



Pennoweth Primary School and Nursery

Pupil Attendance Policy

Date of Policy	December 2020
Review Date	December 2022

1. Introduction

1.1 **Pennoweth Primary School and Nursery** is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

1.2 The whole school community – pupils, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's part in this.

1.3 The policy has been drawn up based on current government and Local Authority guidance and statutory regulations. The school will ensure that all members of the community know of the policy and have access to it.

2. School's roles and responsibilities

2.1 **All staff** (teaching and support) at Pennoweth Primary and Nursery School have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our pupils are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

2.2 **Senior Leadership and the attendance leader (T Billing)** will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. The Attendance Leader, will ensure that up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared with all staff, pupils and parents (who will regularly be reminded about the importance of good school attendance) and that the Governing Body is fully aware of attendance data and targets. She will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

2.3 Registration

i) The school is required to mark the attendance register twice each day; once at the start of the day and once during the afternoon session. Classroom teachers are responsible for completing the attendance registers using the prescribed codes (see below).

Codes	Description	Meaning
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Education off site (no Dual reg)	Approval Education Activity
C	Other authorised circumstances	Authorised Absence
D	Dual registration	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded	Authorised Absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised Absence
G	Family holiday (not agreed)	Unauthorised Absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised Absence
I	Illness	Authorised Absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised Absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised Absence
O	Unauthorised Abs	Unauthorised Absence

Codes	Description	Meaning
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised Absence
S	Study leave	Authorised Absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised Absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised Absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
#	School closed to pupils & staff	Attendance not required
Y	Enforced closure	Attendance not required
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Attendance not required
Z	Pupil not on roll	Attendance not required
-	All should attend/No mark recorded	No mark

ii) The register will be called promptly at 8.50 am and at the beginning of the afternoon session by each class teacher and a mark will be made during the registration period in respect of each child.

iii) The registers will close at 9.10 am. Any pupil who arrives after the closing of the register will be marked as absent. Any child arriving late but before the closing of the register will be marked as late.

2.4 Categorising absence

i) A mark will be made in respect of each child following the close of the registers. Any child who is not present will be marked unauthorised absence unless leave has been granted by the school in advance or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended in such a way that the original entry and the amendment / correction are distinguishable. The decision about whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised rests with the Headteacher.

ii) Pennoweth Primary and Nursery School recognises the clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding children. It recognises that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be as damaging to a child's education. Any such inappropriate authorisation of absence could well send a message to parents that any reason for non-school attendance is acceptable. This in turn may make children extremely vulnerable to harm. If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, staff at Pennoweth Primary and Nursery School will challenge parents about the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school

iii) If no explanation about an absence is received by the school within 2 weeks, the absence will remain unauthorised.

iv) Absence will be authorised in the following circumstances:

A) Where leave has been granted by the school in advance, for example:

- A pupil is to participate in an approved performance for which a licence has been granted by the Local Authority.
- A pupil is involved in an exceptional special occasion – in authorising such an absence the individual circumstances of the particular case and the pupil's overall pattern of attendance will be considered.
- In exceptional circumstances, permission has been granted for a family holiday for which the parents have sought permission in advance (see appendix for the school's term-time leave of absence form).

B) Where the school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend.

C) Where the pupil has a medical appointment (although parents should be encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible, and to return their child to school immediately afterwards – or send him / her to school beforehand).

D) Where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control, eg extreme weather conditions.

E) The absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's / student's parents belong.

F) The pupil lives more than two miles (if he/she is under eight) or three miles (if he/she has reached eight) and no suitable transport arrangements have been made by the Local Authority.

G) The pupil / student is of no fixed abode, his/her parent is engaged in a trade which required him/her to travel, the pupil / student has attended school as often as the nature of the trade permits and, have reached the age of six, he/she has attended 200 sessions in the preceding 12 months.

H) In other exceptional circumstances (eg a family bereavement) and for a very limited period.

v) Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised.

Some examples of reasons for not authorising absence would be:

- No explanation has been given by the parent.
- The school is not satisfied with the explanation.
- The pupil or parents are staying at home to mind the house.
- The pupil or parents are shopping during school hours.
- The pupil is absent for unexceptional reasons, eg a birthday.
- The pupil is absent from school on a family holiday and the reason for the absence is not considered 'exceptional' (as defined by the government).
- The pupil has been stopped during a truancy sweep and is unable (or the parent is unable) to give a satisfactory reason for the absence.

2.5 Approved educational activity

Where a student is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the school will check his/her attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register.

2.6 Absences after close of class registers

Any sudden absences that occur during the day will be picked up immediately by the classteacher and reported to the school office. The school office will advise the Headteacher.

2.7 Traveller Families

The special position of Traveller families is recognised by Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act. Section 444 advises local authorities that:

"Traveller parents are protected from conviction (for the non-attendance of their children at school), if the parents can show that their trade or business requires them to travel, and the child has attended school as regularly as the nature of the trade or business allows, and the child – where aged six or over – has attended school for at least 200 sessions during the preceding twelve months."

This does not mean that part time education for Traveller children is legally acceptable, nor does it relieve the parents of their duties under section 36 of the 1944 Education Act to ensure that children are receiving a suitable education when not in school.

- Absence **must** be authorised for the following reason: The family travelling for work.
- Absence **may** be authorised for the following reasons:
 - Absence due to lateness because the family is forced to travel a long distance to bring the child to school to ensure continuity of education.
 - Absence due to family occasions for which the parents make an application to the Head Teacher for Exceptional Leave.

Travelling families may not be able to give schools prior warning of an absence, or a written note following an absence. Therefore it is important to work with parents to encourage oral communication e.g. by phone, when parents collect children after school, or via other relatives.

2.8 Staff Training

The School Attendance Leader will ensure that all staff responsible for taking registers, including any temporary or supply staff, receives sufficient training to enable them to perform the task accurately.

3. Collection and analysis of data

3.1 The Attendance Leader will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to staff, parents and the governing body. The report should include commentary on the trajectory and the school target. The data will inform the school's future practice to improve attendance and prevent disaffection.

3.2 Accurate attendance returns are made to the DfE (via the Local Authority and SIMS).

4. Systems and strategies for managing and improving attendance

4.1 Attendance has a high profile at Pennoweth Primary and Nursery School. Parents are regularly reminded about the importance of good attendance and its links to attainment.

4.2 Pennoweth Primary and Nursery School has procedures for dealing with unexplained absences within a week. The school office will contact the families for an explanation of absence and refer to the Headteacher.

4.3 First-day calling – Pennoweth Primary and Nursery School has in place a system of first-day calling. This means that parents will be telephoned on the first day if a pupil is absent without explanation to establish a reason for the absence. This helps to identify at an early stage pupils who do not have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parents' knowledge.

4.4 Meetings with parents - Where there is an emerging pattern to a pupil's absence over a 3 to 4 week period (or sooner if staff are particularly concerned), with or without explanation, the school will invite parents to a meeting to discuss the reasons for the absences. Plans should be put in place with the parents and pupil to resolve any difficulties and improve the attendance within a specified time limit – usually no more than 6 weeks. It will be explained to parents that any future absences will be unauthorised unless there is clear evidence of a good reason for them. Where attendance has dropped significantly below the expected attendance of 96% as a result of illness the school, as is their right, may decide to no longer authorise absence as a result of illness without parents/carers providing medical evidence from the hospital or GP.

4.5 Referral to the Education Welfare Service - If there continue to be unauthorised absences by the end of the specific time (or sooner if the pupil is failing to attend school at all), the matter will be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

4.6 Lateness and punctuality - Pupils are expected to arrive at school on time every day. It is very disruptive to their own education, and that of others in their class, if they are late. Pupils who arrive after the register closes will be marked absent for the whole session (a session being a morning or an afternoon). This absence will be unauthorised unless the school is satisfied that there is a legitimate reason for the pupil to be late. Such a reason will not include things such as missing the bus, clothes in the washing machine or lost shoes. A pupil who is persistently absent by reason of lateness will be

dealt with in the same way as other students with an emerging pattern of absence. If the matter is not resolved quickly, it will be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

4.7 Pupils / students who arrive late for school but before the register closes must report to the school office and will be recorded in the "Late Book". They will then be marked as late.

4.8 For health and safety reasons it is important that the school knows who is in the building. Pupils arriving late should therefore report to the school office. It is important that all pupils arriving late follow this procedure.

4.9 For the same reason it is important that parents of pupils leaving the premises legitimately (eg for a medical appointment), or returning to school later in the day inform the school office. The school office will record that the child has left the school site and will mark them back in when they return.

4.10 Post-registration truancy Post-registration truancy occurs when a pupil goes missing from school having previously registered for the session. This behaviour not only means the pupil will not be receiving a full-time education, it also potentially renders him/her vulnerable to harm. Pennoweth Primary and Nursery School takes this very seriously and will endeavour to ensure it does not happen. If, however, a pupil appears to have left the premises without authorisation, the school will try to make contact with his/her parents immediately. The school also has an obligation to report a child as a missing person to the police if they have left the school without authorisation.

5. Term-time Holidays (please note new statutory legislation, from Sept 2013)

5.1 Term-time holidays are intended for children whose parents are unable to take holiday at any other time.

5.2 Pennoweth Primary and Nursery School will consider every application individually, its policy is NOT to grant leave of absence for a holiday other than in the most exceptional circumstances. Time off school for family holidays is not a right. An application must be made in writing using the appropriate form (see appendix), with appropriate evidence, in advance of the intended holiday.

5.3 Pennoweth Primary and Nursery school will consider authorising exceptional leave of absence during term time for:

- Service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays during termtime.
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis.
- Parents who are subject to a strict and un-negotiable holiday rota and evidence is provided to this effect.

5.4 Requests for holidays for the following reason will not be authorised:

- Cheaper cost of holiday.
- Availability of the desired accommodation.
- Poor weather experienced in school holiday periods.
- Overlap with beginning or end of term

5.5 Pennoweth Primary and Nursery School will respond to all requests for a leave of absence using the appropriate form (see appendix) giving the reasons for the decision.

5.6 Pennoweth Primary and Nursery School will NOT authorise a holiday during periods of national tests, ie SATS examinations.

6. Extended leave of absence

6.1 In considering absence for extended trips overseas Pennoweth Primary and Nursery School will take account of the following:

- A visit to family overseas has a very different significance from a normal 'holiday'.
- Such visits may be important in terms of children's identity and self-esteem as they grow up.
- Parents may feel that the reasons for their visit outweigh the importance of their child's uninterrupted attendance at school (although parents could be encouraged to use the school holiday periods for at least part of their trip).
- The reasons for wishing to make a visit is more difficult, particularly for minority ethnic families, where huge distances and high costs are involved.
- Where extended leave of absence is granted there will be an expectation that the pupil undertakes some school-set work during this period.

7. Parents' / carers' responsibilities

7.1 The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parents / carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child), who will be supported and encouraged by Pennoweth Primary and Nursery School.

7.2 Pennoweth Primary and Nursery School expects parents / carers will:

- Ensure their children attend the school regularly.
- Support their children's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum.
- Not expect the school to automatically agree any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from school.
- Notify Pennoweth Primary and Nursery School on the first day of absence.
- Ensure their children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and with the right equipment for the day.
- Work in partnership with the school, for example by attending parents' meetings and consultations, taking an interest in their children's work and activities.
- Contact the school without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their children's school lives Pennoweth Primary and Nursery School will endeavour to support parents to address their concerns.

8. Pupils' responsibilities

8.1 All pupils should be aware of the importance of regular school attendance. If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school regularly, they should speak to any member of staff.

8.2 Pupils should attend all their lessons on time, ready to learn. If they have been absent from school they should provide a note from their parents to explain the absence. Pupils also have a responsibility for reporting to the school office if they arrive late.

9. Governors' responsibilities

Section 175 (2)

9.1 The governing body of a maintained school shall make arrangements for ensuring that their functions relating to the conduct of the school are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are pupils at the school.

10. Conclusion

Reviewing the policy The school will review this policy each year.

Request for Exceptional Leave of Absence Form

To: *Head Teacher of:*

I wish to apply to have an absence authorised, for:

Child's name: Class:

Child's name: Class:

Date from: Date to:
(Inclusive)

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

Address:
.....

Reason for requesting absence during term time (This section must be completed)

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

Office use only			<input type="radio"/> Absence authorised Code _____
Date form received	No. of school days absence requested	% Attendance	<input type="radio"/> Absence unauthorised
			Signed _____ Headteacher

This portion to be returned to parent/carers

Please note, that even if this absence request is authorised and your child's attendance levels drop below a level the school deems acceptable, you may still receive letters of concern from either the school or Local Authority.

Pupil(s) name(s): Class
s/Year:

Current Attendance % **as of**/...../20.....

- Absence Authorised Absence Unauthorised
 Non Statutory School Age Absence

Signed: (Head Teacher) Date:

NOTES TO PARENTS/CARERS

When requesting authorisation for a period of avoidable absence, the learning that will be missed as a result, must be considered. 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 you do not have Parental Responsibility and/or normally live with the child you **must** seek the consent of the parent/carer who does and that person should complete the form. Schools will only consider requests from parents/carers. Each school's Governors set their Attendance Policy which the school will then follow when deciding whether to allow term time leave for any reason.

Warning: If the school refuses your request and the child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and this may make you liable to a Penalty Notice for each child, payable by each parent/carer.

AVOIDABLE ABSENCE IN TERM-TIME

IMPORTANT: Please read carefully the information overleaf

WARNING: If you take your child on holiday in term time without the prior approval of the school, you may be liable for a Penalty Notice per parent per child – Penalty Notice £60 if paid within 21 days, increasing to £120 if paid after 21days and before 28 days.

As a parent/carer, you can demonstrate your commitment to your child's education by, whenever possible, taking your holidays during school holidays.

THE FACTS	THE LAW
<p>We recognise that it is often expensive to take a holiday during school breaks and that is why some parents may ask for term-time leave for their child. However, it is important that parents carefully consider the implications of taking their child out of school during term time.</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 harmful if the child is studying for final year examinations.</p> <p>Children who struggle with English or Mathematics may also find it even harder to cope when they return to school, while younger</p>	<p>The law does not say that parents have an automatic right to take their child out of school for holidays during term-time.</p> <p>However, in exceptional circumstances school may authorise, in advance, requests for periods of leave. 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 and could be quoted in a prosecution for poor attendance.</p>

children may find it difficult to renew friendships with their classmates.

WHAT YOU SHOULD CONSIDER

There are times during a school year when a child may experience particular problems because of term-time leave such as:-

- Closeness to exams or tests.
- During GCSE, and other examination courses.
- During the first year at a new school.
- At the beginning of a new school term.

If the school refuses a request for term-time leave and the child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as **unauthorised absence** and you may receive a £60* fine per parent for each child.

If the child is away from school for a total of four weeks or more, the school may refer as a Child Missing Education to the Local Authority and may then have the option to take the child off roll subject to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

In the case of unexpected extended absence, it is advisable that the parent fully informs the school as to the reasons. If a child is removed from roll, there is no guarantee that the child will regain a place at the school.

If you decide to still take your child out of school, without permission, you will be committing an offence under the Education Act 1996. The School may refer the matter to Cornwall Council who may decide to take legal action against you. A penalty notice can be issued under Section 444A and 444B of the Education Act 1996. This carries a fine of £60 per child, per parent if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid after this but within 28 days. Failure to pay the penalty notice will result in Court action. Persistent absences not authorised by the school may result in a prosecution in the Magistrates Court, Leading to fines up to £2,500 and/or custodial sentences.