**Introduction**

Although we know that some families work really hard to ensure their children are at school every day, on time, average attendance at Fowey Primary School is below the national average for England. This is something we must work together to improve. Our school attendance target this year is 97%. We have a number of systems in place in individual classrooms and as a whole school to reward good attendance. To sit alongside this, we have now created a system for when children’s attendance falls below our target, which are mapped out below. We are sharing this with you so that we can ensure the challenging of non-attendance is fair and consistent and that families are aware of what actions we will take should a child’s attendance fall below our target.

We know that there is a direct link between children’s attendance and how well they achieve at school. It is vital that children have excellent attendance and we want to work with families to achieve this.

Most children have excellent attendance and we want to thank all those families who make every effort to support this.

**Absence Reports and Requests**

If you know your child is going to be absent from school you should contact the office and leave a message. If a child is absent without a reason, we will ring their named contacts (before 9:30) to establish the reason for absence. We will agree with you when we expect your child to return. Should this change, please contact the office and let us know. If we cannot reach anyone on the named contact list we may need to take further action to ensure your child is safe which could include contacting Children’s Services as per our Safeguarding Policy.

Following Department for Education guidance, we ask that all medical appointments be made outside of school hours. If this is not possible, please make sure the office have a copy of the appointment letter for your child’s file. We will expect your child to be at school before and after the appointment (e.g. for an 11am appointment, we would expect your child to be collected at 10:30 and then returned to school for afternoon lessons).

If you wish for your child to be absent for any reason other than illness or a medical appointment, you must complete a blue request form (available from the office) with as much notice as possible. The Department for Education stipulates that we cannot authorise any absence unless there are very exceptional circumstances (e.g. a child in foster care spending time with their family or close family bereavement). I cannot authorise requests for family holidays due to working hours, cheaper holidays or spending time with visiting relatives.

After half term, we will begin passing unauthorised holiday absence to Cornwall Council who may issue fixed penalty notices.

**Children with SEND or Complex Needs**

Where children have complex medical conditions or SEND needs, these will always be taken into account when making decisions. If this is the case for your child, it is important that the school is fully aware so that we are able to consider this. Where children have recognised complex or SEND needs, we would always authorise absence for anything directly related to these needs (e.g. hospital appointments, equipment fitting, therapeutic input, increased illness in the winter) but we will not be able to authorise absence that does not relate to a child’s additional needs e.g. family holidays. This is to ensure that our systems are as fair as possible for everyone.

**Formal Steps to Challenge Non-Attendance**

When attendance is not good enough we will meet with parents to discuss how it can be improved. We will also automatically issue a letter to you, with a print out of your child’s registration information so that you know your child’s current attendance level and can check for any patterns. If attendance still doesn’t improve, we will take steps to challenge this, which ultimately may include prosecution, issued by Cornwall Council.

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| Attendance drops below 95% | Amber letter home  No further absence for illness will be authorised, without a doctor’s letter, where the attendance % has been caused by multiple short absences for illness.  If absence is caused by series of short absences- meeting with class teacher. |
| Attendance drops below 92% | Yellow letter home  No further absence for illness will be authorised, without a doctor’s letter  Meeting with class teacher and headteacher- improving attendance plan written |
| Attendance drops below 90% | Red letter home  Child is classed as persistently absent, which we must report to the local authority  Meeting with head teacher and local authority for an education planning meeting.  100 day monitoring period- if attendance improves we will continue to monitor, if your child misses 10% of sessions during this period we will begin proceedings to prosecute |

No-one wants to fine or prosecute parents (to be clear, any funds raised from this do not come back to the school so there is no financial incentive for schools to take this route) but we know that children need to be at school to achieve well. I hope never to need to take this action at Fowey Primary School.

Please come and talk to us if there are reasons why your child is not attending school regularly. It is much better to work with us early on, so that children do not become persistently absent.

Our Attendance policy and copies of our yellow, amber and red letters are available on our website.