



Bishop Cornish CEVA Primary School

Attendance Policy

Date Reviewed: September 2025

Next Review: September 2026

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Our Mission Statement: To inspire through faith and love, that all may flourish.

Those who do what is right will flourish like a palm tree,
they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon;
¹³ planted in the house of the Lord,
they will flourish in the courts of our God.
¹⁴ They will still bear fruit in old age,
they will stay fresh and green,
¹⁵ proclaiming, "The Lord is upright;
he is my Rock, and there is no *wrong* in him." Psalm 92 12:15

The Christian values that we hold as a school permeate throughout all areas of school life.

Friendship, Perseverance, Respect, Compassion, Trust, Justice

In the context of Christian belief and practice, we aim to:

Provide an inclusive, supportive and nurturing environment, shaped by Christian values in which children can learn and flourish. Our vision, 'To inspire through faith and love, that all may flourish' where we aim to working together as a family, nourish the mind with knowledge and understanding, foster feelings of awe and wonder about the world in which we live, so that all flourish, living life in all its fullness and our six Christian values of Friendship, Perseverance, Respect, Compassion, Trust, Justice underpin all that happens in school in creating a harmonious environment where all are valued and treated respectfully.

At Bishop Cornish school staff and governors are committed to working with parents and children, as this is the best way to guarantee as high a level of attendance as possible. Through good attendance, we ensure every child's welfare and life opportunities are promoted in order that they may flourish.

Introduction

Regular attendance at school is essential to ensure uninterrupted progress and to enable children to maximise their potential. Attendance for all children is monitored, with the school seeking to work actively with parents to ensure a regular pattern is maintained. 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.

Our aim for all children to flourish is supported through good attendance. We actively promote 100% attendance and punctuality for all our children. We encourage children to attend and put in place appropriate procedures to support this. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school and learning. Poor attendance could seriously affect a child's:

- attainment in school
- relationships with other children and their ability to form lasting friendships
- confidence to attempt new learning and to learn alongside others.

The Governors and Headteacher, in partnership with parents, have a duty to promote full attendance at school.

Parental Responsibility

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and arrives on time. Full attendance is essential to the all-round development of a child; children are entitled to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them by law. Poor attendance undermines their education and sometimes puts children at risk. The school share the attendance percentage with parents at each report and more frequently where there are concerns.

It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent. If parents do not contact the school, the school will endeavour to contact the parent and establish the whereabouts of the child and reason for absence.

Children are expected to arrive between 8.30 and 8.40am and go directly to class where they will be ready to start their school day. All children who arrive after 8.40am must report to the school office, where they will be registered, their meal requirements noted and the reason for lateness is recorded.

When a child is unwell, parents should contact the school before 8.40am on the first day of absence informing the school of the reason for absence. For each day that the child is absent, contact with the school office should be made.

When a child is absent, the class teacher will record the absence in the register which is held in ARBOR. As part of our safeguarding procedures, the school office will endeavour to contact the parent or carer and other emergency contacts if no message has been received regarding the reason for the absence to check on the safety of the child.

If a child needs to attend a medical appointment, we will:

- Expect every effort to be made to arrange the medical appointments outside school hours
- Require an appointment card or verification by the doctor/ dentist/hospital.

When it is unavoidable for a child to be out of school for a medical reason, we would prefer that the child attends school prior to the appointment and then be returned to school directly after the appointment if appropriate.

If a child is absent due to vomiting or diarrhoea, they should not return to school for the next 48 hours after the last bout of sickness. This is to reduce the risk of infection to other children and adults at school.

The Role of the School Staff

Working with the Educational Welfare Team, the Head Teacher has overall responsibility for attendance. Class teachers complete a register at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. Children are marked as either present, absent or late. Attendance is closely monitored in order to highlight and take action where the attendance of individual children is causing concern.

Attendance:

Attendance Administration: Mrs L Dunbar

It is the responsibility of the school attendance administrator to ensure:

- Attendance and lateness records are up to date
- If no reason for absence has been provided, parents are contacted on the first day of absence and a reason obtained
- Where it is not possible to make contact, letters are sent to parents requesting reasons for absence with a seven day reply deadline before the absence is recorded as unauthorised.
- The appropriate national attendance code is entered into the register.

Levels of Attendance

At Bishop Cornish, an acceptable level of attendance is 96%+. This will help all aspects of a child's progress and life in school. This will give children the best possible opportunity to excel in their learning, flourish as an individual and support a positive work ethic.

Attendance of 94% - 95% is a focus for improvement. The aim is to improve beyond this rate of attendance. The school will work with parents to continue to promote full attendance to move to

96%+. 90 - 93% constitutes below average attendance. This level of absence will affect attainment and progress at school. The school will contact parents directly to seek ways of working together to improve attendance.

Attendance that is below 90% is considered to be unacceptable and noted as persistent absence. This level of absence is a cause for serious concern. It will significantly affect attainment and progress and is disruptive to children's learning.

Written communication and meetings between home and school to share strategies for improvement will be called. If improvement is not quickly achieved, a referral is made to the Education Welfare Team and appropriate support will be sought.

Non-attendance is an important issue that is treated seriously. However, each case is different, and the school acknowledges that no one standard response will be appropriate in every case.

Consideration is given to all factors affecting attendance before deciding what intervention strategies to apply.

- a) In every case, early intervention is essential to prevent the problem from worsening. It is essential that parents keep the school fully informed of any matters that may affect their child's attendance.
- b) Prior to the engagement of the EWO team, the school will discuss the issue with the parents, clearly defining the concerns within school regarding a child's' absence and looking at how we may support parents in securing better attendance for their children.

It is hoped that a quick response and change in levels of absence will prevent the need for external involvement.

Children Missing Education

If families move away from the area, or wish to transfer their child to another school, the Head Teacher must be informed in writing. Children cannot be removed from the school roll until we have been notified by another school that the offer of a school place has been taken up. Children who stop attending and who cannot be traced will not be removed from the school roll. Cases such as these are reported to the Education Welfare Team for further investigation. Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed.

Lateness

The class register is taken as children arrive in class between 8.30am and 8.40 am; it is also taken at the start of the afternoon session. Children arriving after 8.40 am, must enter school by the main entrance and report to reception where their name and reason for lateness will be recorded. The child will be marked as late before registration has closed (Code 'L') at 8.50am. Children arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (Code 'U') This national code counts as an unauthorised absence. Frequent lateness is disruptive to learning, both for the child concerned and the class. This will be discussed with parents and a plan put into place to support the child and their family. It may be referred to the Education Welfare Team for possible legal action. Frequent or regular lateness can provide grounds for prosecution or the issue of a Penalty Notice.

Definitions

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required.

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 carer; for example, if a child has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence. In the case of planned absence such as a hospital appointment, the 'Request for Absence' form must be completed in order to request authorisation and be agreed and signed by the Head Teacher prior to the absence, in order for the absence to be recorded as authorised.

Unauthorised Absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the Head Teacher. Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no authorisation has been given.

This includes:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy during the school day
- Absences that have never been properly requested or explained
- Unauthorised holidays or day trips
- Visits to family member.

Authorising Absence

Only the Head Teacher can authorise absence for approved reasons. The absence must be unavoidable. The Head Teacher is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation and, if the absence is not authorised, parents will be notified.

Authorised absence codes will only be used after there has been some communication between the parent and school.

The following reasons are examples of the kinds of absence that will not be authorised:

- Persistent non-specific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Parental illness (alternative arrangements should be made to get children to school – emergencies excepted)
- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Child's/family birthday
- Shopping trip
- Visit of a relative to the family home or visiting family or friends away from the home.

Attendance and Lateness

For all children, the school monitors absence and lateness and has a stepped approach to taking action. It will not always be appropriate to progress through all of these steps or even to carry them out in the order listed.

Responsible staff will use discretion and consider each case carefully.

Steps include:

- Where there has been no contact from parents, first day calling for all pupils
- Discussion with Headteacher to identify pupils with attendance below 95%, monitoring trends in pupil attendance and lateness
- Request from school for parent/carer to meet with school staff
- Initiate the process, if appropriate, to access support from other agencies
- Referral to Education Welfare Team.
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Reasons for absence are recorded and retained by the school.

Where there is no improvement in a pupil's attendance following intervention by the school, and there are at least 10 sessions (5 days) absence in a term, the school will consider the following:

Education Welfare Officer Actions This may include:

- Home visits
- Multi agency meetings
- Sign posting to supportive agencies e.g. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, Social Services and Family Group Conference Service
- Consideration for Prosecution Penalty Notices for Poor Attendance Penalty Notices are issued by the EWO Service in accordance with the Local Authority guidelines.

Penalty Notices may be issued in the following circumstances:

- Truancy
- Parentally-condoned absences
- Persistent lateness after the register has closed
- Being present in a public place without reasonable justification during the first 5 days of any fixed term or permanent exclusion.

IMPORTANT CHANGES TO THE LAW REGARDING PENALTY NOTICES FOR UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

A new National Framework for Penalty Notices for school absence, including unauthorised holiday absence, is being introduced following changes to the law. These new Government regulations will come into effect from 19 August 2024 and will affect when penalty notices are issued in Cornwall.

What are the changes?

1. There will be a new national threshold of 10 unauthorised sessions for any reason (equivalent to 5 school days) within a rolling 10 school week period for when a penalty notice must be considered.
2. The new rules mean you will no longer be able to take your child out of school for one week's holiday without the consideration of a penalty notice being issued.
3. There will be an increase in the penalty fine from £60 to £80 if paid in 21 days. If the fine is not paid by the first 21 days, it will rise to £160 if paid within 28 days of being issued.

4. If a second penalty fine is issued to the same parent for the same child within a 3-year rolling period, the fine will automatically rise to £160 with no option to pay the lower rate of £80.
5. If a parent then commits a third offence in a 3-year rolling period, the local authority will need to consider other enforcement options available to them. This could include prosecution.

Leave of Absence/Holiday Absence

Time off school for family holidays cannot be authorised. However, the Head Teacher does have the discretion to authorise absence in exceptional circumstances. Examples of 'exceptional circumstances' include:

- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis
- Children with highly complex needs requiring an out of season holiday to avoid sensory overload.
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Applications for exceptional Leave of Absence where dates are known ahead, MUST be made at least four weeks in advance of the requested date.

Consideration is given to each request before a decision is reached on behalf of the Governing Body (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Each case will be judged on its merits in line with the criteria outlined above. The decision is final and once the decision to not authorise the leave is taken, it cannot be authorised retrospectively.

If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken anyway, the case will be referred to the Education Welfare Service for possible legal action.