



St Erme with Trispen Community Primary School

School Lane, Trispen, Truro, Cornwall. TR4 9BJ

Tel. 01872 279539. Email. secretary@st-erme.cornwall.sch.uk

St Erme with Trispen School

Attendance Policy

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including COVID 19 Annex

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1. Aims

To aim to meet our obligation with regards to school attendance by:

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

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

When parents choose our school they need to understand and adhere to all policies. Our Attendance expectation is that all non-compulsory age pupils attend full time.

If parent/carers do not feel their infant is school ready and is a summer born, they may visit the Delayed/Deferred policy for guidance.

We actively encourage regular attendance by providing rich curriculum activities. Children need to attend regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Irregular attendance undermines the educational process and may lead to educational disadvantage.

Parents are primarily responsible for ensuring that children attend school. It is the school's responsibility to support attendance and to take seriously problems which may lead to non-attendance.

Pupils attend for 190 days each year – a total of 38 weeks

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. School procedures

3.1 Attendance register

The register is a legal document, and all pupils must be on this document. All schools must, (except those where all pupils are boarders) under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 take a register at the start of the morning session, and again during the afternoon session. Since September 2006, schools have been required to use statutory registration codes.

The Register will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

The original entry

- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Parental responsibility extends beyond securing regular school attendance, so it is also important that parents ensure that their children arrive at school on time and school ready for registration and are collected promptly.

3.2 Compulsory School Age

By attending our school you are agreeing to our policy of full attendance regardless of age.

A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the 1st term after their 5th birthday, so:

- children who turn 5 between 1st January and 31st March will be of compulsory school age at the beginning of the school term after 31st March.
- children who turn 5 between 1st April and 31st August will be of compulsory school age at the beginning of the school term after 31st August.
- children who turn 5 between 1st September and 31st December will be of compulsory school age at the beginning of the school term after 31st December.

A child remains of compulsory school age until the last Friday in June in the school year that they turn 16. From September 2013 all 16-year-olds must remain in education or training until the end of that academic year and from September 2015 they will be required to continue until their 18th birthday.

3.3 Who is considered a parent in education law?

Section 576 Education Act 1996 defines a 'parent' widely to include:

- a biological parent of the child (even if they do not have Parental Responsibility and even if the child does not reside with that parent).
- any person who is not a parent but has Parental Responsibility for the child (for example through a Residence Order, Child Arrangements Order, Special Guardianship Order, Step-Parental Responsibility Order, Adoption Order, or Care Order).
- someone who has care of the child.

Therefore, all these people have the duty to ensure a child of compulsory school age receives a suitable education. This does not mean that the child must attend a school – it is possible to fulfil this duty by home educating the child.

3.4 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9am or as soon as possible (see also section 6).

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and parents will be notified of this in advance.

3.5 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence only if evidence of the appointment is presented to the school; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage 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.

Parents will need to share evidence of any medical or dental appointments with the School Office to receive an authorised absence and for Safeguarding purposes.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.6 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

It is important that children arrive for school punctually to ensure a calm and purposeful start to the day and to minimise disruption to other learners.

Minutes late are calculated and reported to the Local Authority – ongoing lateness may incur a Fixed Penalty Notice.

3.7 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

The attendance officer or a member of the School's Administration Team will phone the child's parents by 10 O'clock to establish the reason for the absence. Any Social workers involved will be informed of non-attendance.

3.8 Reporting to parents

Parents will receive a copy of their child's attendance report with each School report. If there are any concerns about a child's attendance throughout the academic year, parents may be asked to arrange a meeting with the attendance officer, Education Welfare Officer or Head Teacher to discuss strategies to improve their child's attendance.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 have removed all references to family holidays.

Head teachers no longer have the discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence. Leave of absence shall not be granted unless an application had been made in advance and the Headteacher considers that leave of absence should be granted due to exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher/Senior Leadership Team will consider all requests on a case-by-case basis, parents must be aware that requests will normally be refused.

Where a family **chooses** to take a holiday during term time or where a family states the child is unwell, but it transpires a term time holiday was taken the absence will be coded as unauthorised (G code).

If leave of absence is **taken without the request having been agreed**, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Absence purely for the purpose of a **family holiday is not an exceptional circumstance**. Exceptional circumstances could include:

1. Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave soon that coincides with school holidays.
2. Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
3. The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.
4. To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English, and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

Schools also have a safeguarding duty under **section 175 Education Act 2002**, to investigate any unexplained absences.

Attendance is monitored daily by the Attendance officer. The Headteacher oversees the monitoring process and meets regularly with the Attendance Officer.

Any issues identified concerning absence, illness or lateness will be addressed by the Attendance Officer by letter, telephone or meeting with strategies put in place to improve attendance.

The Attendance Officer will endeavour to work with pupils and families to address attendance issues and may refer a pupil to the Education Welfare Service where attendance remains a concern following school intervention. However, if attendance fails to improve, legal action may be taken against parents/carers and could include a Penalty Notice, Education Supervision Order or Prosecution.

All unauthorised term time holiday of 5 days or more over a 3-month period will automatically be referred to the Local Authority and a Fixed Penalty notice will be issued.

4.2 Flexi Schooling

We will not normally consider requests for flexi schooling. (See appendix 4).

4.3 Extended leave policy/leave of absence

Where leave of absence exceeds 20 days, our School reserves the right to remove the child from roll, which would result in the parent being required to make application for a school place on their return from leave. You should also note that the place at the existing school would not necessarily still be available.

4.4 Legal sanctions

Schools may refer to the Local Authority to fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

In accordance with the [Cornwall Council Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices in respect of unauthorised absence from school](#) (£120 per parent, per child / £60 if paid within 21 days), where there have been 10 sessions (5 days) or more of unauthorised absence recorded. If this penalty is not paid the Local Authority will instigate legal proceedings against the parent/carer in the Magistrates Court.

The school will, after making appropriate checks, report all Children Missing from Education to the Local Authority, Education Welfare Service, who has a duty to investigate the whereabouts of such children and negotiate their prompt return to suitable education. If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether to issue a penalty notice rests with the Headteacher/Senior Leadership Team, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- several unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- one-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

At St Erme with Trispen school we celebrate attendance in many ways.

- A warm welcome from your class team
- A rich and diverse curriculum
- To be praised for working hard
- Ensuring that your child attends a safe and nurturing environment
- An 'open door' policy for parents to seek support and advice
- An opportunity to be educated outside and off site whenever appropriate
- Certificates and celebrations for high attendance
- To be praised for being a considerate citizen

6. Attendance monitoring

We monitor pupil absence daily.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2).

Parents are expected to call the school each day a child is ill, unless otherwise agreed with the school. If a pupil's absence goes above 3 days, we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this. If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continue to rise, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is 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. We compare our attendance data to the national average and share this with Local Governance.

7. Communications

At the induction meetings for children about to join the school, the importance of regular attendance is discussed and explained. At this initial meeting parents are asked to arrange their family holidays within school holidays, rather than in term time so that their child's education is not disrupted. The school's policy relating to authorisation of holidays is also communicated to parents.

When children join our school at other times of the year, the importance of regular attendance is discussed with parents.

This initial communication is considered as the first stages of the warning process to any family who are considering taking their children out of school during the school term.

8. Pupils with Ongoing Medical Conditions

Parents/Carers should inform the school of any medical conditions that could impact on Attendance and Wellbeing. A Healthcare Plan should be agreed with Health Services on how to ensure the pupil is able to access their full potential and attend school.

In some cases, a child can be educated at home whereby the school environment is detrimental to either condition or causes a risk (of infection etc.) to said pupil.

Pupils should not be penalised if their absence from school is related to their medical condition, such as attending hospital appointments. To avoid being fined for non-attendance, parents must obtain permission from the school in advance of the appointment, so that the absence can be treated as authorised. An absence can also be authorised if the child is too ill to attend school and the school is notified of that as soon as possible.

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 Equality Act 2010 states that the school's governing bodies or proprietors must make reasonable adjustments to ensure that children and young people with disability are not put at a substantial disadvantage compared to other students. Therefore, some pupils may be exempt from the consequences of poor attendance due to their, but only if their poor attendance is support with medical evidence from medical practitioners.

Children and Families Act 2014

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.

The statutory guidance, **Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions, is available to read on the Government website, Gov.uk.**

The Education Act 2002

Sections 21 and 175 of the Education Act 2002 detail how governing bodies of maintained schools must support the wellbeing of students and take responsibility of safeguarding of children at the school. This included investigating poor attendance

9. Roles and responsibilities

9.1 Governance

The Local Advisory Board:

- is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

9.2 The Headteacher

- The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.
- The Headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

9.3 The attendance lead

The attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the Senior Leadership Team when pupil absence crosses thresholds that require action (see attached thresholds and letters to send to support attendance and provide information to parents)

9.4 Class teacher's/Form tutors

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance daily, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

9.5 Office staff

Office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

9.6 Parents/Special Guardians

Legally responsible for fulfilling their child's legal right to a full time Education.

Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Delayed/Deferred Admissions

Review – this policy is reviewed annually and in line with changes to the law or DfE guidance

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness

M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2 COVID Measures

During the COVID pandemic staff understand that some parents may be anxious about sending their children to school. The Government remain clear and adamant, that Education remains compulsory and school Attendance policies should not alter.

It is our expectation that most pupils will attend school.

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

Follow up on their absence with their parent or carer

- The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.
- The attendance officer or a member of the School's Administration Team will phone the child's parents by 10 O'clock to establish the reason for the absence.
- Notify their social worker, where they have one
- Will work closely with parents to discuss their anxieties, if a pupil does not attend because they, and/or their parent/carer are concerned about returning to school because of coronavirus.
- We will arrange a phone call/video meeting/in-school appointment between the parent/carer and a member of the SLT explain the steps taken by the school to be COVID secure and will work within Government Guidelines to support the family.

We understand that some families and their children have additional clinical vulnerabilities. We will support and follow the guidance of the individual's medical team where they are clearly advised to shield or isolate. As in all Attendance cases, medical evidence is required.

Shielding advice for all adults and children was paused from 1 August. This means that children and young people can return to school or college if they:

- are on the shielded patient list
- have family members who are shielding

A small number of children may be unable to attend in line with public health advice because they:

- are self-isolating
- have had symptoms or a positive test result themselves
- are a close contact of someone who has coronavirus (COVID-19)

If a child is unable to attend school these reasons, we will make provision for remote education.

Appendix 3: Covid-19 Attendance Coding

Reason for absence	Return to school when..	Absence code
A child has COVID -19 symptoms	... the test comes back negative	Code X
A child tests positive for COVID -19	They can return to school after 10 days, if they feel better and if 48 hours clear of a high temperature. They can return if they have a cough or loss of smell/taste as these symptoms can last for several weeks once the infection has gone	Code I when positive test confirmed
A Child tests negative for COVID-19 but remains unwell with a different illness	They feel better	Code I when negative test confirmed
A child is being withheld from school due to parent anxiety around COVID -19	School to engage with parent to explore anxiety and discuss COVID secure	Code X (maximum use two weeks before referral made)
Child isolating because someone in their household has COVID -19 symptoms	...the test has been returned negative or the child has completed 14 days of self-isolation and no other member of the family has become symptomatic during this period	Code X
Child isolating because someone in their household has tested positive for COVID -19	...the child has completed 14 days of self-isolation and no other member of the family has become symptomatic during this period	Code X
NHS Test and Trace have identified pupil as having 'close contact' of somebody with COVID -19	...the child has completed 14 days of self-isolation	Code X
Child has travelled and has to self-isolate as part of a period of quarantine	...the quarantine period of 14 days has been completed	Code X
A child has received medical advice that they must shield/must resume shielding	When shielding restrictions have been lifted	Code X

Appendix 4: Flexi Schooling guidance

We do not normally grant requests for Flexi Schooling.

In exceptional circumstances a decision may be made that flexi schooling best meets the educational needs of a pupil registered at our school. In these circumstances, the arrangement will be monitored on a fortnightly basis. Before flexi schooling will be agreed we will need to be assured about the safeguarding and quality of the alternative provision. The following information should be provided as part of your request for flexi schooling.

1. Details of the proposed alternative provider
2. Letter of assurance that organisation adhere to Keeping Children Safe in Education
3. Copy of public liability insurance
4. Qualifications of Staff
5. DBS number of staff
6. Details of pupil ratio's
7. Lesson Plans
8. Confirmation of attendance
9. Safeguarding measures
10. Risk Assessment