

Attendance Policy

May 2023



Our Mission

At Peters Hill we are passionate about the whole child. We want all children to leave school with skills and attributes that prepare them for the next stage in their education and allow them to embrace life's opportunities to the full. Our aim is for every child to fly high, flourish and fulfil the limitless potential they have. We want children to understand and demonstrate the importance of ambition, belief, compassion, pride and respect. We want children to become successful, confident, motivated and responsible individuals.

Our Aims

As a school we aim to:

- promote curiosity, enthusiasm and engagement.
- encourage independence and confidence.
- foster logical, creative and deep thinking.
- nurture respect for others and personal self esteem.
- provide a broad and balanced curriculum with imagination, purpose and value.
- ensure high standards of behaviour and positive attitudes.
- grow an awareness of civic responsibility and global citizenship.
- value all abilities, interests, cultures and beliefs.
- embrace innovative technology.
- develop full potential in a structured, caring and purposeful learning environment.

We believe that regular attendance is crucial if children are to benefit from their education and achieve their full potential. For children to have good attendance, measures have been put in place to monitor and address concerns over attendance and absence. These are outlined in the policy below.

Rationale

The pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 and key stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment. At KS2, pupils not meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths had an overall absence rate of 4.7%, compared to 3.5% among those meeting the expected standard. Moreover, the overall absence rate of pupils not meeting the expected standard was higher than among those meeting the higher standard (4.7% compared to 2.7%). *DFE Guidance - Working together to improve school attendance May 2022*

Attendance and punctuality are important for learning at Peters Hill Primary School. Time out of class means children miss learning opportunities. Children with Outstanding Attendance can participate in and make the best use of all the wonderful learning, activities and events provided at our school; what we would like for every single one of our pupils! A government report has looked at how attendance affects the performance of pupils in the most important years of primary education. The report finds that higher attendance leads to pupils achieving higher grades. You can read this report by clicking [here](#).

It is essential that all pupils achieve as high attendance as possible, and we are committed to achieving this across the whole school. We understand that occasionally children will be absent due to illness or other circumstances; it's a natural part of life in and out of school. We can administer prescribed medicines when required to help your child while at school. This can be arranged by contacting the school office.

Our First Aid and Medical Assistant is Miss Hicks.

Our School Attendance Officer is Mrs Bird.

Our Attendance Link Governor is Mrs Belcher.

Please note that daily absence is expected to be recorded through the absence reporting line. All parents have a duty to do this daily. This ensures that parents can leave a message for school before the day begins outlining the reason for the absence. Any pupil missing at the start of the day will be recorded through the registers and parents contacted if we have not received clarification of the absence. It is essential that parent contact details are always up to date. If we have not received a message regarding absence and we are unable to identify the whereabouts of the child this information will be given to the school safeguarding team who will follow school policy by exploring different strategies for contacting parents. This may include a home visit. Please note that in the event of not being able to verify the whereabouts of a child through all available contacts and strategies, it may be considered an immediate safeguarding concern and could result in a referral to children's services.

Punctuality

Being on time is important to your child; every morning the class teacher explains what is going to happen during that day and starts teaching sessions promptly. If your child misses just a few minutes they may miss some very important information.

Getting into the habit of being punctual at school is a good life lesson. Good timekeeping is a requirement for most employers and is usually listed as a requirement for employees so by ensuring your child learns to be on time you are not only helping them make the most of school but also helping them with their future job prospects.

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1. Aims

We are 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
- 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.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting 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 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board 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
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

The link governor for attendance is Mrs J Belcher

3.2 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
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Mr S Duncan and can be contacted via 01384 816740 or by email address enquiries@petershillprimary.org

3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and/or the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher (authorised only by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Mrs J Bird and can be contacted via 01384 816740 or by email address enquiries@petershillprimary.org

3.5 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. This needs to be done by 9am each day and by fifteen minutes after the start of afternoon teaching sessions.

3.6 School Admin Staff

School Admin Staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system as appropriate
- Transfer calls from parents to the attendance officer, class teacher, senior leader, safeguarding officer in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.45am on the 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

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- 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
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not

- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We 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 8.45am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.50am and will be kept open until 9am. As year group lunch breaks are staggered, the register for the second session will be taken 5 minutes after the end of the lunch session and will be kept open for 10 minutes after that time. All registers will be complete by 1.25pm at the latest.

4.2 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 8.45am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school on the absence line (see also section 7). Parents are asked to leave a voicemail message with details of the absence.

We 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.

4.3 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.

Parents should request a leave of absence form from the main 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. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code
- We will contact parents directly where there are concerns regarding punctuality. This will be initially in writing. If improvements are not made, then parents will be invited to a meeting to discuss strategies and identify the support needed to improve over time.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

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

- 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 complete a home visit and/or refer this to children's services as a safeguarding concern.
- 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 consider involving an education welfare officer

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels. This data is available to all parents through the SatchelOne app.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be '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.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as one off events which are unavoidable, examples may include the death of a close relative, attendance at a funeral, respite care of a looked after child, a housing crisis which prevents attendance.

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 4 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the main school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- 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 parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils 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

5.2 Legal sanctions

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.

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

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

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

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

In order to promote positive attendance, we will make good attendance a central part of our vision, values and ethos.

We will account for attendance in other school improvement priorities and regularly review our approach to improving attendance and share this with stakeholders.

We will have a designated senior leader with overall responsibility for improving attendance.

We will make sure all staff receive appropriate training and understand the importance of good attendance.

We will set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of pupils and communicate these regularly to pupils and parents.

We will promote and visibly demonstrate the benefits of good attendance.

We will recognise children missing education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues.

We make sure that displays are used effectively e.g. the use of display boards or visual display units dedicated to attendance which can have a positive impact on raising the profile of attendance. These are placed in key areas of school.

School Mascot – R to Yr 6. The child in each class in Rec to Year 3 with best attendance can have the school mascot for a week. The child in each class in Years 4 to 6 receives carrot reward points.

Rewards - School attendance raffle. Each child who has 95%+ attendance for the term is given a raffle ticket and there is a draw in assembly. Prizes are awarded to the winners of the raffle.

7. Attendance monitoring

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

- 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 governing board.

7.2 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
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 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
- 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
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

7.5 Monitoring Process

The attendance of children from Nursery to Year 6 is monitored:

The following systems are in place for addressing attendance:

- Each fortnight an attendance tracker is produced showing every child's percentage attendance.
- The Headteacher and Attendance Officer look at children's attendance under 95% with a particular focus on those under 90% (the figure classed as persistent absence).
- Parents may be contacted either by letter or phone informing them that their child's attendance and/or punctuality is low and a meeting may be requested.

The purpose of these meetings are to:

- Make parents aware of their child's attendance and/or punctuality.

- Ensure parents are aware that a referral to ESS may be necessary if there are a significant number of unauthorised absences.
- Discuss reasons for absence.
- Look at additional support that may be available, eg. Family Support, School Nurse.
- Look at strategies for promoting good attendance, eg. Reward charts.
- Raise awareness of the impact of good attendance on pupil outcomes.
- Ensure that parents understand the impact and possible consequences of further absence.

If a child has not been at school and no contact has been made with parents, then a home visit by the Attendance Officer and/or Safeguarding Officer may be requested by the Headteacher, particularly if there are any additional safeguarding concerns.

If a child is absent from school for 10 days and cannot be located then the child may be reported to the local authority as CME – a child missing in education. There is also a statutory obligation to report any child to the local authority if there has been an absence for 10 or more days unless agreed as a holiday.

7.6 Individual/Group high attendance is acknowledged

At the end of each term, children whose attendance is 100% are presented with a certificate in assembly. At the end of the school year children whose attendance is 100% are presented with a special certificate in assembly.

Each week the school mascot (SAM) is awarded to the child in each class from Rec to Year 3 with the highest attendance figure.

7.7 Reporting on Attendance

Each term a monitoring report is produced and shared with the school leadership team and the governing body as part of the Headteacher report.

The annual attendance plan is reviewed and shared with the school leadership team and the governing body.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the Head teacher and Attendance Officer. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
I	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness

M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Approved by:	Full Governing Body	Date: May 2023
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