

# Mawnan CE VA Attendance Policy

## Policy Statement



Mawnan CE VA Primary School is a happy and successful school and every child plays a part in making it so. We aim to create an environment that encourages and enables all members of our school community to achieve their full potential. In order to make the most of the learning opportunities provided within school, pupils need to have the continuity of provision that consistent attendance allows. **We consider regular attendance to be 98% or above.** Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. It is very important that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this policy sets out how we will achieve this together.

## The Aims of the Policy

We wish to:

- develop habits of good time keeping
- develop habits of regular attendance
- ensure that all members of the school community understand their role in encouraging good attendance and punctuality.

## Procedure

### Responsibilities

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality.

#### **Pupils are responsible for:**

- arriving at school on time, ready for the start of the day
- signing in at reception if they arrive at school after registration (after 9:00am)

- attending school whenever they are well enough to do so.

**Parents are responsible for:**

- ensuring that their children arrive before the start of the school day
- ensuring that the school has up to date contact details in case of an emergency. If you or any of your named contacts change their details it is essential that you inform the office.
- notifying the school on the first day of absence no later than 10am (medical evidence will need to be produced if attendance is below 90%)
- co-operate with school and the Education Welfare Service if there are attendance problems
- do not book holidays during term time. The Headteachers cannot and will not authorise school absence purely for the reason of a family holiday (for more information see Holiday during term time).
- where possible avoid booking medical appointments during school time
- to make sure that your child has had a good night's sleep to enable them to be ready to learn

If you have any concerns about your child's attendance or if there are reasons why your child is reluctant to attend school, please discuss these concerns with the school to enable the school to support you and your child.

**Teachers are responsible for:**

- keeping accurate and up-to-date registers
- keeping an overview of class and individual attendance, in particular poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and lateness and/or unusual explanations for non-attendance offered by children and parents/guardians
- monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to address attendance concerns
- following up absences with immediate requests for explanation

**Office staff are responsible for:**

- contacting families where concerns are raised about absence
- monitoring individual attendance on a daily basis where concerns have been raised
- providing a point of contact between individual teachers, the Head and the school's education welfare officer (EWO)
- informing the Head on a formal and informal basis of patterns of attendance
- promptly issuing registers and processing on a weekly basis.

**The Head is responsible for:**

- monitoring trends in authorised and unauthorised absence
- acting as a point of contact for teaching and non-teaching staff where concerns need to be raised or advice sought
- ensuring procedures are in line with the Local Authorities statutory duty under Section 436A of the Education and Inspections Act 1996 in relation to children at risk of missing education and children missing from education
- liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence
- meeting regularly with the EWO and ensuring these meetings are recorded and held securely
- ensuring that the attendance policy is followed and that the actions from EWO meetings are carried out
- liaising with and discussing with parents issues relating to attendance
- reporting termly to the governing body on progress against targets and cases of persistent non-attendance
- meeting with parents who have requested a term-time holiday.

### **The governing body is responsible for:**

- asking searching questions about trends in attendance — particularly in relation to persistent poor attenders
- ensuring that the attendance policy is carried out

### **Types of Attendance**

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school, as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is required, preferably in writing.

**Authorised absences** – are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, unavoidable medical appointments, emergencies or other unavoidable causes.

**Unauthorised absences** are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given.. This includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- attending weddings and family celebrations during term time
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time (see below for more information)

This type of absence can lead to Cornwall County Council using sanctions and/or legal proceedings –see statutory guidance section.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend for any reason please speak to the school for support and guidance.

### **Persistent Absenteeism (PA)**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need

parents fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately in writing. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment. All PA cases are also automatically made known to our Education Welfare Officer.

## **Absence Procedure**

### **First-day Calling**

The school implements a first-day calling policy. Parents are requested to call school before 10am if their child is to be away. Where no call is received, office staff ring parents that morning to ascertain the reason for absence. Where a pupil is subject of a child protection plan or is a looked after child, the pupil's social worker is informed of his/her absence if no valid reason is given that morning.

If a child is absent without reason we will make a welfare phone call. Please ensure that your contact details are up to date, if we are unable to contact you or the other named contacts that you have provided we will treat this a missing person and inform the local authority police due to safeguarding concerns.

### **Where There Is a Cause for Concern**

Where no explanation is received, or where there is an emerging pattern of poor attendance, the following procedures are followed.

- Discussion on an informal level with the parent and a reminder about the importance of regular attendance and punctuality.
- If attendance remains erratic, further attempts are made to meet with parents and letters are sent from school, drawing attention to the pupil's attendance and enclosing a report showing the pattern of attendance.

- If there continues to be lack of cooperation and the attendance record does not improve, an approach is made by the EWO either by letter or in person.

If other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and the unauthorized absences persist, the Education Welfare Officer can use sanctions such as **penalty notices** or **prosecutions**.

## Long-term Absence

When pupils have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will send materials home in order that they can keep up with their school work if they are well enough. Where it is likely that the absence will continue for a protracted period of time or be repeated, support services may be contacted in order to arrange tuition outside school.

## Holidays During Term-time

There have been amendments to the Education Regulations (Pupil Registration 2006) act. These amendments remove reference to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear **that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time** unless there are exceptional circumstances.

## Statutory Guidance

If you 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 the Education Welfare Service who may decide to prosecute. A conviction may result in a fine of up to £2,500, a prison sentence of up to three months or both. Alternatively, a penalty notice may 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. Failure to pay the penalty notice will 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.'

All applications for leave must be made in advance, forms can be obtained from the school office. In making a decision the school will consider the

circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave in term time and the pupil's attendance rate prior and as a result of taking a holiday.

## **Absence due to Medical, Dental or Hospital Appointments**

Whilst we understand that some absences may include times when your child is ill or attending appointments, (preferably out of school time) it is important that we all work together to try to ensure that your child has the best possible chance of success whilst at school.

Wherever possible medical, dental or hospital appointments should take place out of school time. Where this is not possible, parents should:

- contact school to let them know of the proposed appointment and send written confirmation to school
- provide further evidence if required, which might include a prescription or appointment card.

## **Monitoring**

The Head will report to the governing body (via the Head's Report) the attendance percentage for the school and any specific trends and/or difficulties with individuals.

We monitor attendance according to:

- gender
- age
- ethnicity
- first language
- Free School Meals eligibility
- special educational needs.

We also set individual targets for persistent absence.

## **Improving Attendance and School Targets**

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets. At Mawnan Primary School we will foster a culture of regular attendance and encourage all pupils to have good attendance through:

- regularly informing parents of our progress towards our whole school target through our newsletters
- informing parents of their child's attendance percentage at parent-teacher meetings



