an environment in which pupils feel valued and welcome. 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.
- A varied and flexible curriculum will be offered to all pupils. Every effort will be made to ensure that learning objectives are matched to pupils needs.

- Attendance data will be collected regularly and analysed in order to help identify patterns, set targets, correlate attendance with achievement and support and inform policy / practice.
- Good attendance awards will be presented monthly to the class with the highest percentage attendance for the month and annually to children with 100% attendance for the year.
- Pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern will be monitored and if appropriate referred on to the specialist agency..
- Parents will be reminded regularly that attendance matters via newsletters, parents evening etc.
- Pupils who are absent through sickness for any extended period of time will have work sent home to them when appropriate, and will be re-integrated into school upon their return.
- An annual report will be made to the Governing Body on attendance matters, including monthly figures for each class.
- Children with 100% attendance for a given period will have their names displayed on an attendance board.

The headteacher or deputy headteacher will have regular meetings with the Attendance team in order to identify and support pupils experiencing attendance problems (including lateness).

### **7. Monitoring Procedures**

Children's attendance is monitored at varying levels. Initially class teachers monitor the attendance of their own class highlighting any concerns to the deputy head teacher. The secretary and the deputy headteacher monitor the attendance of all children on a monthly basis when calculating attendance figures. Concerns are discussed and investigated through speaking to the child and or parent. If necessary, the child's name will then be added to the list of concerns for more rigorous monitoring and will be referred to the attendance team. If a child being monitored makes a significant improvement and sustains this level of punctuality and attendance over the period of a term, they are removed from the list.

Governors receive termly reports of attendance issues at their full Governors meeting and at the Pupil Inclusion sub committee.

Detailed guidance on how St. Peter's Primary School ensures its pupils stay safe can be found in the following policies and documents:

Safer Recruitment, Health & Safety, Behaviour, Anti-bullying, Equality, Confidentiality, drug education, Food, E-safety, Sex and Relationships, Whistleblowing, Staff Code of Conduct, Asbestos, Intimate Care, Risk

Assessments, Emergency / Critical Incidents Plan, Fire Procedures, Accident Reporting, Visitors in School, Educational Visits.

Signed: .....  
On Behalf of St. Peter's C.E. Primary School Governors

Date: .....