



**ATTENDANCE POLICY & STRATEGY**

**2022-2025**

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## **1. Vision for Attendance**

We all have high aspirations for the children who attend St Just School– we want them to enjoy life in the school and beyond, to achieve well and to thrive as part of a strong and inclusive community and economy. Good attendance at school is vital if they are to realise this ambition and reach their full potential. As a school we therefore aim to reduce avoidable pupil absence to an absolute minimum in order to ensure that all pupils achieve the highest levels of attendance possible.

## **2. Why Good Attendance Matters**

Evidence shows that securing excellent attendance at school is key to ensure positive outcomes for children and young people. Missing lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind, creating gaps in their learning, and diminishing their self-confidence. Good attendance habits must start from the earliest stages of education. We know that children who regularly miss school in Reception class will most likely go on to have poor attendance at secondary school. Research by Universities UK indicates that children with poor attendance are 5 times less likely to achieve 5 strong passes at GCSE, preventing them from going on to Higher Education or into employment.

We also know that poor attendance at school can lead to poor emotional health and wellbeing. Children and young people who miss school, on a regular basis, can become socially isolated; they can lack confidence and have low self-esteem. Children can feel like they don't fit in with their peers and this can lead to loneliness. We also know that young people who regularly miss school are at greater risk of anti-social behaviour and are more likely to become victims of crime.

These are not the life outcomes and experiences we want for our children. School is not just about academic success and attainment; it is about learning about the world, about relationships and about ourselves. It is about trying new things, making new friends, and finding our place in the world. To miss school is to miss the many, many experiences that shape the choices we make, the opportunities we have and the quality of life that we lead. There is a wide range of international evidence that tells us that children who attend school regularly go on to achieve better outcomes, to live healthier, wealthier and more enriched lives - and we want to make sure we are all doing everything that we can to make that happen for all of our children.

## **3. Returning to a Culture of Good Attendance**

At St Just we have always faced certain challenges relating to attendance and the socio-economic make-up of our catchment area. Over half of our pupils are from the most deprived 20-30% of homes nationally according to the latest IMD data. This fact means that our families are much more likely to take advantage of the pricing policy applied by the holiday industry at present, with term-time holidays being significantly cheaper than those offered during the school closure periods. This tendency is clearly shown through our analysis of pupil absence data. Whilst we have regularly asked parents to avoid taking holidays during term-time we have not fined parents who do so. This is in part in recognition of the financial difficulties faced by many of our parents, and a need to maintain a positive working partnership with them, but it also directly relates to the strategic position taken by Cornwall LA and EWO Service which has made the process of applying for Fixed Penalty Notices for Term-Time absence a difficult one.

The COVID-19 pandemic created huge disruption for children, families, and educators. Attendance at school became more challenging for all. The disruption to learning created by the closure of schools and settings and the creation of remote learning packages is unprecedented. It is important that we work with our families and other agencies to overcome the challenges created by the pandemic and make sure all our children are supported to return to school and to the high expectations we had pre-Covid in terms of school attendance.

We know that for some children and young people the return to school, following the pandemic and lockdown, will be an anxious time and it is important that we all work together to understand that and make sure the right support is in place. Our Attendance Strategy covers the next three years from 2022 to 2025 and will direct our work in improving school attendance over that time.

#### 4. Facts about Poor Attendance

Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school. The Education (School Day and School Year) (England) Regulations 1999 require all maintained schools to open to educate their pupils for at least 190 days (380 sessions) in each school year. The Table puts absence in the context of the days children miss at school based on a school being opened for 190 days per year and Table 2 puts absence in the context of the days children miss at school over a six week period.

Number of days absence	Equals attendance one school year
9.5 days	95%
19 days	90%
28.5 days	85%
38 days	80%
47.5 days	75%
57 days	70%
66.5 days	65%

Number of days absence	Attendance over past six weeks
2 days	93%
3 days	90%
5 days	83%
8 days	73%
10 days	67%
15 days	50%

#### 5. School Procedures (a) Registration Processes

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register. Each class teacher has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance. Any pupil who is absent must be recorded at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session. The attendance register must be completed by the class teacher by 9.00am and by 1.10pm.

These registers are completed electronically using the Arbor system. If this system is unavailable for any reason then a paper copy of the register will be provided by, and should be returned to, the school office.

It 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 A** for the DfE attendance codes.

All attendance records are documented using Arbor software, which is supported by the Local Authority. Attendance registers are legal documents and these must be kept secure and preserved for a period of three years after the date they were last used.

### **(b) Attendance Codes**

Please See **Appendix A** of this policy.

### **(c) Pupil Lateness Procedures**

- If any child is late (ie arrives after 9am), their name will be recorded on Arbor.
- Monthly report to the Headteacher of late marks.
- Following review of monthly report, letter sent to parents.
- Texts and letters will be escalatory.
- If children arrive at their classroom / workspace doors after 9am, the office should be notified by the teacher either via a note or a message.
- We recognise that if a child arrives late to school, it is almost never because of something they have done and we will not in any way make them feel responsible.
- The Education Welfare Officer will be notified if lateness becomes a regular occurrence.

## **(d) Pupil Absence - Parental & School Responsibilities Unplanned Absences**

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 9.00am or as soon as practically possible.

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.

St Just school belongs to the Learning Well Partnership which exists between local schools and GP Surgeries. The school may contact a child's surgery in relation to safeguarding concerns, including those linked to a child's attendance.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Where, despite seeking clarification from parents/carers, we have not received reasons for a child's absence then the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (Attendance Code O).

### **Repeated or Long Term Illness**

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school long term, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services to see if arrangements can be made for the child to be given some home tuition outside school.

Where, over the course of an academic year, a child has repeated periods of illness, the school will write to parents to ask them to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness related absence. This evidence could be a Doctor's note, appointment card or copy of a prescription. We may seek written permission from parents for the school to make their own enquiries

### **Medical or Dental Appointments**

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; 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.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance.

## Granting Approval for Term-Time Absence

With effect from September 2013 headteachers may no longer grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional circumstances' are that they are 'rare, significant, unavoidable and short'.

### Guiding principles for term-time absence approval

It is not possible to write a definitive list of occasions which may be classed as 'exceptional circumstances'. However, these may include religious observance, attendance at a funeral or to visit a seriously ill family member.

Term times are for education. This is the priority. Children and families have 175 days off school to spend time together, including weekends and school holidays. The Headteacher will rightly prioritise attendance, and it is unlikely that holidays taken in term time will be deemed to fall into the definition of being 'exceptional circumstances', and are therefore likely to be classed as unauthorised.

The default school policy should be that absences will not be granted during term-time and will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

The decision to authorise a pupil's absence is wholly at the headteacher's discretion based on their assessment and merits of each request.

If an event can be reasonably scheduled outside of term-time then it would not be normal to authorise absence for such an event – holidays are therefore not considered 'exceptional circumstances'.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

Should parents be considering a holiday during term time a leave of absence request form must be completed by all adults with parental responsibility **BEFORE** the holiday is booked. Where a holiday is not authorised, consideration will be given to requesting a penalty notice from the Local Authority for this period of absence if a child's attendance is deemed as 'not regular'. This is defined by our school as falling below the threshold of 98%. In the Autumn Term, a child's attendance for the previous academic year will be considered before deciding on a course of action. From January onwards, the decision will be based on attendance data from the current academic year.

If a child is absent from school without authorisation, a parent will be committing an offence under the Education Act 1996. We may submit a request to Cornwall Council for a Penalty Notice to be issued, in accordance with Sections 444A and 444B of the said Act. Penalty Notices are issued per liable parent, per child and each carry 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 may result in legal action. 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.

A copy of the Parental Request for Leave of Absence during Term Time form is attached as Appendix B.

## (e) First Day Contact

Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, then we initiate a first day contact process. Office staff check all of the registers from 9.15am to 9.45am on a daily basis, to identify those pupils who are absent. There are occasions when we are unaware why the child is absent and we will contact the parent to check the reasons for this.

**(f) Children Missing in Education**

“Where a pupil has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days, the pupil can be removed from the admission register when the school and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to establish the whereabouts of the child. This only applies if the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause.” DfE CME, September 2016

See also **Appendix D - CME Action Plan**

**6. Rewards**  
**Class Rewards**

**Weekly Attendance Award**

A weekly attendance award is published for parents in the Friday Newsletter.  
 An award at the final assembly of the week for the class with the highest attendance in that week with the class receiving special privileges for that week.

- **Half termly Raffle** - any pupil with 100% attendance in the week will be entered into the half termly attendance raffle which will be drawn in assembly at the end of the half term.
- **Prize and certificate** will be awarded for all pupils who achieve 100% attendance across each term.

**7. Monitoring & Reporting Strategy**

The school expects attendance of **at least 96%** for each child.

The percentage categories used for attendance are:

	Attendance %	Broken Weeks %	Occasions of Lateness
Outstanding Attendance	100%-98%	0%-3%	0-1
Good Attendance	97.9%-96%	4%-9%	2-3
Attendance Requiring Improvement	95.9%-94%	10%-18%	4-9
Poor Attendance	93.9%-90%	>18%	>9
Persistent Absentee (DfE defined)	<90%	n/a	n/a

These attendance bands are based upon a rolling year.

\* A broken week is any week which was not completed in full.

**(a) Weekly**

Each week the class teacher and the school office will monitor individual absences and report concerns to the HT or DHT as appropriate.

**(b) Fortnightly** the HT will analyse pupil attendance data for the whole school, for particular focus groups (see below), and for individual pupils. This will then inform further steps and targeted action as detailed in section 9 of this policy.

A **monthly Attendance Meeting** will be held between The Attendance Officer (DB), the Attendance Support Officer (KB), and the office staff responsible for 1st Day Contact (SH). The Governor Attendance Champion may also be invited as part of a monitoring role (RS)

This meeting will review overall trends in attendance for the whole school, focus groups and individuals. A review of intervention strategies and progress will be made and any relevant adaptations made.

**(c) Termly**

- Reports to parents at each termly teacher consultation meeting detailing their child's current attendance %, with a discussion about how this might be improved.
- Reports to Governors as part of the HT Report to the LGB

**(d) Annually**

- Reports to parents are contained in the end of year report detailing their child's attendance %, in that year.
- Report to TPAT and the LGB Focus Groups

**(e) Focus Groups**

Monitoring and reporting will give a particular focus to the following groups of pupils

- Child Missing in Education
- Looked After Children
- FSM and Pupil Premium Children
- EAL Children
- SEND Children

## **8. Targeted Intervention Strategy/Attendance Support Plan**

The graduated approach is a framework of staged interventions. Interventions from Stage 2 to Stage 4 will be carried out in response to data monitoring/analysis or intelligence received.

**(a) Stage 1 - All pupils**

This stage refers to the variety of school-based interventions to celebrate and promote attendance and secure good attendance levels for all - these are detailed in section 6 of this policy.



**(b) Stage 2 (mainly for pupils who are at risk of being persistently absent)**

This stage deals with early intervention and a family response to early challenges with children's attendance. This intervention will be carried out in response to concerns about a pupil's attendance based on monitoring data or concerns raised by staff. This will include a focus on overall attendance patterns, broken weeks data and lateness.

Response Escalation in Stage 2

1. Stage 2 concerns raised via data monitoring or intelligence received.
2. The class teacher will contact the parent to raise concerns and offer support
3. The Attendance Support Officer (KB) will contact the parent/carer to arrange a meeting, raise concerns and offer support. Informal targets will be set and support offered or signposted where appropriate. Where it is considered to be potentially beneficial to the process, the pupil's class teacher may be invited to this meeting.
4. Following the meeting the Attendance Support Officer will update any staff as required/appropriate. This may include;
  - The pupil's class teacher
  - The SENDCo
  - The Pupil Premium Lead (COR) (if the child is Pupil Premium)
  - The school office (e.g. where adaptations have been agreed)
  - The Headteacher/Attendance Officer (possibly at Monthly Attendance Meeting)
  - Any other agencies as agreed at the meeting (normally Stage 3)
5. A review meeting date will be set, and this cycle may be repeated if there is a belief that progress is being or can be made. If no improvement is evident the case will move to Stage 3.

**(c) Stage 3 (mainly for pupils who are persistent absentees)**

This stage uses targeted intervention and brokering multi-agency support:

1. The Attendance Officer (DB) will arrange a formal meeting with the parents/carers and an Attendance Contract will be put in place (Appendix C). This will set out any support that may be appropriate, and targets for improvement. A review date will be set, and the parent will be made aware that a failure to achieve improvement may result in the case moving to Level for and a referral for statutory intervention from the LA.
2. The Attendance Officer will make referrals to any multi-agency partners as detailed in the meeting above.
3. A review meeting will be held on the date set to look at the progress made. It may be appropriate to repeat this cycle and to put in place a further Attendance Contract with revised targets and support, or it may be considered necessary to move to Stage 4. Where good progress has been achieved the case may be de-escalated to Stage 1. This decision will be made by the attendance officer, recorded and clearly articulated to the parent/s carers.
4. Attendance Officer referral to LA for Statutory Intervention

**(d) Stage 4 (for persistent absentees and/or term time holidays)**

This stage moves on to statutory intervention through the local authority.

1. The Headteacher/Senior Attendance Officer makes a referral to the LA for Statutory Intervention
2. The school liaises with the LA in addressing the concerns with parents/carers. (

### **e) Responding to Term Time Holiday Requests**

Follow this link to make a referral for an unauthorised term-time holiday

<https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/schools-and-education/schools-and-colleges/services-for-schools/school-forms-linked-from-sla-online/unauthorised-absence-holiday/>

## Attendance Support Plan (Overview)

### Stage 1

#### All Pupils

This refers to the variety of school-based interventions to celebrate and promote attendance and secure good attendance levels for all. This includes both class Attendance Rewards and Individual Attendance Raffles / Rewards and Incentives.



### Stage 2

#### Mainly for pupils who are at risk of persistent absence

This stage deals with early intervention and a family response to challenges related to attendance. This intervention will be carried out in response to concerns about a pupil's attendance based on monitoring data or concerns raised by staff. This will include a focus on overall attendance patterns, broken weeks data and lateness. This stage is managed by class teachers, the Attendance Support Officer, SENDCo and any relevant third parties. It involves working closely with parents and carers to achieve sustainable improvements in pupil attendance.



### Stage 3

#### Mainly for pupils who are Persistent Absentees

This stage uses targeted intervention and brokering of multi-agency support where appropriate. This is led by the School Attendance Officer who will meet with parents and carers to establish formal attendance targets within an Attendance contract. Multi Agency support will be co-ordinated within this stage as appropriate



### Stage 4

#### For Persistent Absentees where targeted support has not worked\*

This stage moves to statutory intervention through the local authority, and is used where targeted support at Stages 2 and 3 has failed to achieve the required improvements in a pupil's attendance.

\*Stage 4 Statutory Intervention may also be used to make Fixed Penalty Fines for families taking term-time holidays where the LA criteria has been met. Follow this link to make a referral for an unauthorised term-time holiday <https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/schools-and-education/schools-and-colleges/services-for-schools/school-forms-linked-from-sla-online/unauthorised-absence-holiday/>

## 9. Roles and Responsibilities

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

### (a) Headteacher / Senior Attendance Officer (DB)

- consider requests for absence and meet with parents to discuss such requests as necessary.
- make referrals to the Local Authority for the issue of Fixed Penalty Notices as appropriate.
- overall monitoring of school attendance.
- Identify trends in authorised and unauthorised absence
- keep an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers.
- monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised.
- making referrals to the Education Welfare Service.
- meet parents / carers of pupils at Stage 3 and 4 of the Attendance Response Plan.
- Involve other agencies in order to support improvements in attendance for pupils.
- Ensure that good attendance is reinforced for all pupils through the use of appropriate reward systems.
- promote excellent attendance by pupils and provide opportunities to celebrate good attendance.
- Attend the monthly Attendance Planning Meetings as required

### (b) Attendance Support Officer (KB)

- contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues.
- Update and Maintain the Attendance Monitoring systems
- monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised.
- making referrals to the Education Welfare Service.
- meet parents/carers of pupils who are at risk of becoming or are persistent absentees under Stage 2 of the Attendance Response Plan.
- liaise with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.
- keep an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers and reporting concerns to the Headteacher.
- inform the Headteacher where there are concerns and act upon them
- provide background information to support referrals
- monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns
- ensure attendance issues are raised by teachers at parent consultation evenings where necessary
- promote excellent attendance by pupils and provide opportunities to celebrate good attendance.
- Attend the monthly Attendance Planning Meetings as required

**(c) Attendance Administrator (SH)**

- collate and record registration and attendance information
- Update and Maintain the Attendance Monitoring systems
- take and record messages from parents regarding absence
- contact parents of absent children where no reason for absence received
- record details of pupils who arrive late or go home
- send out standard letters regarding attendance.
- provide background information to support referrals
- follow up absences with immediate requests for explanation via telephone calls or e mail
- keep an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers and reporting concerns to the Headteacher.
- promote excellent attendance by pupils and provide opportunities to celebrate good attendance.
- To attend monthly Attendance Planning Meetings as required

**(d) Class Teacher**

- To act as the child's first point of contact and monitoring daily attendance patterns
- Take registers accurately and on time
- Highlight concerns regarding attendance with parents
- Discuss attendance during parent consultations or at individual parent meetings
- To raise concerns with the Attendance Officer where necessary using the Attendance Concern Form Appendix E
- promote excellent attendance by pupils and provide opportunities to celebrate good attendance.

**(e) All Staff**

- To promote excellent attendance by pupils and provide opportunities to celebrate good attendance.
- To raise concerns with the Attendance Officer where necessary using the Attendance Concern Form Appendix E

**(f) Governor Attendance Champion**

- To act as a critical friend to the Headteacher in relation to attendance matters
- To ensure that the school follows the requirements and expectations of this Attendance Policy
- To have an overview of attendance data and action planning
- To feedback to the FGB on attendance matters
- To periodically attend monthly Attendance Planning Meetings for monitoring purposes

**(g) Parents/Carers**

Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring their child attends school regularly.

Parents and carers are asked to:

- Ensure that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment
- Contact the school office as soon as possible on the first morning of absence, ideally by 8.45am.

- Inform the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we do require evidence from the doctor or dentist (appointment card/letter/etc.).
- As far as possible ensure that non-urgent medical or dental appointments are made outside of the school day.
- Intervene promptly and work closely with the school and local authority to resolve any issues when attendance problems occur;
- Comply with their roles and responsibilities as outlined in this attendance policy;
- Avoid term time holidays - a term time holiday may mean a pupil becomes a persistent absentee if they go on to have any further time away from school
- Talk to the school as soon as possible about any pupil's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with. Parents should not keep children away from school whilst they are resolving any issues;
- Ensure that their child continues to attend S Just School until a place is available at another school if a transfer has been requested.
- Ensure that their children arrive at school in correct uniform and equipped for the school day.

**(h) Pupils** Children and young people are asked to:

- Attend school regularly and punctually in accordance with the agreed timetable;
- Attend school appropriately prepared for the day
- Aim for an attendance high level of at least 96%
- Comply with the requirements of them as laid out in the school Attendance policy.

## APPENDIX A

### Absence and Attendance Codes

The national codes enable schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations. They are also used for collecting statistics through the School Census system. The data helps schools, local authorities and the Government to gain a greater understanding of the level of, and the reasons for, absence. The codes are:

#### **Present at school**

Pupils must not be marked present if they were not in school during registration. If a pupil were to leave the school premises after registration they would still be counted as present for statistical purposes.

- **Registration code / \: Present in school / = am \ = pm Present in school during registration. •**
- **Code L: Late arrival before the register has closed**

Schools should have a policy on how long registers should be kept open; this should be for a reasonable length of time but not that registers are to be kept open for the whole session. A pupil arriving after the register has closed should be marked absent with code U, or with another absence code if that is more appropriate.

**Present at an approved off-site educational activity** An approved educational activity is where a pupil is taking part in supervised educational activity such as field trips, educational visits, work experience or alternative provision. Pupils can only be recorded as receiving off-site educational activity if the activity meets the requirements prescribed in regulation 6(4) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. The activity must be of an educational nature approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school. The activity must take place during the session for which the mark is recorded. Attendance codes for when pupils are present at approved off-site educational activity are as follows:

**Code B: off-site educational activity** This code should be used when pupils are present at an off-site educational activity that has been approved by the school. Ultimately schools are responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils educated off-site. Therefore by using code B, schools are certifying that the education is supervised and measures have been taken to safeguard pupils. This code should not be used for any unsupervised educational activity or where a pupil is at home doing school work. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the provider of the alternative activity notifies the school of any absences by individual pupils. The school should record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.

**Code D: dual registered - at another educational establishment** This code is not counted as a possible attendance in the School Census. The law allows for dual registration of pupils at more than one school. This code is used to indicate that the pupil was not expected to attend the session in question because they were scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered. The main examples of dual registration are pupils who are attending a pupil referral unit, a hospital school or a special school on a temporary basis. It can also be used when the pupil is known to be registered at another school during the session in question. Each school should only record the pupil's attendance and absence for those sessions that the pupil is scheduled to attend their school. Schools should ensure that

they have in place arrangements whereby all unexplained and unexpected absence is followed up in a timely manner.

**Code J: at an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment**

This code should be used to record time spent in interviews with prospective employers or another educational establishment. Schools should be satisfied that the interview is linked to employment prospects, further education or transfer to another educational establishment.

**Code P: participating in a supervised sporting activity** This code should be used to record the sessions when a pupil is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school.

**Code V: educational visit or trip** This code should be used for attendance at an organised trip or visit, including residential trips organised by the school, or attendance at a supervised trip of a strictly educational nature arranged by an organisation approved by the school.

**Code W: work experience** Work experience is for pupils in the final two years of compulsory education. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the work experience placement provider notifies the school of any absences by individual pupils. Any absence should be recorded using the relevant code.

**Authorised absence from school**

'Authorised absence' means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

**Absence codes when pupils are not present in school are as follows:**

**Code C: leave of absence authorised by the school**

Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Schools should consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

**Code E: excluded but no alternative provision made**

If no alternative provision is made for a pupil to continue their education whilst they are excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked absent in the attendance register using Code E. Alternative provision must be arranged for each excluded pupil from the sixth consecutive day of any fixed period or permanent exclusion. Where alternative provision is made they should be marked using the appropriate attendance code

**Code H: holiday authorised by the school** Head teachers should not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in advance and the head teacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion.

**Code I: illness (not medical or dental appointments)** Schools should advise parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness. Schools should authorise



absences due to illness unless they have genuine cause for concern about the veracity of an illness. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness. Schools can record the absence as unauthorised if not satisfied of the authenticity of the illness but should advise parents of their intention. Schools are advised not to request medical evidence unnecessarily. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors' notes.

**Code M: medical or dental appointments** Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence. Schools should, however, encourage parents to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.

**Code R: religious observance** Schools must treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, schools should seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.

**Code S: study leave** Schools must record study leave as authorised absence. Study leave should be used sparingly and only granted to Year 11 pupils during public examinations. Provision should still be made available for those pupils who want to continue to come into school to revise.

**Code T: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence** A number of different groups are covered by the generic term Traveller – Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. This code should be used when Traveller families are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision. It should not be used for any other types of absence by these groups. To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children it is expected that the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling and be dual registered at that school and the main school. Children from these groups whose families do not travel are expected to register at a school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly once registered at a school.

#### **Unauthorised absence from school**

Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence. **Absence codes are as follows:**

**Code G: holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the head teacher.** If a school does not authorise a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday but the parents still take the child out of school, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.

**Code N: reason for absence not yet provided** Schools should follow up all unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence. When the reason for the pupil's absence has been established the register should be amended. This code should not be left on a pupil's attendance record indefinitely; if no reason for absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time it should be replaced with code O (absent from school without authorisation).

**Code O: absent from school without authorisation** If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised.

**Code U: arrived in school after registration closed** Schools should actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent.

**Administrative codes** The following codes are not counted as a possible attendance in the School Census.

**Code X: not required to be in school** This code is used to record sessions that non-compulsory school age children are not expected to attend.

**APPENDIX B**  
**EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCE LEAVE REQUEST NOTICE TO PARENTS /CARERS**

The law does not grant parents an automatic right to take their child out of school during term time. Any absence from school will disrupt your child's learning. You may consider that a holiday will be educational, but your child will miss out on the teaching that their classmates will receive during your holiday. Attendance is vital to academic success and lost education poses a potential risk of underachievement. This is something we all have a responsibility to avoid.

The Department for Education no longer allows Headteachers to grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. If you consider that your request for absence is exceptional you will need to complete the form attached to this notification. A response will be sent to you as soon as possible. If leave is not authorised and you nevertheless withdraw your child from school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised absence.

*If your child is absent from school without authorisation, you will be committing an offence under the Education Act 1996. We may submit a request to Cornwall Council for a Penalty Notice to be issued, in accordance with Sections 444A and 444B of the said Act. Penalty Notices are issued per liable parent, per child and each carry 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 may result in legal action. 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.*

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.

**All requests must be completed on this form; letters will not be accepted.**

This form should be returned to the Attendance Office at least 15 school days before the start of the absence.

I hope you will support our efforts in raising attendance and attainment at St Just Primary School.

**APPLICATION BY PARENT/CARER (to be completed by each parent/carer)**

If you consider an absence during term time to be an exceptional circumstance, please complete this form and return it to the School Office at least 15 school days before the date you wish to remove your child from school.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Post Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Parent/Carer completing this form: \_\_\_\_\_

First day of absence: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of return to school: \_\_\_\_\_

If leaving your home address before the first day of absence, please provide the date on which you will leave \_\_\_\_\_ Total number of days missed: \_\_\_\_\_ days

Reason for absence:

*I understand that if the absence request is unauthorised the school may request that Cornwall Council issue a Penalty Notice. I understand that a Penalty Notice is issued to each liable parent/carer of each child taken out of school and that this carries a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days, increasing to £120 if paid within 28 days. I understand that if I do not pay the fine, it may result in legal action being taken against me. I understand that parents have a duty to ensure their child's regular attendance at school and failure to do so is an offence under Section 444(1) and Section 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996.*

Please inform us if you have a child in another school – we may need to contact the school to discuss the absence request. Please note, we will need to share information about our child with the other school.

Name of child \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_

Signed .....

Dated .....

**(Please ensure you give at least 15 school days' notice of the proposed absence)**

**Below to be completed by the school:**

FAO – Headteacher

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Class \_\_\_\_\_

Compulsory School Age YES / NO

<b>Current school attendance %</b>	<b>Last Years attendance %</b>	<b>Broken weeks</b>	<b>Lateness</b>

**AUTHORISED:**

Request has been authorised for the following dates only: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ to \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

**UNAUTHORISED:**

Signed..... HEADTEACHER

<b>Penalty Notice Request</b>	<b>Signed (Headteacher)</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>YES / NO</b>		

<b>Parent Notified</b>	<b>Signed (Office)</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>LETTER / PHONCALL</b>		