



# **St Peter & St Paul**

## CofE Primary School

# Attendance Policy

## 2018 - 2020

(This policy has been drafted having regard for the school's Christian ethos.)

	Date	Signed
Agreed by Staff:	July 2018	Mr Mark Carlyle Head Teacher
Agreed by Governors:	July 2018	Mrs N Ford Chair of Governors
Lead:	Strategic Leadership Committee	
Review date:	July 2020	

### Our School Mission Statement

We see it as our mission to grow the whole child - intellectually, emotionally, physically, socially and spiritually. To provide them, within a Christian environment, with every learning opportunity possible and to empower them to be the leaders of tomorrow.

# **St. Peter and St. Paul Attendance Policy**

## **Rationale:**

Eye Primary School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils and recognises that this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance. (Research results illustrating this fact can be found in Appendix A).

## **Aim:**

The aim of this policy is to ensure that the school has a robust registration and attendance monitoring system in place such that attendance can be properly managed and it will be possible to know, with certainty, at any one time, which children are in school, able to learn and safe from harm.

## **The Partnership Between Parents/carers and the School:**

The whole school community – pupils, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. It is the responsibility of both the school and parents to support attendance and to take seriously any problems that may lead to non-attendance.

This policy has been drawn up after consultation and is based on current government and Local Authority guidance and statutory regulations. The school will ensure that the policy is on the website and also accessible via the school office.

## **Parents/Carers:**

The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parents/carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child), who will be supported and encouraged by the School. They fulfill this responsibility by making sure that their children attend school regularly.

Parents/carers should consider themselves partners with the school in the education of their children. The Home-School Agreement which parents sign is used to remind parents of their responsibilities with regard to attendance and reminds them that children should attend properly dressed and have the right equipment for the day. It also asks them to work in partnership with the school by: attending parents' meetings and consultations, taking an interest in their children's work and activities and contacting the school if they are

aware of any concerns or problems which might affect their children's work or behaviour.

It is the parents'/carers' responsibility to keep the request for absence to a minimum. They should not expect the school to automatically agree any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from school.

Parents/carers will be expected to inform the school of the reason for a child's absence on the first day of absence by telephoning the school on 01379 870497. When the call is received, a 'record of message re pupil absence slip' is completed and given to the class teacher for inclusion in the pupil's records. The cause of absence should be specified.

In cases of poor school attendance, or where a pupil suffers serious harm, such information could be required in court or used to assist a serious case review commissioned by Suffolk Safeguarding Children Board.

### **The School's Roles and Responsibility:**

#### **a) Staff**

All staff have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and in providing an environment in which all pupils are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to going to school every day.

Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in their own attendance and punctuality.

In accordance with the law, the school is required to report pupils who fail to attend regularly, except where such absences are covered by a medical certificate. The Education Welfare Officers (EWOS) are consulted when there is difficulty in determining whether absence is justified. The EWO may then visit the home.

#### **b) Attendance Leader**

A member of the Senior Leadership Team will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure that the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school.

This Leader, aided by Pupil Administrative staff, will also ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed regularly and shared weekly, together with associated issues, with the Senior Leadership Team. They will also ensure that this data is regularly made available to all staff, pupils and parents and ensure that a report is prepared for the governing body to be included in the Head Teacher's termly report to governors. The report should include commentary on the trajectory of the school's attendance data and the school attendance targets as well as outlining measures taken to improve

attendance. This will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

Attendance is monitored by year group, class and by reasons for absence. It is also analysed by gender, ethnicity, pupils with special educational needs and those who are vulnerable to poor attendance.

The Attendance Leader will also ensure that all staff responsible for taking registers, including any temporary or supply staff, receive sufficient training to enable them to perform the task accurately.

### **c) Governors**

The Governing body has a responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are pupils at the school which includes ensuring that robust attendance procedures are in place and that school attendance is strictly monitored and any problems or barriers to attendance are identified and addressed.

#### **Registration:**

The school is required to mark the attendance register twice each day; once at the start of the day and once during the afternoon session. Classroom teachers, teaching assistants or such other person designated by the Head Teacher are responsible for completing the attendance registers using the prescribed codes (Appendix B).

The register will be called promptly at **9:00am** and **1:00pm** by each class teacher or teaching assistant and a mark will be made during the registration period in respect of each child. The registers will close at **9:05am** and **1:05pm**.

Registers open and close at these regular set times so that they are familiar to all staff, pupils and parents. In very severe weather the school may lengthen the period during which the register remains open.

The Attendance Register must record, for each session, whether pupils are present, absent, attending an approved educational activity, or unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances. The register codes which should be used can be found in Appendix B of this policy. Any child who is not present at the appointed time will be marked unauthorised absence unless leave has been granted by the school in advance or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate.

#### **Lateness:**

Children are expected to arrive at school and be ready to line up in the playground for 8.55 am, where they will be taken by staff to their class for registration at 9.00am. It is very disruptive to their own education, and that of others in their class, if they are late.

Pupils who arrive during registration, but before the register closes, will be counted as **present** but get a late mark.

If a child is not in class for registration, the Head or Deputy Head will be informed and appropriate action taken.

Any pupil who arrives **after** the closing of the register will count as **absent** for that session (a session being a morning or an afternoon) and the number of minutes late will be documented. This absence will be unauthorised unless the school is satisfied that there is a legitimate reason for the pupil to be late. Such a reason **will not** include things such as missing the bus, clothes in the washing machine or lost shoes. Where the parent provides a satisfactory explanation for the lateness (e.g. the child had a medical or dental appointment), the absence will be authorised.

If no acceptable reason for the absence has been received at the time of registration, the absence is unauthorised unless or until a satisfactory reason is given. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. **The decision whether or not to authorise an absence rests with the school.**

If no explanation about an absence is received by the school **within 2 weeks**, the absence will remain unauthorised. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended in such a way that the original entry and the amendment/correction are distinguishable. **The decision about whether the absence should be authorised lies with the Head Teacher.**

A pupil who is persistently absent by reason of lateness will be dealt with in the same way as other students with an emerging pattern of absence. If the matter is not resolved quickly, it will be referred to the Education Attendance Service.

For reasons of health and safety, it is important that the school knows who is in the building. Parents of pupils arriving late should therefore go the school office to sign the child in and provide a reason for the lateness. The pupil's late arrival will subsequently be shown in the register, marked as late if a satisfactory explanation has been provided by the parent, or unauthorised if not. (As admitted entry is via the school office, the register is subsequently completed by the Admin. Team).

It is also important that children leaving the premises legitimately (e.g. for a medical appointment), or returning to school later in the day, report to the school office prior to departing and on return.

A register must never remain unmarked in anticipation of a reason for absence being given. There are serious health and safety risks if there is uncertainty about whether or not a child is in school. It is important that, in the event of a fire or other emergency, schools are able to account for all pupils.

It is also important to know when, if a child is subsequently reported missing, he/she was last in school.

For school days where the whole school has to close due to severe weather conditions, fire, heating failure or other structural damage, the Attendance Register need not be marked.

The attendance register is a legal document and, as such, one to be regarded seriously and marked accurately. **Changes cannot be made to the document as it may have to be produced as evidence in court.**

Accurate attendance returns are made to the DfE within the stipulated time frame.

### **Absence:**

#### **a) Unexplained Absence**

If communication about a child's absence has not been received in school by 9:15, contact will be made with the parent/guardian.

The School has in place a system of first-day calling. This means that parents will be telephoned on the first day a pupil is absent without explanation to establish a reason for the absence. If parents cannot be reached, messages will be left with the alternative contacts who have been supplied by the parents. This helps to identify at an early stage pupils who do not have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parents' knowledge. If the parents are not contactable, the child will be marked as an unauthorised absence.

#### **b) Authorised Absence**

Absence will be authorised where:

- the school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend;
- the child has a medical appointment (although parents should be encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible), and to return their child to school immediately afterwards – or send him/her to school beforehand;
- there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control, e.g. extreme weather conditions;
- the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong
- the pupil lives more than two miles (if he/she is under eight) or three miles (if he/she has reached eight) and no suitable transport arrangements have been made by the Local Authority;
- the child is of no fixed abode, his/her parent is engaged in a trade which requires him/her to travel, the pupil has attended school as often as the nature of the trade permits **and**, having reached the age of six, he/she has attended 200 sessions in the preceding 12 months;

- the pupil was absent with leave
- in other **exceptional circumstances** (eg. a family bereavement) and **for a very limited period.**

Leave *may* be granted in advance when:

- a pupil is to participate in an approved performance for which a licence has been granted by the LA;
- a pupil is involved in an exceptional special occasion – in authorising such absences the individual circumstance of the particular case and the pupil's overall pattern of attendance should be considered;

### **c) Unauthorised Absence**

The School recognises that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be as damaging to a child's education as authorised absence and will potentially send a message to parents that any reason for non-school attendance is acceptable. Potentially this practice could render children extremely vulnerable to harm. If absence is frequent or continuous, and except where a child is clearly unwell, staff at the School will challenge parents about the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. **The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school.**

Absences which cannot be accounted for (and those for which the Headteacher or Education Welfare Officer feels the reason given is unsatisfactory) will be recorded as 'unauthorised'. The total number of 'unauthorised' absences is published in each individual pupil's Annual Report. The school is not obliged to accept parental notes where there is reason to doubt the validity of the explanation offered. Similarly, if no explanation for absence is offered, the absence should remain unauthorised.

Where continued absence is noted or where a pattern of absences occurs this is reported by the Headteacher to the Education Welfare Officer during one of his/her regular visits to the school.

#### **Approved Educational Activity:**

A pupil who is engaged in off-site educational activities which are supervised by the school should have his/her absence recorded as approved educational activity. For statistical purposes such pupils may be counted as present even though they are physically absent. For reasons of health and safety it is important, however, that the attendance register clearly indicates that they are not on site.

Where a pupil is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the school will check his/her attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register.

An approved educational activity is:

- dual registration arrangements with another school, such as a Pupil Referral Unit or special school (both institutions share responsibility for the pupil – failure to attend either institution as instructed, without good reason, is unauthorised absence);
- a supervised field trip or educational visit either in the UK or abroad;
- participation in or attendance at an approved and supervised sporting activity;
- registered pupils receiving part of their tuition off-site at another location whilst remaining under the overall supervision of the school (ie. with an alternative provider but short of formal dual registration) – this can include sick children being taught at home and remaining on the school roll (such children must be in receipt of supervised tuition, not simply undertaking homework which is provided by the school).

### **Registering Part-Time Attendance:**

All pupils are entitled to a full-time education. Part-time arrangements should therefore be made only in exceptional circumstances (eg. to re-integrate a child who has had a long-term absence) and should be time-limited with the clear aim of making them full-time as soon as possible.

Pupils on part-time timetables should have agreed periods of absence marked as authorised absence.

### **Children Unable to Attend School because of Medical Reasons:**

Where a child is unable to attend school because of medical reasons, the school will ask for evidence, usually via an appointment letter. In more complicated situations, the school will contact the Education Welfare Officer and follow their guidance.

### **Excluded Pupils:**

Where a pupil has been excluded for a fixed period, their name remains on the school roll. This absence is treated as authorised. Where the pupil has been excluded permanently, the pupil's name is removed from the school roll.

### **Post-Registration Truancy:**

If a pupil appears to have left the premises without authorisation, the school will try to make contact with his/her parents immediately. If the parents cannot be contacted, the school will telephone the police.

### **Term-Time Holidays:**

Children are not permitted to be absent from school for holidays in term time. The School will only consider authorising holidays for:



- Children whose parents are armed forces personnel on leave from an overseas posting
- A family who needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis.

Requests for holidays for the following reasons will not be authorised:

- Cheaper cost of holiday
- Availability of desired holiday/accommodation
- Family day trips
- Visiting family/friends that have different half terms or holidays
- Overlap with beginning or end of term
- Weddings and honeymoons

The Head Teacher will consider every application individually. The School's policy, in line with government guidance, is **NOT** to grant a leave of absence for a holiday other than in the most exceptional circumstances. Time off school for family holidays **is not a right**.

An application for a term-time holiday must be made in writing on the appropriate form (See Appendix C), with appropriate evidence, at least two weeks **in advance** of the intended holiday.

The School will **not** authorise a non-medical absence during periods of national tests, i.e. SATS.

The School will **not** authorise a non-medical absence when the overall attendance of the pupil is lower than 95% for both the current and previous academic years.

Where there is a delay in a child/children returning to school following authorised leave of absence (e.g. a delayed flight or extreme weather), each case will be treated on its own merit. The parent must contact the school as soon as possible in such circumstances with the reason for the delayed return to school. The absence will be marked unauthorised until satisfactory evidence is received from the parent of the reason for the delay. It is the parents' responsibility to keep the school as informed as possible.

Delays in returning to school following unauthorised absence will continue to be marked as unauthorised absence unless satisfactory evidence is provided as to the reason for absence.

Additional information with respect to term time holidays can be found in Appendix D.

### **Extended Leaves of Absence:**

In considering requests for absence for extended trips overseas, the School will take account of the following:

- A visit to family overseas can have a very different significance from a normal 'holiday'
- Such visits can be important in terms of children's identity and self-esteem as they grow up
- Parents may feel that the reasons for their visit outweigh the importance of their child's uninterrupted attendance at school (although parents could be encouraged to use the school holiday periods for at least part of their trip)
- The reasons for wishing to make a visit are more difficult, particularly for minority ethnic families where huge distances and high costs are involved
- Where extended leave of absence is granted there will be an expectation that the pupil undertakes some school-set work during this period

### **Persistent Absenteeism:**

Where there is an emerging pattern to a pupil's absence over a 3 to 4 week period (or sooner if staff are concerned), with or without explanation, the school will invite parents to a meeting to discuss the reasons for the absences. Plans should be put in place with the parents and pupil to resolve any difficulties and improve the attendance within a specified time limit – usually no more than 6 weeks. It will be explained to parents that any future absences will be unauthorised unless there is clear evidence of a good reason for them.

If there continues to be unauthorised absences by the end of the specified time (or sooner if the child is failing to attend school at all), the matter will be referred to the Education Attendance Service.

### **Systems and Strategies for Managing and Improving Attendance:**

Attendance has a very high profile at the School. Parents are regularly reminded in newsletters and school meetings about the importance of good attendance and its links to attainment. They are also reminded that it is their responsibility to inform the Pupil Administrative team directly, either in person, via the school email or on the school absence line of any absences.

The School has procedures in place for dealing with situations where there are a number of unexplained absences within a week. When this happens, a response slip is sent home to the parents for completion and return.

Where there is an emerging pattern to a pupil's absence over a three to four week period (or sooner if staff are particularly concerned), with or without

explanation, the school will contact parents by letter. Plans should be put in place with the parents and pupil to resolve any difficulties and improve the attendance within a specified time limit - usually no more than six weeks. It will be explained to parents that any future absences will be unauthorised unless there is clear evidence of a good reason for them. If there are 5 unauthorised absences, including lates, a referral to the Education Welfare Officer can be triggered.

### **Penalty Notice Protocol:**

The School aims to work with parents/carers to improve pupil attendance but will refer pupils to the Education Attendance Service, who may issue a Penalty Notice, where:

- A pupil has taken unauthorised term-time holiday
- A pupil is stopped with parents/carers during a truancy sweep and the absence is not authorised by the school
- A pupil has missed at least 5 sessions (2.5 school days) due to unauthorised absence in a school term (this will include lateness)

In every case, a pupil will have lost a minimum of 5 sessions (2.5 school days) of unauthorised absence during the current term before a referral for a Penalty Notice.

### **Period of Review:**

This policy should be reviewed every two years.

## Appendix A

### Research Showing the Impact Good School Attendance has on a Pupil's Academic Achievement

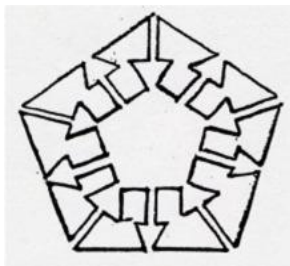
Attendance (%)	Chance of getting 5 A* to C grades at GCSE
94 and above	Very good
93	Good
<92	Fair
<90	50%
<88	35%

## Appendix B

### Register Codes

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

**Appendix C**



Gislingham CEVCP  
 Hartismere High  
 Mellis CEVCP  
 Occold CP  
 Palgrave CEVCP  
 St Botolphs CEVCP  
 St Edmunds CP  
 St Peter & St Paul CEP  
 Stoke Ash CP  
 Thorndon CEVCP  
 Wortham CP

**Absence Request Form**

**APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE FOR A HOLIDAY  
 FOR A SCHOOL PUPIL WITHIN THE HARTISMERE PYRAMID OF  
 SCHOOLS**

**The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006**

**Important Information For Parents/Carers**

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 state that a pupil may be granted leave of absence from their school to enable them to go away on holiday where:

- An application has been made in advance to the proprietor by a parent with whom the pupil normally resides; and
- The proprietor, or a person authorised by the proprietor considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the special circumstances relating to that application.

**Please note that**

- When considering whether to authorise a holiday request, your child's current attendance record will be taken into consideration.
- Authorisation during examination periods or for a pupil who has been on roll for less than 6 weeks, is very unlikely to be granted except in **highly** exceptional circumstances
- Any requests for **extended leave** will require an interview with a senior member of school staff and only in **highly** exceptional circumstances will such leave be authorised.

**To be completed by Parent/Guardian**

To: Head teacher of St.Peter & St.Paul CE Primary School

I understand that your decision will be taken after considering

- α) the impact the absence will have on his/her education
- β) the child's previous attendance record

I, being the Parent/Guardian of the child detailed below, request that you consider allowing my child to be absent from school.

Name of Child.....Date of Birth.....Class.....

Requested Period of Absence:  
 From.....

To.....

Reason for Absence.....

Signature of Parent/Guardian.....

**To be completed by Class Teacher/Senior Leadership Team**

Do you have concerns about the number of absences this year and/or any holidays taken? Yes/No

Do you have concerns that this holiday will impact on their education? Yes/No

Do you have concerns about the pupil having time off? Yes/No

**To be completed by Headteacher**

To: Parent/Guardian of.....in  
Class.....

Leave of Absence **has/has not** been granted for your child as requested.

Signed..... (Head Teacher)

Head teacher's comments: The School and Governors are concerned to improve pupil attendance and wish to discourage families from taking holidays during term time, due to the impact it has on learning. Thank You.

## Appendix D

### Additional Information on Term Time Holidays

**As a parent/carer, you can demonstrate your commitment to your child's education by, whenever possible, taking your holidays during school holidays. If you take your child on holiday in term time without the prior approval of the school, you may be liable for a £60 Penalty Notice per parent per child, rising to £120 per parent per child, if not paid within 21 days.**

### The Facts

We recognise that it is often expensive to take a holiday during school breaks and that is why some parents may ask for term-time leave for their child. However, it is important that parents carefully consider the implications of taking their child out of school during term time.

Research suggests that children who are taken out of school may never catch up on the work they have missed. This may affect test results. Children who struggle with English or Mathematics may also find it even harder to cope when they return to school, while younger children may find it difficult to renew friendships with their classmates.

### The Law

The law does not say that parents have an automatic right to take their child out of school for holidays during term-time. However, in **exceptional** circumstances school may authorise, in advance, requests for periods of leave. The request for leave must come from a parent with whom the child normally resides.

If a child then stays away from school for more than any authorised period this must be recorded as unauthorised absence and could be quoted in a prosecution for poor attendance.

**The law requires schools to be open to pupils for 190 days each year, and every day is important. Please help them not to miss any of this valuable time.**

#### Authorised Absences include:

- Genuine illness
- Unavoidable medical/dental appointments (but try to make these after school if at all possible)
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional circumstances, such as bereavement
- Seeing a parent who is on leave from an armed forces overseas deployment

#### Unauthorised Absences include:

- Any type of shopping
- Looking after brothers, sisters or unwell parents
- Minding the house
- Birthdays
- Resting after a late night
- Relatives visiting or visiting relatives
- Holidays



## Document History

<b>Version</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Issue 1	July 2012	Adopted by governors
Issue 2	November 2015	Policy amended in line with new government guidance
Issue 3	July 2018	Policy reviewed without amendment of guidance.