

St. Peter's Primary School



School Policy Document

Attendance Policy

January 2020

St. Peter's Attendance Policy

The teaching and learning experience at St. Peter's inspires all of our children to question, to reflect and to understand in a happy, secure and inclusive environment. We aim to provide an education that will maximise each child's potential and promote his / her personal development.

We will achieve this in partnership with the parents and the local and wider community. Regular attendance and a punctual start to the school day are crucial in raising standards and ensuring that every child has full access to the school curriculum.

St. Peter's will strive to promote an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance and where each child will feel valued and secure.

Aims:

- Improve / maintain the overall attendance of pupils
- Promote the importance of school attendance
- Provide support, advice and guidance to parents / guardians / pupils
- Develop a framework that defines roles / responsibilities in relation to attendance
- To achieve a minimum of 94% attendance for all children (except for those who have chronic health issues).

Role of the School

The Principal at St. Peter's Primary School has overall responsibility for school attendance. If there are any concerns regarding school attendance the designated staff member (A O' Kane) will bring these concerns to the principal.

The Board of Governors provide support by reviewing school attendance figures and targets and ensuring it is placed as an agenda item at each meeting.

Teaching staff regularly monitor the attendance and punctuality of pupils by ensuring that attendance is recorded at the beginning of morning and afternoon registration sessions. Teachers will inform the principal / designated teacher where there are concerns and provide background information.

Attendance issues will be discussed at curriculum evenings / parents' meetings where necessary.

The school will proactively promote the value of school attendance in the early years to establish good practices and will operate early intervention procedures to prevent patterns of poor attendance – incentive systems in place, ongoing engagement with parents / carers, regular communication, home visits, strong pastoral provision, certificates, Monthly Attendance Heroes, treat boxes, points, stickers.

Role of Parent/Guardian

Parents / guardians have a legal duty to ensure their child of compulsory school age shall receive efficient full time education suitable to age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular school attendance or otherwise.

If a child is registered in school, their parent has a legal duty to ensure that they regularly attend that school.

It is a parent's responsibility to inform the school of the reason for a pupil's absence on the first day of absence. This should be confirmed with a written note when the pupil returns to school. If the absence is likely to be prolonged, this information should be provided to enable the school to assist with homework or any other necessary arrangements which may be required.

If your child is reluctant to attend school please discuss the matter promptly with the class teacher or Principal to ensure that both you and your child receive maximum support.

Role of Pupils

Each pupil at St. Peter's Primary School must attend school punctually and regularly. If you have been absent from school, a written note from a parent/guardian must be provided to your teacher when you return.

Procedures

- Children should be in their classrooms for registration at 9:00 am.
- Attendance will be recorded at the beginning of the morning and afternoon registration sessions on SIMS application using C2k codes.
- Children not in school by 9:10am will be recorded as late.
- An explanation from an accompanying adult, a parent's note or a telephone call will enable the attendance records of late children to be updated properly
- The principal or class teacher will investigate recurring lateness/absences. Reasons for pupils' absences will be followed-up with parents / carers within 5 days.
- Routine medical and dental appointments should, if possible, be made outside of school hours.
- The school is obligated to consider unexplained absences as unauthorised.
- If a teacher is absent, a classroom assistant will provide a hard copy to Mrs. O' Kane or Mr Laverty, registration will subsequently be recorded on SIMS.

Authorised absences

Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for the child to be absent or where an explanation offered afterwards has been accepted as satisfactory reason for absence.

Absence may generally be authorised for the following reasons:

- illness, medical / dental appointments;
- family emergency;
- family bereavement;
- attendance at a funeral or wedding of close family members
- 'exceptional' closure (the nature of such occasions will be determined by school on an individual basis)

Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence is where no explanation has been given for the child's absence or where the explanation offered is considered by the school to be unacceptable.

Absence should **not** be authorised in the following circumstances:

- no explanation is offered by the parent/guardian;
- the explanation offered is unsatisfactory, eg, shopping, birthdays, hair appointments, visiting relatives
- family holidays (unless granted under 'exceptional' circumstances)

Procedures for Managing Non-attendance

1. Should a child's attendance fall below 90%, Letter 1 (Appendix A)will be sent home to the child's parents/guardians alerting them of the situation. If there is significant / immediate improvement, no further action will be required.
2. Should a child's attendance fall below 90% and there is no improvement, (following letter 1) Letter 2 (Appendix B)will be sent home to the child's parents/guardians requesting a meeting to identify support strategies.
3. If there is significant / immediate improvement, no further action will be required.
4. If there is no improvement and attendance falls below 85%, the matter will be referred to the Education Welfare Service (EWS). If appropriate, EWS will support staff and parents in developing and implementing strategies to address / improve school attendance.

Schools are required by law to continue to hold copies of pupil attendance records and pupil registration records for not less than 10 years from the date on which the register ceased to be used.

To enable our school to accurately record and monitor attendance in a consistent way, we will adhere to the guidance provided in Department of Education Circulars, the most recent being 2019/14, Attendance Guidance and Absence Recording by Schools.

Signed:

Principal: *Mrs. P. Alexander*

Chair, Board of Governors: *Mrs. M. Walsh*

Date of implementation: January 2020

Review: January 2022

St. Peter's Primary School

Appendix A

Date:

Re: Insert Pupil's Name

Attendance letter 1

Dear Parent / Guardian,

You are receiving this letter because we are concerned that your child's attendance is below 90% and that he / she is missing school.

Our school records show that your child's attendance at school this year is xx%.

Please be aware that any pupil with attendance below 85% will be discussed with the Education Welfare Officer. School procedures for monitoring attendance can be found in our Attendance Policy located on our website. Hard copies are available from the school office.

You are invited to make an appointment with our Designated Teacher, Mrs. O' Kane or myself to discuss ways in which we can help you to improve your child's attendance.

Yours Sincerely

Mrs. P. Alexander

Principal

St. Peter's Primary School

Appendix B

Date:

Re: Insert Pupil's Name

Attendance letter 2

Dear Parent / Guardian,

Further to Letter 1 that was sent home on (insert date), you are receiving this letter because we are concerned that your child's attendance has remained below 90%.

Our school records show that your child's attendance at school this year is xx%.

Please be aware that any pupil with attendance below 85% will be discussed with the Education Welfare Officer. School procedures for monitoring attendance can be found in our Attendance Policy located on our website. Hard copies are available from the school office.

Can I please ask you to contact the office to make an appointment to see our Designated Teacher, Mrs. O' Kane or myself to discuss ways in which we can help you to improve your child's attendance.

Yours Sincerely

**Mrs. P. Alexander
Principal**