

September 2015

Dear Parent/Carer,

As Head of School Improvement for Peterborough City Council part of my role is to lead the Attendance Service. I am writing to you to clarify the position of myself and my team regarding cases of persistent absence of children from schools within Peterborough.

From September 2015 the Government will be changing the threshold for persistent absenteeism.

Previously a pupil of compulsory school age who had an absence rate of 15% or more (attendance of 85% or less) was classed as a persistent absentee. Persistently absent pupils are defined statistically according to the number of sessions missed – previously 56 or more sessions of absence (half days) for the full academic year.

For the academic year 2015/16 and subsequent years this percentage will reduce to 10% (attendance of 90% or less). Persistently absent pupils will be defined statistically according to the number of sessions missed - the new threshold will be 38 or more sessions of absence (half days) for the full academic year.

These absences can be both authorised and unauthorised, but where the absences are unauthorised action may be taken against parents/carers to support schools in raising attendance and attainment.

Peterborough City Council is committed to improving rates of attendance in schools and will take any necessary action to help schools to achieve this. Actions can include issuing Penalty Notices, holding meetings and if necessary presenting the case to a court.

The table below explains the number of sessions and the absence threshold from September 2015.

	15 % Absence	10% Absence from September 2015
Half Term 1	10 or more sessions	7 or more sessions
Half Term 2 (autumn term)	22 or more sessions	14 or more sessions
Half Term 3	30 or more sessions	20 or more sessions
Half Term 4 (autumn and spring term combined)	38 or more sessions	25 or more sessions
Half Term 5	46 or more sessions	31 or more sessions
Half Term 6 (full academic year)	56 or more sessions	38 or more sessions

We hope and expect that you, as parents/carers of children, will help schools to improve their rates of attendance. Every time your child is absent from school they are missing lessons/learning activities which they may not be able to catch up on. They will certainly

miss the discussion//dialogue which takes place in the classroom every day. This means that their opportunities to be successful in achieving their aims may be more limited than those whose rate of attendance is consistently high.

You can also assist schools in registering the correct code by informing the school **every** time your child is absent. This can be done by phone, email or by responding to the school when they call you.

Together, you the schools and the Attendance Service can raise attendance and outcomes for all children in Peterborough.

Please refer to the school's attendance policy and the Peterborough City Council "Promoting Good School Attendance" policy document for further information – available on the relevant websites and in hard copy upon request.

Thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary Perkins". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'G'.

Gary Perkins

Head of School Improvement  
Peterborough City Council

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