

A guide to Education Welfare Services
for parents and carers

Is your child in school today?



www.cornwall.gov.uk



Many pupils go to school every day and enjoy it. Some children may experience difficulties in attending school for many reasons. A parent or carer may not be aware that this is happening.

Cornwall Council recognises that regular school attendance is essential. Children need to enjoy their time in school and make the most of the opportunities available to them.

If a pupil misses one day a week for their entire school career they would lose the equivalent of two school years. The time missed at school can lead to gaps in knowledge that become difficult to fill.

The Education Welfare Service is aiming to reduce truanting within Cornwall. This is a joint initiative between Cornwall Council and Devon and Cornwall Constabulary. Through this initiative the Police will have the power to take truants back to school.

The Education Welfare Service can also offer support and help to pupils, parents (or carers) and schools who may be having problems with attendance.

Remember, if your child is not in school...

- » they may be putting themselves or others at risk and
- » they are missing out on educational opportunities

What can you do to help?

- » Make sure that your child arrives at school on time.
- » Be aware of the school's rules and routines.
- » If your child is ill contact the school on the first day they are ill. When the pupil returns to school send an explanatory note of absence.
- » Ask the school's permission in advance if you wish your child to miss school for an exceptional reason. This may include:
 - » a holiday in term time
 - » a day of religious observance
- » Above all, show interest in your child's school work and maintain contact with your child's school.
- » If your child has problems with attending school, talk to their teachers or contact the Education Welfare Service.

Unacceptable reasons for absence:

- » shopping
- » birthday treats and trips
- » non-urgent medical and dental appointments

Holidays in term time

Holidays should not be taken during term time. Holiday request forms are available from your child's school office for those who wish to take unavoidable holidays during term time.

Holidays may be taken at the headteacher's discretion if they deem the reason for the holiday to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

If your child's attendance is poor, it is unlikely that the school will grant permission for a holiday. Some schools do not allow term time holidays.

How can the Education Welfare Service help?

Most schools in Cornwall have a nominated Education Welfare Officer (EWO) who visits regularly to check registers and discuss pupils about whom the school is concerned. The EWO can provide help and advice on:

- » school attendance issues
- » bullying
- » exclusions
- » child Protection procedures
- » advice and information about other agencies

Please check with your child's school to see if there is an EWO available.

What the law says

The 1996 Education Act makes it very clear that parents must ensure that their child of school age receives regular, full-time education. For most parents this is in school. Children must attend the school they are registered in. Only the school can authorise a child's absence. If a child is not registered or does not attend their educational provision, Cornwall Council may take legal action against the parent/carer, if appropriate.

Devon and Cornwall Police involvement

Patrolling officers may speak to children who are truanting from school. In addition, Section 16 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 empowers the police to remove truants from a public place and return them to school; the Police can only remove those children who are of compulsory school age.

If you are worried about your child's attendance please try talking to your child's school first. If you feel unable to do this or you would like further help, please contact the Education Welfare Service.

Contact details

For further information look us up on:

<http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/education-and-learning/schools-and-colleges/education-welfare>

Telephone: **01872 323400**

Education Welfare Service
Education, Health and Social Care
One Stop Shop
39 Penwinnick Road
St Austell
TR25 5DR

If you would like this information in another format or language please contact:

Cornwall Council, County Hall, Treyew Road, Truro TR1 3AY

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Email: enquiries@cornwall.gov.uk

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