



Lostwithiel School
Bodmin Hill
Lostwithiel
Cornwall
PL22 0AJ

www.lostwithiel.cornwall.sch.uk
Telephone: 01208 872339

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Lostwithiel Primary School

ATTENDANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES 2017-2018

At Lostwithiel School, as well as across the Peninsula Learning Trust, we are committed to providing a full and effective educational experience for all pupils. We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expect all staff, Governors, trainees and volunteers to embody and drive this commitment. We believe that if children are to benefit from education, good attendance is crucial. Irregular attendance undermines the educational process and can lead to educational and social disadvantage. We do all that we can to ensure maximum attendance. Any problems that prevent full attendance will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible in line with procedures agreed by the Governors.

It is the policy of our School to celebrate achievement. Attendance is a critical factor to a productive, enjoyable, connected and successful school career and establishes a good pattern for later life. We will actively promote, encourage and reward good and improved attendance for all our pupils. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance. Class teachers have a key role and responsibility in establishing good communications around attendance and will talk with parents and carers about this regularly.

To celebrate high attendance, we will be rewarding the pupils in our school with an end of half term celebration, such as a whole school disco or picnic, if our target of 96.5% is met at the end of each half term. The class with highest attendance will also be noted in the weekly newsletter. Additional information about the whole school attendance picture and updates about strategies and expectations will be included in newsletters throughout the year.

Aims and Objectives

- Encourage and support full attendance and punctuality
- Record and monitor attendance, absenteeism and lateness and apply appropriate strategies
- Acknowledge a successful record of attendance
- Ensure a consistent approach in line with all schools within the Peninsula Learning Trust that is in line with legislation
- provide a transparent process for parents and carers





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Statutory Duty of Schools and Parents

The Education Act 1996 requires parents/carers to ensure their children receive effective full-time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. Schools are responsible for recording pupil attendance twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. Parents/carers are legally responsible for ensuring that their children attend school. This extends to ensuring that pupils arrive at School on time, properly attired, and in a condition to learn. All schools will make every effort to promote good attendance, giving advice and support where needed.

The Education Welfare Service and School Attendance

The EWS is a part of Cornwall County Council. Its aim is to ensure that every child has the opportunity to benefit from a full time education by attending school regularly. The EWS can help and advise parents/carers who may be experiencing difficulties that prevent this. It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure that their child attends school regularly and the EWS expects parents/carers to do all that is necessary to make sure this happens.

The school will send a letter at the end of each half term of concern when a pupil's cumulative attendance falls below 95%. The attendance of the pupils(s) in question will be monitored throughout the following term and you may be asked to attend a meeting with the Headteacher and/or the EWS. Medical evidence may be requested if this becomes persistent absence.

The school may ask parents to attend an attendance clinic with the EWS if your child(ren) have attendance that is lower than 90% over a term.

What happens if your child does not attend school regularly (and their absence is not authorised)?

Schools are required to notify the Local Authority if a pupil has a number of unauthorised absences. Unauthorised absences can be acquired when;

- 1) Leave has been requested, but the circumstances are such that the school is unable to authorise the leave and it is taken anyway.
- 2) Leave is not requested and/or the school has grounds to believe that the child has been taken out of school for an avoidable reason (example – a family holiday). Only the Head teacher can authorise an absence.
- 3) A child arrives late after the registration period has closed.

When this is persistent the Local Authority will be informed. It is a criminal offence for a child not to attend school regularly and as a parent/ guardian, this is your responsibility. A Penalty Notice may therefore be issued, requiring you to pay a payment of up to £120 per parent/carer, per child if their attendance is below an acceptable level. In certain circumstances you may be prosecuted and be



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required to attend the Magistrates Court where you could face up to 3 months imprisonment and/or a fine of up to £2500. You will be given every opportunity to improve your child's attendance and you will receive a written warning before any legal action is taken

Parental Request for Absence from School for Holiday

With effect from September 2013 the government abolished the right of the Headteacher to authorise absence specifically for holidays of up to 10 days per year. Instead, the Headteacher will only be allowed to grant leave of absence for any reason if they are satisfied that exceptional circumstances exist.

The governors and leadership at Lostwithiel School have taken the decision that Penalty Notices will be requested for unauthorised holiday during term time. The absence/holiday must be 10 sessions or more in 10 weeks. This equates to 5 school days. The Penalty Notice Officer will consider requests when attendance is or would fall to below 94.5%.

If you decide to still take your child out of school, without permission, you will be committing an offence under the Education Act 1996. If your child's absence is unauthorised you will be committing an offence. We will 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 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.

Statutory Attendance

There is a legal requirement to have an AM and a PM registration

Key Stage One and Two (Years One to Six)

AM: Pupils will be registered at the beginning of each morning at 9:00am by the teacher. Any pupils arriving after this time will be signed in at the school office and registered as Late (Code L) Arrival after 9:15 am is recorded as an UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE (Code U).

Disruption within the school day is unsettling for the children. We therefore expect pupils to arrive on time which supports all the children to know their rhythms and routines of the day. PM: Registration takes place at the beginning of the afternoon session by the class teacher.

Early Years Foundation Stage (Reception)

Doors will open at 8.45 am to enable parents and carers to settle their youngest children and still accompany older children into classes. EYFS children are of statutory school age in the term following their fifth birthday and the same expectations apply to their attendance and punctuality as all pupils. The school expresses clearly that it is very important to establish good attendance and



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punctuality routines and we encourage our EYFS parents to be vigilant about start of the day routines and attendance in general regardless of when statutory school age commences.

If unsure, parents and carers are encouraged to talk to their child's class teacher, enquire at the school office or refer to the start of the day signs at the school entrance for clarification. All registration will be recorded on the SIMS system at the end of each week by the administrator. Class registers must be taken at the beginning of all sessions by the teacher. Accurate registration is very important and registration details can be used as evidence where parents/carers are prosecuted for school attendance offences. The attendance register will be kept for three years.

Punctuality

Start of the day times are as follows:

Doors open at 8.45 am – register at 9:00

It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their child attends full time education and arrives at school on time. Punctuality is monitored by the school and parents will be contacted if their child is not arriving on time. Lateness impacts on disrupted learning, both for the individual and others in the class. If children are arriving after 9:10 this is classified as an unauthorised absence.

Unauthorised absences.

Persistent cases may be referred to the EWO when there have been 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within 100 sessions. There are 2 sessions within the school day. The EWO will work with you and the school to try and support higher attendance. However, legal proceedings may be considered if the problem cannot be resolved. The School may require medical evidence for each future period of illness related absence in order to continue authorisation. Evidence might be a Doctor's note, appointment card or copy of a prescription or other evidence.

Reporting Absences

It is the responsibility of parents/carers to inform the School of the reason for a child's absence on the first day, either in person by the parent/carer, by telephone or by email, together with the estimated length of the absence and to contact the school on every further day in order for communication between home and school to be clear. Reasons for absence must be specific in order for records to indicate what is preventing the child from attending school rather than vague comments such as 'poorly' or 'headache'. Reasons for a pupil to be absent from school should be in a similar vein to those which would prevent an adult from attending work.

The School will operate a First Day Calling system for every absent child if the school has not been contacted to report the absence. In addition, as part of our safeguarding procedure, parents/carers of every absent pupil will be contacted for each day of absence. In all cases of absence, parents/carers must inform the school of the reason by one of the following methods:



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- By phone to the Administrator where the information will be recorded in the class attendance file.
- Personal contact with Administrator at school, where a note detailing the ill health will be completed and stored in the class attendance file.
- If you are unable to contact the administrator, a parental note explaining the absence must be passed to the school office on the first day back at school.

If no communication is received parents need to be aware that following five days from each of the days of absence (i.e five days from the first day) the absences will be recorded as unauthorised.

Class attendance files are used to share information between teaching, administrative staff and leadership as part of the monitoring of attendance across the school. They form a valuable record for monthly attendance meetings with the EWO. In the case of long term illness the school should be notified.

Disruption and lost learning is clearly evidenced where absences occur. No request for absence will be authorised unless exceptional and unavoidable in line with the national legal position. A family holiday is not normally considered to be an 'exceptional circumstance' and therefore will not be authorised by this school which does not encourage any absence during term time. Any requests, should they be made, must be via the absence request form, available from the office, a minimum of 4 weeks before the requested absence- except in the most exceptional of circumstances. In the event that an absence request is received, a group which might include the Headteacher, class teacher and the SENCo will decide if this is exceptional and unavoidable and therefore liable for authorisation. Governor approval may also be sought in some cases. As well as exploring a request to see if it is unavoidable and exceptional, no absence will be authorised in the first two weeks of any term or during assessment periods such as May when SATs for Years 2 and 6 take place, or June for year 1 for phonics screening.

If a parent/carer is refused an absence request and the pupil is still taken out of a school by the parent/carer, the School / Education Welfare Officer may be informed of this unauthorised absence. Where a child accrues a number of unauthorised absences, particularly if attendance falls below an acceptable level, further action may be taken. Travellers Parents who are registered as Travellers, who therefore need to travel as part of their work commitments and for their children to travel with them, are required to work in partnership with the school in order to ensure their children are fully supported in their social, emotional and academic learning.

Flexi Schooling

Lostwithiel School does not offer the option of flexi schooling.



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APPENDIX 1- Letter A

Dear «salutation»

High attendance at school improves your child's chances of success. Pupils who have high attendance are more likely to be able to sustain good friendships and make good progress towards qualifications. At Lostwithiel Primary School the largest group of students have attendance above 96%.

Lostwithiel School is very concerned that your child's attendance has fallen below 95%. If this high level of absence continues they are more likely to:

- find it hard to make good friendships
- make poor progress
- find school stressful .

Sometimes absence from school is caused by medical issues or worries about school or friendships . Lostwithiel School is committed to supporting pupil's welfare. If you feel there is anything we can do to support «chosen_name» please contact their Class Teacher or Mrs Barnes, our SENDco.

Your child's pattern of absence has caused concern because it may;

- show occasional absence of one or two days for minor ailments.
- be that Lostwithiel School is unaware of the reason for absence.
- be that you have taken an unauthorised holiday.
- Have fallen below 95%
- be that their attendance is within the government's definition of persistent absence.

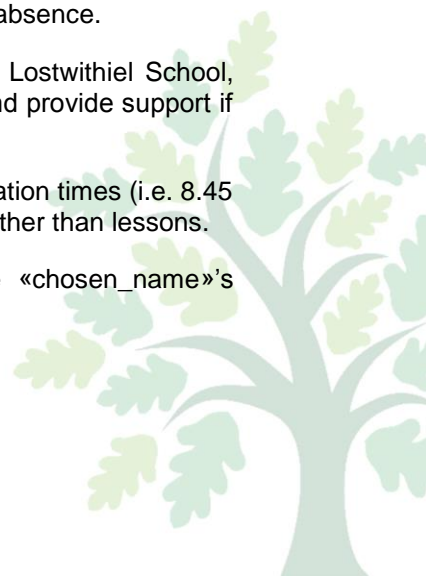
Please support our high expectations for your child's attendance and progress. Lostwithiel School, along with our Educational Welfare Officer, will monitor your child's attendance and provide support if needed. I enclose «chosen_name»'s registration certificate.

If «chosen_name» has to attend a medical appointment please try to avoid registration times (i.e. 8.45 a.m. and 1.00 p.m.) so that they can attend the start of the day and miss breaks rather than lessons.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can do anything to help improve «chosen_name»'s attendance.

Yours sincerely

Ms Natalie Simmonds





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Appendix 2- Letter B

«salutation»

Dear

I wrote to you on **date** to express our concern with «chosen_forename»'s attendance. «chosen_forename»'s attendance has fallen below 93% and is now approaching a level that may damage their education and progress. I enclose a copy of your child's registration certificate. Please note that being late to school after the register closes at 9:15 am counts as being absent from school for a morning.

Here at Lostwithiel Primary School, we recognise that there are occasions when it is appropriate to authorise an absence, such as when a pupil is genuinely too ill to attend school, has a medical appointment that cannot be taken outside of school hours or a request for leave has been agreed on exceptional circumstances. Please let us know of any medical reason for absence or any school based factor.

Lostwithiel Primary School is closely monitoring your child's attendance. It is becoming very hard for your child to learn effectively and progress in their learning and friendships. We aim to support you as much as possible in improving attendance. However, if attendance fails to improve Lostwithiel School may have to take legal action with the Local Authority. This can include a legal warning and/or fines for parent.

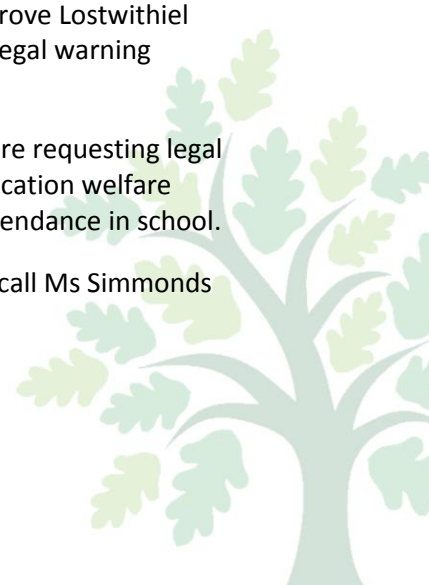
Lostwithiel Primary School is committed to supporting students and families before requesting legal action. Therefore, you are invited to an attendance clinic with myself and/or education welfare officer and myself to see if there is anything we can do to support your child's attendance in school.

Please attend on.....at.....If you cannot make this time, call Ms Simmonds on 01208 872339 or email on head@lostwithielsch.org.

Yours Sincerely

Natalie Simmonds

Headteacher





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Letter denied holiday request

Appendix Letter C

Dear

Thank you for your holiday request form. Unfortunately, the request for holiday during term time has not been authorised.

Here at Lostwithiel, we recognise that there are occasions when it is appropriate to authorise an absence, such as when a pupil is genuinely too ill to attend school, has a medical appointment that cannot be taken outside of school hours or a request for leave has been agreed in exceptional circumstances. However, the Government does not support parents taking children out of school unless the school agrees this is appropriate under 'exceptional circumstances'. Any request for leave should be made in writing to the Headteacher using the school's request form.

If you decide to still take your child out of school, without permission, you will be committing an offence under the Education Act 1996. If the absence is for 10 or more sessions (5 days) within 100 sessions (10 weeks) we will 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 per child, per parent if paid after this but within 28 days. Failure to pay the penalty notice may 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.

The Council may also apply for the costs incurred in taking the matter to Court. You are welcome to contact the school to discuss any concerns you may have regarding this or if you feel you would like advice or support in helping your child attend more regularly. Lostwithiel School is committed to maximising the education of all its pupils and aims to work with parents to ensure this can be achieved.

Yours Sincerely

Natalie Simmonds
Headteacher

