



Truro School Pupil Attendance Policy

A copy of this policy is published in the following areas:

The school's website

Reviewed and Updated: September 2024

Date for review: September 2025

Reviewed by: Deputy Head (Pastoral)

Policy applies to: Senior School

The Department of Education guidance on attendance can be found here:

[Working together to improve school attendance](#) (August 2024)

[Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance](#) (Feb 2023)

Introduction

In order to fulfil our ambition of inspiring pupils to thrive – personally, spiritually, academically, socially and physically – and to ensure their ambitious and sustainable engagement with a broad and holistic education, it is imperative that every child attends school regularly to benefit fully from their education.

Missing lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind and children with poor attendance records tend to achieve less in all stages of their school lives.

Consistent and regular attendance is a requirement of the School. In exceptional circumstances such as prolonged illness, recuperation or compassionate circumstances that result in extended absence, the school will provide work and facilitate a pupil's return to full time education within an agreed timeframe. This is at the Head's discretion.

The Government expects all schools to:

- Build strong relationships and work jointly with families, listening to and understanding barriers to attendance and working in partnership with families to remove them.
- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.
- Have a clear school attendance policy which all staff, pupils and parents understand.
- Accurately complete admission and, with the exception of schools where all pupils are boarders, attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-

up absence.

- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.
- Be particularly mindful of pupils absent from school due to mental or physical ill health or their special educational needs and/or disabilities, and provide them with additional support.

In addition to these School responsibilities, there is also an expectation that:

- Parents will perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.¹
- All pupils should be punctual to their lessons and other timetabled School activities.

School Day

Pupils are registered at the start of the morning and during the afternoon session each day.

All pupils are required to be in their form rooms by 0845 to be registered by their form tutor.

All pupils are registered in every lesson, with period 5 registration being the official afternoon registration.

The normal School day finishes at 1550.

Pupils who remain on site after 1550 must either sign in to an after-school activity or in the library and can sign up to join boarders for supper at 1745.

Pupils taking School transport home must remain on School site until the departure of their transport.

Notifying the School of illness

If your child is unwell or will be absent from school, please contact the absence hotline on 01872 246118 or email absence@truroschool.com by 0900 each day of your child's absence. If the school has not heard from a parent or guardian we will always telephone in order to ascertain your child's whereabouts.

The School may request reasonable medical evidence in cases where clarification is needed to

¹ Working Together to Improve School Attendance, Department for Education, 2024, Paragraph 11.

accurately record absence in the attendance register or if there is genuine or reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness. In the majority of cases, a parent's notification of illness will be that evidence and can be accepted without question or concern.

Late arrival

Pupils are registered by their form tutor at 0845 and again at 0915 in period 1. It is essential that if a pupil arrives late, they sign in at main reception prior to going to their class. Persistent lateness without good reason will be dealt with according to the Positive Behaviour and Values Policy.

Leaving School early during the day

1st to 5th Year pupils are not allowed to leave the site during the school day unless accompanied by a member of staff for a trip, a visit or a sporting fixture. If a pupil has to leave the School during the day for illness or they are being collected for a medical appointment, they are required to be signed out and wait to be collected from reception.

If a pupil feels ill during the school day, they must go to the Medical Centre. Staff will assess the pupil and call home if they feel the pupil is too ill to remain at School.

Sixth Form pupils may leave the School site between 1230 and 1400, if they sign out with the Sixth Form administrator. Upper Sixth pupils may leave at 1230 to study at home if they sign out and have an afternoon with no further lessons.

Boarders

Roll calling is fundamental to ensuring the safety of our boarders and in order to be compliant we must make sure that our records are complete, accurate and in line with our School policy. We use an online platform Orah to roll call our boarders. Roll calls are taken at the following times.

Monday to Friday			
	Pentreve House	Malvern House	Trennick House
Morning	0800	0800	0800
After School (1 st to 4 th Year)	1615		1615
Early evening	1735	1735	1740
Return to House / Library	1830	1830	
Late evening	2130	2200	2130 (1 st – 4 th Year) 5 th 2200 (Lower and Upper Sixth)
Saturday and Sunday			

	Pentreve House	Malvern House	Trennick House
Morning	1025	1025	1025
Lunch time (including on trips)	1330	1330	1330
Early evening	1735	1735	1740
Return to House	1830	1830	
Late evening	2130	2200	2130 (1 st – 5 th Year) 2200 (Lower and Upper Sixth)

Boarders and their parents / guardians are expected to follow the instructions given for requesting Orah passes for overnight stays outside boarding, holiday travel passes, flexi boarder passes, and absences for clubs / trips or activities. Good communication and punctuality is expected of all boarders. Boarders should refer to the document “Orah – What kind of pass do I need and what is required” if they are in doubt or check with their Housemaster / Housemistress.

Exceptional leave

Requests for exceptional absence for any planned appointment or event should be as far in advance as possible in writing to the absence email: absence@truoschool.com. All requests will be considered by the Deputy Head (Pastoral) consulting, where necessary, with the Head. We do ask for as much notice as possible and supportive acceptance if for any reason we feel that permission should not be granted. Pupils will only be granted leave to be absent from school in exceptional circumstances.

Requests for leave of absence on compassionate grounds or in exceptional circumstances should be made in writing and in advance of the proposed absence when possible. Absence in exceptional circumstances does not include birthdays, family holidays, days out as a special treat or other family celebrations.

In relation to absences for religious observance, the School will treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance on a day that is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the family belongs. Where necessary, the school may seek confirmation from that religious body that the day has been set apart for religious observance.

Whilst it is preferred that absence in term time is avoided, each request will be considered individually and decisions made based on a number of criteria including:

- The stage the pupil has reached in their educational career
- Whether there are compassionate reasons such as a serious family illness or bereavement
- The pupil’s academic record
- The unique nature of the absence
- If the request is to participate in a co-curricular activity such as sport or drama, the level of representation will be considered
- Whether the pupil is sponsored on a Student Visa.

In relation to request for absence for a holiday or recreational reasons in term time, these should not be expected to be recorded as authorised.

Provision of work during absence

For authorised absences of 5 days or fewer, the usual expectation is that the pupil will take responsibility for catching up with missed work on their return to School.

For authorised absences longer than 5 days, the tutor or Head of Year will assist the pupil in catching up with missed work.

In the case of unauthorised absences, there is not an expectation that the School will provide work but teachers may do so at their own discretion.

Working together to improve attendance

The Department for Education (DfE) expects every pupil attending school to maintain an attendance level of approximately 90% and above; any figure below this is deemed as “poor attendance”.

There is clear evidence from national data of a link between poor attendance at school and low levels of achievement. Of pupils who miss more than 50% of school nationally, only 3% manage to achieve five A* to Cs (9-4s), including English and maths. Of pupils who miss between 10 and 20% of school nationally, only 35% manage to achieve five A* to C (9-4s) GCSEs, including English and maths. Of pupils who miss less than 5% of school nationally, 73% achieve five A* to Cs (9-4s), including English and maths. Truro School expects pupils to outperform national outcomes in academic terms and views regular attendance as one contributing factor to that ambition for our pupils.

Department for Education guidance states that where absence escalates and pupils miss 10% or more of school (equivalent to one day or more a fortnight across a full school year), schools are expected to sensitively consider the reasons for absence and put additional targeted support in place. Truro School endorses this guidance.

Parents / guardians / carers of pupils can expect to be contacted by the School when attendance falls below 92% so that the reasons for frequent absence can be better understood and any relevant help and support provided. Parents / guardians / carers can expect the School to remain in contact to discuss attendance whilst it remains below 92%.

The Truro School Parent Contract states that “the Head may in his or her discretion require [removal]... where a child's attendance or progress is unsatisfactory and, in the reasonable opinion of the Head, the removal is in the School's best interests and/or those of your child or other children”.

Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA)

Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) is a term referring to reduced or non-attendance at school by a child or young person.

Rather than the term ‘school refusal’, the term EBSA recognises that this avoidance has its source in emotional, mental health or wellbeing issues. A growing body of analysis suggests that EBSA should not be thought of as a deliberate act of defiance, but instead as a complex issue inextricably linked with mental health and wellbeing.

This guidance applies to pupils displaying social, emotional or mental health issue that is affecting their attendance. It is not only for pupils who have a diagnosed mental disorder, or a disability or special educational need.

As well as working on universal approaches to mental health and wellbeing, Truro School recognises the importance of developing a planned process around EBSA for children and young people who require more targeted support.

The possible interventions in cases where EBSA is being displayed are:

1. In the early stages of a possible EBSA being identified and a pupil's attendance is at or below 90%, a member of staff (normally the tutor or HOY) may meet with pupil and call home. If the pupil is not in School, a phone call home may happen. Any conversations would aim to sensitively communicate the School's high expectations for attendance and identify any potential risk factors that might be contributing to EBSA. Any reasonable adjustments or support put in place should ensure that the time the child spends in school is prioritised (DfE, Feb 2023). These will need to consider the individual circumstances of the child, mindful of safeguarding responsibilities as set out in KCSIE (2024). A Return to School Action plan may be required at this, or any other, stage of a pupil displaying EBSA.
2. If attendance does not improve, the likely next step would be a meeting with parents and pupil in School. Any actions or reasonable adjustments would be agreed by all parties and followed up in writing.
3. If attendance does not improve, the likely next step would be a meeting with parents to further assess the pupil's EBSA and barriers to attendance, consider the risk factors contributing and review current reasonable adjustments. It would be reiterated to all that the priority must be working towards fully integrating the pupil back into School. A prolonged period of absence may heighten anxiety about attending in future (DfE, Feb 2023).
4. If attendance does not improve, a home visit may be considered, organised with parents' prior consent. There would be further assessment of risk factors contributing, review of reasonable adjustments, barriers to attendance. It would be reiterated to all that the priority must be working towards fully integrating the pupil back into School. A prolonged period of absence may heighten anxiety about attending in future (DfE, Feb 2023). An Early Help referral may be appropriate at this stage, **however, we reserve the right to make an Early Help or MARU referral at any point and would consult with parents before doing so unless doing so is perceived to put the child at greater risk.**