



PHOENIX ST PETER ACADEMY



ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY

The policy owner is:	DEPUTY HEADTEACHER: T FREEMAN
This policy was ratified by the Governing Panel on:	September 2021
This policy will be reviewed in:	July 2022
Policy Version:	VERSION 1.0: SEPTEMBER 2021
Related Policies:	Safeguarding, Anti-Bullying and Discrimination Policy; Mental Health and Well-being Policy, Positive Relationship Policy.

PURPOSE:

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Children need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. Phoenix St. Peter Primary Academy fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure children are in school and on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days, sessions and hours.

Our policy applies to all children registered at this school and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of children who are registered at our school on our school website.

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Suffolk Local Authority.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Headteacher and Governors at Phoenix St. Peter work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all children are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.

AIMS:

This attendance policy ensures that all staff, governors and parents/carers at Phoenix St. Peter are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good and regular attendance.

Through this policy we aim to:

- Improve children's achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a minimum of 96% good and regular attendance for all children; apart from those with chronic health issues; or reason that meets set criteria, as outlined by the DfE.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school and each home setting.
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and children of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Ensure that our policy applies to Reception aged children in order to promote good habits at an early age so that the transition to legal school age and KS1 is successful¹.
- Work in partnership with children, parents/carers, staff and the Education Welfare Service so that all children realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which children feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in children a sense of responsibility and ownership as part of growing up.

- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and managing difficulties.
Raise awareness of the roles and responsibilities of the Attendance Lead, Mrs Terri Freeman, Deputy Headteacher, including the use of the Local Authorities Education Welfare Officers.
- Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially class teachers, in promoting good and regular attendance.
- Outline the school's morning and afternoon registration procedures.
- Outline the school's procedure and intentions for home-school visits, in line with safeguarding concerns and safe practice.

OBJECTIVES:

We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents/carers and children through all types of communication and media.
- Ensuring that parents/carers have an understanding of The Lawⁱⁱ the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development.
- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, children, staff and governors on school attendance matters.
- Recognising excellent, good and regular attendance with incentives and rewards schemes.
- Recognising improved attendance with incentives and rewards schemes to support a child's mental health and well-being.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Supporting children who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good and regular attendance.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.

DEFINITIONS:

Authorised absence:

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer, in line with the school procedure for the reporting of absenceⁱⁱⁱ. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent or carer telephones the school to explain the absence.

Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

Unauthorised absence:

- An absence is classified as **unauthorised** when a child is away from school without the permission of the school.
- Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent or carer.
- This includes when an absence request form^{iv} has been submitted by the home setting and the school has made the decision not to authorise the request.

Role of the Education Welfare Officer:

- To investigate absence that which exceeds more than 10%, and to hold meetings with these parents as required.
- To ensure parents / carers are aware of the legal duty under the Education Act to ensure their children attend school.
- To refer cases to the Local Authority for prosecution where persistent absenteeism has not improved despite thorough intervention and support from the school and Education Attendance Service.
- Regular monitoring of all pupil's attendance is carried out by the Education Welfare Officer. Children who have repeated unauthorised absences, holidays or otherwise, will be contacted by the Education Welfare officer and may be invited to an attendance meeting to discuss absences and any appropriate support that will help the child and / or the home setting.

Unexplained absence:

When a child is repeatedly absent and no satisfactory reason has been given, the parent/carer will be investigated and may be liable for prosecution and/or fine from the Local Authority.

PROCEDURES:

Our school will undertake to follow the following procedures to support good attendance:

- To maintain appropriate registration processes^v.
- To maintain appropriate attendance data.
- To communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, governors, parents/carers and children.
- To have consistent and systematic daily records which give detail of any absence and lateness^{vi}.
- To follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school; including home-school visits.
- To inform parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
- To strongly discourage unnecessary absence the school may consider Education Attendance Service intervention ('Fast Track' (court process) or prevention ('Education Preventative Support')). Should the fast-track route be enforced the Education Welfare Officer will invite those with parental responsibility into school for a meeting and issue a PACE caution.

Alternatively, the school will issue a Fixed Penalty Notice to those parents/carers who choose to take their child(ren) on a term-time holiday without the Headteachers authorisation, the child(ren)'s absences will be marked as unauthorised. The penalty notice is £60 for each child, for each parent/carer (i.e. 2 children, 2 parents/carers = £240 fine) increasing to £120 between 21 and 28 days after the notice is served.

- To encourage good and regular attendance and punctuality, Phoenix St. Peter will complete 'Prevention Request Referrals' to the Education Attendance Service. This service ensures that the home setting and school, work in collaboration to improve attendance and punctuality and access other external agencies.
- To strongly discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time and enforce fixed penalty notices for those who take unauthorised holiday. It should be noted that in the instance that a home setting are in receipt of a FPN for an unauthorised holiday in one academic, who then decide to take a second unauthorised holiday the Education Attendance Service will submit the case directly to court without the need for a second FPN.
- To strongly discourage unauthorised absence the school may consider issuing a FPN after 2 sessions (1 day); particularly in the instance where the school have offered transportation for the child(ren) from the home setting to the school and completed a home visit that affirms the children are fit and well and able to complete school tasks and activities. In the instance where 6 sessions (3 days) of unauthorised absence has occurred, the school may serve a FPN to all parents/carers for each child.
- To work with parents/carers to improve individual children attendance and punctuality, through the use of attendance contracts and initiatives such as 'My Attendance Matter' tracking record.
- To refer to the Educational Welfare Service any child whose attendance and punctuality causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to show improvements.
- To report attendance statistics to Suffolk LA and the DfE where requested^{vii}.
- All staff should be aware that they must raise any attendance or punctuality concerns to the Attendance Lead/Designated Safeguarding Team with responsibility for monitoring attendance and absence; particularly those with an attendance contract.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

Staff responsibilities:

All Phoenix St. Peter staff are expected to place a high value on regular and good attendance and punctuality.

Staff have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality through successful role modelling. Staff are rewarded in the same way as the children for their attendance achievements.

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality.

The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have:

Class teachers/HLTAs are responsible for:

- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers.
- Informing the Attendance Lead/Designated Safeguarding Team where there are concerns and acting upon them; including safe guarding concerns for vulnerable children.
- Providing background information to support referrals to the LA: EWO such as concerns in attendance and gaps in learning as a result of persistent absence and lateness.
- Work collaboratively with the Attendance Lead/Designated Safeguarding Team to monitor. follow-up and enforce actions that have been taken by the school with parents/carers to correct attendance concerns.
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness.
- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation which should be noted inside the register and transferred electronically onto the school system.
- Discussing attendance issues at staff and parent evenings where necessary.

The School Office are responsible for:

- Signing in children and adults who are arriving late to school due to medical appointments and lateness.
- Signing out children and adults who are leaving school site due to a medical appointment or due to illness in school.
- The School Office will attend any evacuation procedure with the signing in and out register so that all children and adults are accounted for.

The Attendance Lead & Deputy Headteacher, Mrs Terri Freeman is responsible for:

- Overall monitoring of school attendance.
- Trends in authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues.
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised.
- Making referrals to the EWO service.
- Providing reports and background information to inform discussion with the Senior Leadership Team, The Governing Board and the school's EWO.
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence, such as professional agencies and family support groups.
- To update and inform the Headteacher and Governing Body of all attendance matters; half termly Governor Reports will be shared.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Deciding if absence is authorised or unauthorised and what action to take in the instance of unauthorised absence.

The Attendance Lead/Designated Safeguarding Team and School Office are responsible for:

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information.
- Taking and recording messages from parents/carers regarding absence.
- Ensuring the Absence/Late Form is completed by all parents/carers for unexplained lateness and absence.
- Contacting parents/carers of absent children where no contact has been made.
- Recording details of children who arrive late or go home, or who have medical appointments.
- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers and reporting concerns to the Headteacher.
- To implement attendance contracts for persistent absence or persistent lateness.
- To oversee celebrations assemblies to recognise excellent attendance and good and regular attendance and/or improved attendance.
- Sending out standard letters/attendance certificates regarding attendance that report percentages of attendance.
- Sending out letters to communicate rates of attendance: excellent attendance, above, in line with, below or well below national expectation guidelines.
- To carry out home visits to enquire why a child is absent; this may be the outcome of failing to report a child as absent, a concern over a child's safety and well-being, to support a family or obtain evidence.

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually and that their child secures 96% for their attendance, unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment.
- Ensuring that they follow the school's absence reporting procedure, which includes contacting the school office on the first morning of absence by 8.30 am (Tel: [01502 574586](tel:01502574586))^{viii}.
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence, it would be helpful if the home setting could provide evidence from the doctor or dentist, such as an appointment card or letter.
- Making requests for authorised absence in term time, only if absolutely necessary and meets guidelines^{ix}.
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with by the Pastoral Team.

REGISTRATION:

All the school doors open at 8.40 am, children line up at 8.45 am and enter the school building entry points^x. All school doors remain open until 9.00 am. This time is sufficient for parents/guardians to have short conversations with year teams and provide all children with enough time to come into their classrooms ready to learn. At 9.00 the school site is secured. Entrance and exits are achieved through the front reception gate and playground rear gate.

Each class teacher has the responsibility for adhering to the registration procedure^{xi} keeping an accurate record of attendance. Any pupil who is absent must be recorded at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions. The attendance register must be completed by the class teacher by 9.00 am by 1.15pm (EYFS/KS1) or 1.45 pm (KS2) (Attendance code '/' present and 'O' for children who are absent). These registers are submitted using Arbor. In the failure of ICT hard copies of the class register will be distributed to staff for completion.

All attendance records are documented using Arbor software, which is supported by the Local Authority.

Attendance registers are legal documents, and these must be kept secure and preserved for a period of three years after the date they were last used.

LATENESS:

Once the doors to each class/year area are closed at 9.00 am any child arriving after this time is late, it is essential that parents/carers ensure each child is at the correct door ready to enter at 8.45 am. Children are not allowed to enter school through the front office at 9.00 am to avoid lateness.

A child arriving at 9.01am is late. The only way to get into school once the year area doors have close is by reporting to the school office and Attendance Lead/Designated Safeguarding Team for lateness at our 'Late Gate' sign in board in the Front Office.

Any pupil who does not enter their year area doors by 9.00 am will be marked as late on the late attendance record. Records are kept of those children who are late, this is documented on the electronic register for each pupil (Attendance code L).

Any child who arrives for school later than 9.15 will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning; attendance code U, this is the equivalent of an unauthorised absence and this will affect the child's attendance figures. Fixed penalty notices may be issued to parents/carers whose children persistently arrive after the times of 9.15 am or KS1:1.15 pm/KS2: 1.45 pm.

Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school later than 9.00 am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence, attendance code M.

Children who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning, often the most important aspect, as the beginning of the day is where the teacher explains the learning and what each child is expected to achieve.

Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness parents/carers will receive a letter advising them of the concerns and the school will provide opportunities for parents/carers to seek support and advice to address these issues.

Alternatively, the school may initiate a 'My Attendance Matters' tracking card or stipulate that an attendance contract is completed. Where necessary, advice from the LA will be sought to reduce persistent lateness; particularly when the parent/carer has not responded to the school intervention and support given by the Attendance Lead/Designated Safeguarding Team.

Children who repeatedly attend school late with a U code after 9.15 am or after: KS1: 1.15 pm/KS2: 1.45 pm will be brought to the attention of the Education Welfare Officer, who may invite parents / carers to attend a meeting in school to discuss the persistent lateness, a preventative meeting may be held instead of issuing a fixed penalty notice.

ABSENCE REPORTING PROCEDURE:

Parents/carers should contact the school on the first day of their child's absence by 8.30 am. When parents/carers notify us of their child's absence it is important that they provide us with details of the reason for their absence. This includes: name, class, year with a detailed reason for absence and how long they anticipate the reason for absence to continue.

All absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised absences on Arbor. It is important that we receive accurate information from parents with reasons for the child's absence. This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

The Deputy Headteacher has the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised, under the supervision/direction of the Headteacher.

The school may contact the children home setting to challenge absence, even when the parent/carer has reported the absence following the absence reporting procedure; this is in line with LA advice.

The Headteacher / DHT may decide to complete a home-visit to support the reason for absence as part of the monitoring of absentees at Phoenix St. Peter, or in response to attendance concerns that may exist.

FIRST DAY CONTACT:

The Attendance Lead will check all register codes from 9.00am to 9.20am and 1.35-1.50 pm on a weekly basis.

Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, then the Attendance Lead will initiate a first day contact process.

There are occasions when we are unaware why the child is absent, and we will contact the parent/carer to check the reasons for the child's absence; it may be that the communication to school requires further explanation.

Where we have not received reasons for a child's absence then the school will take appropriate action, this may be a call to your home setting, a home visit or a letter requesting these details^{xii} for parents/carers to complete.

It is essential that the reason for absence letter is completed and returned by the specified date when the absence remains unexplained, otherwise the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (Attendance Code U).

ILLNESS:

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school long term, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their schoolwork.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services to see if arrangements can be made for the child to be given some home tuition outside school. Where reasonable and appropriate to do so, the school will liaise with the NHS Services for educational provision whilst in hospital.

The school understands that over the course of an academic year, a child may have repeat periods of illness and absence due to their needs. It is very helpful if the home setting chooses to provide medical evidence to support their child's attendance record. In this instance home-school communication will be important so that we can work collaboratively to support the home setting and improve attendance.

FIXED TERM EXCLUSIONS:

In the instance that where a fixed term exclusion has been issued and in line with the school policy for behaviour and conduct, all sessions will be coded with E on the children register.

ALTERNATIVE PROVISION:

The school will comply with Local Authority guidance on dual registration procedures^{xiii} and coding for children who are attend part-time or full-time alternative provision.

The school will comply with Local Authority guidance on part-time provision^{xiv} and coding.

PART TIME TIMETABLE:

The school, in line with Local Authority guidance, will implement part-time timetables or inclusion support plans to support children at Phoenix St. Peter and to reduce the chance of Fixed Term Exclusions or a Permanent Exclusion. The Local Authority are notified fortnightly of all Part-Time Timetables in place at Phoenix St. Peter.

Part-time timetables will not be enforced by the school. Part-time timetables are at the discretion of the Parent / Carer. It should be noted that part-time timetables are used as a strategy to retain and promote good and regular attendance, whilst responding to the needs of the child and working with external agencies.

Part time timetables are reviewed weekly with the intention of returning to full time education promptly; and ideally within 6-8 weeks. All parties are expected to meet weekly and review the provision in liaison with the Attendance Lead/ DHT Inclusion, where reasonable adjustments are made.

'Attendance Certificates' reflect coding as advised by the EWO; i.e. late start: L Code, early end to the school day, C Code.

PARENT/CARER REQUEST FOR ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL FOR HOLIDAY:

With effect from September 2013 the government abolished the right of Headteachers to authorise absence specifically for holidays of up to 10 days per year if special circumstances exist.

Instead, Headteachers will only be allowed to grant leave of absence for any reason if they are satisfied exceptional circumstances exist^{xv}.

ADDRESSING ATTENDANCE CONCERNS:

The school expects good and regular attendance of at least 96%. Children and staff are encouraged to achieve 100% attendance. For those children with acute or chronic health issues, reasonable adjustments and considerations will be made to reward good and regular attendance in these circumstances. ^{xvi}

It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their primary school education. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and the governors to support good and regular attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly.

In primary school we rely upon parents/carers to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually and therefore where there are concerns regarding attendance parents/carers are always informed of our concerns. Initially concerns about attendance are raised with parents/carers via home-school communication such as conversations, phone calls, emails and letters which are sent home.

There will be opportunities for the parent/carer to discuss reasons for absence and support to be given by the school with the aim to improve attendance. Where a child's attendance record does not improve over a period of time then the school has a responsibility to make a referral to the Educational Welfare Service.

The Education Welfare Service (EWS) will issue penalty notices to parents/carers when there has been a referral to EWS from the school as part of the school's processes to address poor attendance patterns.

In addition, education-related parenting orders are available by direct application by a school or LA to the Magistrates' Court as an ancillary order following a successful prosecution by the LA for irregular attendance or breach of a school attendance order.

The Education Welfare Officer visits periodically to check and monitor attendance. They carry out regular register checks to identify children with low attendance (usually below 90%). They work with the school to improve attendance and may issue fixed penalty fines if attendance support meetings held by the school do not improve attendance.

MONITORING:

The Attendance Lead/DHT for Inclusion has the responsibility for ensuring that all of the attendance data is accurately recorded on the Arbor attendance software.

Regular meetings are held with the DHT for Inclusion to discuss all attendance concerns and appropriate actions are taken by the Deputy Headteacher and / or the Headteacher following these meetings.

Signed (Chair):	Date:
	Presented to Governors: 27 th September 2021
To be reviewed by (committee): Attendance Lead/Designated Safeguarding Team / DHT Inclusion	Next Review Date: July 2022

APPENDICIES:

- i EYFS Welcome Pack available for viewing to outline the expectations for Reception and Nursery
- ii Appendix 1: The Education Act 1996: Attendance Matter Leaflet
- iii Appendix 2: Absence Reporting Procedure
- iv Appendix 3: Absence Request Form
- v Appendix 4: Registration Procedure
- vi Appendix 5: Late Registration Procedure/Documentation
- vii Appendix 6: Local Authority: Half Termly Data Reports
- viii Appendix 2: Absence Reporting Procedure
- ix Appendix 8: Guidance for authorised absence during term time
- x Appendix 9: Lining Up Procedure
- xi Appendix 4: Registration Procedure
- xii Appendix 7: Parent / Carer Letter: Notification of absence
- xiii Appendix 10: Local Authority Dual Registration Procedure
- xiv Appendix 11: Local Authority Reduced Timetable Procedure
- xv Appendix 8: Guidance for authorised absence during term time
- xvi Appendix 12: List of children for good and regular attendance with reasonable adjustments (Retained List by Attendance Officer)