



St. Peter's
Catholic
Primary School

St. Peter's Catholic Primary School

Attendance Policy

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Headteacher: Mrs C Young	C J Young
Chair of Governors: Mrs K-A Kent	K-A Kent

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Aims

St. Peter's Catholic Primary School ('the school') is committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- promoting good attendance;
- reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence;
- ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled;
- acting early to address patterns of absence; and
- building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school.

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons. We aim that all pupils will achieve an attendance rate of 97% or higher during an academic year.

1. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) and school attendance parental responsibility measures. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of the Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

It also refers to:

- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1. The School will:

- have effective systems for monitoring pupil attendance;
- have a designated senior leader for attendance and punctuality (the Headteacher);
- adopt a whole school approach to managing attendance with roles and responsibilities clearly defined;
- ensure registers are taken accurately and are up to date;
- accentuate the positives of good attendance;
- have clear lines of communication with parents or carers and discuss any concerns immediately;
- implement attendance management procedures as soon as necessary;

- work in partnership with the local authority and other agencies and services to support the needs of pupils and families;
- provide up to date attendance data on a regular basis to the local authority, or when requested;
- notify the local authority of additions and removals from the school admission register;
- seek advice and guidance from health professionals for children with medical needs;
- adhere to safeguarding procedures and practices;
- work in partnership with other schools on requests for leave of absence;
- comply with the School Admissions Code of Practice and ensure allocations are admitted without reasonable delay; and
- support the local authority 'Access to Education Strategy for Improvement'.

2.2. The Local Academy Committee

The Local Academy Committee of the school is responsible for:

- promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos;
- making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties;
- regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data;
- monitoring attendance figures for the whole school;
- making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance; and
- holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The link governor responsible for attendance is Mr. S. Butler.

2.3. The Headteacher

The headteacher has overall responsibility for attendance in the school and is responsible for:

- implementation of this policy at the school;
- leading attendance across the school;
- monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7);
- having an oversight of data analysis;
- monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors;
- benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement;
- offering a clear vision for attendance improvement;
- arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues;
- delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families;
- supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils;
- monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies;
- issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary;
- working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence;
- evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes; and
- addressing areas of poor attendance identified through data following specific strategies advised by Doncaster Local Authority and/or the Academy Trust.

2.4. Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office by 09:00 and 13:15 each day.

2.5. School administration and office staff

School administration and office staff will:

- take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system;
- have effective systems for monitoring pupil attendance;
- provide regular attendance reports to school staff and report concerns about attendance to the Headteacher

The designated pupil attendance officer responsible for attendance is Mrs F Butler and can be contacted via 01302 369143 or admin3@stpeter.doncaster.sch.uk.

2.6. Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- register their child at a school;
- make sure their child attends school every day on time;
- ensure their child is punctual, attends and remains in school during the required hours;
- call the school to report their child's absence before 09:30 on the first day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return;
- provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child;
- ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day;
- ensure a positive attitude to learning and support any home school agreements;
- meet any social and emotional needs that may affect a child from accessing a full-time education. This may be through assistance from external services or agencies;
- inform the school of any significant changes to a child's circumstances, such as bereavement, change of residence, or health needs; and
- ensure their child complies with the schools policies and procedures.

3. Recording attendance

3.1. Attendance register

The school will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

The school will take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and at the beginning of the afternoon session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- present;
- attending an approved off-site educational activity;
- absent; or
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- the original entry;
- the amended entry;
- the reason for the amendment;
- the date on which the amendment was made; and

- the name and position of the person who made the amendment.

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

The school will also record:

- for pupils of compulsory school age - whether the absence is authorised or not;
- the nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity; and
- the nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

The school will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 08.45 on each school day. The school gate will open at 8.40am to facilitate this.

The register for the first session will be taken at 08:45 and will be kept open until 09:15. The register for the second session will be taken at 13:05.

3.2. Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 09:15 or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff (see also section 7).

The school will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

3.3. Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. The school should be informed of this by contacting the school office.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Please see section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

3.4. Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed (until 09:15) will be marked as late, using the appropriate code - L

- After the register has closed (09:15 onwards) will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code - U

3.5. Following up unexplained absence

If any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Send an Arbor In-App message requesting the parent/carer to contact the school office to confirm the absence.
- If no response is received, call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may make a welfare visit to the child's address as necessary and ensure proper safeguarding action is taken as necessary.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not.
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session.
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary.

If absence continues, the school will follow the guidance stated in 'The Graduated Approach to Manage Pupil Attendance and Attainment – Local Authority guidance for schools, academies and alternative providers.' Doncaster LA September 2022 (or equivalent).

3.6. Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via a termly letter. It can also be viewed at any time via Arbor.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1. Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 school attendance regulations. These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least four weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school website. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Other valid reasons for authorised absence include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

4.2. Legal sanctions

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

4.2.1. Penalty notices

The headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day).

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a first penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a second penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

4.2.2. Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

A fine can be issued if:

- The child has had 10 sessions, or more, of absence in a period not exceeding 13 weeks and meets the terms of a prosecution under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996, and the school or Doncaster Council has previously issued a warning letter giving the opportunity to improve attendance over a specified period.
- The child has 10 sessions of unauthorised leave of absence in term time and the Headteacher has advised the parent in writing that the leave of absence does not constitute the Headteachers view of an exceptional circumstance.
- The child has taken leave of absence in term time of not less than 10 sessions, without parents requesting authorisation from the school.
- Exclusion has taken place and the parent has allowed the child to be present in a public place during school hours, without reasonable justification, during the first five days of a fixed or permanent exclusion.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices will be issued to each parent for each child. The exception to this would be where a parent has taken a child on unauthorised leave of absence without the consent of the other parent.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

The school continually promotes good attendance and the class with the highest attendance is recognised weekly in the school's Celebration Assembly each Friday. All children who have had 100% attendance each term are rewarded with an attendance certificate and enter a draw to win a prize. The school are signed up to the Doncaster Rovers 'Attendance4Attendance' initiative offering pupils who meet the 97% target to get free tickets to Doncaster Rover sporting activities. The school also recognises individual pupils who have made significant improvements to their attendance with a gold badge issued at a celebration assembly.

6. Attendance monitoring

The school monitors and analyses attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance. Absence trends, and pupils who may be at risk are identified.

6.1. Monitoring attendance and school processes

The school will:

- monitor attendance and absence by running a data report bi-weekly to identify persistent absentees and emerging cases. Produce reports each half-term, term and year across the school at individual pupil level or designated group level; and
- identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern.
- contact via letter any parent/carer of any child whose attendance is causing concern, reminding them of our attendance targets, and offering further support. An informal meeting may be held to outline our concerns and identify any support needed.
- in cases where attendance does not improve, a second letter will be sent offering further support, but advising that the school will seek further guidance from the Local Authority.
- If attendance does not improve, an attendance support plan meeting will be put in place and further guidance sought through the Local Authority.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the Local Academy Committee.

6.2. Analysing attendance

The school will:

- analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families; and
- look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns.

6.3. Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families; and
- use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies.

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence;
- hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school; and
- provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance in line with Doncaster's guidance.

6.4. Attendance and Pupil Welfare Service

The School works with the Attendance and Pupil Welfare Service at Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council to ensure a consistent approach in promoting good attendance.

A Designated Officer visits school monthly to support the school in monitoring attendance and minimising unauthorised and/or persistent absenteeism and punctuality.

Where necessary, the Designated Officer will support the School in setting up an Attendance Support Plan, holding review meetings and identifying agreed actions.

7. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the Academy Trust, the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Local Academy Committee.

8. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's "[Working together to improve school attendance](#)" which applies from 19 August 2024.

Please contact the school office for further information.

Code	Full name	Description
The student is counted as present.		
/ or \	Present am or pm	Present in school during registration.
L	Late	Late arrival before the register has closed
The student is counted as present, at an Approved Educational Activity.		
B	Educated off Site	The pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
J	Interview	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution.
P	Sporting Activity (Approved)	The pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is a sporting activity.
V	Educational trip	The pupil is attending a place, other than the school or any other school at which they are a registered pupil, for an educational visit or trip arranged by or on behalf of the school and supervised by a member of school staff.
W	Work Experience	The pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is work experience provided under arrangements made by a local authority or the school as part of the pupil's education.
The student is counted as absent, authorised.		
C	Other Authorised Absence	Leave of absence granted at the Headteacher's discretion.
E	Excluded	The pupil is suspended from school or permanently excluded from school, but their name is still entered in the admission register, and no alternative provision has been made for the pupil to continue their education.
I	Illness	The pupil is unable to attend due to illness.
M	Medical/Dental Appointments	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment.

R	Religious Observance	The pupil is absent on a day that is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body.
S	Study Leave	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination.
T	Occupational Absence	The pupil is a mobile child and their parent(s) is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them
The student is counted as absent, unauthorised.		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	The school has not granted a leave of absence and the pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday.
N	No Reason	Reason for absence not yet established; if a reason for absence cannot be established within 5 school days, schools must amend the pupil's record to Code O.
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	Where no reason for absence is established or the school is not satisfied that the reason given is one that would be recorded using one of the codes statistically classified as authorised.
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Where a pupil has arrived late after the register has closed but before the end of session.
These codes are not counted so will not affect attendance figures.		
D	Dual registered at another school	The pupil is absent with leave to attend the other school at which they are registered.
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school	Sessions non-compulsory school-age children are not expected to attend.
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	The school is closed due to an unavoidable cause or the student is unable to travel to the school.
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Used prior to the pupil starting at the school.