

# Petworth CofE Primary School

## Attendance and Absence Policy



As a Rights Respecting School, all our policies are underpinned by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the child.

**Article 2** - *The Convention applies to all children, whatever their race, religion or abilities; whatever they think or say, whatever type of family they come from.*

**Article 3** - *The best interests of children must be the primary concern in making decisions that may affect them.*

**Article 28** - *You have the right to a good quality education. You should be encouraged to go to school to the highest level you can.*

Reviewed:	September 2024
Next Review:	August 2026
Person Responsible:	John Galvin

**Inspire, nurture and challenge with JOY at the heart in all we do.**

Our attendance policy aims to:

- support pupils and their parents/carers in the establishment of the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality;
- ensure that all pupils have full and equal access to the best education that we can offer in order to increase learning;
- enable pupils to progress smoothly, confidently and with continuity through the school;
- make parents/carers aware of their legal responsibilities;
- ensure attendance meets Government and Local Authority targets

## **Being at school**

School education lays the vital foundations of a child's life. Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. It also encourages peer interaction and good social skills, and develops understanding of core values of co-operation and respect. Parents/carers and the school staff should work in partnership in making education a success and in ensuring that all children have full and equal access to all that the school has to offer. As a school, we will encourage parents and carers to ensure that their child achieves maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly. As parents, it is their responsibility to ensure that their children arrive at school and return home safely.

## **Expectations**

*We expect that all pupils will:*

- attend school every day
- attend school punctually
- attend appropriately prepared for the day

*We expect that all parents/carers will:*

- ensure regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities
- ensure that their child arrives at school punctually and prepared for the school day
- ensure that they contact the school daily of absence or if known in advance, whenever their child is unable to attend school
- contact school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school
- notify the school of any home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child
- notify school immediately of any changes to contact details

*We expect that the school will:*

- provide a welcoming atmosphere
- provide a safe learning environment
- provide a sympathetic response to any child's or parent's/carer's concerns
- keep regular and accurate records of AM and PM attendance and punctuality, monitor individual child's attendance and punctuality
- contact parents when a child fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence

- follow up all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents. Although parents may offer a reason, only the school can authorise the absence. In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, verifications from a GP or other relevant body may be requested
- encourage good attendance and punctuality through a system of reward and recognition
- inform all parents of their child's attendance at least twice during the academic year
- make initial enquiries regarding pupils who are not attending regularly
- meet regularly with our attendance governor to monitor and support school attendance and punctuality
- Failure by the family to comply with the planned support set by the school may result in further actions, e.g. a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN), parental prosecution or an application for an Education Supervision Order
- will notify the Local Authority (LA) after 15 days sickness
- will notify our Local Authority after 10 days unexplained absence

### **Registers, Punctuality and Lateness**

Punctuality to school is crucial. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. It is paramount therefore that all pupils arrive at school on time. For school pupils the gates are opened at 8:30am and close at 8:45am.

By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil. Registration takes place at 8.50am and pupils who arrive after 8.55am will be recorded as late to school.

- registers close at 9.05am and after this lateness is recorded as an unauthorised absence and can be subject to prosecution by the local authority
- afternoon registration is taken at 1.00pm
- persistent lateness by a pupil will be dealt with through the home/school link worker and may be referred to our Local Authority
- pupil's attendance and punctuality is recorded on their report and will be passed on to future schools as necessary

### **Pupil Leaving During the School Day**

- during school hours the school staff are legally in loco parentis and therefore must know where the pupils are during the school day
- pupils are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school
- whenever possible, parents should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside of school time
- parents are requested to confirm in writing, by letter or email, the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving, the expected return time
- pupils must be signed out on leaving the school and be signed back in on their return
- where a pupil is being collected from the school, parents are to report to the school office before the pupil is allowed to leave the site

- if a pupil leaves the school site without permission their parents will be contacted. Should the school be unable to make contact with the family it may be appropriate, in certain circumstances, to contact the Police and register the pupils as a missing person.

### **Leave of Absence**

- the school holiday dates and end of Key Stage Assessment dates are published a year in advance and leave of absence will not be authorised during these assessment periods. INSET days are published as soon as the school have agreed these, but may be subject to change.
- in line with the Government's amendments to the 2006 regulations (appendix 1), holidays during term time will NOT be authorised.

The Headteacher and Governors have determined that:

- in exceptional circumstances permission may be granted for a maximum of five days of holiday providing your child has a good (95% or higher) attendance record over the previous three terms.
- where leave of absence in term time is due to exceptional circumstances, an application form must be requested from the school office and submitted for consideration by the Headteacher on behalf of the school governors, no less than 4 weeks prior to the requested date. Consideration will then be given to the pupil's previous school attendance and that the time requested does not exceed five school days in any one academic year.
- if leave is taken without prior authorisation by the school, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

### **The headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Inform the Pupil Entitlement Team where unauthorised absences are of concern (they may issue a fixed penalty notice)

### **The designated senior leader responsible for attendance (Headteacher)**

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school monitoring and analysing attendance data;
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

- Report concerns about attendance to the Governing Body.

### **Penalty Notices**

- penalty Notices can be issued for unauthorised leave and may also be issued when a pupil is stopped by Truancy Patrol or if a parent / carer fails to ensure regular school attendance.

### **Penalty Notices for Holidays**

Petworth CofE Primary School follows guidance from the Department for Education that states Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. If a parent wishes to take a child away from school during term time, permission from the Headteacher (or designated member of staff in their absence) must be obtained in advance. The school has a "Request for Absence from Learning in School Time" form. This is available from the school office. Any request for absence from learning that is denied but is still taken will be recorded as unauthorised. If 10 sessions (a school day is two sessions – am and pm) or more are classified as unauthorised within a school ten-week period, then a referral may be made to the Pupil Entitlement Team, which could result in a Fixed Penalty Notice. If a request is denied, a letter will be sent from the school outlining the next steps if they do go ahead with the absence. Click on the link below to the West Sussex website for further information on Fixed Penalty Notices.

[School absences - West Sussex County Council](#)

### **Changing Schools**

It is important that if families decide to send their child to a different school that they inform Petworth CofE Primary School as soon as possible. We would want to work with the new school to ensure the transition runs as smoothly as possible. A pupil will not be removed from the school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- the date the pupil will be leaving the school and starting the next school
- the address of the new school
- a new home address if appropriate
- the pupil's school records will then be sent to the new school. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the local authority.