

# 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



## Attendance policy for full school re-opening September 2020

This document does not replace our existing **Attendance Policy** which can be found on our website at [www.mawnanschool.com](http://www.mawnanschool.com) but it outlines our attendance procedures for the period of school re-opening from September 2020 until matters are reviewed in January 2021

*\*Please refer to DfE guidance at the end of this document for information on vulnerability, shielding and quarantine requirements*

### Background

In March 2020 when the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak was increasing, we made clear that no parent would be penalised or sanctioned for their child's non-attendance at school.

Now the circumstances have changed, and it is vital for **all children** to return to school to minimise as far as possible the longer-term impact of the pandemic on children's education, wellbeing and wider development.

Missing out on more time in the classroom risks pupils falling further behind. Those with higher overall absence tend to achieve less well in both primary and secondary school. **School Attendance** will therefore be mandatory again from the beginning of the Autumn Term in September 2020. This means from that point, we welcome your child back into school and the usual rules on **School Attendance** will apply, including:

- Parents' duty to ensure that their child attends regularly at school where the child is a registered pupil at school and they are of compulsory school age
- Schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- The availability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with Local Authorities' codes of conduct

### Who can't be in school?

**No one with symptoms or where another member of the same household has symptoms should attend school for any reason. (where this is the case, please refer to the NHS testing website and inform the school)** If someone in your household is extremely clinically vulnerable, the school will discuss individual cases with parents as necessary.

### Pupils who are shielding or self-isolating

We now know much more about coronavirus (COVID-19) and so in future there will be far fewer children and young people advised to shield whenever community transmission rates are high. Therefore, the majority of pupils will be able to return to school. However:

- A small number of pupils will still be unable to attend in line with public health advice because they are self-isolating and have had symptoms or a positive test result themselves; or because they are a close contact of someone who has coronavirus (COVID-19)
- Shielding advice for all adults and children will pause on 1 August 2020, subject to a continued decline in the rates of community transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19). This means that even the small number of pupils who will remain on the shielded patient list can also return to school, as can those who have family members who are shielding. Read the [current advice on shielding](#)
- Where you and your child have been delayed in returning to the UK during the lock-down period or travelling abroad and have been told to remain at home, you should not attend school during the period of quarantine. Please discuss such circumstances with the school and provide documentary evidence in support of absence; the school will consider the circumstances of the trip/time abroad to inform their decision to authorise absence or not. Current advice on [travel corridors](#)
- If rates of the disease rise in local areas, children (or family members) from that area, and that area only, will be advised to shield during the period where rates remain high and therefore, they may be temporarily absent.
- Some pupils no longer required to shield but who generally remain under the care of a specialist health professional may need to discuss their care with their health professional before returning to school. You can find more advice from the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health at [COVID-19 - 'shielding' guidance for children and young people](#).

Where a child is unable to attend school because they are complying with clinical and/or public health advice, we will offer access to education at home resources. We will monitor engagement with this activity to ensure learning is being accessed appropriately. This may also apply to some pupils with EHCP plans.

Where children are not able to attend school as parents are following clinical and/or public health advice, absence will not be penalised.

**All other pupils must attend school.**

**Pupils of compulsory school age** must be in school unless a statutory reason applies and where the absence has been **authorised** (for example, the pupil has been granted a leave of absence, is unable to attend because of sickness, has been told to quarantine, is absent for a necessary religious observance etc).

We understand that some pupils, parents and households may be reluctant or anxious about returning to school. This may include pupils who have themselves been shielding previously but have been advised that this is no longer necessary, those living in households where someone is clinically vulnerable, or those concerned about the comparatively increased risk from coronavirus (COVID-19).

If parents of pupils with significant risk factors are concerned, please discuss your concerns with us so that we can understand your situation and reassure you of the measures we have in place to reduce the risk in school. The school may contact the SEND and School Nursing Teams for advice and support, and we may require medical verification or other relevant documentation in order to assess risk.

### **Punctuality**

Children will be given staggered start and finish times to keep groups apart as they arrive and leave school. Staggered start and finish times will not reduce the amount of overall teaching time each child receives. Please ensure your child arrives on time and is collected on time in order to minimise disruption in line with the school's Covid risk management. Please contact the school ahead if you are experiencing difficulties. *If lateness persists, the school will want to discuss this with you and agree some support measures; if matters do not improve, the lateness will **not be authorised** and the matter may be referred to our Education Welfare Officer, who may invite you to agree a Parenting Contract.*

Please refer to our 'drop off and collection' arrangements and **be aware that the gathering of parents at the school gates and otherwise coming onto the site without an appointment is not allowed.**

### **Management of non-attendance:**

**Families should notify their school as normal** if your child is unable to attend on any given day and update the school regularly regarding on-going absence.

Where a child is not regularly attending the school, we will want to discuss this with you to understand what the difficulties are and agree with you some supportive measures to improve matters as early as possible. We will follow our normal absence procedures to establish the reasons for absence. Where our efforts do not result in an improvement in attendance or time keeping, we will refer to the local authority School Attendance Service for additional support, advice and ultimately enforcement.

### **Referrals to the Local Authority**

- All unauthorised absence, including significant lateness is reported to the Education Welfare Officer to offer additional advice and support to parents as necessary. Where unauthorised absence is frequent and or persistent, sanctions will be imposed to include warnings, penalty notices, prosecution in the magistrate's court or an education supervision order through the family proceedings court.
- Where a child or family is away from home including abroad, and unable to return home, parents are expected to provide the school with detailed information as to the whereabouts, reasons for travel and estimated return dates and we will do our best to support you. Where the school is not satisfied with the reasons provided, the absence will not be authorised, and this could result in Fixed Penalty Fine (please refer to our main Attendance Policy) Please be aware that leave of absence is only granted in **exceptional circumstances** at the discretion of the Headteacher and in accordance with the school policy as agreed by the governing body. There is no entitlement to time off during term time.
- Where the school is unable to contact a child/family over a 3-day period, they will contact the School Attendance Service to carry out enquiries to try to locate them. A home visit will also be undertaken.
- Where the school and the Attendance Service have failed to locate the child/family within 10 days, the child will be referred to the **LA Children Missing Education Officer** (CME officer) who will undertake additional checks with other agencies to locate them, including consultation with social care, the police, health and housing. Where these enquiries do not lead to confirmation of the child's whereabouts, the matter will remain open to that service who will widen their enquiries. In these circumstances, the school cannot guarantee to keep a school place open for your child.

## **Is attendance compulsory?**

Yes, however, anyone who displays symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) can and should get a test. [arrange to have a test](#) Tests can be booked online through the NHS testing and tracing for coronavirus website or ordered by telephone via NHS 119 for those without access to the internet.

Parents must inform school immediately of the results of a test:

if someone tests positive, they should follow the 'stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection' and must continue to self-isolate for at least 7 days from the onset of their symptoms and then return to school only if they do not have symptoms other than cough or loss of sense of smell/taste.

This is because a cough or anosmia can last for several weeks once the infection has gone. The 7-day period starts from the day when they first became ill. If they still have a high temperature, they should keep self-isolating until their temperature returns to normal. Other members of their household should continue self-isolating for the full 14 days.

## **Safeguarding**

If at any time the school are concerned for a child's safety or welfare from any year group, we will consult the MARU with our Child Protection Procedures.

\*Link to DfE Guidance

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-travel-corridors>