



ATTENDANCE POLICY

September 2020
(Covid 19 Amendments)

Rationale

Good attendance is proven to be a major factor in high achievement. Therefore, we will actively promote and encourage 100% attendance from all our pupils.

We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school with both pupils and their families. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We believe that, if pupils are to benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum in which they achieve their full potential, good attendance is crucial. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, due to ill health, are prevented from coming to school.

Sennen Primary School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its children and recognises that this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all.

The Headteacher monitors all attendance, in collaboration with the administration staff and may consider buying into the service level agreement which provides support from the Educational Welfare Service.

Nationally expected attendance levels have been raised to 95%.

Attendance / Leave of Absence Entitlement

The Government introduced some significant changes to attendance regulations for pupils at all schools as of September 2013.

The most important of these is in relation to term-time family holidays. From 1 September, the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 changed the rules about term-time holidays. Below is a quotation directly from the Department for Education Circular:

'Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove 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.'

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, the Governing Body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the

morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether the absence was authorised or unauthorised by the Headteacher.

ARRIVAL AND REGISTRATION

- **All children should be ready to come into school** each day. The gates are open from 8.40 – 9.00 and children can arrive at any point during that time.

The register is taken twice a day at **9.00am and at 1.00pm for all pupils**. A day counts as 2 attendance sessions.

- Registers are taken and sent to the school office every morning once registration has closed to be inputted into SIMS. If a child arrives after the registration period, he / she will be marked in as Late.
- The Headteacher monitors lateness and follows this up by meeting with parents if this persists as a regular problem. Parents are often unaware of the distress caused to a child who regularly arrives late to school. It is difficult for a child to enter a classroom when everyone is already settled and working. Children are never reprimanded for being late unless it becomes apparent that this is of their making e.g a discussion with Mum reveals that the child will not get dressed in the morning. The Headteacher will manage the problem of 'lateness' according to the circumstances and in collaboration with the family.
- For safeguarding reasons, all non-attenders are followed up every morning via a phone call home if a message has not been received from the home. Each day, the school office and Headteacher endeavour to be satisfied regarding each child's whereabouts that day. Serious concerns are reported to Social Care in circumstances deemed reasonably appropriate by the Headteacher. A child for whom we have no knowledge of their whereabouts for 3 consecutive mornings is regarded by the school as a 'missing child' and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will inform the 'Children Missing In Education' Team. (CMIE).
- It is essential that children arriving and leaving school with a parent / guardian outside the normal hours are signed in or out from the office. The signing in / out register in the office is used in the case of an emergency or a fire drill.

ILLNESS AND MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

- Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours. If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment.
- The school office should be informed during the morning of the first day of a child's absence through illness and then each morning, if appropriate, for the duration of the absence.

DEFINITIONS

Authorised Absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence. Only the school can decide that an absence be 'authorised'. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported

by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

Unauthorised Absence - An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the Headteacher.

IF A CHILD IS ABSENT

- When a child is absent, the class teacher will record the absence in the register.
- The school office will endeavour to contact the parent or guardian by telephone if no message has been received regarding the reason for the absence.
- Parents are, however, expected to email (secretary@sennen.cornwall.sch.uk) or telephone the school by 9.00am on the morning of the day of absence to inform the school that their child will be absent. They are asked to state a reason. If there is no answer, they can leave a message on the answerphone
- If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety and well-being of the child.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN TERM-TIME

The Governors recognise that pupil absence during term time can seriously disrupt a pupil's continuity of learning and can have a detrimental effect upon the child's emotional security in school. Parents are therefore strongly urged to avoid booking a family holiday in term time as this absence will be recorded as 'unauthorised' due to its possible detrimental effect on the child.

- *All leave of absence requests should be discussed with the Headteacher before any bookings are made.*
- *A leave of absence that has not been agreed by the Headteacher will be recorded as unauthorised.*
- *Authorisation will not be granted retrospectively.*
- ***Holiday requests will not be authorised except in 'exceptional circumstances.' The period of absence will be discussed with the Headteacher.***
- ***No precedents for authorisation are set. Each application is considered within its own context by the Headteacher.***

EXAMPLES OF WHAT MIGHT CONSTITUTE EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

- If a parent, due to the nature of their work, cannot possibly take time off during the regular school holidays, then this might constitute an exceptional circumstance but this would have to be discussed with the Headteacher before it might be deemed to be 'exceptional'.

CRITERIA ON WHICH THE HEADTEACHER MIGHT BASE A DECISION CONCERNING THE AUTHORISATION OF TERM TIME EXCEPTIONAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE – this is not an exhaustive list and decisions may be based on some or all of the following:

- a) General attendance of the pupil might be considered. If a child has had a significant number of absences for any reason they might not be able to “afford” to miss any further schooling.
- b) General attitude to learning of the child – a child might not be able to ‘afford’ time off school if their attitude and commitment to learning is poor when in school.
- c) If a child is receiving or has been chosen to receive a strategic intervention programme in school, absence could render the impact of this as negligible. If absence is taken as unauthorised, another child might be entered for the length of the intervention programme.
- d) A holiday request for exceptional circumstances is unlikely to be approved unless the child’s attendance is 95% or above for the past year.
- e) An exception may be granted to parents who are able to prove that they are unable to take holidays during school holidays due to their employment circumstances.
- f) The timing of the proposed holiday. Requests coming soon after statutory holiday times might not be authorised; mid-term absence might not be authorised; absence near the beginning of the term might not be authorised; absence requested during significant assessment times (these occur 6 times per year) might not be authorised etc.....

LONG TERM ABSENCE

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up their school work.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services and do their best to make arrangements for the child to receive remote learning from home.

Our Remote Learning Policy in place provides an outline of the curriculum provision available for pupils who may be absent due to Covid19 related illness or absence.

REPEATED UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

- Unauthorised absences remain on the child’s record and may be reported to the Local Authority’s Education Welfare Officer (EWO)
- Attendance and punctuality are monitored by the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and the school. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents and guardians will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem.
- The EWO may also visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or guardians understand the seriousness of the situation.
- The LA has the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

ATTENDANCE TARGETS

The Headteacher will report on attendance percentages in the termly report to the Governing Body.

MONITORING AND REVIEWING

- It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance.
- The Governing Body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out.
- The Governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that the school's attendance figures are as high as they can be.
- The school will keep accurate attendance records on file.
- Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class. If they become aware of an unexpected pupil absence during the course of the school day, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the Headteacher, who will contact the parents or guardians.

Signed: N. Smith Headteacher

Chair of Governors

Date: April 2021

Review date: September 2021