

Ysgol Gymunedol Llangatwg Llangatwg Community School



Attendance Policy 2014-15

**Inspire, Aspire, Succeed
Ysbrydoli, Dyheu, Llwyddo**

DESIGNATED STAFF MEMBER WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR MONITORING ATTENDANCE

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NOMINATED MEMBER OF THE GOVERNING BODY FOR MONITORING ATTENDANCE

NAME:

Contacts within the Local Authority

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Llangatwg's policy is informed by the school's inclusive ethos. At Llangatwg, we challenge all those involved with the school to use their innate ability to achieve excellence and make significant progress in their learning whether student or member of staff. Opportunities exist for aesthetic, sporting, performing and creative talents to be nurtured. We place emphasis on, and praise, effort, not just on demonstrating academic ability.

It is recognised that regular school attendance is a critical contributory factor to a productive and successful career. Full and/or improved attendance will be actively promoted and encouraged for all our pupils. Irregular attendance impairs academic progress and may place pupils at risk of involvement in anti-social and/or criminal behaviour.

RATIONALE

- The school bases its attendance policy on the guidelines as set out by the ERW Consortium.
- Whilst the legal responsibility for regular school attendance rests with parents, the school shares with them, and the local authority (LA), responsibility for encouraging good attendance and improving poor attendance.
- The school is required by law to maintain specific records and to produce specified information on the attendance of pupils.
- Statutory obligation apart, the school is committed to improvements in attendance standards as a direct stimulus to raising pupil achievement.
- Poor attendance is destructive of educational achievement, undermines the well-being of each pupil and demoralises staff.
- The LA has a statutory duty to ensure that a child for whom they are responsible is receiving suitable education and, if a registered pupil at school, this means attending school regularly and on time.

AIMS

The aims of this policy on attendance and punctuality are to maximise pupil attendance by encouraging parents to enable their children to take full advantage of their educational opportunities by regular and punctual attendance at school and:

- To establish and maintain a high level of attendance.
- Raise the profile of attendance and make it a priority for staff, pupils, parents and governors.
- Ensure attendance procedures are effective and consistent.
- Ensure the marking of registers is completed accurately, consistently, reliably and within agreed timescales. Attendance data will be used to provide an effective monitoring system, to inform practice and target resources.
- Develop a systematic approach to gathering, analysing and acting upon attendance data in order to target attendance-related issues.
- To identify pupils and groups of pupils whose absence is giving cause for concern and to target resources to work towards the resolution of any difficulties being experienced.

- To promote an effective whole-school approach to the management of attendance where each member of the school community (including staff, governors, parents and pupils) is aware of their roles and responsibilities and makes an effective contribution.

OBJECTIVES

- To promote good attendance as this is vital to educational achievement.
- To convey clearly to parents and pupils that:
 - regular attendance is essential;
 - unauthorised absence and persistent lateness is not acceptable;
 - only the Headteacher in the context of the law can approve absence;
 - parental condoned, unjustifiable absence will be investigated and will be recorded as unauthorised absence.
- To keep records of attendance which:
 - clearly distinguish between authorised and unauthorised absence by pupils;
 - provide accurate information on actual attendance to enable monitoring and evaluation of school attendance rates through centrally held statistics.
- To build on existing good practice that fosters a positive attitude to good attendance by:
 - responding rapidly to pupil absence;
 - recognising pupils who maintain 'excellent', 'good' and 'improving' attendance records.
- To be sensitive to situations where regular attendance patterns are disrupted by external factors such as family bereavement.

STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES

The legal framework governing attendance is set by the Education Acts and their associated regulations (which relate to schools and Pupil Referral Units).

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that "...the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/ her to receive full time education suitable to his/ her age, aptitude and ability and to any special education needs he/she may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise..."

Section 444 further states " ..the parent of a child of compulsory school age registered at school and failing to attend regularly is guilty of an offence punishable by law..."

Compulsory school age means that children and young people should attend school from the start of the first term commencing after their fifth birthday and are of compulsory school age until after the last Friday in June of the school year in which they have their 16th birthday

An offence is not committed if it can be demonstrated that:

- the pupil was absent with leave (authorised absence);

- the pupil was ill or prevented from attending by an unavoidable cause;
- the absence occurred on a day set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil/ parent belongs;
- the school is not within the prescribed walking distance of the child's home and suitable transport arrangements have not been made by the LA;. The law relating to walking distance effectively is defined as two miles for pupils under eight and three miles for all other pupils. Distance will be measured by nearest available walking route;

Absence from the centres will be authorised if it is for the following reasons:

- sickness;
- unavoidable medical or dental appointments;
- days of religious observance;
- exceptional family circumstances,

Absence from school will not be authorised for:

- shopping;
- haircuts;
- missed bus;
- overslept;
- no uniform;
- looking after brothers, sisters or unwell parents;
- minding the house;
- birthdays;
- holidays / day trips taken in term time.

Parents are asked to make all medical and dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible.

Unauthorised absence of an individual pupil, which brings the pupil's attendance to below 90% in any one term, or when unauthorised absence is due to a family holiday taken in term time, the Education (Penalty Notice) (Wales) Regulations gives the school the ability to request that the Local Authority (Education Welfare Service) consider issuing a Penalty Notice to a parent(s)/day to day carer of the named pupil. This request, when made, will be in accordance with conditions laid down in ERW's Code of Conduct.

Schools are required under the Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 to take an attendance register twice a day: at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. The accuracy of the register is important to support any statutory interventions that may be required. It should be noted that it is an offence not to maintain accurate registers.

PRACTICE AND PROCEDURES

Clear systems and procedures will govern response to all pupil absence. The school will follow the 'Procedures for Non Attendance' flowchart as agreed by the ERW Consortium.

The school adheres to the descriptors received from ERW.

95-100% attendance	Best chance of success	Your child is taking full advantage of every learning opportunity.
90-95% attendance	At least 2 weeks of learning missed	Satisfactory. Your child may have to spend time catching up with work.
85-90% attendance	At least 4 weeks of learning missed	Your child may be at risk of underachieving and may need extra support from you to catch up with work.
80-85% attendance	At least 5 ½ weeks of learning missed	Your child's poor attendance has a significant impact on learning.
Below 80% attendance	At least 7½ weeks of learning missed	Your child is missing out on a broad and balanced education. You are at risk of prosecution.

The school encourages good attendance and punctuality by;

- creating a caring and nurturing environment whereby pupil's feels safe and appreciated as young adults;
- ensuring that attendance and punctuality are recognised within the whole school reward system, e.g. lunch passes and tokens, attendance levels considered before a pupil is eligible for merit trips and trips abroad;
- developing positive relationships with parents / carers and external agencies working with the family / pupil;

- monitoring and evaluating the early intervention strategies adopted by the school;
- working closely with multi agency colleagues and the Education Inclusion Service to improve attendance and punctuality;
- monitoring attendance data and trends and reporting this information termly to the Governing Body.

Specific actions

- The school will make its policy on attendance clear to parents and pupils through: the initial transition meeting prior to admission and at various key times throughout the year.
- The school will also communicate the importance of attendance to parents and pupils through assemblies, the school prospectus, newsletters and the school website.
- If no contact is received by the parent/ carer of an absent pupil on the first morning of the absence, a text is sent by the school's administration staff to investigate the reason for the absence. If the school is not able to contact the family then this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (**N**: no reason yet provided for absence). This is repeated daily until the pupil returns to school. A record of send texts is kept in the school office as is a record of replies received.
- Details of the absence are recorded, if later received, and discussed with the Headteacher and a decision will be made with regards to authorisation as soon as possible. The Headteacher may ask the Education Welfare Service for advice with regards to this but the decision to authorise any absence remains with the school.
- If the pupil is registered as a Child in Need or on the Child Protection register and absent from school without reason, then the school should contact Social Services as soon as possible.
- If an absence remains unexplained for 3 consecutive days then arrangements should be made to visit the home.
- When a pupil returns to school from an absence, but no explanation is offered, contact is made with the parent.
- A letter will also be sent out if a pupil is persistently late to school.
- Ultimately, if an attendance matter cannot be resolved by the school and the appropriate steps have been followed, then a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service for further investigation.

The school will also:

- ensure that all staff are aware of the registration procedures, registration regulations and education law relating to school attendance;

- complete school registers at the start of the morning session and afternoon session – the register is open for **20** minutes and closes at **9.00 am** for morning registration and **2.10 pm** for afternoon registration.
- stress to parents and carers the importance of contacting the school as early as possible on the first day of absence;
- promote positive staff attitudes to pupils returning after absence;
- consult with all members of the school’s community and Education Welfare Service in developing and maintaining the whole school attendance policy;
- ensure regular evaluation of attendance by the Governing Body;
- work towards ensuring all pupils are supported and valued and so want to attend school.

The Designated Member of Staff

Attendance is the responsibility of all staff. There is, however, a designated member of staff for attendance matters and all staff are able to discuss individual pupil attendance with this person. The Designated Member of Staff for Attendance:

- monitors the school’s registers;
- liaises with teaching staff, in particular Key Stage / Assistant Learning Leaders
- meets with the LA Officer on a regular pre-arranged basis;
- refers to other agencies if appropriate;
- refers to the Pupil Support Officer if there are doubts about the validity of an illness;
- oversees the use of standardised letters to parents addressing specific aspects of attendance and requiring parental response,
- arranges for an attendance meeting in the case of repeated, unexplained absences (school will consider inviting the named governor for attendance to such a meeting);
- ensures that the Education Welfare Officer’s role is known and understood in school.

GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY - Roles and Responsibilities

Class Teachers

- Aim to accurately complete registers within 10 minutes of the start of the lesson, **every lesson (with statutory afternoon registration completed by 2.15pm daily)**. If, in rare circumstances, the electronic register cannot be taken during the lesson, this must be done on paper and sent to the School Officer.
- Ensure that pupils in each class who are underachieving owing to absence, are identified and inform Pupil Progress Leaders.
- Identify, within each lesson, any pupils who clearly should be present in the lesson but are not. Please inform the Pupil Progress Leader as soon as possible.
- Ensure that appropriate work is set and marked for long-term absentees and those on fixed-term exclusions, so that return to school is made as easy as possible.
- Ensure that those who return from long-term absence are provided with appropriate support to enable them to access the learning within the lesson.

Form Tutors

- Ensure that the register for morning registration is accurately completed (legal requirement).
- Check the registration data each day to identify any internal truancy from lessons. Question the pupil and take action personally. Also, alert the Pupil Progress Leader.
- Take action to request absence notes from returning pupils. Where absence notes are not provided within 3 days of the pupil returning from absence in spite of your actions, inform the Pupil Progress Leader.
- Collect and scrutinise absence notes and alert the Pupil Progress Leader if you feel these are forged.
- Encourage high attendance through constant reinforcement of individual and class targets and through encouraging pupils to want to be the best-attending form in the Year.
- Liaise with the Pupil Progress Leader as early as possible where there are issues of attendance with individual pupils, groups within the form or the whole form.

Key Stage / Assistant Learning Leaders

- Monitor carefully the attendance of pupils within their Year Group, taking note of any patterns amongst pupils from particular groups, particular times of the week or particular subject areas. Inform SLT of any identified patterns.
- Oversee the efficient running of the Registration system and take action where registers are not being completed accurately.
- Monitor the attendance within the Year Group where pupils are identified as having poor attendance.
- Work with targeted pupils to improve attendance through parental contact, attendance reports, short-term targets and rewards. Particular attention will be paid to pupils with attendance between 80% and 90% and those falling into the persistent absentee category.
- Monitor particularly closely the attendance of persistent absentees, those with deteriorating levels of attendance, and those at risk of disaffection, using short-term targets and attendance reports as necessary.

- Involve outside agencies with individuals and groups of pupils.
- Foster a positive attitude to school attendance within the Year Group through assemblies, the form noticeboards and constant reinforcement with pupils. Encourage a spirit of healthy competition between forms and individuals.
- Liaise with subject teachers to ensure that appropriate work is set for long-term absentees and those excluded from school.
- Investigate instances of suspected whole-day or lesson truancy and take appropriate action, including making initial contact with parents.
- With the Assistant Head teacher responsible for Transition, identify Year 6 pupils for targeted support on attendance at transition from primary school.
- Make referrals to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO).
- Meet with the EWO regularly to identify referrals, providing full details and additional information for cases where court action is required.
- Administer the attendance rewards systems.
- Provide regular data on attendance for Form Tutors and the Deputy Headteacher.

Senior Leadership Team

- Support the Key Stage / Assistant Learning Leaders in the implementation of the Attendance Policy.
- Take overall responsibility for developing the Attendance Policy within the school.
- With the rest of SLT, actively discourage parents from taking pupils out of school during term- time.
- Ensure that induction of new teachers includes training about taking a register.

Education Welfare Service

The Education Welfare Service, in particular the specific EWO, shall keep the Pupil progress Leaders informed as to any child for whom a referral has been received, with whom they are involved on a casework basis, or any other registered pupil at the school with whom they have involvement. The EWO will also support the process of monitoring attendance. The EWO will also support the school by:

- Making home visits and will also be available in school to interview pupils and their parents.
- Making judgments in co-operation with school staff and other agencies in line with statutory duties in relation to school attendance.
- Providing interim welfare support to pupils and their families and through assessment of their needs, engage a multi-agency response to addressing those needs.
- Providing an independent approach to supporting the school community in particular with advice relating to the management of school attendance.
- Assist the school in analysing data and identifying patterns of absence and punctuality.
- Carrying out duties with regard to statutory intervention in cases of irregular school attendance.

Parents

Parents are responsible in law for ensuring that their children attend the school at which they are registered, regularly, on time, properly dressed and in a fit condition to learn (parents are also responsible for ensuring that their children stay at school once they have registered).

Parents can do a great deal to support the regular and punctual attendance of their children. Parents should:

- take an active interest in their child's school life and work;
- attend parents' evenings and other school events, if possible;
- ensure that their child completes his/her homework and goes to bed at an appropriate time;
- be aware of letters from school which their child brings home;
- ensure that their child arrives at school on time each day;
- ensure that their child only misses school for reasons which are unavoidable or justified, such as illness or days of religious observance;
- always notify the school as soon as possible - preferably on the first morning - of any absence;
- confirm this in writing when the child returns to school;
- avoid booking family holidays during term-time;
- talk to the school if they are concerned that their child may be reluctant to attend.

REGISTRATION

Keeping the registers

The register is a legal document and must be kept accurately. The register may be requested in a court of law as evidence in a prosecution for non-attendance. It will also be used for end of term reports, records of achievement and reference requests, and information for other schools, LAs and external agencies.

- No pupil should be marked present unless actually in attendance at school or other agreed educational activity.
- The register should not have missing marks.
- When a pupil arrives late but the register is still open, the pupils should be marked as late but counted as present for the session.
- When a pupil misses registration, she/he should be marked as an unauthorised absence, unless a medical letter/ phone call by parent is received and deemed to be genuine.
- Pupils should not have access to the register.

- The Headteacher is the only person who can authorise that a pupil be removed from the register – this can only be done with the agreement of the LA.
- In addition to twice daily registration in form groups, a class register is taken for every lesson throughout the day. These are checked by the Key Stage / Assistant Learning Leaders to identify possible truancy and any pupil found to have missed a lesson.

A mark will be recorded in respect of each pupil during each period of the school day, with morning registration and period 5 being used for recording statutory attendance. Any child who is not present at these times will be marked as an unauthorised absence unless leave has been granted by the school in advance or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended. Amendments will be carried out by the Pupil progress Leader, Attendance Support staff and the Deputy Headteacher.

Lateness

A pupil's punctuality is a legal requirement and the parent of a pupil who is persistently late is guilty of an offence. The law treats persistent lateness in the same way as irregular attendance and parents can be prosecuted if persistent late arrival is not resolved.

Holidays

Headteachers do have the discretionary power to grant leave for the purpose of a family holiday or trip. However, the ERW Consortium is strongly advising that any holidays or day trips in term time should be unauthorised, and that there should be no exceptions to this policy. The school adheres to this and family holidays during term time will not be authorised, unless circumstances are deemed by the Headteacher to be exceptional.

Registration Codes

/	Present (AM)
\	Present (PM)
B	Off Site Education
C	Other Authorised Circumstances
D	Dual Registered i.e. Present at another school or PRU
E	Excluded (No alternative provision made)
G	Family holiday (Not agreed)
I	Illness

J	Interview
L	Late (Before the registers closed)
M	Medical / Dental Appointment
N	No reason yet provided for absence
O	Unauthorised Absence (Not covered by other code)
P	Approved Sporting Activity
R	Religious Observance
S	Study Leave
T	Traveller Absence
U	Late (after registers closed)
V	Educational Visit or Trip
W	Work experience
Y	Partial or Enforced closure
X	Non-compulsory school age absence
#	School closed to all pupils
Z	Pupils not on roll yet

MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF POLICY

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Date passed by Governing Body

Chairman

Designated Governor for school attendance