**Attendance and Punctuality Policy (Summary)**

(Guidance and advice for parents regarding their responsibilities for the attendance and punctuality of their children at school as laid down in the school’s full policy. This is available on request.)

Please read carefully.

**Introduction**

This school policy document on attendance has been produced to explain to all concerned the rights, responsibilities and rules relating to the attendance of pupils at the school. If pupils do not attend school, they cannot be educated. Good attendance and punctuality leads to the best learning outcomes.

**Good attendance = Good future**

**Philosophy / Mission Statement**

* The school aims to encourage and assist all pupils to achieve excellent levels of attendance and punctuality.
* The school is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience to all pupils and if pupils are to benefit from education, punctuality and good attendance are paramount. Any problems that impede punctuality and regular attendance will be identified and addressed as quickly as possible. It is the policy of the school to celebrate achievement and to highlight that attendance is a critical factor for a productive and successful school career.
* The school will actively promote and encourage 100% attendance for all our pupils. We will involve the Inclusion Service when appropriate to ensure a focused approach to achieve this aim.

**Why is attendance important?**

* Learning and wellbeing are core elements in a young person’s life. School attendance plays a key role in developing positive outcomes in this respect.
* Regular school attendance is very important for all children and young people. Failure to attend school increases the risk of leaving school without qualifications.
* Non-attendance in the early years is approved by parents. This will soon become a pattern and establishes poor attitudes towards school. Young children do not play truant from school, they are off because their parents allow it. Evidence shows that children who miss significant amounts of their education in primary school are more likely to truant later on.
* As a school we are set a target from the County and Welsh Government of 95% or above over the year. Attendance figures are used as an element of the new school categorisation system. Also, when the school receives an Estyn visit, if the school does not reach an attendance of 95% or above they are automatically placed in the monitoring category.

**Absence**

It is important to emphasise that there are two different types of absence – **authorised and unauthorised,** and that unauthorised absence is perceived as truancy, and may result in the involvement of the Pupil Support Service and ultimately could lead to the prosecution of parents.

Within the categories of authorised and unauthorised absences, there are a range of codes which school staff should use to accurately mark the register in order to denote the precise reason for absence. These codes can be found at the back of this policy.

* Parents should be reminded that it is only the school who may decide whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.
* Parents should be reminded that a letter does not in itself authorise an absence, only the school’s acceptance of the explanation offered by the letter authorises the absence.
* All of the Authorities within the south west and mid Wales consortium (ERW) have agreed to strongly advise schools not to authorise holidays during term time.
* **An explanation is required for every absence**. If one is not forthcoming the absence will be treated as unauthorised.

Absence from the school will be **authorised** by the school if it is for the following reasons:

* Sickness
* Unavoidable medical/dental appointments
* Days of religious observance
* Exceptional family circumstances, such as bereavement.

Absence from the school **will not be authorised** for the following reasons:

* Shopping
* Haircuts
* Missed bus
* Slept late
* Looking after brothers or sisters
* Minding the home
* Birthdays
* Days out

*NB All medical/dental appointments should try to be made outside of school hours as far as possible.*

**Authorised Absence**

Only a school can authorise an absence. Parents and the LEA do not have the power to authorise absences.

**Lateness**

A pupil’s punctuality for school is a legal requirement and the parents/carers of a pupil who is consistently late are guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted.

* Lateness should be actively discouraged and persistent lateness treated in the same way as irregular attendance.
* Arrival after registration has closed at 9:30am will be marked as an unauthorised absence (U). With the introduction of Penalty Notice legislation lateness is also defined as an unauthorised absence and therefore under the Code of conduct, a Penalty Notice can be issued for persistent lateness after the register has closed.

Where the home situation makes it difficult for the pupil to arrive on time, the school may need to refer the case to the Inclusion Service.

**Procedures for Recording Absences**

If no contact is received from the parents/carers on the **first** morning of absence (before 9:15am) the school will:

* Contact the parents by telephone, or if the parent is unavailable, send a standard letter requesting information.
* After **three** days of unexplained absence, send a second letter.
* After a maximum of **ten** days absence or below 90% attendance for a half term, invite the parents into school. This meeting will include the Headteacher, parents and the pupil. The aim of this meeting will be to identify and resolve the difficulties that are preventing the pupil from attending school and how the school can give support.
* If this meeting does not secure the pupil attending school or their attendance drops below 80%, then the matter should be referred to the designated Attendance Office. The Inclusion Service will enact the Pupil Support process which will involve ensuring that the parents/cares are aware of the legal requirements regarding regular school attendance.

An individual reintegration plan should be adopted where a pupil is returning after any absence longer than two weeks. In the event of a pupil returning after a long term absence, then an Individual Reintegration Programme (IRP) will be implemented. The IRP will include members of the school staff and will be designed to be as supportive as possible to the pupil. The LA Attendance Service officer can assist in the development of the IRP.

**Penalty Notices**

Since January 1st 2015 the school and LA can issue Penalty Notices in accordance with attendance

The key criteria are as follows for issuing a Penalty Notice:

* when a pupil has a minimum of 10 sessions (five school days) that have been lost due to unauthorised absences during the current term and this brings the overall school attendance to below 90% in the school year (these absences do not have to be consecutive);
* unauthorised absences of at least 10 sessions (5 school days) due to holidays in term-time if the absences take the overall school attendance to below 90% in the school year to date (these absences do not have to be consecutive);
* persistent late arrival at school i.e. after the register has closed ( ‘U’ code as in the Codes Guidance Document 2010). Persistent for the purpose of this document means at least 10 sessions of late arrival within a term; these do not need to be consecutive but should bring the overall school attendance to under 90% in the school year to date;
* where parents/carers have failed to engage with the school/and or LA in attempts to improve attendance.

It should be noted that penalty notices will only be issued by post and never as an instant action, e.g. during a Truancy Sweep. This will enable officers to ensure that all evidential requirements are in place and will limit the health and safety risks to individuals.

**Strategies for promoting good attendance:**

* Early intervention is key as this works best when pupils are young enough to respect people and processes, and wish to improve.
* The school’s commitment to achieving high levels of attendance and the importance of punctuality should be explicit and clear to the pupils, staff and parents / carers e.g regular letters, displays within school.
* Parents should be kept regularly and fully informed of all concerns around attendance and punctuality.
* Pupils whose attendance falls below 90% or misses over 5 days in a half term are set targets for improvement. The class teacher and Headteacher regularly review these targets.
* Regular, structured meetings will be held with the school’s Headteacher in order to identify and support pupils whose attendance / punctuality is causing concern (under 90%).
* Raising pupils’ levels of academic self-concepts and general self-esteem can lead to improved attendance at school and therefore the school will constantly monitor pupils’ attitudes and actively act upon findings in order to encourage attendance and punctuality. We will send out each child’s attendance every half term in percentage and sessions missed.
* Certificates for attendance of 98-100% over a term will be presented along with certificates for most improved attendance as we want to promote good attendance and effort made towards improvement.

**Attendance facts and figures.**

Every school day counts

towards your child’s future.

Days off school add up to lost learning.

A year has 365 days, 52 weeks and 12 months.

A school year has 195 days, 39 weeks and 6 terms.

Five days in each school year are training days for the teachers (= INSET

days).

Pupils attend school, therefore, for 190 days. 175 days are non-school

days.

A school days is divided into two sessions. A pupil therefore should

attend school for 380 sessions.

* 10 days absence (50 lessons) = 5% absence
* 19 days absence (95 lessons) = 10% absence (four whole weeks)
* 29 days absence (145 lessons) = 15% absence
* 38 days absence (190 lessons) = 20% absence
* 47 days absence (235 lessons) = 25% absence
* 17 days off school every year means that you will probably obtain a whole grade lower in your exams than you are really capable of.
* Pupils with less that 85% attendance are unlikely to gain 5 A – C GCSEs or any qualifications.

Punctuality

Being frequently late for school adds up to lost learning:

* 5 minutes late every day = 3 lost days (15 lessons) a year
* 15 minutes late every day = 2 lost weeks (50 lessons) a year
* 30 minutes late every day = 19 lost days (95 lessons) a year

**Missing 19 days (10% absence) every year over 10 years of**

**school life = 1 whole year of school (950 lessons).**

Attendance codes.

Present

**/ \ -** Present at registration

**L** - Late but arrived before the register closed

Approved Educational Activity

**B** - Educated off-site (not dual registration)

**D** - Dual registered (i.e. PRU or another school)

**P** - Approved sporting activity

**V** - Educational visit or trip

**J** - Interview

**W** - Work experience (not work based training)

Authorised Absence

**C** - Other authorised absence (not covered by another code)

**I** - Illness

**M** - Medical or dental appointment

**S** - Study leave

**E** - Excluded but no alternate provision made

**R** - Exclusively for religious observance

**T** - Traveller absence

Unauthorised Absence

**N** - No reason yet provided

**O** - Other unauthorised (not covered by other codes or description)

**G** - Family holiday (not agreed or sessions in excess of agreement)

**U** - Late and arrived after register closed

Not Required to Attend

**X** - Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils

**Y** - Partial or enforced school closure

**Z** - Pupil not yet on roll

**#** - School closed to all pupils

**Information for parents in relation to punctuality.**

# PUNCTUALITY

If you have a problem getting your child to school on time:

* talk to your child;
* talk to the school;
* ask for help.

Remember it’s better to get help early to stop little problems from becoming big ones.

**Why is punctuality such a good thing?**

Being on time:

* gets your child’s day off to a good start and puts your child in a positive frame of mind, so that he/she can make the most of his/her learning;
* sets positive patterns for the future;
* leads to good attendance;
* leads to better achievement;
* leads to understanding that school is important and education is valuable;
* helps your child develop a sense of responsibility for him/herself and towards others;
* helps your child make friends and keep friends;
* reaps rewards: it leads to success and self-confidence.

**Why is lateness such a bad thing?**

Being late:

* gets your child’s day off to a bad start;
* can be embarrassing for your child;
* will be noticed by other children who might make negative comments;
* may lead to your child losing confidence;
* may lead to your child feeling confused all day! He/she will have missed out on vital instructions, information and bits of news at the start of the day;
* disrupts the lesson for everyone;
* can cause your child to fall behind with his or her work;
* creates a bad habit that can be hard to break at secondary school and in the workplace;
* can lead to poor attendance - if your child thinks it is okay to be late for school they can soon start to think it is okay not to go to school at all.

**Here are some more things that help**

* Make sure you have everything ready the night before e.g. PE kit, books, school uniform etc.
* Get to know your child's school timetable.
* Make sure you allow plenty of time for you and/or your child to travel to school.
* Make alternative arrangements with neighbours, family or friends if there is a difficulty in getting your child to school.
* Make sure your child has breakfast or arrives at school in time for breakfast club if your school has one.
* Make sure your child does homework the night before, not at the breakfast table!
* Establish a good bedtime routine - this pays dividends! Even simple things like making sure the room is dark enough to enable your child to sleep well can make mornings easier and less of a struggle.
* Make sure your child gets enough rest and is not prevented from sleeping by distractions - TV, computer, Playstation etc.
* Buy an alarm clock!
* Make your life easier by getting enough rest and having a good routine yourself.

**Types of lateness**

* late before the register closes - when your child is a few minutes late;
* late after the register closes - this counts as an unauthorised absence.

Persistent lateness after register closes can result in a Penalty Notice or court action by the Inclusion Service under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act.

**Primary school attendance process**

**ATTENDANCE**

**PRIMARY SCHOOL PROCESS**

Head teacher/Class Teacher identifies Pupil with deteriorating attendance

**(Below 90%)**

School Letter to be sent.

School (Class Teacher) to arrange and hold a more informal meeting with parent at the school which needs to be recorded.

If absence due to holiday, unauthorised absence or persistent lateness, consider request for Penalty Notice (see ERW Code of Conduct)

If there is no improvement, school will require Parent/ Guardian to meet Head Teacher to discuss.

A plan could be implemented, with School offering support to Young Person to encourage more regular attendance, i.e. Peer Mentors/ Youth workers.

School nurse can be involved at this stage. This meeting should be recorded.

School to send Letter to Parent/Guardian. Letter to highlight a possible referral to L.A if there is no improvement in attendance.

**OR**

If absences due to persistent MEDICAL absence, Medical Letter to be sent to parent.

If there is still no improvement and pupil’s attendance falls **below 80%,** a referral to the LA’s Attendance Officer needs to be made.