



**Liskeard Hillfort**  
Primary School



Part of the  
Truro and Penwith  
**Academy Trust**

## **Attendance Policy 2022/23**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Regular attendance at school is essential in promoting a full and efficient education for all children; it maintains continuity in their education and friendships, enables positive attitudes to learning and promotes good learning. We believe that one of the most important factors in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, the school's ethos demonstrates that children feel valued and that their presence in school is important. The 1996 Education Act makes it clear that parents must ensure that compulsory school-age children receive a regular full-time education and that if any child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly then the parent is guilty of an offence. For a child to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential. Liskeard Hillfort Primary School is committed to working towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children (apart for those with chronic health issues.) Every opportunity will be used to convey to children and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

### **AIMS**

- To maximise attendance of all children
- To provide an environment that encourages regular attendance and punctuality
- To monitor and support children whose attendance is a cause for concern and work in partnership with parents/carers to resolve any difficulty
- To analyse attendance data regularly to inform future policy and practice
- To work closely and make full use of the support from the wider community including the Education Welfare Officer and multi-agency teams
- To prevent patterns of absence from developing by intervening early by using data to identify patterns of absence and then target support for persistent and severe absentees.
- To work with parents/carers to develop specific support for pupils with SEND when required and provide good support for pupils with physical or mental health conditions.

### **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The following people have key responsibilities in the pursuit of high levels of attendance and punctuality:

**Governors**

- To set and monitor progress towards annual targets for attendance
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the Attendance Policy

**Headteacher and the Senior Champion for Attendance**

- To ensure that effective systems are in place to accurately reflect individual pupil and group and whole school attendance patterns.
- To monitor and analyse individual pupil, group and whole school attendance and punctuality on a regular basis in order to allow early interventions to address issues. This includes raising concerns with other agencies like children's social care and early help services which are working with families.
- To provide Governors with information to enable them to evaluate the success of policy and practice
- To write to parents/carers regarding any concerns about their child's attendance
- To arrange meetings with parents/carers to discuss support and set targets for those experiencing attendance difficulties

**Class Teacher**

- To provide an accurate record of the attendance of each child in their class
- To organise work to be sent home for children in their class who are expected to be absent for an extended period through sickness

**Office Staff**

- To record the reasons for absence on the student record system
- To monitor and track attendance patterns for all children and prepare relevant attendance reports on a weekly basis
- To contact parents/carers on the first day of their child's absence to establish the reason
- To ensure that a satisfactory reason for every absence has been established
- To make a judgement in conjunction with the Head teacher whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised

**Education Welfare Officer**

- To enforce the law regarding school attendance
- To support the whole school response to attendance through regular meetings and monitoring individual children's attendance.

**ADMINISTRATION**

- Registers are a vital legal document and teachers are required by their contractual duties to take an attendance register at the beginning of both the morning and afternoon sessions.
- Registers must be completed carefully and accurately, as they provide a record of a pupil's attendance. Failure to complete a register accurately leaves the school vulnerable to complaint from parents / carers and constitutes a risk in an emergency evacuation.
- The school will keep accurate attendance records for 3 years from the date of entry.

## **ABSENCE**

Any child who is absent from school at the morning registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity. In law only the Governors can grant leave of absences for a child, but Governors will delegate this responsibility to the Headteacher or Senior Champion for Attendance in their absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded, in the first instance, as unauthorised.

### **Authorised Absence:**

Authorised absence is the term given to any form of absence from school with permission from the head teacher on behalf of the Governing Board. Absences may be authorised in the following circumstances:

#### **Illness**

- Parents/carers are asked to contact the school by 9am on the first day of absence to provide the reason for the absence and where necessary on each subsequent day of absence
- If no contact is received, the school will phone parents/carers on the first day of absence in accordance with school procedures
- If any member of staff is concerned about a reason for absence, the Head teacher should be informed.

#### **Medical Appointments**

- Parents/carers are encouraged to make all medical appointments out of school hours
- Absence from school due to a medical or dental appointment will be considered as an authorised absence if parents/carers provide written confirmation of these appointments
- Where a child is absent from school for an unavoidable medical reason, we expect parents/carers to ensure the child attends school for the remainder of the day.

#### **Exceptional Circumstances**

- Absences caused by exceptional circumstances may be authorised. Parents should complete a 'Request for Exceptional Leave of Absence during Term-time' form, available from the office or the school website.
- The head teacher will look at the reasons behind the absences, whether the leave period includes internal or external examinations or other key dates, and the child's attendance in determining whether the absence will be authorised. Where a child's attendance is less than 96%, leave for exceptional circumstances will not be authorised
- The definition of 'exceptional circumstances' is very limited in scope
- No more than 5 days leave will be authorised per academic year

### **Unauthorised Absence:**

An unauthorised absence is an absence during which a pupil fails to attend school but where they do not have a statutory right, or the head teacher's permission, to be absent. Absences may be unauthorised in the following circumstances:

## Holidays in Term Time (Not Exceptional Circumstances)

### Term-time holiday

Parent/carers do not have the right to take their child out of school during term-time for holidays. The Headteacher does not have the authority to approve absence for general family holidays. Any unauthorised holiday absences of 5 days or more will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer who will issue parents/carers with a fixed penalty notice. (FPN.)

The school publishes the dates for school terms well ahead, and these are available on the Cornwall Council website: [www.cornwall.gov.uk](http://www.cornwall.gov.uk) as well as the school website. This is to help parents plan their holidays, out of term-time.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 previously allowed Headteachers to grant leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during term time in 'special circumstances' of up to ten school days leave per year. Headteachers could also grant extended leave for more than ten school days in 'exceptional circumstances'.

Amendments to the 2006 regulations have removed the references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that Headteachers may not grant **any** leave of absence during term time unless there are '**exceptional circumstances**'. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Liskeard Hillfort Primary School will not authorise term-time holidays unless it can be adequately proven that there are exceptional circumstances present. The school may consider approving a request for pupils provided the following conditions are met:

- The child's attendance is 96% or above for the past 6 months
- No more than 5 days holiday has been requested in one academic year
- The period of absence does not include any internal or external examinations
- There are exceptional reasons as to why a holiday cannot be taken in normal holiday time

Applications to take a holiday or an occasional special day during term time will be considered on an individual basis and should be applied for using the holiday application form outlined above.

### Insufficient Explanation for Absence

Where a child is absent and we are unable to establish the reason, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. This would occur where we are unable to speak with a parent/ carer, where the parent/ carer is elusive or vague as to the reasons, or where a parent/ carer has not or cannot supply medical evidence of an appointment or absence where requested.

Where a child is absent without explanation the Headteacher and Senior Champion for Attendance will be informed and the Safeguarding Lead where appropriate. On the second day of absence without explanation, the Education Welfare Officer will be contacted to make further investigations. Where the school has safeguarding or ongoing concerns about a child, The EWO will be contacted on the first day of absence.

### Lateness

- Pupils arriving after the register has been closed at **8.55am** will be considered as **late (L)** and must report to the school office

- Pupils arriving after **9.20am** will be marked as **absent (U)** for the morning session. This will be considered an unauthorised absence unless a satisfactory reason and evidence is given, for example a medical appointment
- Action to address lateness will be taken in line with the school's strategy to improve punctuality.

### **Other Absence**

Other absence from school will be considered on an individual basis and a decision will be made to authorise or not authorise the absence.

### **Long-term absence**

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will, when appropriate, ensure that work is sent home so that children can keep up with their school work.

If it seems likely that the absence will continue for an extended period (15 days or more), or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the Local Authority (LA). The LA has the responsibility to arrange suitable full-time or part-time education for children who are unable to attend a mainstream or special school because of their health.

### **Persistent and Severe Absence**

It is the responsibility of all staff to be aware of, and bring attention to, any emerging attendance concerns.

Monitoring takes place on a weekly basis by the Senior Champion for Attendance and the School Administrator. We look for patterns and reasons for absence, making parents or carers aware of the number of absences and the importance of attendance.

If there is persistent or severe absence, we organise ACMs (Attendance Concern Meetings) which involve the parent/carers, EWO and the Senior Champion for Attendance. This is a supportive meeting in which an intervention is set up in an attempt to overcome any difficulties which are preventing the child/children from attending school on a regular basis. For example, external support may be sought in order to support the family. However, depending upon the circumstances, a First Warning can be issued to the parent/carers during this meeting.

If, following this meeting, the absence of the child continues to be persistent, an EPM (Education Planning Meeting) is held which involves the parent/carers, the EWO, the Senior Champion for Attendance and the Local Authority's Senior Educational Welfare Officer.) It is during this meeting that a Fixed Penalty Notice can be issued and/or the beginning of Court proceedings with a view to prosecution can take place.

### **REPORTING TO PARENTS AND CARERS**

Individual pupils' attendance figures will be reported to parent/carers three times per year during the parents' evening and end of year report.

Reviewed: September 2022

To be reviewed: September 2023