

Attendance policy

Boscastle CP School

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| Approved by: | Full governors | Date: 17.02.2022 |
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Contents

| | |
|--|---|
| 1. Aims | 2 |
| 2. Legislation and guidance | 2 |
| 3. Roles and responsibilities | 2 |
| 4. Recording attendance | 3 |
| 5. Authorised and unauthorised absence | 5 |
| 6. Strategies for promoting attendance | 6 |
| 7. Attendance monitoring | 6 |
| 8. Monitoring arrangements | 7 |
| 9. Links with other policies | 7 |
| Appendix 1: attendance codes | 7 |

1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (and [2010](#), [2011](#), [2013](#), [2016](#) amendments)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

Audley Jarvis is the governor with responsibility for attendance.

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.4 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

3.5 School admin staff

School admin staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system and contact parents/ carers of those

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school 8:50 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9am and will be kept open until 9.30am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.30pm.

Teachers **MUST** mark the attendance register at the start of each session in accordance with the school marking code. This is a legal requirement. Cornwall Council now collect attendance data daily, so entries must be accurate.

Teachers MUST monitor attendance rates within their class.

Teachers MUST provide accurate information to ensure children are safeguarded and to enable the completion of penalty notices. The attendance register is a legal document and teachers will be held to account for the information given.

The Headteacher MUST be informed of any child who has:

An attendance rate for under 95%

A regular pattern of non-attendance i.e. odd days each week, long blocks of absence

A continuous absence of more than 2 weeks

A regular pattern of lateness.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.10am, or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

Messages can be left on the school answer machine, sent via the school text or email system.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

We ask that parents / carers book appointments for outside the school day where it is possible to do so. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Parents/carers must complete an absence request form (available from the school office or on the website alongside term dates).

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

Children who arrive after the school gate has closed, but before registers have closed still miss out on important school time. The start of the day routines and teaching must not be missed unless there is no way to avoid it.

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

4.5 Following up absence and lateness

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by contacting the parent/ carer.
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken, where necessary.

- If it is not possible to contact the parent/ carer, a message will be sent by text and left on the voicemail system of each parent and then emergency contacts if necessary.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not.
- Identify the correct attendance code to use.
- Contact the Education Welfare Officer for advice, in some cases.

Where there are concerns regarding absence, a series of interventions will be put in place that include:

- Initial follow up should be by the class teacher. A record of the meeting and the outcomes should be made on SIMS.
- Frequent absences should not automatically be authorised on the basis that parents/ carers are stating their child is ill.

Should attendance or lateness concerns continue, or where a parent has not responded to contact. The following actions will be taken:

After a maximum of 10 days unexplained absence, unless other action is planned, the parents will be invited to a meeting by the school. This meeting will include the Headteacher and the Education Welfare Officer.

If attendance does not improve, a formal referral will be made to the Education Welfare Officer.

4.6 Reporting to parents

Attendance is reported annually in each child's school report. If there are concerns regarding attendance, parents will be contacted and invited in for a meeting at any point in the year.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. Attendance to date will be a factor for consideration.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- Other possible 'exceptional circumstances' where the headteacher/head of school may grant term-time holiday.
- Study leave
- Flexi-schooling requests

5.2 Reducing persistent absence

Children with attendance that falls into the category of persistent absence (less than 90% attendance) will be considered on a case by case basis. The school will:

- Hold meetings
- Send letters
- Monitor more closely
- Discuss issuing a penalty notice
- Discuss setting up an action plan to improve attendance
- Take advice from the Education Welfare Officer and other outside agencies.

Further absences may only be authorized when evidence is provided.

5.3 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

We want our children to receive the very best education possible. To do this, they must be in school, on time as much as possible. See the DfE's guidance for ideas.

7. Attendance monitoring

The Education Welfare Officer from Cornwall Council monitors pupil absence on a termly basis. Teaching staff monitor on half termly basis.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2). They should call in each day that their child is absent.

If a pupil's attendance falls below 94%, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this. Falling under 94% impacts on progress and attainment significantly.

If a pupil's absence continue to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published

alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

- We track the attendance of individual pupils on SIMS (School Information Management Systems)
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in-need of intervention and support.

Teachers MUST mark the attendance register according to

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum bi-annually by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

| Code | Definition | Scenario |
|------|-------------------------------|---|
| / | Present (am) | Pupil is present at morning registration |
| \ | Present (pm) | Pupil is present at afternoon registration |
| L | Late arrival | Pupil arrives late before register has closed |
| B | Off-site educational activity | Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school |
| D | Dual registered | Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered |
| J | Interview | Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment |
| P | Sporting activity | Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school |
| V | Educational trip or visit | Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school |

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| W | Work experience | Pupil is on a work experience placement |
|----------|-----------------|---|

| Code | Definition | Scenario |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| Authorised absence | | |
| C | Authorised leave of absence | Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances |
| E | Excluded | Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made |
| H | Authorised holiday | Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances |
| I | Illness | School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness |
| M | Medical/dental appointment | Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment |
| R | Religious observance | Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance |
| S | Study leave | Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations |
| T | Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence | Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school |
| Unauthorised absence | | |
| G | Unauthorised holiday | Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school |
| N | Reason not provided | Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time) |
| O | Unauthorised absence | School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence |
| U | Arrival after registration | Pupil arrived at school after the register closed |

| Code | Definition | Scenario |
|-------------|---|--|
| X | Not required to be in school | Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend |
| Y | Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances | School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody |
| Z | Pupil not on admission register | Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school |
| # | Planned school closure | Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day |