



Ysgol Gynradd

Llantrisant

Primary School

Attendance Policy

YSGOL GYNRADD LLANTRISANT PRIMARY SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

This policy takes account of the Attendance and Wellbeing Service Tool kit in Rhondda Cynon Taff. The policy statement below summarises the content and approach taken by the school.

Introduction

- We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so.
 - ✓ **Pupils must arrive at school between 8.50 and 9.00.**
 - ✓ **Pupils must be punctual for registration at the following times:**
 - **Morning registration between 9.00am (reg close 9.30am)**
 - **Afternoon registration between 1.15 -1.30 pm**
- Any pupil who arrives after 9:10am will be marked on the register as late. Any pupil arriving after the registration period, an unauthorised late mark will be issued. The accuracy of the register is important in order to support any statutory intervention that may be required.
- This register must record whether a pupil is present, absent, not required to attend or attending an approved educational activity (treated as present) .
- Importantly, every half-day absence must be classified as either 'authorised' or 'unauthorised', only the school can make this decision.
- We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 identify the duty schools have to ensure that clear and efficient registration practices are in place and are accessible to the Local Authority (LA) for monitoring purposes, as required. A school register is a legal document that may be required to be presented as court evidence in Local Authority prosecutions for non-attendance. It is an offence for schools not to maintain accurate registers.
- Rhondda Cynon Taf LA recommends that all schools should close their registers to pupils 30 minutes after the start of the session, in line with guidance from the Welsh Government. Under no circumstances should schools leave their registers open for the entire session. It is the duty of the Attendance & Wellbeing Service (AWS) on behalf of the LA to formally inspect school registers.

- The school has the responsibility to monitor individual attendance rates weekly and use their own intervention methods to tackle individual pupil attendance issues where the pupil's attendance rate is 86% and above. A referral to the AWS is required from the school when an individual's attendance falls to 85% or below over a six week period and there is no exceptional reason for this. It is essential that the school attempts to address the issue in house prior to a referral and the school is expected to detail all actions that have been taken on the referral form.
- Schools have a statutory duty under Section 175 Education Act 2002 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. This can only be fulfilled through effective registration systems and active whole school monitoring of pupil absence, in order to support and promote regular school attendance.

Definitions

Authorised Absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent/guardian writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence on the first day of absence.
- Medical appointments must be supported by an official appointment card or letter.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents and carers do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents/carers will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent/guardian takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

Unauthorised Absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent/guardian.
- Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent/guardian.
- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school due to a holiday that was not agreed by the head teacher under her discretion.

If a child is late/absent

- Children arriving late must report to the school office with a parent/guardian so that the school is aware that the child is in school and can mark the register appropriately. *This is a Health & Safety requirement.*
- When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, and will inform the school office.

- All absences will be recorded as unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation has been received from the parent/guardian and considered by the school.
- If a parent telephones the school to report an absence, it will be recorded in the absence book.
- Parents/guardians are required to notify the school on a daily basis of any absence to provide an update as well as an expected return date.
- The school clerk will collate the names of pupils absent without reason and will endeavour to contact a parent/guardian by telephone or text.
- When the child returns to school, a note should be brought from a parent or guardian to explain the absence.
- An official letter/appointment card must be provided to support any medical, dental or other health related appointment.

Holidays in term time

- We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are circumstances under which a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child to attend, e.g. a special event.
- Parents/guardians do not have the automatic right to withdraw pupils from school during term time for a family holiday – it is the law that they apply to the school for permission in advance. The maximum number of days that a pupil is permitted to miss for a holiday is 10 days – any absence in excess of this must follow safeguarding principles.

Authorised Holidays

- The school (Governing Body) uses its discretion to authorise pupils' absence from school for holidays up to 10 days in one academic year during the school term, in accordance with Welsh Government guidelines.
- The school (Governing Body) will authorise holidays under the following circumstances:
 - ✓ *Attendance at the time of the holiday is above 95% for the year up to the date the holiday starts*
 - ✓ *Is NOT more than 10 days in one academic year*
 - ✓ *Is NOT in the first week of the new September term*
 - ✓ *Is NOT during testing week in May for pupils in Years 2-6*
 - ✓ *There have been no exclusions in the previous 3 terms*
 - ✓ *The head teacher has used her discretion in special circumstances*
- Requests for holidays must be received at least a week before the start of the holiday.
- Holidays requested well in advance will be unauthorised in principle but the decision to mark them authorised or unauthorised will depend on the above criteria being met on the date the holiday starts. A letter will subsequently be issued to the parent/guardian to confirm them of the school's decision.
- Holidays that are marked unauthorised will be issued with a fixed penalty notice in line with RCT guidelines.

Unauthorised Holidays

- The school has adopted the guidelines as set out the RCT Toolkit for Attendance and Wellbeing. All unauthorised holidays will be referred to the Attendance and Wellbeing Service and issued with a fixed penalty notice.

Long-term absence

- When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over ten days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can work with their parents and keep up with their school work.
- If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be for a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

Repeated unauthorised absences/lateness

- The Attendance Welfare Officer (AWO) will visit the school regularly and together with the school clerk and head teacher, consider the rates of attendance of all pupils. Those with below 90% for the term will be identified so that action can be taken, unless there is a known and acceptable reason for such a high level of absence.
- Parents/guardians of pupils highlighted will then be issued with first or second warning letters pointing out the figures and describing the importance of good attendance.
- If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents/guardians will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school will then contact the LA support services, who will visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or guardians understand the seriousness of the situation.
- The school has adopted the procedure as stated in the RCT Attendance Toolkit document. This is as follows -

The school will contact the parent or guardian of any pupil who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or guardians will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem.

If the situation does not improve and the pupil's attendance drops below 86% within the previous 6 week period, the school will then refer to the Attendance and Wellbeing Service (AWS), who will visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or guardians understand the seriousness of the situation.

The AWS provides support to schools, pupils and parents to ensure regular attendance and address problems relating to absenteeism. The service liaises with other agencies and provides an important link between home and school. It helps parents and teachers to work in partnership to ensure that pupils benefit from regular attendance.

The responsibility of the Local Authority is devolved to the AWS. Where 'persistent absenteeism' continues despite input from the governors, supported by the AWS, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

- The governors, supported by the LA, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parent/guardian who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending children to school on a regular basis.

Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN)

- In September 2013, the Education (Penalty Notices) (Wales) Regulations 2013 came into force, as part of Welsh Government's commitment to addressing poor school attendance. All local authorities across Wales are expected to use the fixed penalty notices to assist them to prevent unnecessary absence from school:

A requirement of this is for every local authority to develop a Code of Conduct outlining how the scheme would operate ensuring consistency in the issuing of fixed penalty notices across the county. The implementation of the regulations will affect all pupils of compulsory school age (5 to 16 years) registered at any infant, junior, primary, secondary and special school, including pupil referral units in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

On 31st July 2014, Rhondda Cynon Taf Cabinet approved the Code of Conduct, including the criteria for issuing fixed penalty notices:

- ▶ *Where a pupil has accrued 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absences in the current term;*
- ▶ *Where a pupil has been persistently late on 10 or more occasions in the current term, arriving more than 30 minutes after the registration period;*
- ▶ *Where a parent refuses to engage with a school in the interest of improving their child's school attendance levels;*
- ▶ *Where a pupil is repeatedly caught truanting in public places during school hours;*
- ▶ *Where a holiday in term time has been requested but has been unauthorised.*

Fixed penalty notices will offer a means of intervention to prevent individual cases becoming persistent non-attendance cases and progressing to the local magistrates' court. Only one notice will be issued to a parent/carer (who has parental responsibility) in any one academic year but notices can be issued for more than one child in that family.

Therefore, from the 1st September 2014, the Code of Conduct will be operational across Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Promoting good attendance

- The school uses a variety of strategies to improve attendance. These include 'Late on the Gate' monitoring, specialist assemblies and rewards, letters to parents, including a termly 'traffic light' report highlighting their child's attendance for the term and competitions.
- Holidays in term time are actively discouraged and the results of poor attendance are emphasised to parents.
- Weekly attendance is recorded on the monitoring board in the school hall for pupils to refer to and is also included in the school weekly newsletter to keep parents informed.

Rewards for good attendance

- All the children who have 100% attendance in any one term will receive a certificate for excellent attendance, awarded at the last assembly of the term.
- Special certificates are awarded to any pupil who has achieved 100% attendance for the whole year. Pupils with 99% and 98% attendance for the whole year are also given special certificates.
- At present, the school works with local secondary schools to provide incentives for 100% attendance to Year 6 pupils.
- If the school reaches their target attendance for the week, pupils will receive a reward.
- Weekly class attendance awards take place every Friday with the best class receiving Smokey the Dragon, our good attendance mascot, to look after for the forthcoming week.

Attendance targets

The school is set attendance targets each year by the Local Authority. The school strives to achieve these targets.

Monitoring and review

- It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will be given termly reports from the head teacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.
- The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.
- The rates of attendance will be reported in the school prospectus and in the annual governors' report.

- The school clerk and the head teacher will be responsible for monitoring attendance in the school and for following up absences in the appropriate way. The school has agreed that it is the responsibility of the school to:
 - ✓ monitor pupil attendance on a weekly basis
 - ✓ monitor overall attendance on a half-termly (six week) basis
 - ✓ send letters to parents for attendance under 90%
- If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the Attendance and Wellbeing Service, who will contact the parents/guardians.

Review

The Governors accepted the principles of the RCT Toolkit on attendance in the Summer Term 2020. This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every two years, or earlier if considered necessary.

Signed:

L. Davies

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Head Teacher

Date: 3.06.20



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Chair of Governors

Date: 3rd June 2020