



April 2026

Dear Families

At Brannel School we want every child to enjoy an exceptional educational experience that helps them to achieve their very best. Regular attendance plays a crucial role in this, as children who attend school consistently not only make stronger academic progress but also build confidence, resilience and positive friendships.

Even a small amount of absence can add up over time. This can make it harder for children to keep up with lessons, feel settled, and make the most of the opportunities school has to offer. We fully understand that there will be times when absence is unavoidable, such as illness or exceptional circumstances. Our priority is always to work with you in supporting your child.

We continue to recognise that there are occasions when it is appropriate to authorise an absence, such as when your child is too ill to attend school, however, the Government does not support parents/carers taking children out of school unless the school agrees this is appropriate under 'exceptional circumstances'.

We ask if you believe your situation meets the criteria for exceptional circumstances, please make a request for leave in writing to the Headteacher using the school's 'Leave of Absence Request Form' before the event. The form is available from the school office or website.

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.

'Parent' as set out in Section 576 of the Education Act 1996, defines parent to include: natural parents, whether they are married or not; any person or body who has parental responsibility for a child (as

defined by the Children Act 1989) and; any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child. Having care of a child means a person with whom a child lives and who looks after a child, irrespective of what their relationship is with said child.

Here at Brannel School we know that family life can sometimes be complicated, and we are here to support you every step of the way. If you're unsure about anything in this letter, or if you're facing challenges that may impact your child's attendance, please don't hesitate to get in touch with us. Our team is always happy to listen and work with you to find the best solution. By working in partnership, we can ensure that your child receives the very best start in life and enjoys every opportunity to thrive here with us.

Every day in school really does make a difference to their learning, wellbeing, and future opportunities. Thank you for your continued support in making your child's education a priority.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tristan Muller-Forster', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Tristan Muller-Forster
Headteacher
Brannel School