Mawnan CE VA Primary School

Pupil Attendance Policy

Revised October 2026

Policy information	Details
Senior Attendance Champion	Jilly Pridmore – Headteacher
Operational attendance contact	Natalie Cattle – School Administrator
Designated attendance support officer	Karen Mashford
Reporting absence	Contact the school office before 8:50am using the published school telephone number or agreed absence-reporting channel.
Approval	For Full Governing Board approval – October 2026
Next review	October 2027, or sooner if guidance or school arrangements change.

1 Introduction, aims and why regular attendance is important

Mawnan School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all children. A key element of this is ensuring a child's attendance at school. Good attendance is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances. We believe that attendance should not be considered in isolation. It is part of the bigger picture and is intertwined with the whole ethos and culture of the school. Improving attendance is linked to curriculum, behaviour, special educational needs support, pastoral and mental health and wellbeing. At the heart of what we do is helping children to feel that they belong in school, through helping them to feel safe, welcome, celebrated and championed.

Improving attendance is everyone's business. We work in partnership with families to understand and address barriers within and beyond school. The Senior Attendance Champion leads this work, supported by the school administrator, teachers, SENDCo, safeguarding team and governors. This policy supports Mawnan Promise Four: belonging, behaviour and attendance.

It is very important, therefore, that parents/carers make sure that their child(ren) attends school regularly, and this policy sets out how together we will achieve this. Our school is committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We have high expectations for attendance and want every child to attend every session when well enough to do so. Our school attendance ambition is at least 99%+. This is an achievable ambition as over 70% achieved this in 2025-2026. However, individual needs, disability and health circumstances are considered sensitively.

We will support parents to fulfill their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending school.

Regular attendance supports learning, friendships and wellbeing. When absence occurs, we help pupils reconnect with school and address missed learning. We encourage families to contact us early if their child is struggling to attend.

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is the parents'/carers' legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Unexplained, repeated or prolonged absence can be a safeguarding concern. Attendance procedures operate alongside our safeguarding policy, with timely action based on each child's circumstances and risk. Our safeguarding responsibilities include:

- Protecting children from maltreatment whether that is within or outside the home, including online.
- Preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development.
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Promoting the upbringing of children with their birth parents, or otherwise their family network through a kinship care arrangement, whenever possible and where this is in the best interests of the children

- Taking action to enable children to have the best outcomes, in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 and our current safeguarding policy.

We communicate attendance expectations clearly and positively to pupils and families.

We offer support when attendance falls or patterns of absence or lateness emerge, without waiting for a percentage threshold. Attendance below 95% prompts a review of circumstances and support needs. Persistent absence means missing 10% or more possible sessions (attendance of 90% or below); severe absence means missing 50% or more (attendance of 50% or below). These measures include authorised and unauthorised absence and do not automatically trigger legal action.

2 Legislation and guidance

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 requires parents to ensure that children of compulsory school age receive an efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs, through regular attendance at school or otherwise. Where a child is registered at school, parents must ensure regular attendance unless a lawful reason for absence applies.

This policy has regard to Working together to improve school attendance (DfE statutory guidance, July 2026), Cornwall Council's current penalty-notice Code of Conduct, and the following legislation and guidance:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended, including the 2024 amendments
- The Equality Act 2010; the Children and Families Act 2014; current DfE guidance on supporting pupils with medical conditions, mental health-related attendance difficulties, education for children unable to attend because of health needs, and children missing education.

The school makes required attendance and admission returns, shares daily attendance data with the DfE, and works with Cornwall Council on statutory attendance, sickness and pupil-movement notifications.

3 Roles and responsibilities

Governance

The Governors are responsible for:

- Recognising the importance of school attendance and promoting it across the school's ethos and policies.
- Ensuring leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Regularly reviewing the school's attendance data, discussing, and challenging trends
- Ensuring a designated senior leader has overall responsibility for attendance and appointing a link governor to provide proportionate support and challenge.
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school, on behalf of the FGB on at least a termly basis.

- Monitoring the implementation and impact of this policy, reporting any concerns to the FGB.
- Ensuring school staff receive adequate training on attendance.

The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Making sure all teaching and non-teaching staff know the importance of good attendance, are consistent in their communication with pupils and parents, and receive the training and professional development they need.
- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Establishing and maintaining an effective culture of attendance at Mawnan School.
- Whole school absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supervising staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Providing evidence for prosecution to Cornwall Council
- Providing evidence for fixed-penalty notices to Cornwall Council
- Monitoring of attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Working with education welfare officers to reduce absence across the whole school population
- Ensuring the correct use of the school system used to record and monitor attendance
- Agreeing any part-time timetables within the school

Senior Attendance Champion and operational support

Jilly Pridmore, Headteacher, is the Senior Attendance Champion. Natalie Cattle supports day-to-day attendance administration and is the first point of contact for absence reporting. The Senior Attendance Champion is responsible for:

- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Maintaining effective systems for tackling absence
- Having a strong grasp of absence data at the school and individual pupil level and benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Working with the administrator, SENDCo and DSL to identify barriers, agree support and evaluate its impact.
- Working with external agencies including education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Considering appropriate referrals to Cornwall Council under the national penalty-notice framework and local Code of Conduct. Cornwall Council issues penalty notices; the school does not issue them.
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress, including the efficacy of the school's strategies and processes
- Providing regular information to staff and termly reports to governors, including attendance, punctuality, persistent and severe absence, key cohorts and the impact of support.

Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for taking the class register twice a day and submitting this information to the school office. The register is taken electronically using Arbor.

Teachers promote attendance positively, welcome pupils back following absence and alert the Senior Attendance Champion to concerns or emerging patterns.

School Office staff

Designated staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record any explanations provided on the school system.

Any unexplained absences are promptly followed up by the designated office staff with a electronic message or telephone call home to the parents/carers to ascertain the reason for the non-attendance.

Parents/Carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every session on time
- Report absence to the school office before 8:50am on the first day and each subsequent day, unless a different communication arrangement has been agreed for a longer absence; explain the reason and expected return date.
- Provide up-to-date contact details for parents and, wherever possible, at least two emergency contacts; notify the school promptly of changes.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

Who is considered a parent in education law?

'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.

4 Recording attendance

The school's admission register and daily attendance registers are kept in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024

Attendance register

We keep an attendance register using Arbor and place all pupils onto this register.

The register is an accurate reflection of a pupil's attendance and a legal document which may be used as evidence in court. The decision on whether to authorise an absence rests with the headteacher. A staff member takes the attendance register at the start of each morning session of each school day and once during each afternoon session. On each occasion they record whether each registered pupil is physically present in school or, if not, the reason they are not in school by using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from regulation 10 of the School Attendance Regulations 2024. See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

The office records the reason for absence and any relevant communication. Pupils should arrive by 8:45am, ready for the morning session.

Morning registration takes place at 8:45am and closes at 8:55am. Afternoon registration takes place at 1:00pm and closes at 1:10pm. Registers are taken at the same published time

for all pupils and remain open for ten minutes in each session, including where a pupil has an agreed part-time timetable.

Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After closure, code U is used unless another absence code accurately describes the reason. Code L is only used for arrival before the register closes.

Repeated lateness prompts a supportive meeting with the family. Register closing times remain the same for all pupils and are not changed as an individual sanction. Unauthorised lateness may contribute to consideration of enforcement under the national framework and Cornwall's Code of Conduct.

5 Understanding types of absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for an unavoidable reason like illness/medical appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies, or other unavoidable cause. However, the school encourages 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.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. Examples of this type of absence include:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences where the reason has not been established after appropriate follow-up, or where the reason does not justify authorisation.
- 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.

Medical evidence is not routinely required and will not be requested solely because attendance falls below a percentage threshold. In most cases, a parent's report that their child is too ill to attend is accepted. Where there is genuine and reasonable doubt, or prolonged or recurrent illness, we discuss proportionate evidence with the family to understand needs, plan support and record absence accurately. We accept appropriate available evidence rather than insisting on a particular medical letter.

Where a child is anxious or reluctant to attend, parents should contact school promptly. We listen to the child and family, explore the causes and work together on support. Ordinary worries and significant mental health difficulties require sensitive, individual responses; a diagnosis is not a prerequisite for beginning support.

We distinguish ordinary worries from significant anxiety or mental health difficulties. We investigate school-based barriers, including bullying, sensory demands and unmet learning

needs, and agree individual support. The school will not assume that all anxiety can be resolved simply by insisting on attendance.

Following up absence

If any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason
- Ensure schools safeguarding protocol and process is followed
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use
- Message or telephone all contacts on the first day of absence to follow up on unexplained absence.

If contact cannot be established, the office alerts the DSL promptly. The DSL assesses risk and decides on further checks, a home visit or referral to safeguarding partners. Immediate danger is referred to emergency services. Staff record contacts and actions. Known vulnerable pupils receive priority follow-up; staff do not wait for a fixed number of absent days before acting.

Reporting to parents

Attendance is reported to parents every term at parent teacher meetings and on their child's school report. Parents may request attendance figures for their child from the office.

Where attendance causes concern, the school communicates sensitively with families, explains attendance information and agrees next steps. Reports take account of individual health, disability and family circumstances and focus on practical support.

Persistent absence means missing 10% or more possible sessions, for any reason. We review the individual circumstances with the family and pupil, identify barriers and agree support. We evaluate progress and involve the Education Welfare Service or other partners where appropriate.

Legal sanctions

There is a National Framework for issuing penalty notices that reflects changes to the law introduced through the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024.

For pupils of compulsory school age, unauthorised absence may lead to legal action under the Education Act 1996. The school considers each case individually and must consider whether to request a penalty notice when there are 10 unauthorised sessions within 10 school weeks. This is a threshold for consideration, not an automatic fine. Individual circumstances, support and the local Code of Conduct inform the decision. Cornwall Council issues any notice.

Penalty Notices are issued per liable parent, per child and each carry a fine of £80 if paid within 21 days or £160 if paid after this but within 28 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in legal action.

Within the law there is an escalation process for repeat cases where any second attendance related penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the first is charged at a flat rate of £160. A third penalty notice cannot be issued within 3 years of the first, and prosecution or other attendance intervention should be considered instead.

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. Schools will collaborate with the Education Welfare Officer who will oversee this process on behalf of school

Leave of Absence in term time

All schools can grant a leave of absence when a pupil needs to be absent from school with permission. All schools are expected to restrict leaves of absence to the specific circumstances set out in regulation 11 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 . These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance or employment abroad: in line with a licence issued by a local authority or Justice of the Peace or a body of persons approval (BOPA). (For full details please see code C1)
- Attending an interview: for entry into another educational institution or for future employment where requested in advance by a parent the pupil normally lives with.
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable: where the pupil is of compulsory school age, both the parent who the pupil normally lives with and school agree the pupil should temporarily be educated on a part-time basis for exceptional reasons and have agreed the times and dates when the pupil will be expected to attend school as part of that timetable.

Exceptional circumstances

Requests for exceptional leave should be made to the Headteacher in writing, normally at least 15 school days before the proposed absence, using the Absence Request Form (this should be requested from the school office). Where circumstances are unforeseen, parents should contact school as soon as possible. Each request is considered individually; no category of exceptional leave is granted automatically. The Headteacher determines the duration of any leave granted.

The DfE does not allow leave of absence to be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

The DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance. Taking holidays in term time will affect a child's schooling as much as any other absence and parents are expected to help schools by not taking children away in term time. Any savings parents think they may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to a child's education. Where the decision is made not to authorise leave in term time, school will inform parent/carers in writing.

Where a holiday request is refused and the holiday is taken, code G is used. For other refused leave, the school records the code that accurately describes the absence; code G is not used for every type of unauthorised leave.

Unauthorised leave is considered under the national penalty-notice framework and Cornwall Council's Code of Conduct. The legal sanctions section explains the threshold, repeat notices and possible further action.

6 Pupils with Ongoing Medical Conditions

Parents should tell school about physical or mental health needs affecting attendance. We work with families, the SENDCo and relevant health professionals to agree support and, where appropriate, an individual healthcare plan.

Where health needs prevent attendance, the school liaises promptly with Cornwall Council about suitable education and any section 19 responsibilities. A sickness return is made where there are reasonable grounds to expect 15 school days of illness absence, consecutively or cumulatively; support is not delayed until that point. We maintain contact, share relevant learning information and plan reintegration. Remote education, where appropriate, is a last resort within a reviewed reintegration plan and does not itself count as school attendance.

Absence because a pupil is too ill to attend, including mental health-related illness, is recorded using the appropriate illness code. Unavoidable medical appointments are recorded appropriately. Parents should notify school promptly and arrange appointments outside school hours where possible; children should miss only the time needed.

A school should not encourage non-attendance, such as sending a pupil with medical conditions home frequently or preventing a pupil from staying for normal school activities, including lunch. This will only be justified if it is in accordance with the pupil's individual healthcare plan and is necessary. If a child is regularly sent home at lunch or placed on a part-time timetable which has not been fully agreed to, these absences may amount to unofficial exclusions.

The school makes reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. Support and adjustments are not conditional on attendance falling below a threshold or on a family obtaining a particular medical letter. We consider available evidence and the pupil's individual needs and avoid discriminatory attendance practices.

The Children and Families Act 2014 includes a duty on schools to support children with medical conditions. This is inclusive of children with conditions such as diabetes. Schools must make arrangements for supporting pupils at schools with medical conditions and in meeting that duty they must have regard to the statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

SEND anxiety and individual attendance support

The school works with the child and family to understand barriers, including difficulties with friendships, bullying, sensory needs, learning, routines or transport. The SENDCo and DSL are involved where appropriate.

An individual plan records the child's views, agreed adjustments, a named lead, responsibilities, achievable steps and review dates. Support may include a trusted adult, calm arrival, visual routines, accessible learning and supported transitions. Reviews consider wellbeing and learning as well as attendance.

For pupils with EHCPs, the school informs the local authority when attendance falls or barriers relate to need, and seeks review of provision or the plan where necessary. We work with health, Early Help and attendance services rather than allowing prolonged absence to remain unresolved.

Temporary part-time timetables

A reduced timetable is used only in very exceptional circumstances where it is in the pupil's best interests. It is not used to manage behaviour, compensate for insufficient staffing or

replace appropriate provision. The Headteacher agrees the arrangement with the parent with whom the child normally lives.

A written plan sets out the reason, sessions to attend, education and safeguarding arrangements during time away, parental agreement, regular review dates and an intended end date for returning to full-time education. The SENDCo and DSL contribute as appropriate. The school involves the social worker where there is one and discusses an EHCP pupil's timetable with the local authority promptly. Absence is recorded using C2 for compulsory-school-age pupils or X where applicable for pupils below compulsory school age.

7 Strategies for promoting attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff. Schools will provide parents with details on attendance through regular correspondence and remind parents about the importance of good attendance on the newsletter.

Schools talk to the children about the importance of good attendance and meet to discuss attendance issue with families, offering relevant support when needed.

Mawnan School follows the following government guidance:

- Expect high standards of attendance from all pupils
- Monitor Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns
- Listen and understand Discuss with pupils and parents to listen to and understand barriers to attendance
- Facilitate support Explore support that might overcome the barriers, this might include in school support and external agencies such as Early Help Hub.
- Formalise support: where necessary, work with the family and local authority on an attendance contract or other appropriate formal support, with clear responsibilities and review arrangements.
- Enforce: legal intervention is considered with the local authority where appropriate, having considered individual circumstances, the support offered and engagement with it. For unauthorised holidays, support may not be appropriate; penalty notices are considered under the national framework and Cornwall's Code of Conduct.

8 Attendance monitoring

The school office monitors absence and follows it up daily. The Senior Attendance Champion reviews patterns, punctuality and individual concerns weekly, with fuller analysis each half term and termly reporting to governors.

Analysis includes SEND, disadvantaged pupils, children with a social worker, young carers and other relevant groups. We consider pupil numbers alongside percentages and identify emerging difficulties before absence becomes persistent.

The school looks at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develops strategies to address these patterns.

Pupil-level absence data will be 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. The school will

compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the governing board.

Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is 10% or more missed sessions; severe absence is 50% or more. We prioritise individual support, safeguarding and appropriate multi-agency involvement for these pupils. The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Send letters to parents of those children who are at risk of becoming persistently absent
- Closer monitoring of identified children

9 Monitoring arrangements

The Full Governing Board reviews this policy at least annually, and sooner where guidance or school arrangements change. Review includes pupil and parent views, the effectiveness of support and the impact on vulnerable groups. The policy is published on the school website, shared with new families and communicated again when updated.

Appendix 1 Attendance codes

Use the code that accurately describes each session. Refer to Chapter 8 of the July 2026 DfE guidance for full conditions; this table is a summary.

Code	Meaning	Statistical treatment
/ and \	Present in morning / afternoon	Present
L	Arrived before registration closed	Present
B	School-approved supervised educational activity off site; conditions must be met	Approved educational activity
D	Dual registered at another school and due to attend there	Not a possible attendance at this school
K	Attending educational provision arranged by the local authority	Approved educational activity
P	Approved supervised sporting activity	Approved educational activity
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved educational activity
W	Work experience in final two years of compulsory education	Approved educational activity
C	Leave for exceptional circumstances	Authorised absence
C1	Licensed performance or regulated employment abroad	Authorised absence
C2	Agreed temporary part-time timetable for compulsory-school-age pupil	Authorised absence
E	Suspended or permanently excluded; no alternative provision	Authorised absence
I	Illness, including physical or mental health-related illness	Authorised absence
J1	Leave for an employment or educational admission interview	Authorised absence
M	Medical or dental appointment	Authorised absence
R	Religious observance meeting the code conditions	Authorised absence
S	Study leave for public examinations	Authorised absence
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes; statutory conditions apply	Authorised absence

Code	Meaning	Statistical treatment
G	Holiday not granted by school	Unauthorised absence
N	Reason not yet established; amend within five school days	Unauthorised absence
O	Other or unknown unauthorised absence	Unauthorised absence
U	Arrived after registration closed, without a reason requiring another code	Unauthorised absence
Q	Unable to attend because required access arrangements were not made	Not a possible attendance
X	Not required to attend: below compulsory school age or applicable post-compulsory sessions	Not a possible attendance
Y1	Unable to attend: normally provided transport unavailable	Not a possible attendance
Y2	Unable to attend: widespread travel disruption	Not a possible attendance
Y3	Unable to attend: part of school premises closed	Not a possible attendance
Y4	Unable to attend: whole school unexpectedly closed	Not a possible attendance
Y5	Unable to attend: criminal justice detention	Not a possible attendance
Y6	Unable to attend: public health law or guidance	Not a possible attendance
Y7	Unable to attend: another unavoidable cause; record the reason	Not a possible attendance
Z	Prospective pupil not yet on admission register	Administrative
#	Planned school closure	Administrative

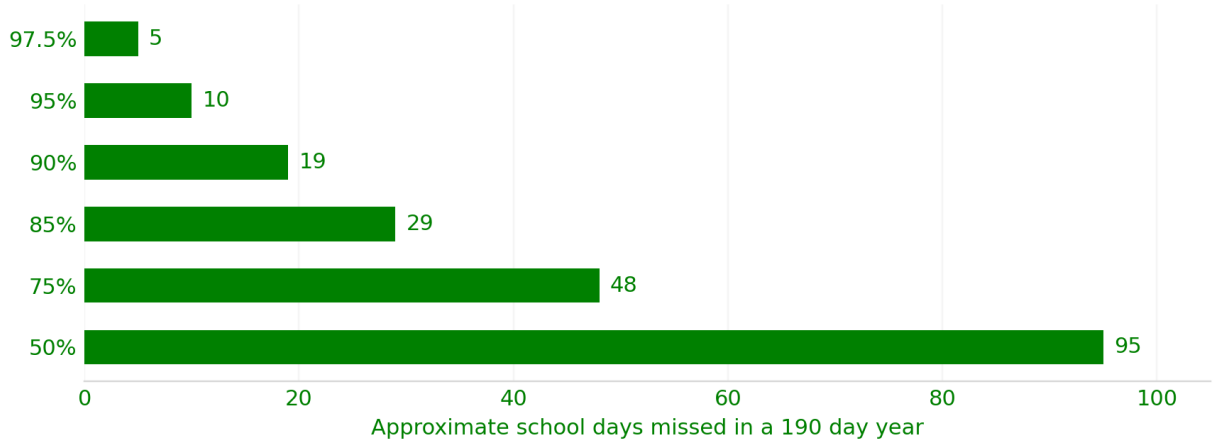
Off-site education and remote learning

The school checks attendance at alternative provision and agrees prompt absence reporting by providers. Codes B, K and D have different conditions and must not be used interchangeably. Completing remote learning at home does not itself justify an attendance mark or code B; the appropriate absence code is used.

Appendix 2 Understanding attendance

Illustrations below assume 190 school days and round to whole days. Attendance is calculated from possible sessions; individual circumstances are considered when planning support.

Attendance	Approximate days missed
100%	0
97.5%	5
95%	10
90%	19
85%	29
75%	48
50%	95



Attendance of 90% or below meets the persistent-absence threshold; 50% or below meets the severe-absence threshold. Both include authorised and unauthorised absence. Support starts earlier where concerns arise. Percentages do not determine whether illness is genuine or whether legal action is appropriate.