



## **St Hilary School Attendance Policy**

### **RATIONALE**

*We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, due to ill health, are prevented from coming to school.*

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2013, the Governing Body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether the absence was authorised or unauthorised.

### **ARRIVAL AND REGISTRATION**

- All children should be ready to come into school at **8.55 a.m.** each day. The register is taken twice a day at **9.00am and 1.15pm**. A day counts as 2 attendances.
- Morning registration ends at 9.15a.m. If a child arrives after the registration period, he / she will be marked in as Late. After 9.15 a.m. this will become an Unauthorised Absence unless a reason has been given which can be authorised.
- It is essential that children arriving and leaving school with a parent / guardian outside the normal hours are signed in or out from the office. The signing in / out register in the office is used in the case of an emergency or a fire drill.

### **ILLNESS AND MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS**

- Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours. If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment.
- The school office should be informed by 9.15am of the first day of a child's absence through illness and then each morning, if appropriate, for the duration of the absence. After 9.15am the school will telephone parents to clarify reasons for absence if no notification has been received.

### **DEFINITIONS**

*Authorised Absence* • An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence. • Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not

all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

*Unauthorised Absence* - An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the Headteacher.

## IF A CHILD IS ABSENT

- When a child is absent, the class teacher will record the absence in the register.
- The school office will endeavour to contact the parent or guardian, if no message has been received regarding the reason for the absence.
- Parents are, however, expected to email or telephone the school by 9.15a.m. on the morning of the day of absence to inform the school that their child will be absent. They are asked to state a reason.
- If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child.
- When a child with a Child Protection Plan is absent, parents will be contacted on the first day, and where unable to get a response social care will be informed.

## HOLIDAYS

The Governors recognise that pupil absence during term time can seriously disrupt a pupil's continuity of learning. Parents are therefore asked not to book family holidays during term time. The Headteacher and Admissions and attendance committee, has the discretion to grant leave, but will only do so in exceptional circumstances. Any pupil who goes on holiday during term time, without the school's permission will have the absence recorded as unauthorised. Parents can be fined for taking their child on holiday during term time, without consent from the school, in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 and Cornwall Council's Code of Conduct regarding Penalty Notices. If a parent takes a child on holiday after a request has been refused and the parent warned in writing, the local authority will consider prosecuting.

- *All holiday requests should be completed on the school holiday request form before any bookings are made.*
- *An absence for holiday that has not been agreed by the Headteacher will be recorded as unauthorised and the local authority may consider prosecuting.*
- *Authorisation will **not** be granted retrospectively.*
- ***Holiday requests will not be granted if the absence will push the child's attendance below 95% for the academic year.***

## **EXAMPLES OF WHAT MAY CONSTITUTE EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

To have a short absence to attend a family wedding, or a special family celebration (e.g. an 80th birthday of a grandparent); or to attend a special family reunion; or to attend a special religious/cultural festival, may constitute an exceptional circumstance.

- If a parent, due to the nature of their work, cannot possibly take time off during the regular school holidays, then this might constitute an exceptional circumstance.

**To take holiday in school time, because the cost is cheaper during term time, does not constitute an exceptional circumstance and will not be authorised.**

## **CRITERIA BY WHICH THE HEADTEACHER AND ADMISSIONS AND ATTENDANCE COMMITTEE WILL MAKE DECISIONS CONCERNING THE AUTHORISATION OF HOLIDAY ABSENCE**

- a) The general attendance of pupils will be considered. If a child has had a significant number of absences for any reason they will not be able to “afford” to miss any further schooling.
- b) A holiday request for exceptional circumstances is unlikely to be approved unless the child’s attendance is 95% or above for the past year.
- c) The timing of the proposed holiday – one of the worst times for a child to be absent is at the beginning of a new school year, particularly with a new teacher or a new class; and for Year 6 pupils, in the build up to and during the National Curriculum tests.
- d) Teachers will not set work for completion when a child is absent on holiday, but the child should be encouraged to read and keep a diary of their experiences.

## **LONG TERM ABSENCE**

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

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

## **REPEATED UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE**

- Unauthorised absences remain on the child’s record and may be reported to the Local Authority’s Education Welfare Officer (EWO)
- Attendance and punctuality are monitored by the EWO and the school. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents and guardians will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem.
- The EWO may also visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or guardians understand the seriousness of the situation.

- The school has the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

## **REWARDS FOR GOOD ATTENDANCE**

### **Good attendance will be awarded in the following ways:**

- Individual fortnightly stickers or bands awarded for very close to, or 100% attendance
- Individual half termly certificates awarded for 100% attendance
- A small 'gift' will be presented for 100% (or very close to) attendance at the end of each term
- Special certificates will be awarded for 100% attendance in a whole year (to be awarded in the final assembly of the Summer Term)
- A reward will be given each term to the class with the highest overall performance. \*

\* No child or class shall be penalized in the case of serious illness or exceptional circumstance, and appropriate awards in such cases will be issued at the Headteacher's discretion.

## **ATTENDANCE TARGETS**

The school is set a challenging attendance target each year.

These targets are agreed by the senior staff, the Chair of Governors. The Headteacher will report on attendance percentages in the termly report to the Governing Body.

The target for 2016-2017 is 90%.

## **MONITORING AND REVIEWING**

- It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance.
- The Governing Body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out.
- The Governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that the school's attendance figures are as high as they should be.
- The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.
- Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class. If they become aware of an unexpected pupil absence during the course of the school day, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the Headteacher, who will contact the parents or guardians.

**Policy Reviewed- Autumn 2016**

To be reviewed: Autumn 2017