

# St Ives Infant School



## Attendance Policy

Approved by Governors – September 2019  
To be reviewed – September 2022

## **Introduction**

All children need, and are entitled to, a full education. The school is committed to ensuring this entitlement for all children in its care. Children who miss school without a good reason are being deprived of the opportunities provided by school. Poor attendance frequently contributes to a child making slow progress and failing to achieve their potential. Poor attendance is therefore damaging to the child concerned and will not be condoned.

A high priority will be given to conveying to parents/carers and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. If there are problems which affect a pupil's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive to resolve the problems as quickly as possible in partnership with the child's parents/carers. Our Home School Liaison Officer (HSLO) is available to talk through any concerns or reasons that may impact on attendance and punctuality, as well as provide practical support and signposting, so we can work together to best support your child's attendance and punctuality.

To ensure your child has full access to their schooling and all the opportunities this involves we aim to ensure all pupils have excellent levels of attendance and punctuality. Our aim is for all children to have a minimum of 95% attendance.

## **Why regular attendance is important**

### **Learning -**

Any absence, no matter how short, affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will affect their learning, as well as possibly affecting the learning of others in the same class.

It is a parent/carers legal responsibility to ensure a child has regular, punctual attendance at school. Permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

### **Safeguarding -**

Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everyone's responsibly (parents/carers, pupils and members of school staff).

### **The law -**

The 1996 Education Act makes it very clear that parents/carers must ensure that their child of school age receives regular, full-time education. For most parents/carers this is in school. Children must attend the school they are registered in. Only the school can authorise a child's absence. If a child is not registered or does not attend their educational provision, Cornwall Council may take legal action against the parent/carer, if appropriate.

## **Guidelines around attendance**

All class registers are completed at 9am to ensure an accurate record of who is in the building and to ensure a timely start to the school day. Anyone arrived after 9am will need to enter the school through the front office. We understand that being late is sometimes unavoidable, however persistent lates have a significant effect on your child, their learning and the class as a whole. If your child misses the start of the school day they can miss work and do not hear the vital information and news for the day. Late arrival can also make a child feel anxious to enter a settled, working classroom, impacting on their willingness to come to school. The

class teacher will talk to the parents/carers of any child who is frequently late for school and if necessary the headteacher will meet parents/carers. The headteacher will talk to parents/carers who are seen bringing their children into school late and will emphasise the importance of punctuality.

Punctuality is a legal requirement and parents/carers can be prosecuted if a child continually arrives late at school.

We are responsible for classifying any absence, no matter how short. This is why information about the cause of absence is always required in person or in writing.

We hope the following information will offer clarity:

- Doors Open 8.50am
- Doors close at 9am
- All late arrivals should enter via Reception to ensure they are correctly registered
- Children arriving after 9am but before 9.30am will be marked as late with the reason given
- Children arriving after 9.30am will be marked as U (unauthorised) with the reason given
- Afternoon register closes at 1pm

## **Absence Procedures**

If your child is absent you should:

- Contact school before 9.15am on the first day and provide a reason for the absence
- Call the school on each of the following days of absence before 9.15am unless there is a definite return date given on the first day of absence

If your child is absent and we do not hear from you, we will:

- Telephone – using the numbers we hold from your application form
- If no contact is made we will conduct a home visit

If contact is not obtained over several days we will refer the matter to the Education Welfare Officer

First Day Contact works through:

- Raising awareness of the importance of full attendance.
- Addressing problems before they grow.
- Reducing the number of children who have short-term absence, thereby reducing the overall absence rate.

The children's attendance rate is the responsibility of parents/carers. The school will not discriminate against children who are not brought to school by their parents/carers. The problem will be addressed through discussion with the child's parents/carers. The school will therefore not use incentive schemes which reward children for attendance.

The headteacher will, however, talk to children who have poor attendance to see if they are worried about any aspect of school and will ensure that these children are welcomed back to school and that their enjoyment of school is promoted and carefully monitored.

### **Monitoring of Attendance**

Daily	The HSLO/Admin staff will review the registers and ensure we have a reason for every absence or late.
Weekly	The headteacher and HSLO will review attendance on SIMS against the registers and phone records. A report will be produced showing the percentage attendance of each child in the school and the records of those with an attendance record of less than 90% will be analysed. A meeting will be held with the HSLO to consider which families need her involvement and which need a letter or meeting in school.

### **Requests for absences, including holidays, during term time**

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday and current guidance states that 'holidays may be taken at the headteachers discretion if they deem the reason for the holiday to be **exceptional** circumstances'. However, the headteacher and governors recognise that as many parents/carers work in the holiday trade in St Ives it is not possible for them to take their holidays during the school holidays. They have therefore agreed that up to 10 days of holiday can be authorised each year, providing attendance is generally above 95% (National expectations for attendance is 96%).

Parents/carers must complete a holiday request form at least 10 days in advance, wherever possible, stating the reason why the holiday needs to be taken during school time. The secretary will record how much holiday the child has already taken in the school year and their current rate of attendance before passing the form to the headteacher for consideration.

Absence for other reason may be considered by the headteacher but again, current absence will be taken into consideration when making a decision.

### **Medical appointments**

Where possible we would encourage these are made for out of school hours, however we realise this is not always possible. Please let the office staff aware of any appointments as soon as you are aware of them.

### **Pupils moving to a new address and/or school**

We have a duty of care to all our pupils on role and have put in place safeguarding procedures to ensure we know where a child has moved to should they leave us at any time. It is extremely important parents/carers keep us updated when they are moving in regards to securing an alternative place so we can ensure we are fulfilling our safeguarding responsibilities. In instances where we have no update we may report the children as 'missing in education' (i.e. of school age but not registered at a school or receiving suitable education)

## **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/carers' full 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.

### **Communicating the Policy to Parents/carers**

The policy will be promoted through newsletters and brought to the attention of parents/carers at pre-school meetings.

Reminders about attendance will be included in school newsletters and parents/carers will be informed about the school's progress towards its targets.

Each child's attendance record will be given to their parents/carers and discussed at the parent interviews held in the spring term. This helps parents/carers to see the pattern of their child's attendance and is an opportunity for good attendance to be emphasised and any concerns to be discussed.

A full attendance record, and letter explanatory letter, will be sent to all parents/carers with their children's annual reports to raise their awareness of the children's attendance pattern over the school year.