



Building each other up –
with God as our firm foundation

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St. Paul's Church of England (A) Primary School

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Dear Parents/Carers,

At St Paul's, we firmly believe that regular school attendance is essential for the educational progress and overall wellbeing of our pupils. We hope that this letter helps you to keep in mind the key aspects of our attendance policy.

Why regular attendance matters

Consistent school attendance allows your child to:

- Fully engage in learning and make academic progress
- Develop critical social skills by interacting with their friends and teachers
- Grow in confidence in a supportive and nurturing school environment
- Build a sense of routine and responsibility, essential for future success

Attendance support

We understand that some pupils may face challenges that impact their attendance. Our staff are here to provide support and guidance to pupils and families in such situations. If you encounter any difficulties related to attendance, please do contact myself or Miss Woods (Family Support and Pastoral Assistant) via the school office.

Acceptable reasons for absence

We recognise that there are circumstances where a pupil's absence can't be avoided.

Acceptable reasons for being absent from school include:

- **Illness:** when your child is unwell, either physically or mentally, and unable to attend school
- **Medical appointments:** if your child has a medical appointment that cannot be scheduled outside school hours, please notify us in advance and provide relevant documentation (e.g. an appointment card)
- **Religious observance:** we respect the diverse cultural and religious backgrounds of our pupils. If your child needs to be absent for religious observance, please submit a request and I will review it
- **Exceptional circumstances:** in exceptional situations, such as family emergencies or unforeseen events, please contact the school immediately to discuss the absence

How to report unplanned absences

In the event of an unplanned absence, we ask that you follow these steps:

1. **Contact the school:** on the day of the absence, please call the school office before 9am to inform us about your child's absence
2. **Provide a reason for absence:** please provide a brief explanation for the absence, such as illness or family emergency, to help us maintain accurate records
3. **Inform the school of your child's anticipated return to school:** if this is not known, call to update the office every other day.
4. **If requested, provide written evidence to support the absence:** appointment letter / card, prescription, outcome letter etc.

Term-time holidays

Family holidays are not deemed an exceptional circumstance and are unlikely to be authorised during the school year. Absences due to term-time holidays are disruptive to learning and lead to missed opportunities in the classroom.

However, we recognise that there may be exceptional circumstances that require a term-time absence. In such rare cases, please submit a formal request to the headteacher well in advance. Each request will be carefully considered and, if deemed appropriate and in the best interest of the child, permission may be granted for the whole, or part of the term-time absence.

We emphasise that such instances will only be considered on a discretionary basis, and the decision will be made with the pupil's educational welfare as the utmost priority. We appreciate your co-operation and understanding regarding our approach to term-time holidays.

Should you need to request absence in term time, please request a form from the office, completing it fully and returning it to school for consideration.

Sanctions for unauthorised absence

A new version of [Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#) will come into force on 19th August 2024. This will be statutory guidance.

Under this guidance, we may be required to issue a fine (known as a fixed-penalty notice) for unauthorised absence. If issued with one, you'll need to pay this directly to the local authority – £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

The decision whether to issue a fine will take into account (alongside other factors) whether the national threshold has been met – **namely 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks.**

N.B. A morning counts as 1 session and an afternoon counts as another session. Therefore, 10 sessions is equal to 5 days. These may be in a block or an accumulation of shorter absences within 10 weeks.

If the decision to issue a fine is made;

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.

A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil will be charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days (no option to reduce with an early payment)

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 should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.

Before a fine is issued, you may receive a notice to improve to give you a chance to engage with support.

Rewards for good attendance

We value and recognise good attendance at St Paul's. Pupils who maintain excellent attendance records throughout the academic year are eligible for special rewards and recognition as well as parents with half termly attendance of 96%+ being entered into a prize draw.

We look forward to working together with you to celebrate and encourage regular attendance for all.

Further information can be found on the [Attendance](#) page of our school website.

If you have any questions about your child's attendance, how the school supports good attendance or addresses poor attendance, please contact myself via the school office or one the gate in the morning / at the end of the day when we return to school.

Thank you for your co-operation in making sure your child receives the best possible educational experience.

Yours sincerely



Jen Ferretti

Headteacher