



## St Peter's C of E School Attendance Policy

<b>Teaching and Learning Committee:</b>	February 2013
<b>Ratified by governors:</b>	May 2013
<b>Review dates:</b>	May 2015

### **Rationale**

Our school is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience for all pupils. We believe that if pupils are to benefit from the education we offer and to have a successful school career, good attendance is crucial. As a school, we do all that we can to ensure maximum attendance for all pupils. Any problems that prevent full attendance will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible.

We give a high priority to conveying to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance. If there are problems which affect a pupil's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive, in partnership with parents and pupils, to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We will adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the pupil to full attendance at all times.

### **Objectives**

- ❖ to encourage full attendance and punctuality
- ❖ to record and monitor attendance and absenteeism and apply appropriate strategies
- ❖ to minimise absenteeism
- ❖ to ensure a consistent approach throughout the school

### **Statutory Duty of Schools**

The Education Act 1996 requires parents or guardians to ensure their children receive efficient, full-time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. Schools have responsibility for recording pupil attendance twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. An entry must be made in the attendance register for all pupils of compulsory school age who are on the school's admission roll.

We recognise that the Government and the Local Authority (LA) have established that the good attendance of all pupils in our schools is a high priority. This is because high attendance and success at school go hand in hand.

The law does not give parents the right to take their child out of school for an authorised absence from school. However, if families request authorisation before a pupil is absent, then headteachers may authorise

the absence for the pupil if certain conditions apply. Only headteachers, and under certain circumstances the school's Governing Body, are able to decide if an absence is to be authorised.

### **Principles**

Parents are legally responsible for ensuring that a child of compulsory school age attends school regularly. We will work towards ensuring that all pupils feel supported and valued. We will send a clear message that if a pupil is absent, she/he will be missed. We will consult with all members of the school community and the Education Welfare Service in developing and maintaining the whole school attendance policy.

We will encourage parents/carers to be actively involved in promoting their child's attendance. We will ensure that all staff are aware of the requirements of the registration process and that they receive training on Registration Regulations and the Law relating to attendance. Regular information will be sent to parents and pupils informing them of attendance rates and related issues. Consistent and vigorous monitoring and evaluation procedures will be in place.

### **Definitions**

#### **Authorised absence**

Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.

#### **Unauthorised absence**

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent.

Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

***Please appendix 1 for the Local Learning Community's agreed protocol for pupil absence.***

### **Procedures**

- ❖ The school day begins at 8.55 a.m. Children are allowed into the playground from 8.45 a.m. and should be there to line up at 8.55 a.m. Registers are taken between 9.00 a.m. and 9.05 a.m. after which time the register is sent to the office.
- ❖ Children arriving after 9.10 a.m. are sent to the office staff, who will mark the register to show the child is late. Children arriving after 9.25 a.m. are registered as absent for that session.
- ❖ Teachers have responsibility for ensuring registers are completed accurately. Advice will be offered by office staff where necessary.
- ❖ All absences are questioned and reasons sought. Parents/carers are asked to phone or write to the school on the first day of absence and to send a written note of explanation when the child returns. Registers are coded accordingly. Unexplained absences are followed up by office staff, by telephone and/or by letter. If an explanation is still not provided, the absence is recorded as unauthorised.

- ❖ Parents/carers are discouraged from taking their children out of school for holidays or family events during term time. Parents are informed, in newsletters and in the prospectus, that they do not have an automatic right to holiday absence. The school may authorise up to a maximum of 10 days' holiday in any one academic year, but this is at the discretion of the Headteacher and will only be granted in special circumstances and if the child has an attendance record of at least 95% over the previous twelve months. Parents/carers are required to complete the school's absence request form to request absence for their child. This needs to be done well in advance before the holiday (accommodation/flights) is booked. Holiday in excess of 10 days will not be authorised.
- ❖ Holiday absence is not normally authorised during September or May, as we believe this is a crucial time for children to be in school. This is publicised to parents.
- ❖ Parents/carers taking their children out of school when this has not been authorised will normally be reported to the Educational Welfare Officer, who may take appropriate action.
- ❖ The school sets an attendance target each year and this is shared with parents and children.
- ❖ Each child's attendance information is sent to parents/carers with the annual report.
- ❖ The Educational Welfare Officer visits the school regularly to check registers and discuss any patterns of absence or lateness with the Headteacher. If a child is causing concern, the EWO will contact the family to ascertain the reason for absence and offer support if required. Parents/carers who do not respond proceed to more formal contact.

### **Monitoring**

Monitoring will take place as part of the school's monitoring cycle.

### **Review**

This policy will be reviewed in line with the school's policy review schedule. The headteacher is responsible for reporting to the governors' Teaching and Learning committee about the quality of its implementation and its impact on standards. In the light of this, policy amendments may be made.

Signed.....  
Chair of Governors

Date.....