



Truro and Penwith
Academy Trust

Primary Attendance Policy

Review Summary

Approved By:	Trust Board
Approval Date:	30 January 2025
Next Review Date:	September 2026

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1. Policy Statement

It is the aim of all TPAT schools that every pupil enjoys learning, experiences success and realises their full potential. The Attendance Policy reflects these aims and recognises that regular full time attendance has a very significant positive effect on the motivation, social development and attainment of pupils.

As part of the Truro and Penwith Academy Trust (TPAT), we are committed to our shared core purpose, which is at the heart of all we do. This core purpose is to improve the life chances for all children and young people in our schools. Our school's mission/ core values are aligned with that of the Trust.

Our school strives to deliver excellent educational experiences for pupils, improving their life chances and serving the communities to which we belong.

This policy should be read in conjunction with existing school policies including (but not limited to) the following policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Special Educational Needs and Disability
- Behaviour
- Exclusions and Suspensions
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions

Legislation and DfE guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the following legislation which sets out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance including:

- The Education Act 1996 (as amended)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended in 2010, 2011, 2013 and 2016)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended in 2012 and 2013)

DfE guidance:

- The Equality Act 2010 and schools (DfE May 2014)
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/315587/Equality_Act_Advice_Final.pdf
- Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions (DfE December 2015)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions--3>
- Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school (DfE January 2013)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-for-children-with-health-needs-who-cannot-attend-school>

- Keeping children safe in education (DfE)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>
- Working together to improve School Attendance (DfE)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>
- School attendance parental responsibility measures (DfE January 2015)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-responsibility-measures-for-behaviour-and-attendance>
- School census guidance (DfE)
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complete-the-school-census>
- [Suspension and permanent exclusion \(DfE May 2023\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion>
- Home to school travel and transport guidance (DfE June 2023)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/home-to-school-travel-and-transport-guidance>

2. Aims

- To communicate the importance to all pupils and their parents/carers of maximum attendance at school as an essential pre-requisite for taking full advantage of the educational opportunities and to maximise individual achievement;
- To make explicit to all relevant parties (staff, parents/carers and students) the School's expectations for attendance;
- To promote a consistent approach across the school towards all matters relating to attendance;
- To clarify the roles and responsibilities of all parties with respect to attendance;
- To communicate to all relevant parties the legal position with respect to attendance and the categories of absence which are deemed "authorised";
- To communicate the need for families and school staff to work in close partnership to achieve high attendance.

3. Introduction

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, places a legal duty on Parents/Carers to ensure that any child of compulsory school age receives full-time education that is suitable to their age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs the child may have. It is essential for children to attend school regularly in order to maximise the opportunities available to them. For a child to reach their full potential a high level of school attendance and punctuality is essential. We aspire to achieve 100% attendance for every child. We acknowledge that there may be times when a child is unavoidably absent from school.

Sennen school support children and parents by:

- ***Promoting the value of high attendance and punctuality and reducing absence, lateness and particularly persistent absence***
- ***Ensuring every child has access to full time education to which they are entitled***
- ***Acting early to support high attendance and address absence***
- ***Ensuring school is a safe and supportive environment in which children can thrive.***

4. Why regular attendance is important

Any absence impacts on the progress of a child and disrupts learning, relationships with peers and academic, personal and social development. Repeated absence is therefore most likely to be detrimental to children and to seriously impede their learning. Any child's absence disrupts teaching and may, therefore, affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is the responsibility of the parent/carer and permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

5. Safeguarding

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State about safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

A child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and, within the context of this school, we will adhere to the latest safeguarding policies and practices. A child missing from education may be at risk of abuse or neglect or become a victim of harm, exploitation or radicalisation. Failing to attend school on a regular basis is therefore a safeguarding concern.

Here at Sennen school we monitor trends and patterns of absence for all pupils as a part of our standard procedure. However, it is recognised that sudden or gradual changes in a pupil's attendance may indicate additional or more extreme safeguarding issues. In line with government guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#), Local Procedures and the School's Safeguarding Policy, staff will monitor and report any safeguarding concerns within the school to the DSL on to the relevant authorities as appropriate. As part of the school's safeguarding duty and standard procedures, staff will inform the Local Authority and/or the Police of the details of any pupil who is absent from school when they cannot establish their whereabouts and there is concern for the pupil's welfare.

If a pupil is not attending school regularly as required, staff may make home visits to see and speak to the pupil and parents/carers as part of the school's safeguarding and attendance processes. If staff are unable to see and speak to the pupil and parents/carers, they may contact the pupil's emergency contacts and/or other professionals or contacts of the family, who they reasonably expect may be able to provide the school with relevant information.

6. Why Do Pupil's benefit from 'High' attendance?

Achieving high school attendance is a national priority. Sennen school data clearly shows a correlation between high attendance rates and high achievement.

We want our children to achieve excellent attendance in line with national average. Illness usually appears as a block of time off school. We review attendance patterns each week and look for unbroken and broken weeks as a key indicator. We would not usually expect that children would have more than one or two broken weeks in the course of an academic year. Regular broken weeks are a cause for concern and we will offer support to families where there are more frequent broken

weeks, in line with our attendance procedures. The impact broken weeks and missed learning can have on a child's education (taken from national data) is illustrated below for guidance:

If your child misses...	That equals at least...	Which is the same as....	And over 13 years of education that's...	Or at least...
1 day a fortnight	80 lessons per year	4 whole school weeks per year	Nearly 1.5 whole years	1040 lessons
1 day a week	160 lessons per year	8 whole school weeks per year	Over 2.5 whole years	2080 lessons
2 days a week	320 lessons per year	16 whole school weeks per year	Over 5 whole years	4160 lessons
3 days a week	480 lessons per year	24 whole school weeks per year	Nearly 8 whole years	6240 lessons

7. Understanding Absence

By law, schools must register pupils for two sessions each day (morning and afternoon registration). Every half-day of absence must be classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about the nature of any absence is always required from parents.

'Authorised absence' means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil to be away from the school or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence. The following information outlines the main circumstances where absence may be authorised by Sennen school:

Illness

- In most cases, absences for illness which are reported by parents/carers in line with the school's absence reporting procedures will be authorised.
- If the school has a genuine and reasonable concern about the authenticity of the illness, the school will request medical information and/or evidence to support the absence - such as a prescription, appointment card, or other appropriate form of information/evidence.
- If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
- Where a pupil has a high level and/or frequency of absence, the school may require suitable information and/or evidence in order to authorise any future absence where illness has been given as the reason. If this is the case, the school will make the parent/carer/s aware of this expectation in advance.
- The reporting of absence due to illness remains the responsibility of the parent/carer. Absences due to illness which have **not** been reported to the school by the parent/carer on the first and any subsequent days of absence may not be authorised.

Pupils taken ill during the school day

If a pupil needs to be sent home from school due to illness, this will be agreed by an appropriately authorised member of school staff. In such circumstances, the pupil must be collected by a parent/carer or adult authorised to collect the child by the parent/carer and identified to the school. No pupil who is ill will be allowed to leave the school without being collected by a known adult. Even if a family home is relatively close to the school, we do not allow sick children to walk home unaccompanied.

Medical/Dental Appointments

- Parents/carers must, wherever possible, arrange for medical and dental appointments to take place outside of school hours. Where appointments during the school day are unavoidable, the pupil should only be absent for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. It is not acceptable for a pupil to miss a whole day for an appointment, unless absolutely necessary, in which case the school will need an explanation as to why this is. The school recognises that pupils with a health condition may have a higher number of medical appointments than other pupils and it is therefore possible that at least some of these appointments may be during the school day.
- If a pupil must attend a medical appointment during the school day, they must be collected from the school office by the parent/carer or another authorised adult and signed out. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parent/carer confirmation.
- The school reserves the right to request evidence of appointments from parents/carers. Suitable evidence may include appointment letters or cards, copies of emails from a verifiable address (e.g. NHS) confirming the date and time of the appointment.

8. Exceptional Circumstances Leave of Absence

By law, Headteachers are not allowed to authorise absence during term time unless the circumstances are exceptional.

If your child is absent from school without authorisation, you will be committing an offence under the Education Act 1996. We may submit a request to Cornwall Council for a Penalty Notice to be issued, in accordance with Sections 444A and 444B of the said Act. Penalty Notices are issued per liable parent, per child and each carry a fine of £80 if paid within 21 days or £160 if paid after this but within 28 days.

If your child is further absent from school without authorisation within any 3-year period, you will be committing a further offence under the Education Act 1996. We may submit a request to Cornwall Council for a Penalty Notice to be issued, in accordance with Sections 444A and 444B of the said Act. Penalty Notices for a second offence are issued per liable parent, per child and each carry a fine of £160, payable within 28 days. Importantly, fines per parent will be capped to two fines within any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action such as a parenting order or prosecution will be considered.

Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may also result in legal action. If you are prosecuted and attend court because your child has not been attending school, you could get a fine of up to £2,500.

Cornwall Council may also apply for the costs incurred in taking the matter to Court, including legal costs.

Absence not authorised by the school may also result in a prosecution in the Magistrates' Court under Section 444(1) or Section 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996, leading to a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a custodial sentence. Again, Cornwall Council may also apply for the costs incurred in taking the matter to Court, including legal costs.

Money raised from fines is only used by the local authority to cover the costs of administering the system, and to fund attendance support. Any extra money is returned to the government.

All requests from parents for term time leave of absence must be made in writing to the Headteacher using the school's form (available on the website or from Reception). Wherever possible, a request

must be made at least 3 weeks (15 school days) prior to the requested leave of absence. Parents will receive written notification to confirm whether their request has been authorised.

Each application from parents for an 'exceptional circumstance' leave of absence during term time will be considered on its own merit - see Appendix 6 Exceptional Circumstances Request Form

9. Persistent Absence

In line with DfE Guidance, a pupil is considered as 'persistently absent' when they miss 10% or more of their schooling across the school year **for any reason**. Absence at this level is highly likely to significantly harm a child's educational progress.

Children who are persistently or severely absent are supported by school staff and the TPAT Attendance and Inclusion Lead in line with our attendance procedures.

10. Home/School Partnership

Sennen School works in close partnership with parents and families to achieve high attendance for every pupil.

Parents must:

- Contact the School on the first day of a child's absence **by 8.50am at the latest**;
- Ensure their child arrives at school on time, **the school day starts at 8.45am**. Late arrival after registers close may be classed as an absence –see Appendix 3 (Late to School Protocol)
- Arrival after the register closes at 9.30am or at 1.15pm without satisfactory explanation will result in an unauthorised absence being recorded on the register.

The School will:

- Contact parents on the first day of absence if a reason for absence has not been given. Wherever possible the school will phone the parent to discuss their child's absence;
- Meet with parents to discuss and agree support to improve attendance in line with our attendance procedures.
- Escalate concerns about attendance to the TPAT Attendance and Inclusion Lead when appropriate and in line with our attendance procedures to ensure children receive support to attend school regularly.
- Where necessary to ensure regular attendance, it may be necessary to apply for sanctions such as Penalty Notice fines or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. In all cases we believe it is in the child's best interests to attend school regularly and our decision making is always led by our commitment to protecting the entitlement of children to full time education.
- Follow up promptly any concerns parents pass on to us that may be affecting a child's attendance;
- Provide support and involve the school's support staff and other support agencies to help pupils re-integrate into school after illness or other individual circumstances;
- Regularly remind pupils (where appropriate) of the importance of high attendance and punctuality for example, through assemblies and class time;
- Acknowledge and celebrate improving attendance.

11. Telephone numbers:

There are times when the School needs to contact parents about educational matters, including attendance, punctuality and absence. The school may also need to contact parents in the event of an emergency. Therefore, we need to have correct parental contact phone numbers at all times. Parents must ensure the school always has an up to date contact number. **Parents have a duty to notify the school as soon as possible of any changes to their contact details.**

12. Supporting High Attendance and Reporting

To promote the importance of high attendance and punctuality, the School will recognise improvement in attendance.

Attendances, punctuality and absence are reported to parents in all written reports and attendance records are available to parents on request.

13. Roles and responsibilities

The roles of the class teacher, Administrator, Attendance Officer and Headteacher are explained in **Appendix 2**. All members of staff have a responsibility to promote high attendance.

14. The Trusts Attendance and Inclusion Lead

The trust Attendance and Inclusion Lead works alongside the school's Attendance lead. The School works closely with the Attendance and Inclusion Lead to support pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern. The Attendance and Inclusion Lead may accompany staff to visit homes, meet with parents in school (or at their home) and is a vital component in our efforts to secure high attendance.

The TPAT Attendance and Inclusion Lead may initiate legal proceedings against parents who have not fulfilled their responsibility for ensuring regular attendance. Before a case goes to court, Parenting Contracts may be drawn up, setting targets for improving attendance. The primary aim of all school action is to ensure every child attends school on a regular basis and is therefore able to achieve their full potential.

15. Students with Special Educational Needs (SEND)

Our School supports the attendance of pupils with SEND and understands that their specific needs present additional school challenges. Good attendance for all pupils including and especially those with SEND is crucial in ensuring academic and social progress. Further information relating to the support available to pupils with SEND is available from the school's SENDCO.

16. Young Carers

Students identified as Young Carers are offered additional support to ensure they can achieve high attendance. We recognise that attending regularly can be particularly challenging for Young Carers. Further information about the support available for our Young Carers is available from our Pastoral Team.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Registration Procedures
- Appendix 2 – Roles and Responsibilities
- Appendix 3 – Tiered Approach to Supporting Attendance
- Appendix 4 – Punctuality Procedure

Appendix 1: Registration Procedures

Staff Guide to Registers and Associated Procedures:

This section complements our Attendance Policy and should be read in conjunction with it. It deals with the practicalities of completing registers and associated attendance procedures. The register is a legal document which may be used as evidence in court. The decision on whether or not to authorise a particular absence rests with the Headteacher. The class teacher will record attendance of a child at morning and afternoon registration. In some circumstances, the Headteacher will authorise another member of staff to take the register with the same level of delegated authority as the teacher or tutor.

Marking the register

A register is taken at the beginning of the AM and PM session to ensure the school has accurate information about where children are. Every register must be taken accurately and in a timely way as an essential part of the school's culture of safeguarding. The responsibility for taking the register will be held by the class teacher (including supply or temporary teachers), cover supervisor, or other school staff as appropriate.

Reading the registers

The registration information is read every morning after Registration. It is imperative that the data entered is accurate and that there is a mark for **EVERY** pupil. Every pupil **must** fall into one of the three categories of present, absent or late. Staff must enter either 'present', 'absent' or 'late' (+ how many minutes late). **Staff have a responsibility to safeguard the children in schools care and it is vital that the information held is accurate.**

The school operates a policy of '1st day response' regarding absence across the school. The Administrator/Attendance Officer will contact the parents of any child who is absent without an explanation.

Communication with/from parents

Same-day contact has been shown to be the single most effective strategy in improving rates of attendance. It is also vital to safeguard children. Parents must contact the school as early as possible on the **first** day of absence to notify the school of their child's absence and the reason for absence.

Communication by phone or in person is required on each day of a period of absence. If absence notes are received, they should be initialled and dated by the class teacher. **All notes must be sent to the Administrator/Attendance Officer on the same day they are received.**

Punctuality

- Registration starts at 8:45am and at 1.00pm. Thereafter a pupil's absence will be recorded as late (L).
- A pupil should be marked as **late** when the class teacher has completed the register and a pupil arrives after the register has been "sent". A late mark should be added for any student who arrives to class after 8.45am and after 1.00pm. The number of minutes late should be recorded.
- Parents may be prosecuted for persistently failing to get their child to school on time. The school will take a robust response to pupils who are regularly arriving late.

Appendix 2: Roles and Responsibilities

Class Teachers

- Class teachers are responsible for recording pupils' attendance on a daily basis (each lesson), using the correct absence and attendance codes, and submitting this information to the School Administer.
- Where attendance concerns are raised class teachers will 'check-in' with the pupil to explore reasons for absence and offer support. Class teachers may also contact/meet with parents/carers whose child has a falling level of attendance.
- Holds Tier 1 support calls with parents/carers to discuss attendance issues, prioritising vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils as directed by the Headteacher.

School Administrator

- Is the first point of contact for parents reporting absence and coordinates appropriate follow up for unexplained absence.
- Monitors AM/PM registers and ensures present/absence codes have been entered and are correct. Providing an accurate account of all code changes where applicable.
- Monitors attendance and absence data at school, cohort and individual pupil levels using the broken weeks and persistent absence reports.
- Works closely with the Headteacher in monitoring and supporting attendance reporting.
- Manages, and maintains records for all requests for absence including communication with parents.
- Holds Tier 1 support calls with parents/carers to discuss attendance issues, prioritising vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils as directed by the Headteacher.
- Co-ordinates requests for Term-time Leave of Absence, liaising with the Headteacher as appropriate.

Headteacher

The Headteacher implements the school's Attendance Strategy and leads the school's culture of high attendance ensuring that attendance is frequently and regularly highlighted to all members of the school community as being of central and vital importance to children's education and wellbeing.

The Headteacher directs the school's approach to supporting the attendance of all children including vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils ensuring intervention and resources are appropriately prioritised and targeted.

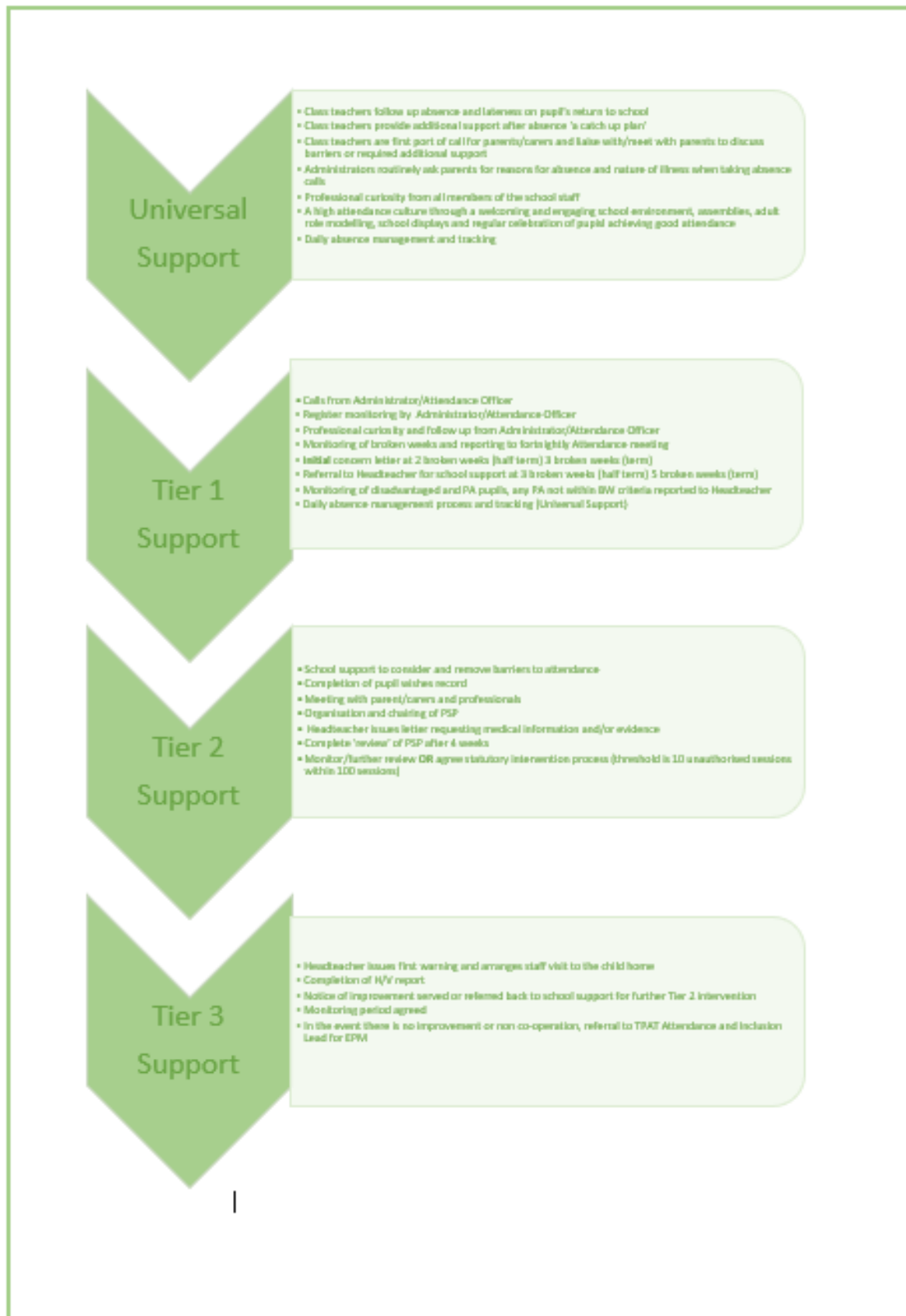
- **Leads and monitors all matters relating to attendance and works in conjunction with teachers, School Administer, Trust team and county tasks include:**
- 3 weekly monitoring of attendance using broken weeks reporting and approves escalation within the Tiered approach.

- Ensures the Administrator provides a weekly update on attendance of all referred pupils
- Is responsible for considering all leave of absence requests and deciding whether or not to approve requests where the reason provided is exceptional.
- Meets regularly with, and liaises with the TPAT Attendance and Inclusion Lead in relation to statutory intervention and EPM outcomes and actions.
- Is responsible, along with Chairs, for ensuring that the Local Monitoring Committee (LMC) receives appropriately detailed reports on student attendance to be able to fulfil their duties to monitor the work and effectiveness of the school.
- Refers requests for Penalty Notices for Leave of absence that has not been approved and exceeds the threshold as per Cornwall Council code of Conduct
- Ensures a home visit report is completed which considers any additional information in relation to barriers to attendance

TPAT Attendance and Inclusion Lead:

- Provides regular meetings for Headteacher providing advice and keeping teams updated on guidance, process and sharing good practice
- Supports the Headteacher with the Statutory process, providing appropriate training, advice and guidance.
- Chairs EPM's and liaises with Headteachers in relation to desired outcomes
- Audits tiered response process and feeds back on timescale/progress and outcomes to Headteachers and the Trust
- Guides and advise Headteachers and Attendance Officers on complex case management
- Liaises with services and LA to ensure clarity on duty and responsibility (where necessary)
- Devises strategy and monitors school attendance data and reports to the Trust

Appendix 3: Tiered Approach to Supporting Attendance



Appendix 4: Punctuality Procedure

Punctuality Procedure

Aim:

- To achieve high levels of punctuality for all pupils, through partnership with parents and students.

Rationale:

- Excellent punctuality is central to learning. For pupils to achieve their potential it is essential that high levels of punctuality are maintained. All parents are expected to ensure that their children are on time every day.

Our school acknowledges its legal duties under the Equality Act 2010, with respect to safeguarding and in respect to students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

Punctuality

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of a lesson they may miss work and vital information to support progress. Late arriving pupils disrupt lessons and the learning of others. The school day starts at **8.45am** and we expect every child to be in registration at that time. Registers will be marked at **8.55am** and a child will receive a late mark if they are not present in the class.

If a child arrives after the register closes at **9.30am** and the explanation provided is not satisfactory they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this may **not** count as a present mark and it may mean they have an unauthorised absence. Ten or more unauthorised sessions (5 school days) in 100 sessions (50 school days/10 school weeks) could result in a first warning of Penalty Notice and/or prosecution.

If a child is persistently late parents/carers will be asked to meet with a member of school staff and/or Attendance and Inclusion Lead to resolve the problem. We encourage Parents/Carers to approach us at any time if there are problems getting a child to school on time.

All pupils are expected to be on time every day and to every lesson. Lateness is only excused in exceptional circumstances. Where lateness is caused by unforeseen family circumstances, parents must contact the school to provide a reason, or provide a written explanation. Persistent lateness will not be authorised.

If a pupil is late to school and arrives during registration, this will be recorded by the school administration team, who will ask parents to accompany the child into reception and sign a late book providing an explanation for the late arrival. The administrator/attendance officer will monitor punctuality and follow schools' absence management process