

St Levan Primary School

where all children SHINE-for life

Attendance Policy - September 2015

It is the policy of our school to celebrate achievement. Attendance is crucial for a productive and successful school career. At St Levan we actively promote and encourage 100% attendance for our children.

1. Introduction

1.1 **St Levan Primary School** 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 St Levan 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 Attendance Leader

The Headteacher 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. As the Attendance Leader, the Headteacher 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. The School Secretary completes the registers using the prescribed codes:

REGISTER CODES

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING

/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	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 absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
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
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

ii) The register will be called promptly at **9.00 am** and **1.15 pm** by each classteacher and a mark will be made during the registration period in respect of each child.

iii) The registers will close at **9.10 am** and **1.25 pm**. 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) St Levan 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 as unauthorised absence, and will potentially send a message to parents that any reason for non-school attendance is acceptable and can render children extremely vulnerable to harm. If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, staff at St Levan 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 a week upon return**, 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 **absence request 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 without prior permission;

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 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 St Levan School. Parents are regularly reminded about the importance of good attendance and its links to attainment.

4.2 St Levan 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

St Levan 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. Where it is not possible to make contact with parents on the first day of absence, the school will send a letter to them by first class post.

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.

4.5 Referral to the Education Welfare Service

If there continues 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

Punctuality is vital for a positive start to the day for all of our children. We expect all children to arrive at school on time every day. It allows for the class and lessons to start uninterrupted and benefits all members of the school community. If a child misses the start of the day, they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. To support parents St Levan School is open to pupils from 8.15am for Morning Breakfast Club and there is supervised playground provision from 8.45am. The morning bell rings at 9.00am for the children to go to their classes for registration.

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 getting up late, clothes in the washing machine or lost shoes. The same procedures will be followed for a pupil who is persistently absent by reason of lateness 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 Children 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.

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

Amendments to The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 have removed references to family holidays and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. This means that the Headteacher will not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. It will be up to the Headteacher, in consultation with the Governors, to decide if the request will be authorised.

5.1 St Levan 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. An application must be made in writing using the appropriate absence request form (see appendix), with appropriate evidence, at least one month **in advance** of the intended holiday. Full reasons should be given and parents should not assume that the request will be automatically granted. The Headteacher may request a meeting with the parents before any decision is given to establish if the reasons are exceptional.

5.2 St Levan school will consider authorising exceptional leave of absence during term time for:

- service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays during term-time;
- 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.

5.3 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; and
- overlap with beginning or end of term.

5.4 St Levan School will respond to all requests for a leave of absence using the appropriate form (see appendix) giving the reasons for the decision.

5.5 St Levan School will not authorise a holiday during periods of national tests, ie SATS examinations.

6. Parents' / carers' responsibilities

6.1 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 St Levan School.

6.2 St Levan 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.

6.3 Parents will also be expected to:

- notify St Levan School on the first day of absence by 9.00am.
- 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. St Levan School will endeavour to support parents to address their concerns.

7. Pupils' responsibilities

7.1 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.

7.2 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.

8. Governors' responsibilities

Section 175 (2)

8.1 The governing body will ensure 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.

9. Conclusion

Reviewing the policy

The school will review this policy each year with its allocated Education Welfare Officer.

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

1. When does my child need to be in School?

Your child should be at school with sufficient time to be ready to join their class for the start of the day. The register is taken at 9.00am. Afternoon school starts at 1:15 pm.

2. What happens if my child is late?

Registration finishes at 9.10 in the morning and 1.25 in the afternoon.

Pupils who arrive after registration should report to the school office.

A series of unauthorised late marks may lead to referral to the EWO (Education Welfare Officer).

3. Does the School need letters explaining my child's absence or will a phone call do?

We would expect a parent to telephone the school on the first day of absence by 9.00am. We will telephone you if your child has not arrived in school by 9:30 a.m. On return to school, a letter explaining the absence is expected. If we do not receive an explanation, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, we will not authorise the absence.

If we are concerned about aspects of your child's attendance or punctuality we will contact you to discuss the best way forward.

An accumulation of unauthorised absences will lead to a referral to the Education Welfare Service.

4. What reasons will the school accept for absences?

- Illness
- Emergency dental/medical appointment.

(Please make routine appointments after school or during the holidays)

- Day of religious observance
- Family bereavement
- Family holidays in exceptional circumstances (only when prior approval has been given)

Except in the case of illness, you should ask for permission for your child to miss school well in advance, giving full details and completing the **leave of absence request form**. In cases of recurring absences through illness you may be asked to produce a medical certificate.

5 What is unacceptable?

The school will not authorise absences other than those in exceptional circumstances. Family holidays, day trips, shopping or birthdays are not classed as exceptional.

7 Can we take family holidays during term-time?

Family holidays should be taken during school holidays. Only in exceptional circumstances will permission be given. You need to request permission for your child to accompany you on a family holiday during term time. You should complete a leave of absence request form (see appendix) stating the reason why the holiday must be taken in term time. The Headteacher has the right to refuse permission.

8. What can I do to encourage my child to attend School?

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that he /she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his / her education. Your child will bring home a reading diary each evening. Please ensure you look at it with your child and sign it ready for the next day.

9. My child is trying to avoid coming to School. What should I do?

Contact your child’s class teacher immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with school work, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child’s reluctance to attend school and work together to solve the problem.

Monitoring and review

The Headteacher is responsible for monitoring the implementation of this policy and for seeking the views of staff, children and parents. The Headteacher will report to the governing body on the effectiveness of this policy.

This policy was approved by the full governing body in September 2015. It is due for review by September 2017

**ST LEVAN PRIMARY SCHOOL
ABSENCE REQUEST FORM (exceptional circumstances only)**

To: The Headteacher

I wish to apply for the following leave of absence during term time:

Child’s name Class

Child’s name Class

First day of absence Last day of absence Total number of days absent:.....

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

Address:

Please fully explain the exceptional circumstances that you would like the school to consider. This section must be completed. Please continue on a separate sheet if needed.

Signature of Parent(s)/Carer(s)

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

Meeting with Governors on: Exceptional Circumstances: Yes / No

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This portion to be returned to parents/carers

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

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

Class.....

- Absence authorised fromto (inclusive)
- Absence unauthorised current attendance % as of/...../20.....

Signed(Headteacher) 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.

Warning: If the school refuses your request and the child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. A significant amount of unauthorised absence may make you liable to a Penalty Notice for each child, payable by each parent/carer, or the subject of court proceedings which could result in a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a term of imprisonment of up to 3 months.

AVOIDABLE ABSENCE IN TERM-TIME

IMPORTANT: Please read carefully the information below.

WARNING: 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.

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>WHAT YOU SHOULD CONSIDER</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 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 children 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 £60* fine per parent 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 and could be quoted in a prosecution for poor attendance.</p> <p>If the child is away from school for a total of four weeks or more, the school may have the option to take the child off roll subject to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.</p> <p>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.</p>

<p><u>Unavoidable absence from school will be authorised if it is for the following reasons:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Genuine illness -Unavoidable medical / dental appointments (but try to make these after school if at all possible) -Days of religious observance -Seeing a parent who is on leave from the armed forces -External examinations -When Traveller children go on the road with their parents -Exceptional circumstances such as bereavement 	<p><u>Absence from school will not be authorised for:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Any type of shopping -Looking after siblings or unwell parents -Minding the house -Birthdays -Resting after a late night -Relatives visiting or visiting relatives
<p>Please contact your child's teacher if you wish to discuss this issue.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	

*Penalty Notice £60 if paid within 21 days, increasing to £120 if paid after 21 days and before 28 days