

# **St Neot Community Primary School**

## **Primary Attendance Policy**

### **Review Summary**

<b>Approved By:</b>	<b>Governing Board</b>
<b>Approval Date:</b>	<b>24 September 2024</b>
<b>Next Review Date:</b>	<b>September 2025</b>

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## **1. Policy Statement**

It is the aim of our school that every pupil enjoys learning, experiences success and realises their full potential. The Attendance Policy reflects these aims and recognises that regular full time attendance has a very significant positive effect on the motivation, social development and attainment of pupils.

Our school's vision, mission, values and aims:

### **Our Vision**

Together we achieve a vibrant, safe, yet challenging community which recognises the uniqueness of individual learners and promotes independent learning and the ability to explore our potential as active citizens of the future.

### **Our Mission**

To bring the world to our children, which will in turn prepare them to go into the world.

To provide exciting and stimulating experiences which will inspire an ethos of enquiry and creativity.

### **Our Aims**

CHALLENGE INSPIRE SUCCEED

Our school strives to deliver excellent educational experiences for pupils, improving their life chances and serving the communities to which we belong.

**This policy should be read in conjunction with existing school policies including (but not limited to) the following policies:**

- Child Protection and Safeguarding
- Special Educational Needs and Disability
- Behaviour Management
- Exclusions
- Anti-Bullying
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions

### **Legislation**

This policy meets the requirements of the following legislation which sets out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance including:

- The Education Act 1996 (as amended)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended in 2010, 2011, 2013 and 2016)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended in 2012 and 2013)

## DfE guidance:

- The Equality Act 2010 and schools (DfE May 2014)  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/315587/Equality\\_Act\\_Advice\\_Final.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/315587/Equality_Act_Advice_Final.pdf)
- Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions (DfE December 2015)  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions--3>
- Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school (DfE January 2013)  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-for-children-with-health-needs-who-cannot-attend-school>
- Keeping children safe in education (DfE)  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>
- Working together to improve School Attendance (DfE)  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>
- School attendance parental responsibility measures (DfE January 2015)  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-responsibility-measures-for-behaviour-and-attendance>
- School census guidance (DfE)  
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complete-the-school-census>
- Suspension and permanent exclusion (DfE May 2023)  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion>
- Home to school travel and transport guidance (DfE June 2023)  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/home-to-school-travel-and-transport-guidance>

## 2. Aims

- To communicate the importance to all pupils and their parents/carers of maximum attendance at school as an essential pre-requisite for taking full advantage of the educational opportunities and to maximise individual achievement;
- To make explicit to all relevant parties (staff, parents/carers and students) the school's expectations for attendance;
- To promote a consistent approach across the school towards all matters relating to attendance;
- To clarify the roles and responsibilities of all parties with respect to attendance;
- To communicate to all relevant parties the legal position with respect to attendance and the categories of absence which are deemed "authorised";
- To communicate the need for families and school staff to work in close partnership to achieve high attendance.

### 3. Introduction

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, places a legal duty on parents/carers to ensure that any child of compulsory school age receives full-time education that is suitable to their age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs the child may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

In order to maximize the opportunities available to children and to enable them to reach their full potential, a high level of school attendance and punctuality is essential. We aspire to achieve 100% attendance for every child. We acknowledge that there may be times when a child is unavoidably absent from school.

St Neot School supports children and parents by:

- *Promoting the value of high attendance and punctuality and reducing absence, lateness and particularly persistent absence*
- *Ensuring every child has access to full time education to which they are entitled*
- *Acting early to support high attendance and address absence*
- *Ensuring school is a safe and supportive environment in which children can thrive.*

### 4. Why regular attendance is important

Any absence impacts on the progress of a child and disrupts learning, relationships with peers and academic, personal and social development. Repeated absence is therefore most likely to be detrimental to children and to seriously impede their learning. Any child's absence disrupts teaching and may, therefore, affect the learning of others in the same class.

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

### 5. Safeguarding

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities, in relation to their education functions, and governing bodies of maintained schools to ensure that they exercise their functions with a view of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

A child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and, within the context of this school, we will adhere to the latest safeguarding policies and practices. A child missing from education may be at risk of abuse or neglect or become a victim of harm, exploitation or radicalisation. Failing to attend school on a regular basis is therefore a safeguarding concern.

Here at St Neot School we monitor trends and patterns of absence for all pupils as a part of our standard procedure. However, it is recognised that sudden or gradual changes in a pupil's attendance may indicate additional or more extreme safeguarding issues. In line with government guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#), local procedures and the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, staff will monitor and report any safeguarding concerns within the school to the Designated Safeguarding (DSL) who will forward to the relevant authorities as appropriate. As part of the school's safeguarding duty and standard procedures, staff will inform the Local Authority and/or the Police of the details of any pupil who is absent from school when they cannot establish their whereabouts and there is concern for the pupil's welfare.

If a pupil is not attending school regularly as required, staff may make home visits to see and speak to the pupil and parents/carers as part of the school's safeguarding and attendance processes. If staff are unable to see and speak to the pupil and parents/carers, they may contact the pupil's emergency contacts and/or other professionals or contacts of the family, who they reasonably expect may be able to provide the school with relevant information.

## 6. Why do pupils benefit from 'high' attendance?

Achieving high school attendance is a national priority. St Neot School's data clearly shows a correlation between high attendance rates and high achievement.

We want our children to achieve excellent attendance in line with national average. Illness usually appears as a block of time off school. We review attendance patterns each week and look for unbroken and broken weeks as a key indicator. We would not usually expect that children would have more than one or two broken weeks in the course of an academic year. Regular broken weeks are a cause for concern and we will offer support to families where there are more frequent broken weeks, in line with our attendance procedures. The impact broken weeks and missed learning can have on a child's education (taken from national data) is illustrated below for guidance:

If your child misses...	That equals at least...	Which is the same as....	And over 13 years of education that's...	Or at least...
1 day a fortnight	80 lessons per year	4 whole school weeks per year	Nearly 1.5 whole years	1040 lessons
1 day a week	160 lessons per year	8 whole school weeks per year	Over 2.5 whole years	2080 lessons
2 days a week	320 lessons per year	16 whole school weeks per year	Over 5 whole years	4160 lessons
3 days a week	480 lessons per year	24 whole school weeks per year	Nearly 8 whole years	6240 lessons

## 7. Understanding absence

By law, schools must register pupils for two sessions each day (morning and afternoon registration). Every half-day of absence must be classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about the nature of any absence is always required from parents.

'Authorised absence' means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil to be away from the school or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence. The following information outlines the main circumstances where absence may be authorised by St Neot School:

### Illness

- In most cases, absences for illness which are reported by parents/carers in line with the school's absence reporting procedures will be authorised.
- If the school has a genuine and reasonable concern about the authenticity of the illness, the school will request medical information and/or evidence to support the absence - such as a prescription, appointment card, or other appropriate form of information/evidence.
- If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded

as unauthorised.

- Where a pupil has a high level and/or frequency of absence, the school may require suitable information and/or evidence in order to authorise any future absence where illness has been given as the reason. If this is the case, the school will make the parent/carer/s aware of this expectation in advance.
- The reporting of absence due to illness remains the responsibility of the parent/carer. Absences due to illness which have **not** been reported to the school by the parent/carer on the first and any subsequent days of absence may not be authorised.

### **Pupils taken ill during the school day**

If a pupil needs to be sent home from school due to illness, this will be agreed by an appropriately authorised member of school staff. In such circumstances, the pupil must be collected by a parent/carer or adult authorised to collect the child by the parent/carer and identified to the school. No pupil who is ill will be allowed to leave the school without being collected by a known adult. Even if a family home is relatively close to the school, we do not allow sick children to walk home unaccompanied.

### **Medical/dental appointments**

- Parents/carers must, wherever possible, arrange for medical and dental appointments to take place outside of school hours. Where appointments during the school day are unavoidable, the pupil should only be absent for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. It is not acceptable for a pupil to miss a whole day for an appointment, unless absolutely necessary, in which case the school will need an explanation as to why this is. The school recognises that pupils with a health condition may have a higher number of medical appointments than other pupils and it is therefore possible that at least some of these appointments may be during the school day.
- If a pupil must attend a medical appointment during the school day, they must be collected from the school office by the parent/carer or another authorised adult and signed out. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parent/carer's confirmation.
- The school reserves the right to request evidence of appointments from parents/ carers. Suitable evidence may include appointment letters or cards, copies of emails from a verifiable address (e.g. NHS) confirming the date and time of the appointment.

## **8. Exceptional Circumstances Leave of Absence**

By law, head teachers are not allowed to authorise absence during term time unless the circumstances are exceptional.

All requests from parents for term time leave of absence must be made in writing to the head teacher using the school's Absence Request Form Exceptional Circumstances (a copy of which is attached in Appendix 4 to this policy and which is available on the school's website or from Reception). Wherever possible, a request must be made at least 3 weeks (15 school days) prior to the requested leave of absence. Parents will receive written notification to confirm whether their request has been authorised.

Each application from parents for an 'exceptional circumstances' leave of absence during term time will be considered on its own merit. In case an exceptional circumstances leave of absence is not authorised, the school will send a letter to the parent/carer based on the model letter attached hereto as Appendix 5.

## **9. Persistent absence**

In line with DfE Guidance, a pupil is considered as 'persistently absent' when they miss 10% or more of their schooling across the school year **for any reason**. Absence at this level is highly likely to significantly harm a child's educational progress.

Children who are persistently or severely absent are supported by school staff in line with our attendance procedures.

## **10. Home/school partnership**

St Neot School works in close partnership with parents and families to achieve high attendance for every pupil.

### **Parents must:**

- Contact the school on the first day and on each subsequent day in case of a child's absence – by 8.50am at the latest; or
- Ensure their child arrives at school on time – the school gates close at 8.45am and morning registration closes at 9.00am

Late arrival after registers close may be classed as an absence –see Appendix 1 – Registration Procedures for more detail.

Arrival after the registers close without satisfactory explanation will result in an unauthorised absence being recorded on the register.

### **The school will:**

- Contact parents on the first day of absence if a reason for absence has not been given. Wherever possible the school will phone the parent to discuss their child's absence;
- Meet with parents to discuss and agree support to improve attendance in line with our attendance procedures.
- Escalate concerns about attendance to the head teacher when appropriate and in line with our attendance procedures to ensure children receive support to attend school regularly.
- Where necessary to ensure regular attendance, apply for sanctions such as Penalty Notice fines or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. In all cases we believe it is in the child's best interests to attend school regularly and our decision making is always led by our commitment to protecting the entitlement of children to full time education.
- Follow up promptly any concerns parents pass on to us that may be affecting a child's attendance;
- Provide support and involve the school's support staff and other support agencies to help pupils re-integrate into school after illness or other individual circumstances;
- Regularly remind pupils (where appropriate) of the importance of high attendance and



- punctuality for example, through assemblies and class time;
- Acknowledge and celebrate improving attendance.

## **11. Telephone numbers**

There are times when the school needs to contact parents about educational matters, including attendance, punctuality and absence. The school may also need to contact parents in the event of an emergency. Therefore, we need to have correct parental contact phone numbers at all times. Parents must ensure the school always has an up to date contact number. **Parents have a duty to notify the school as soon as possible of any changes to their contact details.**

## **12. Supporting high attendance and reporting**

To promote the importance of high attendance and punctuality, the school will recognise improvement in attendance.

Attendances, punctuality and absence are reported to parents in all written reports and attendance records are available to parents on request.

## **13. Students with Special Educational Needs (SEND)**

Our school supports the attendance of pupils with SEND and understands that their specific needs present additional school challenges. Good attendance for all pupils including and especially those with SEND is crucial in ensuring academic and social progress. Further information relating to the support available to pupils with SEND is available from the school's SENDCO.

## **14. Young Carers**

Students identified as Young Carers are offered additional support to ensure they can achieve high attendance. We recognise that attending regularly can be particularly challenging for Young Carers. Further information about the support available for our Young Carers is available from our Pastoral Team.

## **15. Failure to secure regular attendance at school**

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 £80 if paid within 21 days or £160 if paid after this but within 28 days. If your child is further absent from school without authorisation within any 3- year period, you will be committing a further 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 for a second offence are issued per liable parent, per child and each carry a fine of £160, payable within 28 days. Importantly, fines per parent will be capped to two fines within any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action such as a parenting order or prosecution will be considered. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may also result in legal action. If you are prosecuted and attend court because your child has not been attending school, you could get a fine of up to £2,500. Cornwall Council may also apply for the costs incurred in taking the matter to Court, including legal costs. Absence not authorised by the school may also 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.

Again, Cornwall Council may also apply for the costs incurred in taking the matter to Court, including legal costs. Money raised from fines is only used by the local authority to cover the costs of administering the system, and to fund attendance support. Any extra money is returned to the government.

## Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Registration Procedures
- Appendix 2 – Punctuality Procedure
- Appendix 3 – Attendance letters (Model Letters)
- Appendix 4 – Exceptional Circumstances Leave Request Form
- Appendix 5 - **Exceptional Circumstances Leave** not authorised (Model Letter)

## Appendix 1: Registration Procedures

### Staff Guide to registers and associated procedures:

This Appendix 1 complements our Attendance Policy and should be read in conjunction with it. It deals with the practicalities of completing registers and associated attendance procedures. The register is a legal document which may be used as evidence in court. The decision on whether or not to authorise a particular absence rest with the Head teacher..

### Marking the register

A register is taken at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session to ensure the school has accurate information about where children are. Every register must be taken accurately and in a timely way as an essential part of the school's culture of safeguarding. The responsibility for taking the register will be held by the class teacher (including supply or temporary teachers), cover supervisor, or other school staff as appropriate. The class teacher will record attendance of a child at morning and afternoon registration. In some circumstances, the Head teacher will authorise another member of staff to take the register with the same level of delegated authority as the teacher or tutor.

### Reading the registers

The registration information is read every morning after registration. It is imperative that the data entered is accurate and that there is a mark for **EVERY** pupil. Every pupil **must** fall into one of the three categories of present, absent or late. Staff must enter either 'present', 'absent' or 'late' (+ how many minutes late). **Staff have a responsibility to safeguard the children in school's care and it is vital that the information held is accurate.**

The school operates a policy of '1<sup>st</sup> day response' regarding absence across the school. The Administrator will contact the parents of any child who is absent without an explanation.

### Communication with/from parents

Same-day contact has been shown to be the single most effective strategy in improving rates of attendance. It is also vital to safeguard children. Parents must contact the school as early as possible on the **first** day of absence to notify the school of their child's absence and the reason for absence.

Communication by phone or in person is required on each day of a period of absence. If absence notes are received, they should be initialed and dated by the class teacher. **All notes must be sent to the Administrator on the same day they are received.**

### Punctuality

- Registration closes at 9am and at 1pm. Thereafter a pupil's absence will be recorded as late (L).
- A pupil should be marked as **late** when the class teacher has completed the register and a pupil arrives after the register has been "sent". A late mark should be added for any student who arrives to class after 9am and after 1pm. The number of minutes late should be recorded.
- Parents may be prosecuted for persistently failing to get their child to school on time. The school will take a robust response to pupils who are regularly arriving late.

## Appendix 2: Punctuality Procedure

### Aim:

- To achieve high levels of punctuality for all pupils, through partnership with parents and students.

### Rationale:

- Excellent punctuality is central to learning. For pupils to achieve their potential it is essential that high levels of punctuality are maintained. All parents are expected to ensure that their children are on time every day.

Our school acknowledges its legal duties under the Equality Act 2010, with respect to safeguarding and in respect to students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

### Punctuality

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of a lesson they may miss work and vital information to support progress. Late arriving pupils disrupt lessons and the learning of others. The school gates close at 8.45am and we expect every child to be in registration at that time. Registers will close at 9am and a child will receive a late mark if they are not present in the class.

If a child arrives after the register closes at 9am and the explanation provided is not satisfactory they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this may **not** count as a present mark and it may mean they have an unauthorised absence. Ten or more unauthorised sessions (5 school days) in 100 sessions (50 school days/10 school weeks) could result in a first warning of Penalty Notice and/or prosecution.

If a child is persistently late, parents/carers will be asked to meet with a member of school staff and/or Head teacher to resolve the problem. We encourage parents/carers to approach us at any time if there are problems getting a child to school on time.

All pupils are expected to be on time every day and to every lesson. Lateness is only excused in exceptional circumstances. Where lateness is caused by unforeseen family circumstances, parents must contact the school to provide a reason, or provide a written explanation. Persistent lateness will not be authorised.

If a pupil is late to school and arrives during registration, this will be recorded by the school Administrator, who will ask parents/carers to accompany the child into the Reception Office and sign in providing an explanation for the late arrival. The Administrator will monitor punctuality and follow schools' absence management process.

## Appendix 3: Attendance letters (Model Letters)

### Appendix 3a: Tier 1 Letter

Private and Confidential

Mr & Mrs

House

Street

Town

Postcode

Date

Dear Parental Salutation

Pupil name:	Attendance percentage:
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During routine absence monitoring this term, it has been noted that your child has already had **two/three/five** weeks broken by absence related to illness and/or arrival after the close of register.

We know that pupils are likely to fall behind their friends and classmates when they miss school. At St Neot School we want the amount of missed education to be reduced as much as possible. We believe that our community is stronger together, with all of our children in school, on time, every day. We are building life skills, life-long friendships and preparing your child for future success.

We also know that you can have a significant effect on **{Pupil Name}** absences this academic year and we would really appreciate your help and support ensuring that **{Pupil Name}** comes to school every day so that they can get the best possible outcomes. We know that sometimes our pupils cannot come to school because they are really unwell - and that's the right thing to do for them and other students. Medical advice is clear however that children with mild illness will often be well enough to attend - for example if they have a cough, or cold. The NHS guidance [Is my child too ill for school? - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk) is designed to support parents in their decision making about mild illness.

We very much value your support and have researched how parents can help improve attendance:

- Be clear with your child that they must attend school whenever possible.
- Book routine medical and other appointments outside of school time.

- Do not allow your child to take occasional 'days off' and only allow them to stay at home if they are so unwell that they cannot reasonably attend school.

Please help us to ensure your child's attendance improves and be assured that we remain available to assist with any barriers or issues that you feel may be impacting on your child's ability to attend school regularly. If you would like to discuss your child's attendance, or if you would like further advice, please contact me on 01579 320580. However, please be aware that if we do not hear from you and your child accrues further absence, a referral to the pastoral team will be made who will contact you direct to undertake further enquiry.

Yours sincerely

Head teacher

## Appendix 3b: Tier 2 Letter

Private and Confidential

Mr & Mrs

House

Street Town

Postcode

Date

Dear **Parental salutation**

**Re: Child's Name**

You will be aware that your child's attendance at school has been cause for concern this **term/year**. We note that **add number** weeks have already been broken by absence as a result of **illness, unexplained absence or arrival after the close of register**.

We are committed to supporting you and your child to ensure that they have access to education and learning in line with any identified health needs.

We believe that our community is stronger together, with all of our pupils in school, on time, every day. We are building life skills, life-long friendships and preparing your child for future success. Therefore, we would like to invite you to attend a pupil support plan meeting on **add date** at **add school** so that we may better understand and assist with any barriers or issues preventing your child from attending school regularly.

We look forward to meeting with you.

Yours sincerely

Head teacher

## Appendix 3c: Tier 2 Medical Information Letter

Private and Confidential

Mr & Mrs

House

Street

Town

Postcode

Date

Dear Parental/Carer salutation

**Re: Child's Name**

I am writing to you as your child's school attendance continues to be of concern.

As you are no doubt aware, attendance at school has a huge impact on your child's academic achievement; if this pattern of attendance were to continue, it could have a significant impact and your child could fail to achieve their potential.

I appreciate that **NAME** has been experiencing difficulty attending school. In line with our Attendance Policy's tiered response, and due to the number of weeks your child has had broken by absence, we now require medical evidence and/or information to be supplied to the school in order for us to authorise any further absence. This evidence should relate to specific days that your child is absent or any condition that is identified or suspected as impacting on your child's ability to attend school regularly.

**All further absence will remain unauthorised on schools register unless medical evidence and/or information is provided to school.** For ad hoc absence you can provide a compliment slip or appointment card from the doctor's surgery. Prescription slips or packaging for any prescribed medicines for your child could also be provided. However, where absence is more frequent and related to a health issue, we require clear and concise information from the health practitioners involved, so that we can ensure we provide access to education in line with your child's identified health need.

**Please note that the school does not pay for medical letters. It is the responsibility of the parents and health practitioners managing the child's condition to provide any medical evidence or information.**

If you are unable to provide information relating to your child's absence from school, further



absence may not be authorised. Please be aware that parents may face prosecution should their children have absences that are not supported by health-related information or evidence, and as such are not authorised by the school.

**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 £80 if paid within 21 days or £160 if paid after this but within 28 days. If your child is further absent from school without authorisation within any 3-year period, you will be committing a further 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 for a second offence are issued per liable parent, per child and each carry a fine of £160, payable within 28 days. Importantly, fines per parent will be capped to two fines within any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action such as a parenting order or prosecution will be considered. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may also result in legal action. If you are prosecuted and attend court because your child has not been attending school, you could get a fine of up to £2,500. Cornwall Council may also apply for the costs incurred in taking the matter to Court, including legal costs. Absence not authorised by the school may also 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.**

**Again, Cornwall Council may also apply for the costs incurred in taking the matter to Court, including legal costs. Money raised from fines is only used by the local authority to cover the costs of administering the system, and to fund attendance support. Any extra money is returned to the government.**

I will continue to monitor **NAME's** attendance and if their attendance fails to improve, it may be necessary for the school to proceed to Tier 3 and an Education Planning Meeting where you will be made aware of your legal responsibilities as **parent/carer**, and information will be given as to what legal action could be taken should **child name** not attend regularly in the future.

We remain committed to supporting you and your child to access their education and learning. If you would like further advice with regard to any issues surrounding your child's absences from school, please do not hesitate to contact either the pastoral team or me, for further information.

Yours sincerely

Head teacher

## Appendix 3d: Tier 3 First warning Letter

Private and Confidential

Mr & Mrs

House

Street

Town

Postcode

Date

Dear **Parental salutation**

**Re: Child's Name**

### **First Warning Letter of Prosecution for Poor School Attendance.**

I am writing to inform you that following a review of **child's name**, **his/her** attendance has still not improved.

I enclose for your information a copy of his/her latest attendance certificate from St Neot School. You will see that **his/her** attendance is currently **--%** and **he/she** has accrued **--** sessions of unauthorised absence, with **--** weeks broken by absence since **0?/09/202?**. I am therefore issuing you with a First Warning Letter of Prosecution and would be grateful if you could take some time to carefully read through the enclosed Warning Document.

I would like to visit you at home on **-----** **at-----** to explain the Warning Letter in more detail and to discuss how we can work together to improve **child's name** attendance. I can offer advice and support, but must also explain the possible legal implications in regard to absences that are not now authorised by school in accordance with Cornwall's Local Authority policy and process. Please be aware that you may face prosecution in the Magistrates Court for failure to ensure your child attends school on a regular basis, under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

I hope when we meet we can agree a further support plan to improve **child's name** attendance, but in accordance with our Attendance Policy, if **his/her** attendance does not improve, and they miss a further 10 sessions within the next 10 school weeks, I will be left with no alternative other than to call an Education Planning Meeting where a decision on taking legal action will be made, should we be unable to resolve the attendance problems.

Please contact me if you have any queries in regard to this letter. You can also contact me to rearrange the appointment, if the date and time are not convenient.

Yours sincerely,

Head teacher

POLICY

## Appendix 4: Exceptional Circumstance Leave Request Form

### 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 Head teachers 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 £80 if paid within 21 days or £160 if paid after this but within 28 days. If your child is further absent from school without authorisation within any 3- year period, you will be committing a further 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 for a second offence are issued per liable parent, per child and each carry a fine of £160, payable within 28 days. Importantly, fines per parent will be capped to two fines within any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action such as a parenting order or prosecution will be considered. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may also result in legal action. If you are prosecuted and attend court because your child has not been attending school, you could get a fine of up to £2,500. Cornwall Council may also apply for the costs incurred in taking the matter to Court, including legal costs. Absence not authorised by the school may also 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.*

*Again, Cornwall Council may also apply for the costs incurred in taking the matter to Court, including legal costs. Money raised from fines is only used by the local authority to cover the costs of administering the system, and to fund attendance support. Any extra money is returned to the government.*

'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 Reception 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 Neot School.

POLICY

## ST NEOT SCHOOL ABSENCE REQUEST FORM

for exceptional circumstances

To: The Head teacher

*I wish to apply for the following leave of absence:*

Child's name ..... Class .....

Child's name ..... Class .....

Date from ..... date to .....(inclusive)

Name of Parent(s)/Carer(s): .....

Address: .....

Please explain the circumstances that you would like the school to consider and continue on a separate sheet if needed.

Signature of Parent(s)/Carer(s)

Office use only		
Date form received	No of school days absence requested	% Attendance

Absence authorised Number of days\_\_ Code\_\_  
 Absence unauthorised Number of days\_\_ Code\_\_  
 Signed \_\_\_\_\_ HT

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**This portion to be returned to parents/carers**

Pupil(s) name(s).....

Class/Year .....

Absence authorised  Number of days ..... from .....to ..... (inclusive)

Absence unauthorised  Number of days ..... from .....to ..... (inclusive)

Current attendance ..... % as of ...../...../20.....

Signed .....Head teacher Signed.....Governor

Date.....

**NOTES TO PARENTS/CARERS**

The law does not grant parents/carers an automatic right to take their children out of school during term time. If the request is for an absence in term time you must have Parental Responsibility and be the parent/carer with whom the child normally lives. Permission must be sought in advance. If the circumstances relating to this request are considered exceptional and the

absence is authorised by the school, the authorising of the absences will be conditional on the child(ren) attending satisfactorily up to the date covered by this request.

## ABSENCE IN TERM-TIME

THE FACTS	THE LAW
<p>School aged pupils in Cornwall maintained schools are expected to attend punctually on the 190 days that the school is open. Whilst there are a number of unavoidable reasons why a pupil might be away from school (illness, medical appointments, exclusions etc), the legislation is clear that any avoidable absence may only be authorised by a school if there are exceptional circumstances.</p> <p><b>WHAT YOU SHOULD CONSIDER</b></p> <p>Research suggests that children who are taken out of school may never catch up on the learning they have missed. This may affect test results and can be particularly detrimental for the children in year 6.</p> <p>Children who struggle with English or Mathematics may also find it even harder to cope when they return to school, or may find it difficult to renew friendships with their classmates.</p> <p>If the school is unable to authorise the absence and the child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as unauthorised absence and you may receive a penalty for each child.</p>	<p>The law allows schools to consider individual requests to authorise a future avoidable absence. However before the school can authorise any such requests, they must satisfy themselves that there are exceptional circumstances which justify such a decision. It is entirely the responsibility of the parent submitting the request to provide sufficient information/evidence in order to establish this fact. The request for leave must come from a parent with whom the child normally resides.</p> <p>If a child then stays away from school for more than the authorised period this must be recorded as unauthorised absence.</p> <p>In the case of unexpected extended absence, it is advisable that the parent fully informs the school as to the reasons.</p>

<p><b>Unavoidable absence from school will be authorised if it is for the following reasons:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Illness</li> <li>▪ Unavoidable medical / dental appointments</li> <li>▪ Days of religious observance</li> <li>▪ Seeing a parent who is on leave from the armed forces</li> <li>▪ External examinations</li> <li>▪ When Traveller children go on the road with their parents</li> </ul>	<p><b>Examples of absence from school that cannot be authorised:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Shopping</li> <li>▪ Minding the house</li> <li>▪ Birthdays</li> <li>▪ Resting after a late night</li> <li>▪ Relatives visiting or visiting relatives</li> <li>▪ Holidays</li> </ul>
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Please contact the head teacher if you wish to discuss this issue.

The law requires parents to ensure their children receive an efficient full time education, and every minute of every day is important. Please help them not to miss any of this valuable time.

We hope that when you have read this leaflet you will consider that your child's education is too important to allow them to miss school for avoidable reasons.

\*Penalty Notice £80 if paid within 21 days, increasing to £160 if paid after 21 days and before 28 days.

If you allow your child to miss school in term time for an avoidable reason without obtaining the prior approval of the school, you may be issued with a Penalty Notice\* per parent per child, or made the subject of court proceedings under section 444 Education Act 1996.

As a parent/carer, you can demonstrate your commitment to your child's education by not allowing your child to miss school for anything other than an exceptional and unavoidable reason.

## Appendix 5: Exceptional Circumstances Leave not authorised (Model Letter)

Private and Confidential

Mr & Mrs **Name**

**House**

**Street**

**Town**

**Postcode**

Date

Dear **Parental Salutation**

I am writing regarding your request to take **(child name)** out of school on **Date** until **Date**.

The law states that a planned absence from school should only be authorised for pupils in 'exceptional circumstances'. Here at St Neot School, we recognise that there are occasions when it is appropriate to authorise an absence; we look at each request on its own merit, before reaching a decision.

Unfortunately, we regret that on this occasion we are unable to authorise your request for absence. If **(pupil name)** does not attend school on the dates concerned, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. In cases where parents subsequently report their child as ill during this period, we reserve the right to record the absence as unauthorised.

I urge you to reconsider your decision, and bring to your attention the following warning;

***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 £80 if paid within 21 days or £160 if paid after this but within 28 days. If your child is further absent from school without authorisation within any 3-year period, you will be committing a further 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 for a second offence are issued per***



***liable parent, per child and each carry a fine of £160, payable within 28 days. Importantly, fines per parent will be capped to two fines within any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action such as a parenting order or prosecution will be considered. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may also result in legal action. If you are prosecuted and attend court because your child has not been attending school, you could get a fine of up to £2,500. Cornwall Council may also apply for the costs incurred in taking the matter to Court, including legal costs. Absence not authorised by the school may also 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.***

***Again, Cornwall Council may also apply for the costs incurred in taking the matter to Court, including legal costs. Money raised from fines is only used by the local authority to cover the costs of administering the system, and to fund attendance support. Any extra money is returned to the government.***

'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.

St Neot School is committed to maximising the education of all its pupils and aims to work with parents to ensure this can be achieved. If you would like to discuss this matter further, please contact the school at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely

Head teacher

