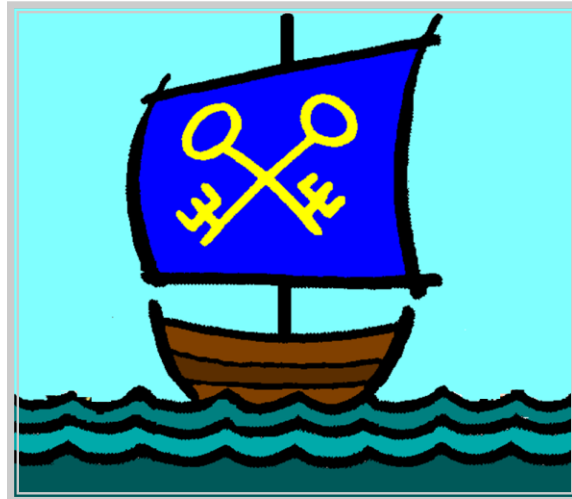


ST PETER'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
SHOREHAM



ATTENDANCE POLICY

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ATTENDANCE POLICY

"Success starts by being at school"

Introduction

At St Peter's Catholic Primary School we aim to provide all of our children with the maximum opportunities to fulfill their potential.

Regular and punctual school attendance is of great importance in ensuring that all children have full access to the curriculum. Valuable learning time is lost when children are absent or late. At St Peter's, most parents understand the need for regular and punctual attendance and work in partnership with the school to achieve this.

Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for absence is unavoidable. Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is parents' legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without good reason creates an offence in law and can result in prosecution.

As a primary school we hope to lay the foundations for good habits by ensuring good attendance and punctuality right from the first day in Reception. Being flexible or laid back about attendance is not going to do a child any favours. Every day in primary school matters and lost time is not easily made up.

Different patterns of absence have different effects. Missing very odd days here and there can be absorbed. Missing odd days more frequently leads to disrupted learning, both for the actual lessons lost and continuity between lessons - the days following an absence are also disrupted as the child struggles to make sense due to gaps in learning. Missing large chunks of time results in the child missing whole units of work, which are difficult to make up. In cases of extended illness, where absence from school is unavoidable, the school will give parents details of the work covered.

Persistent Absence

Missing roughly a day a week (attendance at 85%) results in significant loss of learning to the detriment of the child's achievement of potential. **A child whose attendance is at 85% or below is a 'persistent absentee'**. We need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. All absence is monitored on a weekly basis and parents will be contacted when attendance slips. The Pupil Entitlement: Investigation (PEI) Department at WSCC may also become involved.

Pupil Entitlement: Investigation (PEI)

Parents are encouraged to contact the school at an early stage, if there is a problem with their child's attendance or if their child is reluctant to come to school, and to work with staff in resolving any problems. If difficulties cannot be sorted out using this approach, the school may refer the child to Pupil Entitlement: Investigation who can use sanctions such as a Fixed Penalty Notice or prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

Authorised or Unauthorised?

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school, not the parents, as either 'Authorised' (with the school's permission) or 'Unauthorised' (without the school's permission). This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required.

'Authorised' absences are time away from school for a reason such as genuine illness of the child, or other unavoidable cause. Absence known to be for the following reasons would most likely be authorised -

- Illness;
- Religious Observance;
- Attendance at medical appointments which cannot be made outside school hours.

'Unauthorised' absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and may include -

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily - this is deemed truancy, i.e. parentally condoned absence without the school's permission;
- Absences which have not been properly explained;
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark in the register, i.e. after the register closes at 9.15am;
- Requests for to withdraw a child from learning which have been denied;

Term Time Holiday

The Department for Education have informed schools that amendments have been made to the 2006 Education Regulations removing references to family holidays and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make it clear that from 2013 Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Fixed Penalty Notices

Fixed Penalty Notices for absence from school can be issued by Pupil Entitlement: Investigation (PEI) based on requests from school.

The following circumstances are considered as appropriate reasons for the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices -

- Truancy;
- Parentally-condoned absences;
- Holidays in term time;
- Persistent lateness after the register has closed.

A pupil has to be absent from school in one of these circumstances for at least 10 sessions in any term before the issuing of a Fixed Penalty Notice can be considered.

Absence Procedures

Absences caused by the child's illness will generally be classified as authorised absences. The nature of the illness will need to be provided so that the school can monitor illness patterns, especially contagious illnesses.

1. Parents are requested to telephone the school office (01273 454066) on the first morning of the child's absence.
2. When a child has not been registered as present, and no notification has been received, office staff will firstly send a text message to parents asking them to contact the school. If no response is received, this will be followed up by a telephone call to parents to establish the whereabouts of the child. This is done for safeguarding reasons. If no reply is received to the text message or telephone call, the absence will be classified as unauthorised.
3. Unexplained absence will be followed up by a letter sent home, seeking written explanation.
4. Medical appointments should be made outside of school hours or, failing that, as far as possible in the afternoon rather than in the morning. A copy of the medical appointment should be given to the school office.
5. Illness of a family member is not an acceptable reason for a child to be away from school and any absence for this reason will be classified as unauthorised.
6. A 'Request from Withdrawal from Learning' form must be completed and returned to the school office as soon as possible in advance of the leave. Detailed reasons for the request must be given.

7. Absence following the denial of a request will be recorded as unauthorised absence. This is deemed to be truancy as it is parentally condoned absence without the school's permission.
8. For pupils who have 10 or more unauthorised absences in a 10 week consecutive period, the school will make a referral to Pupil Entitlement: Investigation (PEI) for a Fixed Penalty Notice to be issued. This is in line with Local Authority guidance.
9. All children will have their absence information included in the end of year annual school report.

Each child's attendance at school can be summarized as -

96%+ Excellent

- Well done! This will help all aspects of their life and supports a positive work ethic.

94-95% Average

- Well done, strive to build on this.

85-93% Poor

- Absence is now affecting attainment and progress at school

Below 85% Unacceptable

- Absence is causing serious concern. It is affecting the child's attainment and progress and is disrupting their learning.

Lateness

Children who are persistently late, even if only by a few minutes, have a poor start to their school day. Children need some transition time between home and school to adjust. When they are late they miss out on an informal but essential settling in period and often feel vulnerable and uncomfortable when making a late entrance to the class. They may also miss vital teaching at the beginning of lessons and can cause disruption for the teacher and rest of the children in the class who have arrived promptly. Poor punctuality is not acceptable. Parents will be approached by school staff to try and resolve any punctuality issues.

Lateness Procedures

1. The school gates are opened at 8.40am and we expect pupils to be in class at 8.55am ready to start learning.
2. We encourage children to say goodbye to their parents at the back door and go into the school by themselves. Reception children are taken to their classroom by parents, greeted at the door by a member of the Year R staff and then go into the class by themselves.
3. Registration is at 8.55am sharp. Children arriving after that are late.
4. Children receive a 'L' late mark if they arrive after 8.55am but before the register closes at 9.15am.
5. Children receive a 'U' mark if they arrive after the register closes at 9.15am. This is an unauthorised absence.
6. Parents must take late children to the school office and sign them into the Late Book, together with the reason for lateness.

At St Peter's we provide rewards for good attendance and punctuality.

*We look forward to rewarding **your** child for their good attendance at school.*