



## Peaslake Free School Attendance and Absence Policy

### Aims:

We want our pupils to attend school every day. We believe that children who attend school regularly are more likely to feel settled in school, maintain friendships and keep up with their learning. Peaslake Free School provides a broad and balanced curriculum to engage and motivate children into becoming independent learners, because we want all children to enjoy school and to grow up to become emotionally resilient, confident, and competent adults. We know that every day lost to education can have a serious impact on a child's overall progress and attainment in school, therefore School staff and Governors do all they can to encourage parents and carers to ensure their children achieve maximum attendance and that any problems are identified and acted on promptly.

### Key Objectives:

We expect that all pupils will:

- Attend school regularly.
- Attend school punctually.
- Attend school appropriately prepared for the school day.

We expect that all parents/carers will:

- Encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities.
- Ensure that the child in their care arrives at school punctually, prepared for the day.
- Contact school by 8.45am on the first day of their child's absence.
- Discuss promptly with their child's class teacher or senior staff, any problems that deter their child from attending school.
- Meet with the appropriate person (Head Teacher and/or Inclusion Officer) to discuss persistent absence.
- **Not take holidays in term time.**

We expect that the school staff will:

- Keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils.
- Monitor every child's attendance using the school's Scholarpack system.
- Contact parents as soon as possible when unexplained and/or prolonged absence occurs and obtain notes authorising the absence.
- Encourage good attendance and punctuality.
- Provide a welcoming and safe environment for children.
- Meet with the Head Teacher and /or the Inclusion Officer to discuss any concerns and report on the progress of existing cases.
- Refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the Inclusion Service.
- Inform parents of their child's attendance record at parent consultation meetings and end of year report.

Every school is required to maintain a register of each child's attendance, which must be completed twice daily during term-time. Any child who is absent from School without prior permissions at the time the register closes has to be recorded as being 'absent' and that absence as 'unauthorised'.

We are required to report data from our attendance register, for example, for sickness, or a particular occasion recognised as a religious festival by a faith organisation.

### **Punctuality:**

Punctuality is also an important part of attendance regulations. Children who are late take time to settle, miss important information and disrupt other children's learning when they enter. A child frequently arriving 5 minutes late can lose the equivalent of 3 days teaching over the year.

Under the government guidelines, children who are not in school when the register is taken at 8.45am will be marked as late. Children who arrive after the register closes at 9.10am will be marked as absent. Persistent lateness will be monitored, and letters sent to parents to inform them of learning time lost, if the lateness continues a referral will be made to the Inclusion Service.

### **Persistent Absence:**

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, (90% and below). Severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. 80% attendance over a child's school life equate to missing 2 years of their education. The table below demonstrates how what might seem just like a few days absence can result in a child missing a significant number of lessons.

<b>Attendance during the school year</b>	<b>Days lost in a year</b>	<b>Which is approximately</b>	<b>Approximate number of lessons missed</b>
95%	8.5	Almost 2 weeks	43
90%	17.5	3.5 weeks	88
85%	26	5 weeks	130
80%	35	7 weeks	175

*"The children with the highest attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with lower attainment". (Working Together to Improve School Attendance September 2022)*

### **Unplanned Absence:**

If a child is unable to attend school because they are ill, parents or carers should contact the school by 8.45am on each day of absence and inform the school if the absence is likely to extend beyond that day.

Illness can include but is not limited to the following:

- A stomach bug – children should be kept off school for 48 hours after the last bout of vomiting/diarrhoea
- A high temperature or fever.
- Viruses such as chickenpox, scarlet fever, slap cheek - absence to be advised by your Doctor.
- Other medical conditions as advised by your Doctor.

### **Dental and Medical Appointments:**

Whilst the school will grant requests for dental and medical treatments during the school day, parents/carers are encouraged, whenever possible, to book appointments outside the school day. Parents or carers must report to the school office to sign the pupil out and inform the school when they will return.

### **Leave of Absence:**

No parent/carer can demand leave of absence during term time for their child as a right and authorisation cannot be given retrospectively. Permission for absence during term time is at the schools' discretion and will only be granted

in exceptional circumstances. For the avoidance of doubt, family holidays are not considered to be in the scope of the absence a head teacher may authorise.

If a family needs to request absence in term-time then a **Request for Exceptional Leave of Absence form** should be obtained from the school office or downloaded from the website, completed and submitted to the Headteacher in advance and where possible no fewer than 10 school days before the date on which leave is sought.

The Headteacher may consult with the Chair of Governors, the Inclusion Officer and other schools (where leave has also been requested for siblings) and will then decide whether or not to authorise the absence requested. Each request will be considered separately, and a decision made, based on the reasons for each request.

### **Responding to Non-Attendance:**

If a pupil does not attend school and there has been no information from the parent/carer the school will:

- Endeavor to contact the family via a telephone call by 10am from the school office.
- If there is no response or the absence remains unexplained and still a concern, the office will inform the Head teacher and further investigation and action will be made accordingly.
- If the non-attendance is persistent the Head teacher will keep records on CPOMs and will be discussed with the Chair of Governors and Inclusion Office should a referral be made.
- If a child has persistent absence and meets the criteria, a Penalty Notice will be issued (see below regarding penalties)
- Failure to comply with the expectations set by the Inclusion Service may result in further action, an application for Educational Supervision Order, or court prosecution.

### **Responding to Persistent Absenteeism (PA)**

A pupil becomes a persistent absentee when they miss 10% or more of schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level causes considerable damage to a child's educational prospects and we require parents'/carers' fullest support and cooperation to tackle this. Persistent absence is monitored by the Head teacher and Safeguarding Governor and Inclusion Officer and the following actions will be taken:

- A green warning letter is sent when a child's attendance reaches 95%.
- An amber warning letter is sent when a child's attendance reaches 90%. Parents will be invited to attend a meeting with the Headteacher.
- A red warning letter is sent if a child's attendance remains under 90% for two consecutive half terms. Parents will be invited to attend a meeting with the Head Teacher, Inclusion Officer and a Governor.

### **Penalties:**

The 'National Threshold' when considering issuing penalty notices for unauthorised absences are 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A session consists of one morning or afternoon. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. 4 sessions (2 days) of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 school weeks). These sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions (5 days) of holiday in one week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks). The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the summer term and a further 8 within the autumn term).

Only 2 penalty notices will be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3-year rolling period and any second notice within that period is charged at a higher rate:

1. The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
2. A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
3. A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead, which will often include considering prosecution.

The School has a duty, as part of a judicial process, for the issue and accompanying administration of the penalty notice, this comes at considerable cost and time without any financial benefit to the school.

**Policy Approved by Trustees: 10<sup>th</sup> January 2025**

**Reviewed: 7<sup>th</sup> January 2025**