



# ST PETER'S SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Date Reviewed: October 2022

Date of Next Review: October 2024

Reviewer: Mike Gregory

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| Document Control |                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|------------------|----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Edition          | Issued         | Changes from previous                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 1                | July 2016      | Changes from Director of Learning to Head of Year<br>4.6 - wording amended<br>5.5 and 5.6 - levels increased<br>6.9 and 6.10 - changes re Children missing in education                                                                                                                                                             |
| 2                | September 2018 | Link to admissions and safeguarding policy<br>2.8 – Paragraph added<br>3.3 – point added about safeguarding<br>3.4 - Educational welfare Officer changed to Attendance Officer<br>3.4 - Home visits added<br>3.8 – Liaising with STRIVE and Designated Safeguarding Lead<br>Head of Year added to post holders names in this policy |
| 3                | November 2018  | 3.4 – updated line about absences longer than a week<br>3.4 – added reference to first day calls<br>3.8 – added reference to first day calls<br>3.8 – added a reference to dual registered students<br>5.2 – Add referral to Appendix 1<br>Appendix 1 added                                                                         |
| 4                | January 2019   | Following guidance from County Council EWO<br>4.3 – updated to include opening and closing times of registration<br>5.8 – updated to reflect changes in legislation<br>3.10 - Updated to reflect new working relationship                                                                                                           |
| 5                | March 2019     | Clarification of roles and responsibilities 3.4, 3.5,3.8<br>Remove 3.9<br>Addition of due diligence appendix                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| 6                | June 2020      | Covid-19 appendix added                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 7                | September 2020 | 2 sections added at the start – about legislation and attendance register<br>Appendix 2 – Due diligence removed.                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 8                | October 2020   | Covid-19 appendix update around coding                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 9                | October 2022   | Removed Covid Appendix                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

| Policies/Documents referred to in this policy                                                                                                     | Post holders/Persons named in this policy                                                                             |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| This policy links to other school policies on:<br>Behaviour<br>Admissions<br>Safeguarding<br>Relevant documents kept in school:<br>Staff Handbook | Assistant Head Teacher<br>Attendance Officer<br>Head of Year<br>Student Support Managers<br>Education Welfare Officer |

## **1 PRINCIPLES**

- 1.1 St Peter's School Huntingdon recognises the importance of good attendance in achieving its aim of ensuring each student maximises his/her academic and wider achievement. With the intention of enabling all students to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them, the school aims to encourage excellent levels of attendance and punctuality.
- 1.2 The school's sees satisfactory attendance for an individual student as 96%. Students below this level of attendance will be monitored closely and their parents will be contacted should attendance fall below 96%.
- 1.3 The school will strive to provide an appropriate curriculum to meet the needs of each student. We will also work to ensure a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels wanted and secure. Staff will work with students and their families to encourage each student to attend school regularly and punctually.
- 1.4 The school will endeavour to implement the attendance policies set out below in a systematic and consistent way. It is essential that all partners - students, parents / carers and teachers - recognise their responsibilities and work together to ensure the success of this policy.

## **2 AIMS**

- 2.1 The aim of this policy is to improve the overall attendance and punctuality of students at school and lessons. In order to achieve this primary aim, the school has adopted the secondary aims set out below:
- 2.2 To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including students, parents, teachers and governors. In particular, to ensure through school publications and meetings that all are aware of our high expectations. Headlines about current attendance and the school's attendance targets will be included in the staff handbook and in publications to parents.
- 2.3 To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and students and to maintain positive and consistent communication between home and school.
- 2.4 To provide an effective and efficient system for recording and monitoring attendance and to adopt a systematic approach to analysing attendance related data.
- 2.5 To adopt specific strategies to improve and maintain attendance and to respond to patterns shown by data monitoring and analysis.
- 2.6 To promote attendance among students by celebrating good attendance in the school rewards system and through assemblies and other year activities.
- 2.7 To promote effective partnerships with the Education Welfare Service and with other external services and agencies.
- 2.8 To ensure that all members of staff understand that poor school attendance is a key indicator of possible risk for children and that students with irregular or unexpected attendance patterns should be logged as a concern following the procedures laid out in the Safeguarding policy.

## Legislation and guidance

It is important that all schools to adhere to the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refer to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures, each of these documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

There is a need to use DfE's guidance on the school census to explain the persistent absence threshold and the high expectation that is set in monitoring this form of absence.

All schools by law are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken 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

The DfE attendance codes and Penalty Notices information should be included as appendices.

## 3 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 3.1 **Students** are encouraged to take prime responsibility for maintaining an excellent record of attendance and punctuality. Our high expectations in this area will be made clear in student publications, in school assemblies and by tutors and teachers. Students are expected to remain on the school site throughout the day. Temporary passes for permission to be off-site for medical appointments and other authorised reasons will be issued on written request from parents to the group tutor. Students leaving the school premises must sign out at Reception and sign back in on return. Students should attempt to catch up on missed work including homework when they return from absence. If this absence has been for more than 3 days the student should make an appointment to prioritise work to catch up with support from their Student Support Manager or Head of Year.

- 3.2 **Parents / carers** are responsible in law for ensuring the regular and punctual attendance of their children. Parents / carers should be aware of this attendance policy and should work closely with school staff to overcome any problems which may affect a child's attendance. Parents / carers are asked to notify the group tutor as early as possible of any absence known in advance, for example to attend a medical appointment. Routine medical appointments, for example dental check-ups, should be arranged outside school hours if possible. Unexpected absence as a result of illness or other unavoidable reason should be notified to the school as early as possible. A telephone call to the student's tutor or Reception would be sufficient. It is **essential** that parents / carers send a letter explaining the reasons for the absence on the day the student returns to school.
- 3.3 An effective **Group Tutor** has the prime responsibility for managing all matters relating to the attendance and punctuality of students. Group Tutors are , therefore, responsible for:
- conducting morning registration
  - raising the profile of good attendance in tutor time
  - monitoring unexplained absences and unpunctuality
  - dealing with requests for permission to leave the site during the day
  - discussing unauthorised absence with the Student Support Manager, Head of Year or Attendance Officer and referring those whose attendance causes concern to the safeguarding team as appropriate.
  - ensuring that their groups are aware of school policies and procedures attendance and punctuality and will take every opportunity to encourage high standards in these areas.
- 3.4 **Head of Year** supported by the **Student Support Manager** (see due diligence list (appendix 2), is responsible for monitoring the overall attendance of the year group and for ensuring appropriate action is taken to improve the attendance of individuals and groups.
- The Student Support Manager will:
- make first day calls for all students in their year group everyday. This will be supported by the STRIVE team for students in Alternative Provision and The Attendance Officer. Students on the "vulnerable" list will be contacted first with support from the Safeguarding team if required.
  - All contact will be logged on E contact in Bromcom
  - If it has not been possible to speak to a parent this will be followed up with a return call later in the day or a home visit for vulnerable students.
  - Monitor attendance at lessons and deal with internal truancy in conjunction with Heads of Department.
  - Meet with the Attendance Office on a weekly basis to discuss attendance issues and agree action.
  - communicate with parents concerning persistent attendance concerns
  - To log concerns with the safeguarding team for any students whose attendance raises concerns.
- The Head of Year will:
- For absences extending for a complete school week to consider medical needs pathway provision and if there is a need for work to be sent home.
  - Promote good attendance through systems of praise and rewards for students
  - Include an attendance analysis in the Annual Report to the Head Teacher
  - To carry out home visits for students who have been hard to contact or who we have concerns about.
- 3.5 The **Assistant Head Teacher** with overall responsibility for attendance and punctuality will work with the Student Team and attendance officer to ensure the implementation of policies and procedures. The Assistant Head Teacher will evaluate the effectiveness of policies and report to the Senior Leadership Team on attendance matters.
- 3.6 The **Head Teacher** will ensure that appropriate attendance policies are in place and that they are reviewed and evaluated as part of the general School Self-Evaluation Policy. The Head Teacher will

ensure that attendance is given a high priority by Senior Leadership Team and will provide regular reports to Governors.

- 3.7 The **Governing Body** approves and reviews policies on attendance and punctuality and receives regular reports on these matters from the Head Teacher. These form the basis for discussion at the termly full meetings of Governors. The Governors, with advice from the Head Teacher, may consider setting specific targets for attendance in the annual School Improvement Plan. Termly and Annual reports will be published to the Governing body in line with school census points.
- 3.8 An **Attendance Officer** is responsible for managing attendance data in the Bromcom electronic systems. This includes:
- Working with Student Support Managers and Alternative provision to ensure that all absences have had first day calls by 15:00 every day
  - daily checks that registers have been completed
  - ensuring that reasons for absence are recorded by tutors
  - recording reasons for absence known in advance from parents
  - providing various attendance printouts for teaching staff
  - monitoring lateness
  - monitoring persistent absentees
  - preparing and storing hard copies of registers monthly
  - preparing various attendance data and analysis for tutors and senior staff
  - Liaising with Alternative Provision and the Designated Safeguarding Officer to ensure vulnerable students and those with Individual Education Action Plans have suitable educational provision.
  - Will liaise with other schools about the attendance of students who are Dual Registered at least weekly dependent on the student's circumstances and risks.
- 3.9 The school works closely with the **Educational Welfare Officer** who assists in the monitoring of attendance. The school pastoral team meets or visits the parents of students with persistent attendance problems, implementing follow up action as appropriate. This may include the prosecution of parents.

#### 4 **RECORDING, MONITORING AND COMMUNICATION**

- 4.1 It is a statutory requirement that the attendance of all students is recorded at the beginning of the morning and afternoon school sessions. The school uses Bromcom to record attendance electronically. The Bromcom computer software is used to store and further analyse attendance data.
- 4.2 **REGISTERS ARE TAKEN EVERY LESSON USING THE BROMCOM SYSTEM.** The register is taken as **early** as possible and **only** by the teacher. Any technical problem preventing this should be reported and a temporary paper register taken. This should be entered into the Bromcom system at the earliest opportunity. Heads of Department are responsible for ensuring that the registers of absent colleagues are taken using Bromcon. **Lesson Registration** by subject teachers takes place during each lesson of the day. This is additional to statutory registrations and enables any internal truancy to be detected and followed up.
- 4.3 **Morning Registration** takes place during tutor period each day and is conducted by the class tutor, who electronically records each student as present, absent or late. Guidance on procedures to be followed in registration is published separately. The morning registration opens at 8:35 and closes at 8:55. Students arriving after 8:55 are marked as U – which is an authorised late mark. L marks are given to students who are late but arrive before the register closes. This counts as an attendance mark.

- 4.4 **Afternoon Registration** takes place at 2.05 pm and is conducted by the class teacher using the Bromcom system. Each student is recorded as present, absent or late. The system automatically updates the Tutor Group electronic register with the mark, which can then be monitored by the Group Tutor.
- 4.5 All **attendance data** is stored electronically and available for monitoring and analysis in a variety of forms as required by Head of Year/Student Support Managers, tutors, senior staff or the Educational Welfare Officer. Data is made generally available to staff and communicated to students, parents / carers and Governors where relevant.
- 4.6 The school seeks to work closely with parents / carers in tackling any identified attendance problems and for this **good communication** is essential. All parents / carers are provided with attendance figures for their children at least once each year through the reporting system. In addition to any informal contacts, the formal system of communication and action when attendance concerns arise is as follows:
- The first contact in the case of unexplained absence will be a telephone call from the Student Support Manager.
  - If a student is absent for 3 or more days in succession the school requests medical evidence is supplied for this absence.
  - A letter will be sent after a maximum of 3 days following the first absence if necessary. This is recorded on the students file.
  - A system of first day contact has been established. Students with a poor attendance record will be given priority for first day contact by telephone.
  - Where there are on-going concerns about attendance there will be further contact from the Head of Year and Student Support Manager by letter or telephone. Depending on the nature and severity of the problem, parents / carers will be invited to a meeting with one or more of the Group Tutor, Head of Year/ Student Support Manager, or the Assistant Head Teacher. The Educational Welfare Officer and other external support agencies may also be invited to attend.
  - In addition, the school will implement the formal letter system recommended by the Educational Welfare Service including the fast track procedure. This means that students and parents/carers will be warned about poor attendance and asked provide medical evidence of illness. If attendance fails to improve and the number of unauthorised absence is high, the case is referred to the EWO.

## 5 **AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE**

- 5.1 The school implements national regulations and guidelines in determining all absence as either authorised or unauthorised.
- 5.2 **Authorised absence** will be recorded by Attendance Officer following an explanation from the parent. Group Tutors are provided with detailed guidance and codes for use in recording authorised absence in the appropriate category. The following are examples of authorised absence:
- sickness
  - unavoidable medical/dental appointments
  - days of religious observance
  - exceptional family circumstances, such as bereavement.

Absence for reasons such as looking after parents, brothers and sisters or other relatives, shopping, birthdays or looking after the house do **not** constitute authorised absence. Please see Appendix 1 for more detail.

If there is prolonged authorised absence, evidence may be required, such as medical certification.

- 5.3 **Unauthorised Absence** covers all absence which cannot be defined as authorised, including truancy and **holidays**. Absences without explanation from parents may also be categorised as unauthorised.
- 5.4 **Persistent Absence** is the term used for students who miss more than 10% of a school year (from Sept 2015). These students will be the focus of the EWO involvement and court proceedings.
- 5.5 **Attendance Concern Letters** will be sent to students with attendance below 96%.
- 5.6 Students with attendance below 94% will be asked to provide evidence for every absence. Without evidence, the absences will be recorded as unauthorised.
- 5.7 **Penalty Notices** Penalty Notice monitoring periods will be set up for students with attendance below 92%. A Fixed penalty notice will be issued if the student's attendance is not above 90% in a four week period. The Penalty Notice may be organised before the end of the four week period if the student has already missed more than 10% of the possible sessions.
- 5.8 **Penalty Notices for Holidays** Students who have had more than 3 consecutive days of holiday or suspected holiday in any school year may be subject to a fixed penalty notice without a warning.
- 5.9 **EWO referrals** will be made at 90% attendance although the school will highlight to the EWO students who have concerning attendance patterns or whose attendance is falling but remains above 90%

## **6 ACTIONS THE SCHOOL MAY TAKE**

- 6.1 The school will inform all parents about their students attendance through the My Child At School website and through calendared Assessment Points.
- 6.2 Termly and yearly rewards for the highest attending students.
- 6.3 Restrict access to special events, like the Y11 Prom, due to poor attendance.
- 6.4 Students who have attendance below 96% will be monitored closely by the attendance and student team. Parents/carers will be contacted highlighting the school concerns and asking for medical notes for absences.
- 6.5 Meetings with students or students and their parents or carers
- 6.6 Discuss attendance with the Locality team to see if additional support can be provided.
- 6.7 Work with the EWO to fine parents/carers for poor attendance or to take parents/carers to court.
- 6.8 Refer students with poor attendance patterns to social care.
- 6.9 If a student is absent for more than 10 consecutive days without authorisation, or if a student fails to attend and we are concerned for their welfare, the school will start the Child Missing Education (CME) process in conjunction with the Local Authority. This may include a referral to Social Care. When a student is listed as CME the school will endeavour to locate the student or parents through

a variety of means (letter, phone call, email and personal visits). The Education Welfare Officer will also make similar enquiries to locate the student. If the student continues to be absent from school they may be removed from the school roll. The school will continue to make welfare checks and to work with partner agencies to ensure that the student is safe and returns to education. This complete process will be completed in four calendar weeks including school holidays.

- 6.10 If a student cannot be located and no information can be uncovered on their location and wellbeing the school will list them as a Missing Person with the police.

## Appendix 1

### The Trust's position on granting leave of absence

'Exceptional circumstances' for which an academy **may** grant a leave of absence include:

- Immediate family bereavement, crisis or serious illness
- Funeral of immediate family member
- Religious observance
- One day's absence for the wedding of an immediate family member, where the invitation has been provided as evidence
- One-off sporting events/performing arts competitions, if the pupil is participating and is at County standard or above, and a letter has been provided from the performing arts/sports regional governing body as evidence
- One day's absence for an immediate family member's graduation ceremony/passing out parade
- Medical appointments (please arrange non-urgent medical appointments outside of school hours when possible.) If the medical appointment is during the school day, evidence must be provided. The academy will not usually authorise a whole day's absence for a morning medical appointment – the child would be expected to return to school in the afternoon, and vice versa.

Circumstances under which absence **will not** be authorised include:

- Family holidays
- Weddings abroad – regardless of whether it is for immediate family members
- Family anniversaries
- Caring for other family members
- Birthdays
- Interpreting for other family members
- Lack of school uniform/shoes
- Bullying
- Friendship problems
- Head lice
- Learning difficulties
- Death of a pet
- Travel problems (unless the fault of the LA)
- School refusal, except where corroborated by appropriate health professional.