



St Peter's C of E (Aided) Primary School

Little Green Lane, Farnham, Surrey, GU9 8TF

☎: 01252 714115 Fax: 01252 721215

✉: info@stpeters-farnham.surrey.sch.uk

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Our Vision Statement

At St Peter's we have high expectations where everyone flourishes, achieves and succeeds within a safe, inclusive Christian community. We promote gospel values of independence, respect and empathy. Through an exciting curriculum, children are inspired to find joy as lifelong learners and active world citizens.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Person Responsible:	Children & Learning Committee
Review Period:	Every 3 years or in light of new regulations
Status:	Recommended
Date Adopted:	Autumn Term 2024
Next review:	Autumn Term 2027
Ratified by Governors:	20 November 2024

Introduction

All children of compulsory school age have the right to an efficient full-time education, regardless of age, aptitude, ability and any special needs s/he may have. Regular school attendance is essential if a child is to make the most of the educational opportunity available to them. Our school takes seriously its responsibility to monitor and promote the regular attendance of all its pupils. It acknowledges that irregular attendance seriously disrupts continuity of learning, undermines educational progress, can lead to underachievement and low attainment and impedes the child's ability to develop friendship groups within school.

This policy seeks to ensure that all parties involved in the practicalities of school attendance are aware and informed of attendance matters in school and to outline the school's commitment to attendance matters. It details the responsibilities of individuals and groups involved and the procedures in place to promote and monitor pupil attendance. The policy will aim to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued
- Raising the awareness of the importance of a differentiated and relevant curriculum
- Promoting opportunities to celebrate and reward pupil's successes and achievements
- Raising awareness of the importance of good attendance
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently

Key Objectives

We expect that all pupils will:

- attend school regularly;
- attend school punctually;
- attend school appropriately prepared for the school day.

We expect that all parents/carers will:



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- encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities;
- ensure that the child in their care arrives at school punctually, prepared for the school day;
- contact the school on the first day of the child's absence and send a note on their return to school
- discuss promptly with their child's class teacher or senior staff, any problems that deter their child from attending school;
- not take holidays in term time.

We expect that the school staff will:

- keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils, at least twice daily;
- monitor every child's attendance using SIMS;
- contact parents as soon as possible when unexplained and/or prolonged absence occurs and obtain notes authorising the absence.
- encourage good attendance and punctuality;
- provide a welcoming and safe learning environment for children;
- meet with the school's Inclusion Officer (IO) regularly to discuss any new concerns and report on the progress of existing cases;
- meet with the parents of children whose attendance causes concern;
- refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the Education Welfare Service.

Leave of Absence

The school holiday dates are published a year in advance and parents/carers are expected to book their family holidays during those times.

If a parent wishes to request a period of leave, they are required to write to the Head Teacher using the form obtained from the office. Leave of absence will **not** be offered to pupils for family holidays except under special / exceptional circumstances.

In exceptional circumstances when leave in term time is unavoidable, a leave of absence request form must be completed as soon as possible once the dates of the proposed period of absence are known. The Leave of Absence Request Form can be obtained from the school office.

No parent/carer can demand leave of absence for their child as a right. If leave is taken, without prior authorisation, the child's absence will be recorded as unauthorised in the school register.

The Head Teacher will decide whether or not to authorise the absence having decided whether or not the circumstances are exceptional.

Should absence be taken without the Head Teacher's authorisation the case will be referred to Inclusion Service and a Penalty Notice may be issued.

School Procedures for Recording and Monitoring Attendance



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Recording

The class teacher will take a register recording who is present and absent from school at **8.45am**. At **8:55am** the register is taken to the school office. Any late pupils should then enter the school through the main entrance, via the school office. Any late pupils will receive a "U" code which constitutes an unauthorised mark and the office staff will record a late mark in the register. All staff need to be aware that any child arriving late **MUST** register at the office for purposes of fire regulations.

The register is taken again at 1.00pm.

Reasons for absence may be offered verbally by phone but **must** be followed by a letter on the child's return to school. The school may then decide if it wishes to authorise the absence or record it as an unauthorised absence. This decision will be made within the guidance set out in the 1996 Education act, which identifies the following reasons as acceptable reasons for an authorised absence.

A reason for a period of absence is always required and office staff contact parents where necessary.

Responding to Non-Attendance

When a pupil does not attend school, we will respond in the following manner:

- on the first day of absence, if no note or telephone call is received from the parent/carer, the school will endeavour to contact them that day;
- if there is no response or the absence remains unexplained or still a concern, the office will inform the Home School Link Worker and Head Teacher and further investigation and action will be made accordingly;
- if there is persistent non-attendance, the school's Home School Link Worker will keep records of the contact with home during the period of absence and this will be discussed with the Inclusion Officer (IO) when a formal referral may be made
- if a child has persistent absence and meets the criteria for a Penalty Notice to be issued; or has been taken out of school without the school's permission for 5 or more days; the school will liaise with the IO / LA to decide whether a Penalty Notice should be issued;
- failure to comply with the expectations set by the Inclusion Service (IS) may result in further action, an application for an Education Supervision Order, or court prosecution.

Responding to lateness

Persistent lateness will be monitored, and letters sent to parents to inform them of learning time lost. If lateness remains a problem and this lateness is after close of register a referral may be made to the Inclusion Service.

Changing School

It is important that if families decide to send their child to a different school that they inform school staff as soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from the school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:



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- the date the pupil will be leaving this school and starting the next;
- the address of the new school;
- the new home address (if appropriate and known).

The pupils' school records will then be sent on to the new school as soon as possible. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the Inclusion Service.

Official Register

Class registers are archived and kept for 3 years. Information on SIMS is kept indefinitely.

Strategies used to promote good attendance and punctuality

- Class teachers will ensure that the curriculum is delivered within a culture of inclusion and in such a way that pupils feel that they have and can succeed.
- Individual pupils whose attendance has been a cause for concern will be encouraged to set and achieve personal attendance goals.
- Pupil attendance figures will be published with the annual academic reports.
- Positive verbal reinforcement is given to pupils who have been absent from school for a period of time and an education action plan developed to help them catch up with any missed curriculum and promote future attendance.
- Classes with the highest attendance each week are rewarded.

Monitoring

The Head Teacher monitors the school attendance regularly (at least every fortnight). The Head Teacher and the Inclusion Officer will review the attendance of all the school's pupils on a termly basis and any pupils identified as cause for concern or have less than 90% attendance on a more regular basis. Parents will be contacted, and support offered where appropriate.

Registration data is input to SIMS on a weekly basis allowing various reports to be accessed. The Inclusion Service will also have access to this information and will use the reports to support their role.

Penalty Notices

The Surrey Attendance Service, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school and require the recipient to pay a fixed amount.

Circumstances when a Penalty Notices may be issued

1. Pupils identified by police and Surrey Attendance Advice Officers engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences.
2. The Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, state that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Head teacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.



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Where a child is taken out of school for 10 sessions or more and the 'leave of absence' is without the authority of the head teacher, each parent is liable to receive a penalty notice for each child who is absent. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised and that they will be liable to receive a Penalty Notice if the leave of absence is taken.

3. The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where a pupil has incurred 10 or more unauthorised sessions during the preceding 10 school weeks. The parents' failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school will be a factor when considering the issue of a Penalty Notice. Unauthorised absence will include late arrival after the close of registration without good reason.
4. Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on parents to ensure that their child is not in a public place without justifiable cause during school hours when they are excluded from school. This duty applies to the first five days of each exclusion. Failure to do so will render the parent liable to a Penalty Notice. If the Penalty Notice is not paid, the recipient will be prosecuted for the offence under Section 103. Alternative education provision will be made from the sixth day of any exclusion and failure to attend such provision without good reason will be treated as unauthorised absence.

With the exception of unauthorised leave of absence taken in term time (Paragraph 2 above) parents will be sent a 'Notice To Improve' their child's attendance, warning them of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.

Amount Payable Under a Penalty Notice: The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024

1. If a parent/carer has not incurred a penalty notice relating to the relevant child/children since 19 August 2024, then the penalty notice will be charged at the rate of £160.00, **per parent/carer per child**, if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80.00 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in Surrey County Council considering legal proceedings against you in the Magistrates Court.
2. If you have incurred a penalty notice relating to this child/children since 19 August 2024, the rolling 3 year period will be activated from the date of the first penalty notice and the second penalty notice will be charged at the flat rate of £160.00, **per parent/carer per child**, if paid within 28 days. There will be no reduction for payment within 21 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in Surrey County Council considering legal proceedings against you in the Magistrates Court.
3. If you have incurred 2 penalty notices relating to this child/children in the rolling 3 year period since the first penalty notice was issued, then you will NOT receive a third penalty notice – Surrey County



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Council will have no option but to consider a prosecution, **per parent/carer per child**, in the Magistrates Court under s 444 Education Act 1996.

Circumstances when Penalty Notices may be issued

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, which became law on 1st September 2013 state that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Head teacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.

Where a child is taken out of school for 5 days or more and the 'leave of absence' is without the authority of the Head Teacher, **each parent** may be liable to receive a penalty notice for **each child** who is absent. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised and that they may be liable to receive a Penalty Notice if the leave of absence is taken.

The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where a pupil has incurred 7 or more unauthorised sessions during the preceding 6 school weeks. The parents' failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school or Inclusion Service will be a factor when considering the issue of a Penalty Notice. Unauthorised absence will include late arrival after the close of registration without good reason.

With the exception of unauthorised leave of absence taken in term time, parents will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.



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Appendix One

Request for leave of absence from school for special circumstances during term time

This should be completed by the Parent/Guardian before booking any travel arrangements

Please read the following guidance carefully.

As parents, you have a legal responsibility to ensure your child's attendance at school. During the academic year, pupils are at school for 190 days and at home for 175 days.

Please be aware that The Education (Pupil Registration) (England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, which becomes law on 1st September 2013 state that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Head Teacher is also required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.

If you take your child on holiday without authorisation the Local Education Authority has the power to issue a Fixed-penalty Notices of £120, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days (Anti-social Behaviour Act 2004). Failure to pay within 28 days will result in a summons to appear in a Magistrate's Court.

Please complete and submit this form if you want the Head Teacher to consider your request for your child's leave of absence for an exceptional circumstance. We may ask for proof to back up your request.

The Head Teacher will consider the reasons for the request carefully and will notify you of the decision.

For further information, please refer to our School Attendance Policy.

Name of child/ren:	Class/es:
I am applying for leave of absence for exceptional circumstances for my child/ren for <i>(give dates)</i> :	
From (first day):	To (last day):
Number of school days:	
The exceptional circumstances for which leave is requested is: (Please give details):	
Has your child already had leave of absence in this school year? YES / NO	
If YES, please give dates and details:	
I also have a child / children at the following school/s:	
<i>I have read the schools leave of absence policy document.</i>	
Signed:	Date:
Parent:	



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Please return both sheets back to the office. The Head Teacher will process your request and you will have the second sheet returned to you.

Request for leave of absence from school for special circumstances during term time

<u>To be completed by the Head Teacher</u>		
Child/ren's name:		
Child/ren's class:		
Child's attendance level over the last 12 months:		
Our overall school target for attendance this year is		97%
Having considered your request carefully, my decision is that leave of absence is:		
Approved	<input type="checkbox"/>	The absence will be recorded as authorised.
Not approved	<input type="checkbox"/>	The absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
Explanatory notes:		
Signed: _____ (Head Teacher)		Date: _____