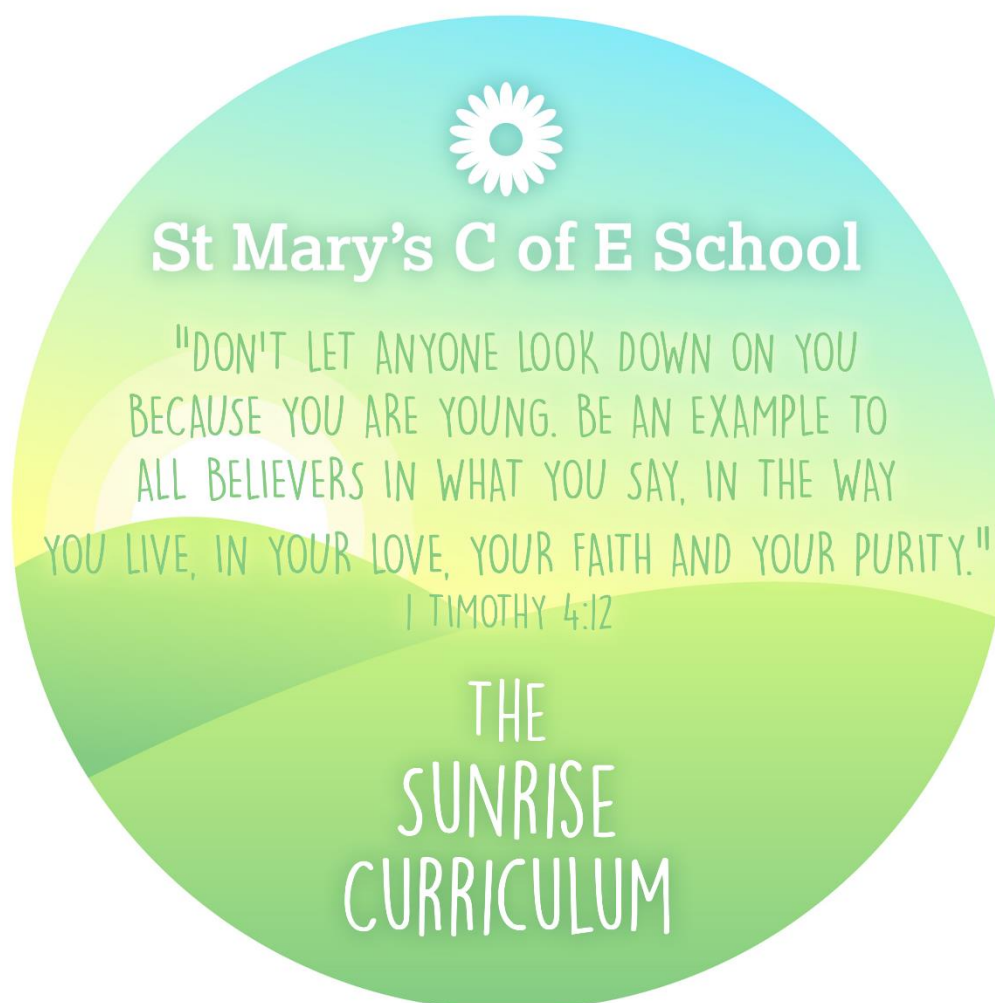


ATTENDANCE POLICY



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| <i>Approved by:</i> | <i>Full Governing Board</i> |
| <i>Next Review Due By:</i> | <i>February 2025</i> |

Contents

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 1. Legislation and guidance | 3 |
| 2. Key Principles | 4 |
| 3. School procedures | 6 |
| 4. Attendance Monitoring | 9 |
| 5. Registration..... | 13 |
| 6. Lateness | 13 |
| 7. Absences | 14 |
| 8. First Day Contact..... | 14 |
| 9. Illness | 14 |
| 10. Parental Request for Absence from School for Holiday | 15 |
| 11. Monitoring Attendance | 16 |
| 12. Links with other policies | 18 |
| 13. Appendix 1: Attendance codes..... | 19 |
| 14. Appendix 2: Avoidable absence and the Law | 22 |
| 15. Appendix 3: Information letter to all parents (Annual) – Warning letter regarding unauthorised leave of absence (holidays) | 24 |

ATTENDANCE POLICY

“Safeguarding and Attendance are everyone’s responsibility”

School Vision: ‘You are never too young to make a difference’.

Legal Requirements for all Schools

- **Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that children between the ages of 5-16 should attend school regularly.**
- **Schools must keep 2 registers: an admission register which serves as the school roll, and an attendance register.**
- **Attendance registers must be called twice a day, at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session by the class teacher.**
- **The register must show whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity, off-site or absent.**
- **When a pupil is absent, the register must also show whether the absence was authorised by the school or unauthorised.**
- **Authorised absence means either the school has given approval in advance, or that a satisfactory explanation was given afterwards.**

This policy has been developed with the Penair Partners School group to ensure a common approach across our schools along with our key stakeholders of pupils, parents/carers and staff. The schools are:

Archbishop Benson C of E Primary School
Bosvigo Primary School
Devoran Primary School
Kea Primary School
St Mary’s Church of England School
Perran-ar-Worthal Primary School
St Erme with Trispen
St Mary’s C of E Primary School
Tregolls Primary School

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](#)
- https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1076127/School_attendance_guidance_May-2022_.pdf

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

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. St Mary's Church of England School recognises its responsibilities to ensure children are in school and on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours.

Our policy applies to all pupils registered at this school and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of pupils who are registered at our school on our school website.

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Headteacher and Governors at our school work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all children are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance and punctuality habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age-related learning expectations. A pupil whose attendance drops to 90% each year will miss 20 full school days or 100 lessons in each year over their time at school; this will be approximately just over 4 half-terms of learning.

Key Principles

The Governing Body of St Mary's Church of England School places a high priority on achieving standards and feel that excellent pupil attendance and punctuality are essential. They undertake this role by:

- Monitoring whole school attendance termly and take appropriate action should it affect standards
- Nominating a named Governor for Attendance. For children to achieve their potential, pupils must be highly motivated to learn and keen and eager to attend school. Regular punctual attendance will establish good habits which will support

them throughout their lives. To achieve this, the Governors and staff are committed to working in partnership with parents to ensure that the school achieves a MINIMUM of 96% attendance throughout the school.

The Government expects us to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence (less than 90%)
- Ensure every pupil has access to a suitable education, to which they are entitled; and act early to address patterns of absence.

This attendance policy ensures that all staff, parents and governors in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance. Through this Policy we aim to:

- Improve pupil's achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality
- Achieve a minimum of 96% attendance for all pupils, apart from those with chronic health issues
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school
- Raise the awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a pupil's education
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents and staff and other support agencies so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in children a sense of their own responsibility
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties
- Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially class teachers, administrators and Senior Leadership Team, in promoting good attendance.

We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and pupils
- Ensuring that parents understand the responsibility placed on them for making sure their pupil attends regularly and punctually
- Equipping pupils with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development
- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, pupils, staff and governors on school attendance matters
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness
- Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school

The 1996 Education Act, (section 444) states that parents (including non-related adult carers in the child's household) have a legal responsibility to ensure that those of compulsory

school age are educated, either by 'regular' attendance at school or 'otherwise'. The 2008 Education and Skills Act, (section 155) specifies the same requirement regarding regular attendance at alternative provision.

The duty on parents is to ensure that their children are educated, either at school or 'otherwise'. Education is therefore compulsory. In terms of 'otherwise,' children may be educated by their parents at home, by a private tutor or in establishments other than schools, i.e. – F.E. colleges from the age of 14, special units, hospitals or in alternative educational programmes or work experience. The law allows parents to choose the alternative options, provided they can demonstrate to the Local Authority that the education is full-time and 'suitable' to the child's education needs, up until the relevant leaving-date for all young people.

The school expects attendance of at least 96%. It is important for pupils to establish good attendance habits early on in their school career. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and the Governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. Parents should ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually and therefore where there are concerns regarding attendance, parents are always informed.

Concerns about attendance are raised with parents/carers via letters which are sent home. There will be opportunities for the parent/carer to discuss reasons for absence and support to be given by the school with the aim to improve attendance. Where a child's attendance record does not improve over a period of time then the school has a responsibility to make a referral to the Education Welfare Service for additional support. A first warning will be issued, then an educational planning meeting will take place, before a final warning. From this point, if there are no further improvements, court proceedings will begin.

Parents have a legal duty to ensure regular attendance and if they fail to do so, may commit an offence under Sections 7 & 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Schools must enter pupils on the admission register and attendance register from the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school.

For most students, the expected first day of attendance is the first day of the school year. Every amendment made to the admission register and the attendance register must include: the original entry; the amended entry; the reason for the amendment; the date on which the amendment was made; and the name and position of the person who made the amendment.

School procedures

Our school will undertake the following procedures to support good attendance:

- maintain appropriate registration processes
- maintain appropriate attendance data.
- communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, governors, parents and pupils

- consistent and systematic daily records which give detail of any absence and lateness
- follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school
- inform parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence
- strongly discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time
- work with parents to improve individual pupil's attendance and punctuality
- refer to the Admissions and Attendance Officer any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve
- report attendance statistics to Cornwall LA and the DfE where requested
- staff should be aware that they must raise any attendance or punctuality concerns to Senior Leadership Team

Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register. **It is a legal requirement that a register is taken at the start of the day.** Not only does the process allow us to monitor attendance but also to act as a student checklist in respect of health and safety issues – e.g. Fire Drill Each year a school calendar is sent out and is also on the website, which clearly indicates the days when your child is expected to be in school.

The attendance register will be taken twice daily, 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.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved in accordance with the school's retention periods.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.45am on each school day. The register for the first session will be taken at 8.45am and will be kept open until 9.00am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.00pm.

Our school will monitor attendance by:

- Marking a register at 8.45am and 1.00pm daily using Arbor electronic registration (where this is not possible, paper copies will need to be taken and returned to the school office as soon as possible).
- Ensuring an absence letter is sent when information about an absence has not been supplied by the third day of the absence.
- Passing to the respective Senior Leader any serious concerns regarding attendance or punctuality.
- Tracking patterns of absence within the class teacher each half-term and suggesting appropriate intervention strategies
- Track patterns of lateness

Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 8:30am or as soon as practically possible.

Parents should ring the school and leave a message on the school answerphone to report their child's absence or email the relevant form tutor with reasons for the unplanned absence. They must also contact the school on each subsequent day of absence to give an update on the situation.

Absence due to illness will be 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 parents 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 will be notified of this in advance.

Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use. Schools will ring to follow through on any absence that has not been explained via email or telephone.

If no contact is received, the Attendance protocols below will be instigated:

- The first day calling procedures will be activated for all pupils who are not in school after close of register and where no reason for absence is known.
- If there is still no contact made from the pupil's parents, a further telephone call home will be made again that morning. If no response can be gained, all the child's emergency contacts will be telephoned.
- If school cannot contact a parent and are concerned about a pupil, a home visit may be carried out.

- Where a child is known to social care, the school will inform the parents that the social worker will also be informed of any absences.
- School will telephone home if a pupil leaves the school without permission.
- Where reasons for absence are not provided despite attempts by school to determine why the pupil has been absent, the absences will be coded as unauthorised.

Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences. Notice should be given via email, in person or via telephone as per the unplanned absence.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. It is expected that children would return to school after the appointment wherever possible.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in the 'Attendance Monitoring' section.

Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code. A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

| Minutes late per day during the school year | Equal days' worth of teaching lost in a year |
|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| 5 minutes | 3.4 days |
| 10 minutes | 6.9 days |
| 15 minutes | 10.3 days |
| 20 minutes | 13.8 days |
| 30 minutes | 20.7 days |

Reporting to parents

Parents are kept up to date on their child's attendance through the reporting process for each year group through the course of the year.

Attendance Monitoring

The School Administrators, in collaboration with the Senior Leadership Team, have the responsibility for ensuring that all the attendance data is accurately recorded on the Arbor attendance software. Regular meetings are held with the Educational Welfare Officer to discuss all attendance concerns and appropriate actions are taken following these meetings, such as letters sent to parents or meetings arranged to discuss attendance concerns.

Student Welfare Officers and form tutors monitor pupil absence on a weekly basis. Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill

health. Parents are expected to call the school each day a child is ill. If a pupil's absence goes above 3 days, we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this. If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continues to rise, 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 is 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. We compare our attendance data to the national average and share this with governors.

For information on how the school collects and stores attendance data, please refer to the schools Privacy Notice.

Responsibilities

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

Senior Leadership Team

- monitor attendance and where concerns are identified, consult with parents/outside agencies to agree actions to address identified issues
- inform Governors of attendance data through leadership reports
- inform parents of attendance percentages for their pupils in line with the school's reporting procedures
- promote excellent attendance and punctuality by pupils and provide opportunities to celebrate good attendance/punctuality.

Headteacher

- consider requests for absence and to organise for staff to meet with parents to discuss such requests as necessary
- make referrals to the Local Authority for the issue of Fixed Penalty Notices as appropriate.

Class Teacher

- are the child's first point of contact and will monitor daily attendance
- take registers accurately and on time
- highlight concerns regarding attendance with parents
- discuss attendance during parent consultations or at individual parent meetings
- raise concerns with the Senior Leadership Team where necessary.

Senior Leadership Team

- Overall monitoring of school and year group attendance, including for those pupils who are educated off-site
- Work with external agencies to maintain good attendance contribute to multi-agency meetings to review progress and agree on actions and to support the student/family with any issues that may affect attendance and punctuality to school
- Work with relevant external agencies if a students' attendance becomes a concern
- Maintain a range of strategies to encourage good attendance by means of rewards
- Identify trends in authorised and unauthorised absence
- contact families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues
- monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised
- making referrals to the Education Welfare Service
- meet parents/carers in danger of being issued a first warning
- liaise with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence
- keep an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers and reporting concerns to the Headteacher
- inform the Senior Leadership Team where there are concerns and acting upon them
- provide background information to support referrals
- monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns
- follow up absences with immediate requests for explanation via telephone calls or e-mail
- ensure attendance issues are raised by teachers at parent consultation evenings where necessary
- collate and record registration and attendance information
- take and record messages from parents regarding absence
- contact parents of absent children where no reason for absence received
- record details of pupils who arrive late or go home
- send out standard letters regarding attendance
- Office / reception staff are expected to take calls/e-mails from parents about absence and record them on the school system.

The designated teacher for looked after children will as far as possible:

- Ensure that any looked after child attends school regularly and achieves high educational standards.

Parents/Carers

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Providing at least **two** emergency contact details to the school

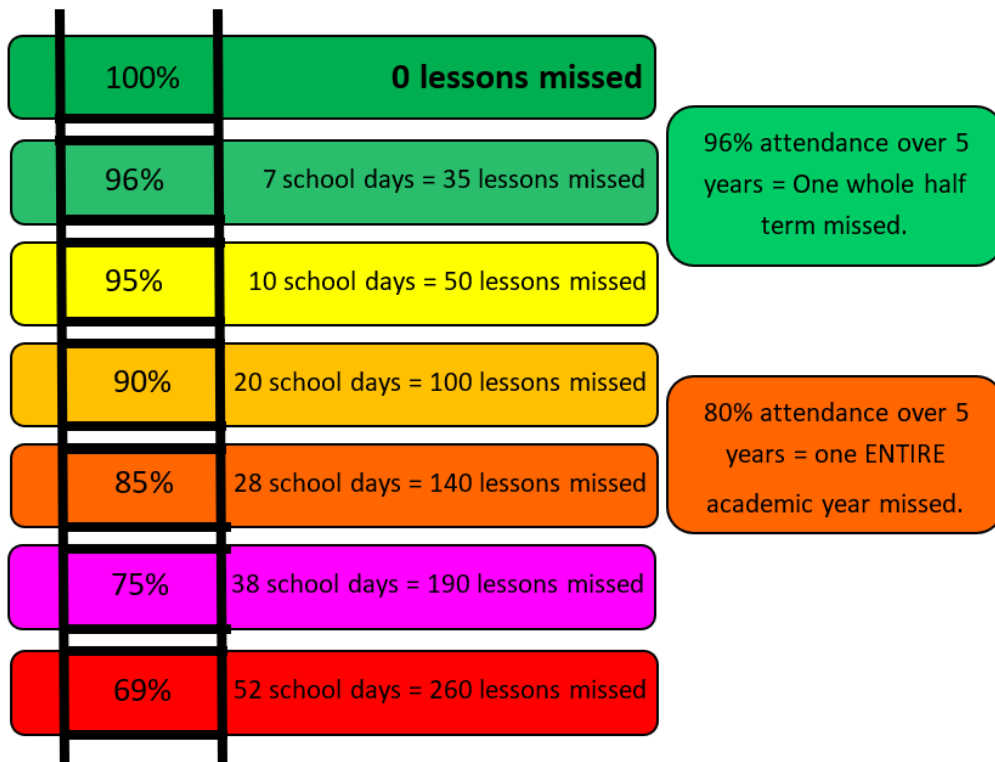
- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly, properly equipped and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment.
- Contacting the school office on the first morning of absence (before 8.30am on the first day of absence, giving the reason for absence and an indication of when the pupil will be returning to school). Contacting again if for some reason the pupil is to be absent longer than was originally indicated.
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we do require evidence from the doctor or dentist. (Appointment card/letter/prescription paperwork or packet.)
- As far as possible ensure that non-urgent medical or dental appointments are made outside of the school day or avoiding registration periods.
- Making requests for authorised absence in term time, only if absolutely necessary as these are not automatically authorised.
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any pupil's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.
- Supplying a note to the form tutor explaining absence **only** if a phone call has **not** been made.
- Contacting the School Administrator if the reason for absence is caused by something other than illness, eg worry about school work, friendship problems etc.
- Understanding that St Mary's Church of England School must decide whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.
- Supporting us in only allowing pupils to be absent for reasons that the school would authorise eg illness, bereavement, family issues, emergency dental work etc.
- Not allowing pupils to stay at home for reasons that the school would **not** authorise eg family holiday, shopping trips, hair appointment, birthday treat.
- Contact the Headteacher in advance, in writing, for a Leave of Absence request Form if time is requested away from school. The request should be made 15 days in advance of the event. If holidays during term time are taken, then the Headteacher will inform parents about the legal action that will be taken by the school in informing the Local Authority by way of them issuing fixed penalty fines.
- **Become aware of dates of all relevant external exams eg SATS**
- Promoting the link between attendance and attainment/progress.
Calling on staff for help when they need it.
- Actively supporting the work of the school.

Pupils and students

- To aim for high attendance (an average student would achieve an attendance of over 97%)
- To be on time for school
- Attend school appropriately prepared for the day
- Take pride in attendance and punctuality
- Register at the School Office if for any reason they are late after 8.45am. They must not go to any lessons until this has taken place. Pupils may be marked absent for the

morning session if they arrive after 9.00am and absent for the afternoon session if they arrive 10 minutes after their pm registration without good reason.

- Attendance Ladder:



Governors

- Attendance data will be shared with Governors during Governor meetings enabling Governors to offer challenge and support
- A named Governor for attendance will maintain an overview of policies and procedures in relation to attendance.

Registration

The school gate is open from 7.45am. Morning registration starts at 8.35am. Each class teacher has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance. Any pupil who is absent must be recorded at the beginning of the morning session. The attendance register must be completed by the class teacher by 9.00am (Attendance code / and \ for pupils who are present.) Morning registration closes at 9.00am. Afternoon registration will take place after lunch (1.00pm).

All attendance records are documented using Arbor software, which is supported by the Local Authority. Attendance registers are legal documents and these must be kept securely and preserved for a period of three years after the date they were last used.

Lateness

Any pupil who comes into school after 8.45am will be marked as late in the attendance record. Records are kept of those pupils who are late, this is documented on the electronic register for each pupil (Attendance code L). Any child who arrives for school later than 9.00am will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning. (Attendance code U).

Pupils who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school later than 9.00am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (attendance code M). Routine dentist or doctor's appointments should be made outside of the school day.

Pupils who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning, often the most important aspect, as the beginning of the day is where the teacher explains the learning and what each child is expected to achieve.

Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness:

- A member of staff from the Leadership Team with responsibility for attendance will meet with the parent/carer to create an action plan to improve punctuality. Should punctuality not improve the Local Authority may be approached to give consideration for a fixed penalty notice.

Absences

Parents/carers should contact the school on the first day of their child's absence. When parents/carers notify us of their child's absence it is important that they provide us with full details of the reason for their absence. Please avoid using phrases such as "poorly" or "sick".

All absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised absences on the computer. It is important that we receive accurate information from parents with reasons for the child's absence. This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. The Headteacher has the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.

Where we have not received reasons for a child's absence (and no response to efforts to contact parents) the absence is recorded as unauthorised (attendance code O).

First Day Contact

Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, then the School Administrator will contact home daily. If no response is received other contacts held for the child will also be contacted. If we have not heard from any contacts, then a home visit may be conducted.

If no response is received to this home visit the child is referred to the Local Authority as a possible Child Missing Education. Contact may also be made with Children's Services and/or the police in line with safeguarding procedures.

Illness

When pupils have an illness that means they will be away from school long term, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their schoolwork.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services to see if arrangements can be made for the child to be given some home tuition outside school.

Where over the course of an academic year, a pupil has repeated periods of illness, the school will write to parents to ask them to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness related absence. This evidence could be a doctor's note, appointment card or copy of a prescription. We may seek written permission from you for the school to make their own enquiries.

Parental Request for Absence from School for Holiday

With effect from September 2013 the government abolished the right of the Headteacher to authorise absence specifically for holidays of up to 10 days per year. Instead, the Headteacher will only be allowed to grant leave of absence for any reason if they are satisfied that *exceptional circumstances* exist.

Should parents be considering a holiday during term time a leave of absence request form must be completed by all adults with parental responsibility BEFORE the holiday is booked. Where a holiday is not authorised, consideration will be given to requesting a penalty notice from the Local Authority for this period of absence if a child's attendance is deemed as 'not regular'. ***This is defined by St Mary's Church of England School as falling below the threshold***

of 96%. In the Autumn Term, a child's attendance for the previous academic year will be considered before deciding on a course of action. From January onwards, the decision will be based on attendance data from the current academic year.

If your child is absent from school without authorisation, you will be committing an offence under the Education Act 1996. We may submit a request to Cornwall Council for a Penalty Notice to be issued, in accordance with Sections 444A and 444B of the said Act. Penalty Notices are issued per liable parent, per child and each carry a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid after this but within 28 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in legal action. Absence not authorised by the school may result in a prosecution in the Magistrates' Court under Section 444(1) or Section 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996, leading to a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a custodial sentence. Cornwall Council may also apply for the costs incurred in taking the matter to Court.

Addressing Attendance Concerns

The school expects attendance of at least 96%.

It is important for pupils to establish good attendance habits early on in their school career. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and the Governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. Parents should ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually and therefore where there are concerns regarding attendance, parents are always informed.

Concerns about attendance are raised with parents/carers via letters which are sent home. There will be opportunities for the parent/carer to discuss reasons for absence and support to be given by the school with the aim to improve attendance. Where a child's attendance record does not improve over a period of time then the school has a responsibility to make a referral to the Education Welfare Service. A first warning will be issued, then an educational planning meeting will take place, before a final warning. From this point, if there are no further improvements, court proceedings will begin.

Parents have a legal duty to ensure regular attendance and if they fail to do so, may commit an offence under Sections 7 & 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Monitoring Attendance

The School Administrator has the responsibility for ensuring that all the attendance data is accurately recorded on the Arbor attendance software. Regular meetings are held with the Educational Welfare Officer to discuss all attendance concerns and appropriate actions are taken following these meetings, such as letters sent to parents or meetings arranged to discuss attendance concerns.

Authorised and unauthorised absence
Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a pupil has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, unavoidable medical/dental appointments (but try to make these after school if possible).
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. Where the absences are not authorised we will inform parents of this.

Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a pupil is away from school without the permission of the school. (Unauthorised holiday constitutes an unauthorised absence.)
- Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a pupil is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.
- If the absence is unauthorised the Local Authority Education Welfare Services will be notified of the absence and consideration may be given to a Penalty Notice or legal proceedings for non-attendance. A Penalty Notice is issued to each parent/carer of each pupil taken out of school and that this carries a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days, increasing to £120 if paid within 28 days if the fine is not paid on time, it may result in legal action being taken against parents/carers. **Parents have a duty to ensure their child's regular attendance at school and failure to do so is an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996. Legal action under Section 444(1) can result in a fine of up to £2500 and/or up to 3 months imprisonment.**
- A Penalty Notice will be considered if a pupil's attendance is deemed as 'not regular'. This is defined as falling below the threshold of 96%. In the Autumn Term, a pupil's attendance for the previous academic year will be considered before deciding on a course of action. From January onwards, the decision will be based on attendance data from the current academic year.

The decision on whether to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may consider:

- A 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 the parent or withdraw the notice.

Further information on avoidable absences and the Law can be found in Appendix 2.

Granting approval for term-time absence

The Headteacher will not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances and relevant

context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion. We are not able to grant leave of absence simply because a holiday is cheaper in term-time or more convenient workwise. To ensure that we comply with these regulations, parents requesting leave of absence will need to detail the exceptional circumstance below, in order that these can be assessed.

Criteria are:

- Absence may not be granted if attendance is below 96% (school minimum target);
- A judgement on the impact that a child's absence will have on their education;
- The exceptional circumstances relating to the request for absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- 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

If attendance or punctuality is a concern we will:

- Discuss the problem with the pupil to try and improve the situation. The school's approach to bullying is of particular significance here. Where problems outside school are identified as having an impact on a student's attendance, an appropriate level of multi-agency support will be developed.
- Inform the parent/guardian and include them in discussion about remedying the problem by way of offering support.
- Advocate prosecuting a parent/guardian after all other avenues have been pursued.

During the next three years we will:

- Improve our monitoring system by reinforcing guidelines to students and parents and expanding our mentoring programme.
- Reinforce with parents the need to reduce the number of holidays taken in term time owing to the impact on educational progress. St Mary's Church of England School will not authorise holidays taken during term time.
- Wherever possible, liaise with parents so that students' routine appointments to doctors, dentists etc are arranged outside school hours.
- Attempt to improve attendance to a school target for 96% overall.
- Ensure the provision of appropriate guidance and support for parents, students and staff.

- Keep parents informed of their child's attendance through first day contact, letters of praise and concern and through individual attendance clinics when appropriate.
- Regularly inform Governors about attendance issues in reports to governors.
- Monitor this Policy every 3 years by the Headteacher and Full Governing Body. At every review, the policy will be shared with the Governing Body.

A range of strategies designed to tackle poor attendance is only a part of the school's approach to this issue. Whole-school issues such as providing effective pastoral support and effective teaching and learning are recognised as having a direct impact upon attendance.

Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding 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 |
| 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 because 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 |

Appendix 2: Avoidable absence and the Law

IMPORTANT: Please read carefully the information below.

WARNING: If you allow your child to miss school in term time for an avoidable reason without obtaining the prior approval of the school, you may be issued with a Penalty Notice* per parent per child or made the subject of court proceedings under section 444 Education Act 1996. As a parent/carer, you can demonstrate your commitment to your child's education by not allowing your child to miss school for anything other than an exceptional and unavoidable reason. *Penalty notice £60 if paid within 21 days increasing to £120 if paid after 21 days and before 28 days.

| AVOIDABLE ABSENCE IN TERM TIME | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| The Facts | The Law |
| <p>School aged pupils in Cornwall maintained schools are expected to attend punctually on the 190 days that the school is open. Whilst there are several unavoidable reasons why a pupil might be away from school (illness, medical appointments, suspensions etc.) the legislation is clear that any avoidable absence may only be authorised by a school if there are exceptional circumstances.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">WHAT YOU SHOULD CONSIDER</p> <p>Research suggests that children who are taken out of school may never catch up on the learning they have missed. This may affect test results and can be particularly harmful if the child is studying for final year examinations.</p> <p>Children who struggle with English or Mathematics may also find it even harder to cope when they return to school, while younger children may find it difficult to renew friendships with their classmates.</p> <p>If the school is unable to authorise the absence and the child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as unauthorised absence and you may receive a £60* fine per parent per child if your child's attendance is deemed to be 'not</p> | <p>The law allows the school to consider individual requests to authorise a future avoidable absence. However, before the school can authorise any such requests, they must satisfy themselves that there are exceptional circumstances which justify such a decision. It is entirely the responsibility of the parent submitting the request to provide sufficient evidence / information to establish this fact. The request for leave must come from the parent with whom the child normally resides.</p> <p>If a child then stays away from school for more than the authorised period this must be recorded as unauthorised absence and could be quoted in a prosecution for poor attendance.</p> <p>If the child is away for a period of four weeks or more, the school may have the option to take the child off roll subject to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.</p> <p>In case of unexpected extended absence, it is advisable that the parent fully informs the school as to the reasons. If a child is removed from roll, there is no guarantee that the child will regain a place at the school.</p> |

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| regular', falling below the St Mary's Church of England School threshold of 96%. | |
| <p>Unavoidable absence from school will be authorised. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genuine illness • Unavoidable medical/dental appointments (but try to make these after school if possible). • Days of religious observance. • Seeing a parent who is on leave from the armed forces • External examinations • When traveller children are on the road with their parents for work purposes | <p>Other examples of absence from school that <u>will not</u> be authorised include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any type of shopping • Looking after siblings or unwell parents • Minding the house • Birthdays • Resting after a late night • Relatives visiting or visiting relatives • Parental appointments |
| <p>Please contact the Headteacher if you wish to discuss this issue.</p> <p>The law requires parents to ensure their children receive an efficient full-time education, and every minute of every day is important. Please help them not to miss any of this valuable time.</p> <p>We hope that when you have read this policy you will consider that your child's education is too important to allow them to miss school for avoidable reasons.</p> | |

Appendix 3: Information letter to all parents (Annual) – Warning letter regarding unauthorised leave of absence (holidays)

NAME AND ADDRESS

Dear Parent/Carer

Here at St Mary's Church of England School we recognise that there are occasions when it is appropriate to authorise an absence, such as when a pupil is genuinely too ill to attend school, has a medical appointment that cannot be taken outside of school hours or a request for leave has been agreed in exceptional circumstances.

However, the Government does not support parents taking children out of school unless the school agrees this is appropriate under 'exceptional circumstances.' Any request for leave should be made in writing to the Headteacher using the school's request form.

If your child is absent from school without authorisation, you will be committing an offence under the Education Act 1996. We may submit a request to Cornwall Council for a Penalty Notice to be issued, in accordance with Sections 444A and 444B of the said Act. Penalty Notices are issued per liable parent, per child and each carry a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid after this but within 28 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in legal action. Absence not authorised by the school may result in a prosecution in the Magistrates' Court under Section 444(1) or Section 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996, leading to a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a custodial sentence. Cornwall Council may also apply for the costs incurred in taking the matter to

'Parent' as set out in Section 576 of the Education Act 1996, defines parent to include: natural parents, whether they are married or not; any person or body who has parental responsibility for a child (as defined by the Children Act 1989) and any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child. Having care of a child means a person with whom a child lives and who looks after a child, irrespective of what their relationship is with said child.

You are welcome to contact the school to discuss any concerns you may have regarding this or if you feel you would like advice or support in helping your child attend more regularly. St Mary's Church of England School is committed to maximising the education of all its pupils and aims to work with parents to ensure this can be achieved.

The decision to submit a request for the issue of a Penalty Notice will be considered when a child's attendance is deemed to be 'not regular.' The definition of 'not regular' in this instance is when it is below the threshold set by St Mary's Church of England School. This attendance threshold is set at 96%, in line with national attendance data. In the Autumn Term, a child's attendance for the previous academic year will be considered before deciding on a course of action. From January onwards, the decision will be based on attendance data from the current academic year.

Yours sincerely
Headteacher

APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

ST MARY'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL

REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME

Your legal responsibilities

If you consider an absence during term time to be an exceptional circumstance, please complete this form and return it to the Headteacher **at least 15 school days** before the date you wish to remove your child from school.

Leave of absence requests during term time will not be authorised unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. We publish the dates of school terms well ahead of the current academic year. This is to help you plan your holidays outside of term time so that absence does not impact on the continuing education of your child.

You have a legal duty to make sure that your child attends school regularly and punctually. Schools have a duty to ensure that children attend school. The school and the Local Authority work in unison to monitor your child's attendance and will act if it is poor. If your child is out of school for no valid reason, or there is unauthorised absence, we must refer the matter to the Education Welfare Service who may decide to prosecute.

How absence is authorised

We are not able to grant leave of absence simply because a holiday is cheaper in term-time, or more convenient workwise. To ensure that we comply with these regulations, parents requesting leave of absence will need to detail the exceptional circumstance below, in order that these can be assessed.

Criteria are:

1. Absence may not be granted if attendance is below 96% (school minimum attendance target)
2. A judgement on the impact that a child's absence will have on their education
3. The exceptional circumstances relating to the request for absence.

If you decide to take your child out of school, without permission, you will be committing an offence under the Education Act 1996. We may refer the matter to Cornwall Council who as the issuing officer will may decide to take legal action against you. A penalty notice can be issued under Section 444A and 444B of the Education Act 1996. This carries a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid after this but within 28 days. Fines are issued per parent/carer, per child. Failure to pay the penalty notice may result in Court action. Persistent absences not authorised by the school may result in a prosecution in the Magistrates Court, leading to fines up to £2,500 and/or custodial sentences."

I request leave of absence for child's name

for days from to returning to school
on Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time
unless there are exceptional circumstances. These are exceptional circumstances because
.....
.....
.....

Signed.....

Date.....

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Below to be completed by the school:

FAO – Headteacher

| % Current | % Last Year | Comments |
|-----------|-------------|----------|
| | | |

Student Name: Tutor: Year:
.....

0 AUTHORISED:

Request has been authorised for the following dates **only**:

___ / ___ / ____ to ___ / ___ / ____

0 UNAUTHORISED:

Signed Headteacher

Date ___ / ___ / __

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------|-------|
| Letter sent / Phone Call / other | Signed: | Date: |
| Action: PN Request | Signed: | Date: |

Decision:

Authorised / Unauthorised

EWO Yes/No

.....

Penalty Notice Model Leave Refusal Letter (for school use)

NAME AND ADDRESS

Date

Dear Name of parent/carer(s)

I am writing regarding your request to take (Student Name) out of school on Date until Date. The law states that a planned absence from school should only be authorised for pupils in 'exceptional circumstances.' Here at St Mary's Church of England School, we recognise that there are occasions when it is appropriate to authorise an absence; we look at each request on its own merit, before reaching a decision.

Under the circumstances, we regret that on this occasion we are unable to authorise your request for absence. If (Student Name) does not attend school on the dates concerned, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. In cases where parents subsequently report their child as ill during this period, medical evidence may be requested to support this.

I urge you to reconsider your decision.

If your child is absent from school without authorisation, you will be committing an offence under the Education Act 1996. We may submit a request to Cornwall Council for a Penalty Notice to be issued, in accordance with Sections 444A and 444B of the said Act. Penalty Notices are issued per liable parent, per child and each carry a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid after this but within 28 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in legal action. Absence not authorised by the school may result in a prosecution in the Magistrates' Court under Section 444(1) or Section 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996, leading to a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a custodial sentence. Cornwall Council may also apply for the costs incurred in taking the matter to Court.

'Parent' as set out in Section 576 of the Education Act 1996, defines parent to include: natural parents, whether they are married or not; any person or body who has parental responsibility for a child (as defined by the Children Act 1989) and any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child. Having care of a child means a person with whom a child lives and who looks after a child, irrespective of what their relationship is with said child.

I would like to offer you the opportunity to contact Mrs Stevenson at St Mary's Church of England School if you would like advice or support in helping your child attend more regularly. St Mary's Church of England School is committed to maximising the education of all its pupils and aims to work with parents to ensure this can be achieved. If you would like to discuss this matter further, please contact the school.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

Re: School Attendance LETTER ONE

Dear

I note from a recent register check that _____ attendance was _____ from the start of September. I enclose a copy of your child's registration certificate for your information.

This attendance level may include times when your child was ill or attending routine appointments. The average attendance in schools nationally is 96%. We aim to achieve this average or even better to ensure that all pupils gain full benefits from their education.

I will therefore be continuing to monitor the attendance of _____ and will contact you again if their attendance continues to remain a cause for concern.

Should you wish to discuss attendance in the interim please do not hesitate to contact us at school.

Yours sincerely

XXXXXXXX – Deputy Headteacher XX

Cc: File

Enc. Attendance certificate

Re: School Attendance LETTER TWO

Dear

You may recall that I wrote to you recently to make you aware that <<Chosen Name>>'s attendance was <<Percentage Attendance>>%. <<Chosen Name>>'s attendance is now <<Percentage Attendance>>% and is still a cause for concern. I enclose an attendance certificate for your information.

I am therefore inviting you into school on **[date]** at **[time]** to meet with me and our Education Welfare Officer to look at ways that we can work together to support <<ChosenName>> in improving their attendance.

If you are unable to attend the appointment date or time, then please do not hesitate to contact us to rearrange this.

Yours sincerely

Cc: File

Enc. Attendance certificate

Dear <<Salutation>>

I am writing to invite you to a Critical Attendance Meeting (CAM) at St Mary's Church of England School onat.....am/pm with the Educational Welfare Officer, and my Deputy Headteacher with responsibility for Attendance.

<<ChosenName>>'s attendance is now <<PercentageAttendance>>% and has not improved since the last meeting.

The purpose of the meeting is to review the action plan we wrote following your last meeting with us and to look at other ways that we can work together to support <<ChosenName>> to improve their attendance.

If you are unable to attend this meeting, please contact (name) on (number) so we can re-arrange the appointment.

In addition, (School) will only authorise «chosen_forename»'s absence where we have reasonable evidence that there is a medical reason or for any other exceptional circumstances. Please share any medical evidence you have so that we can support your child's welfare and education and authorise their absence. (School) can authorise your child's absence when it considers it reasonable to do so.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

c.c. File

Enc. Attendance certificate