

# Attendance policy



Approved by: **Headteacher** Date: **December 2022**

Last reviewed on: **December 2022**

Next review due by: **December 2024**

## Public Sector Equality Duty

We have carefully considered and analysed the impact of this policy on equality and the possible implications for those with protected characteristics, as part of our commitment to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

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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 SWC committee oversees matters pertaining to attendance.

### 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 Spackman and can be contacted via [sp@st-peters.bournemouth.sch.uk](mailto:sp@st-peters.bournemouth.sch.uk)

### 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 the headteacher
- › Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- › Advising the headteacher/AHT (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Sophie Spreadbury and can be contacted via [ssy@st-peters.bournemouth.sch.uk](mailto:ssy@st-peters.bournemouth.sch.uk)

### 3.5 Class teachers and form tutors

Class teachers and form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office during morning tutor time (start of the school day at primary) and during lesson 5 (afternoon session at primary)

### 3.6 School office staff

School office staff will:

- › Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system.
- › Transfer information from parents to the head of year/tutor/class teacher in order to provide more detailed support on attendance where appropriate.

### 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 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence (unless the school has already been advised of a longer period 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:

- › 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
- › 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 8:20am at Primary and 8:45am at Secondary/6th Form on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:30am at Primary and 8:50am at Secondary/6th Form and will be kept open until 8:50am at Primary and 9:10am at Secondary/6th Form. The register for the second session will be taken at 1pm at Primary and 1:40pm at Secondary/6th Form and will be kept open until 1:30pm/2pm.

## 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 9am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff (see also section 7).

Primary Phase	01202 421141 Option 1 then Option 1
Secondary Phase	01202 421141 Yr7 option 3, Yr 8 option 4, Yr 9 option 5, Yr 10 option 6, Yr 11 option 7
Sixth Form Phase	01202 421141 Option 1 then Option 8

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.

If appointments occur during school hours, the Attendance Officer will ask to see an appointment card or if Parent/Carers know in advance a student will be absent during school hours, we request that a letter or copy of the appointment is sent in. We take each case of regular and prolonged absence on an individual basis and will signpost families and seek support from other services including Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) to decide on the best route for their education if required.

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
- › Tutors report on punctuality and attendance in reports, references and the current Progress Files, this is undertaken by the classroom teacher for the Primary Phase.

## 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 refer to other external agencies who are able to support the school in this area.
- › 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 in the written report. This information is also available on SIMS. Should there be a concern regarding attendance, the school will communicate more regularly with the parents/carers.

# 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 events such as a family funeral, family wedding, family graduation. (the length of time requested will also be considered).

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 two weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the student hub. 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

High attendance is celebrated through success/achievement assemblies and also via tutors. Improved attendance is also celebrated through our pastoral systems. The importance/impact of good attendance is also highlighted through assemblies. The school engages with families where there may be concerns surrounding attendance.

## 7. Attendance monitoring

The school uses SIMS to monitor attendance. Disadvantaged pupils are a specific group upon whom we focus our monitoring and interventions

### 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 tutors/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
- › Engage with parents via phone calls and letters to support and promote better attendance
- › 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

## 8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum two years by the Headteacher.

## 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
/	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



<b>W</b>	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement
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<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
<b>C</b>	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>E</b>	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
<b>H</b>	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
<b>I</b>	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	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)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's

		absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	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
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

## Appendix 2 – Sixth Form Attendance

### **Introduction**

Attendance at school is a key determining factor in your academic and personal success. If you are not in school, we cannot teach you.

As a member of the Sixth Form community, there is a basic expectation to attend school all the time. Occasionally illness or medical appointments may take you away from school, but this should be at a minimum. Across an academic year, attendance below 95% can have a serious negative effect on student outcomes. Your attendance, therefore, should not fall below this measure and that includes lessons, study periods and tutorials (unless a formal agreement is in place, via the Head of Sixth Form).

### **Authorised and unauthorised absence**

When absent from school it is important that we receive a written (letter or email) to account for your absence, from parents.

Authorised absences include illness, medical appointments, funerals or other compassionate reasons given at the discretion of the Headteacher and / or the Head of Sixth Form. If students develop a long-term medical condition that requires regular time off school we will work closely with the student to reduce the impact on his or her progress as far as possible.

Unauthorised absence, can be defined as any absence which has not been sanctioned by the Headteacher and / or the Head of Sixth Form. Please note that we do not sanction absence for holidays in term time.

Please see the table below that makes it clear what is considered authorised or unauthorised absence.

<b>Absence</b>	<b>Authorised/not authorised</b>	<b>Evidence required</b>
Medical appointments	Yes	Students to bring evidence of appointment to Sixth Form Office
Birthdays	No	
Family gathering	At the discretion of the HOY and Head of Sixth Form	Students to discuss with the HOY or Head of Sixth Form
Funeral	Yes	1 day authorised. If longer, parents to contact Sixth Form Office with details for consideration
Driving Test	Yes	Photo or a copy of an appointment card to be shown to the Sixth Form Office.
Driving Lessons	Yes	Photo or a copy of an appointment card to be shown to the Sixth Form Office.
Driving Theory Test	Yes	Photo or a copy of an appointment card to be shown to the Sixth Form Office.
Holidays	No	
University Open Days	Yes	Students to provide details of Open Day (email/phone call from parents)
Other i.e. examinations, job interview, participation in extra curricular activities, rehearsal for events relating to schools	At the discretion of the HOY and Head of Sixth Form	Students to bring evidence to the HOY

## **Falling attendance**

Being a member of the St Peter's Sixth Form community is a privilege and we are proud to teach you. With this in mind, students who make an **active decision** to not attend school, could result in the removal from specific courses or ultimately removal from the Sixth Form.

Ultimately, all decisions regarding sanctions and interventions are at the discretion of the Head of Sixth Form and Headteacher.

## **Daily response to attendance**

	RESPONSE	ACTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES
Day 1	In touch text message sent to parents to ask for contact to be made to school to explain the absence	SLA to send text
Day 2	In touch text message sent to parents to ask for contact to be made to school to explain the absence and a phone call made by the sixth form attendance officer. All contacts on SIMS to be tried.	SLA to send text and make call in the afternoon of day 2
Day 3	In touch text message sent to parents to ask for contact to be made to school immediately. All contacts on SIMS to be tried.	SLA to send text and send HOY email in the afternoon with any 3 days absence (no response). If response is received, SLA to email sixth form team and put a comment on SIMS.  If no response, HOY to call home. If a response is received, HOY to email sixth form team.
Day 4	In touch text message sent to parents to ask for contact to be made to school immediately. All contacts on SIMS to be tried and friendship group contacted, where appropriate.	SLA to send text and sixth form team to speak to friendship group, where appropriate. If a response is received, SLA to email sixth form team and put a comment on SIMS. If no response, SAS to make a call home. If a response is received, SAS to email sixth form team.
Day 5	In touch text message sent to parents to ask for contact to be made to school to explain the absence. This may also include a home visit by a member of the sixth form leadership team to check on the welfare of the student. If there is no response, a compliments slip will be sent.	SLA to send text and names to Sixth Form leadership team. Home visit to be completed by sixth form team. If no response, a compliments slip is posted through the door. SAS to log concerns on My Concern.
Day 6	In touch text message sent to parents to ask for contact to be made to school to explain the absence. This may also include a home visit by a member of the sixth form leadership team to check on the welfare of the student. If there is no response, a welfare letter will be sent.	A welfare letter would be sent home by recorded delivery. SAS to put letter together and send it to reception. SAS to log concerns on My Concern.
Day 7-10	The school will continue to contact the family using in touch text message every day and follow up phone calls to all SIMS contacts.	SLA to send text and call. Police to be made aware by SAS as a safeguarding concern.

## **Promoting good attendance**

As well as being an excellent attender, your child will almost certainly achieve the best grades for their ability. They will also increase their chances of future success either in further education or the world of work. Excellent attendance at St. Peters is recognised throughout the year. For example, students could receive any of the following throughout the academic year;

- 100% attendance students each half term can get a free drink in the 6<sup>th</sup> Form Coffee Bar
- Half termly and termly letters home to recognise 100% attendance
- Prize draw for Amazon vouchers every half term for students over 95%
- Termly Whole Tutor Group breakfast for the highest attendance