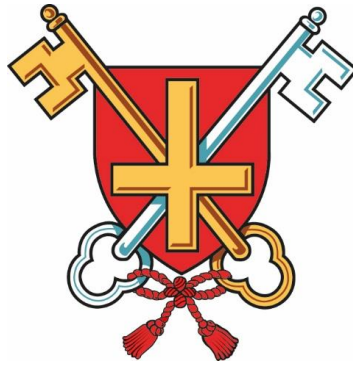




St. Peter's London Docks C of E Primary School

"Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be
compassionate and humble"

1 Peter 3:8

Attendance Policy

Attendance Policy

Aims

St Peter's Primary School recognises that positive behaviour and good attendance are central to raising standards and pupil attainment as well as essential preparation for the world beyond school. This policy is written with the above statement in mind and this policy underpins the school ethos to:

- Promote children's welfare and safeguarding;
- Ensure every pupil has access to the full time education to which they are entitled;
- Ensure that pupils have every opportunity to succeed at school;
- Ensure that pupils develop good habits in order to have opportunities and a successful working life after leaving school

For the children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and arrive at school, on time, every day unless the reason is unavoidable.

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupils' absence or late arrival disrupts teaching and learning routines and may also affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility, parents agree to support this policy as part of the Home School Agreement (see appendix A). Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

This policy is in compliance with the statutory guidance *Keeping Children Safe in Education* September DfE (2019), *Children Missing in Education* September 2016, *The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations* September 2016 and *Tower Hamlet's guidance on Children Missing from Education (CME), Missing Children and the Missing Children Register*.

Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of good attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents, pupils and all members of school staff. The minimum expected level of attendance for any child at St Peter's is **97%**. The school will keep parents regularly updated on their child's progress.

To help us all focus on this the school will:

- Give parents/carers details on attendance via letters, our newsletters or a class teacher/ member of SLT
- Report to parents/carers on their child's attendance at the end of each term as part of the annual school reporting system

- Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below the school's target for attendance
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements
- Reward good or improving attendance through stickers, certificates and class events

Understanding types of absence

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school as AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why clear information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as illness, medical/dental appointments which cannot be arranged outside school time, emergencies or unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which 'no leave' has been given. This type of absence can lead to Tower Hamlets Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily and absences which have never been properly explained
- Shopping, visiting relatives, meeting or greeting relatives at an airport, celebrating a birthday
- Caring for sick siblings/relatives
- To have long weekends
- Holidays in term time

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school for other reasons. Any problems with attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school then the school will work with the family to understand the root problem. The school can use a range of expertise from both within the school and beyond to help with this such as: the school nurse, social care worker, learning mentor or parent support team.

Absence Procedures

Every day a child is absent the parent/carer must follow one of the following procedures:

- Call the school and speak to a member of staff
- Leave a detailed message on the schools answerphone
- Report the absence to a member of staff in the office

If a child is absent the school will:

- Telephone or text the parent/carer every day of absence if they have not contacted the school
- Send a letter if no contact has been made after 3 days
- A home visit will be made if there is no contact after a letter has been sent
- Request evidence such as a letter from the GP, Appointment card/letter, or prescription if the absence is greater than 3 days.

Targeted and Persistent Absentees

The school monitors all absence and the reasons given thoroughly. A pupil becomes a 'targeted absentee' when, for whatever reason, their attendance drops to 92% or below. Attendance below 95% does considerable damage to a child's education and the school needs parents' fullest support and cooperation to tackle this. Parents will be invited into school to discuss their child's attendance and strategies for raising it. Pupil's attendance will subsequently be monitored closely to ensure that it improves.

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' if their attendance falls below 90%. At this point, Tower Hamlets Attendance Welfare Advisory service will become actively involved and parents and pupils will become subject to an action plan to raise attendance. Parents who fail to work with the school to increase their child's attendance may be prosecuted.

Level of attendance.	
Over 98%	Excellent attendance!
Over 97%	Good attendance.
Between 95% and 96%	Satisfactory attendance.
Between 90% and 95%	The child's attendance is unsatisfactory.
Below 90%	The child's attendance is a cause for concern. They are now regarded as "Persistently Absent" and their attendance will be monitored for the rest of the year.
Below 85%	The child's attendance is a serious cause for concern. There is a significant risk the child will underachieve.

The Attendance Welfare Advisor

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out this way, the school may refer the family to Tower Hamlet's Attendance & Welfare Advisor (AWA). He/she will also try to resolve this situation by agreement but if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions.

Alternatively, parents may wish to contact the AWA themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent from the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available by calling Tower Hamlets or on the council's website.

Safeguarding: Children Missing Education (CME)

The School recognises its statutory responsibility to record the attendance of pupils. The School recognises that children missing education (CME) are at significant risk of underachieving, could highlight a potential safeguarding concern or be at risk of becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) as referred to in *Tower Hamlet's guidance on Children Missing from Education (CME)*, *Missing Children* and *the Missing Children Register*.

Holidays in Term Time:

Parents are expected to arrange holidays during school holiday periods when children can enjoy them without their education being disrupted. The Tower Hamlets policy is that holidays in term time should **not** be agreed. Children who take leave for this reason will be marked as an unauthorised absence and may receive a penalty notice and in addition risk losing their place.

Other Reasons

Requests for leave in term time for other reasons will only be agreed in exceptional circumstances and for the shortest possible period. The Governing Body has authorised the Head Teacher to act on this issue. The governors also expect applications for leave in term time to be refused. In exceptional circumstances discretion may be appropriate, although this will very rarely happen and no more than 10 days will normally be agreed.

Parents must complete a form available from the school at least 10 days in advance. They should provide supporting evidence of the exceptional circumstances and why the leave must be taken in term time instead of in the school holidays. All applications will be considered carefully, including how the pupil's educational progress could be affected. Where the request for leave involves travelling abroad, parents may be asked to produce the return tickets before leave is approved.

A penalty notice is issued, one per child per parent. So 3 children and 2 parents would result in 6 penalty notices. The cost is £120 per notice which is reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day, they often miss getting vital information and news for the day as well as missing work such as handwriting or times table practice. Good timekeeping is an essential life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

School starts at 9am. The school expects children to be in the playground before this time, ready to line up when the bell is rung. Children arriving after 9am will not be admitted to class via the classroom doors. Instead, accompanying adults are asked to bring children to the school office and record the reason for the child's lateness in our late book. At 9:10 am the registers are closed. In accordance with the regulations, if a child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will affect their punctuality.

The school encourages good punctuality by being good role models to children and celebrates good class punctuality weekly.