

Ysgol Babanod Mochdre & Ysgol Cystennin

Be your Best!

Ysgol Babanod Mochdre & Ysgol Cystennin

Promoting good attendance

Headteacher: _____

Chair of Governors: _____

Review Date: _____

Attendance Policy & Procedures

Pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. Ysgol Babanod Mochdre and Ysgol Cystennin fully recognise their responsibilities to ensure pupils are in school and on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Headteacher in particular, and school staff work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.

Aims and Objectives

This attendance policy ensures that all staff and governors in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this Policy we aim to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a minimum of 95% attendance for all children.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Ensure that our policy applies to Nursery and Reception aged children in order to promote good habits at an early age.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the Education Welfare Service so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially class teachers, in promoting good 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 carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence.

Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school.

Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

Procedures

Our school will undertake to follow the following procedures to support good attendance:

- To maintain appropriate registration processes.
- To maintain appropriate attendance data.
- To communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, governors, parents and pupils.
- To have consistent and systematic daily records which give detail of any absence and lateness.
- To follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school.
- To inform parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
- To strongly discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time.
- To work with parents to improve individual pupils attendance and punctuality
- To refer to the Educational Welfare Service any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve.
- All staff should be aware that they must raise any attendance or punctuality concerns to the Headteacher or staff member with responsibility for monitoring attendance.

Responsibilities

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

Class teacher

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers
- Informing the Headteacher where there are concerns and acting upon them
- Providing background information to support referrals
- Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness
- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation which should be noted inside the register
- Discussing attendance issues at parents evenings where necessary

Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Overall monitoring of school attendance
- Trends in authorised and unauthorised absence
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised
- Making referrals to the EWO service
- Providing reports and background information to inform discussion with the school's EWO
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.

Administration staff

The school secretary is responsible for:

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information on SIMs.
- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence
- Contacting parents of absent children where no contact has been made.
- Recording details of children who arrive late or go home on SIMs.
- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers and reporting concerns to the Headteacher
- Sending out standard letters regarding attendance

Parents

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment.
- Contacting the school office on the first morning of absence.
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we do require evidence from the doctor or dentist. (Appointment card/letter)
- Making requests for authorised absence in term time, only if absolutely necessary as these are not automatically authorised.
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

Registration

Unless pupils attend Breakfast Club, the children's entrance is open from 8:45am. The school starts punctually at 8:55am. This time is sufficient for all pupils to come into their classroom.

Each class teacher has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance, twice a day. Any pupil who is absent must be recorded at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session. The attendance register must be completed by the class teacher by 9.10am and by 1.10pm. (Attendance code / and \ for pupils who are present) The registers are to be sent to the school office promptly following the register session.

All attendance records are documented using SIMs software, which is supported by the Local Authority. Attendance registers are legal documents and these must be kept secure and preserved for a period of three years after the date they were last used.

Lateness

Once the doors are closed at 8.55am the only way to get into school is via each main entrance at each school. Any pupil who comes into school this way will be met by a member of staff, who will inform the school office of their arrival. The register should be updated, with the time of arrival logged in SIMs. The register code should be marked as 'L' if a pupil is late, between 9:10am and 9:30am. Any child who arrives for school later than 9.30am will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning. (Attendance code U).

Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school later than 9.10am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M).

Children who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning, often the most important aspect, as the beginning of the day is where the teacher explains the learning and what each child is expected to achieve.

Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness parents/carers will receive a letter advising them of the concerns and the school will provide opportunities for parents/carers to seek support and advice to address these issues.

ABSENCES

Parents/carers should contact the school on the first day of their child's absence. When parents/carers notify us of their child's absence it is important that they provide us with details of the reason for their absence.

All absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised absences on SIMs. It is important that we receive accurate information from parents with reasons for the child's absence. This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. The Headteacher has the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.

Where we have not received reasons for a child's absence then school will make contact firstly via phonecall, or send a letter requesting the reason for absence for parents/carers to complete. If this letter is not completed and returned by the specified date then the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (Attendance Code O).

First Day Contact

Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, then we initiate a first day contact process. The School Admin checks all of the registers from 9.10am to 10:00am on a daily basis, to identify those pupils who are absent. There are occasions when we are unaware why the child is absent and we will contact the parent to check the reasons for the child's absence.

Illness

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school long term, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the parent and support services to see if arrangements can, or should, be made for the child to be given some appropriate work to complete at home.

Where over the course of an academic year, a child has repeated periods of illness, the school will write to parents to ask them to provide medical evidence for each future period

of illness related absence. This evidence could be a Doctor's note, appointment card or copy of a prescription.

Parental Request for Absence from School for Holiday

Under the Education (Penalty Notices) (Wales) Regulations 2013 Local Authorities have been given powers to issue Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) as an alternative to taking legal action against parents/carers when responding to unauthorised absence from school.

When a parent requests authorisation for term-time leave for their child, a School Holiday Form will be sent out for them to complete. The returned form is then given to the Headteacher for consideration as to whether the absence will be authorised or not. The Headteacher will consider authorising 'holiday leave' in circumstances where pupils attendance is over 90% and is not a cause for concern.

Where a child may be taken out of school on a holiday which is not authorised by the Headteacher, then a fixed penalty notice may be issued.

Addressing Attendance Concerns

The school expects attendance of at least 95%.

It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their primary school career. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and the governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. We rely upon parents to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually and therefore, where there are concerns regarding attendance, parents are always informed of our concerns. Initially concerns about attendance are raised with parents via letters which are sent home. There will be opportunities for the parent/carer to discuss reasons for absence and support to be given by the school with the aim to improve attendance. Where a child's attendance record does not improve over a period of time then the school has a responsibility to make a referral to the Educational Welfare Officer.

The Education Welfare Officer regularly visits to check and monitor attendance. She carries out regular register checks to identify children with low attendance (usually below 85%). She works with the school to improve attendance and may issue fixed penalty fines if attendance support meetings held by the school do not improve attendance.

Monitoring Attendance

The school secretary, has the responsibility for ensuring that all of the attendance data is accurately recorded on the SIMs attendance software. Regular meetings are held with the Headteacher to discuss all attendance concerns and appropriate actions are taken following these meetings such as letters sent to parents or meetings arranged to discuss attendance concerns with parents.

Appendices:

1. Absence follow-up letter
2. Letter 1
3. Letter 2
4. Letter 3
5. Punctuality – Letter 1
6. Punctuality – Letter 2
7. Punctuality – Letter 3
8. Log of letters sent

Appendix 1

Dear Parent / Carer,

We noticed that your child was absent from school on_____.

We did not receive a message and we were unable to contact you.

Please complete the slip to let us know why your child was off school, and return it to us by _____. Failure to return this slip to school will result in the absence being logged as ‘unauthorised’.

.....

My child: _____ was absent from school on _____

due to:

Illness Medical appointment Other (*Please add more detail below*)

Please remember to telephone the school as soon as possible to notify us of absences in future.

**Thank you for your co-operation,
Miss. Jones**

Absence – Letter 1

Dear _____,

Our attendance records show that your child's attendance currently stands at _____, which is a cause for concern.

A high absence rate has a detrimental effect upon your child's educational progress. Therefore, your child's attendance will be monitored weekly and if there is no improvement, we will be contacting you again.

In the meantime, we would welcome an opportunity to discuss the matter with you further. Please contact school to confirm whether you are available to meet on the following date and time:

Yours sincerely,

Miss. Jones

Absence – Letter 2

Second Follow Up Attendance Letter

Dear _____ ,

A high absence rate has a detrimental effect upon your child's educational attainment. We contacted you recently to advise you that your child's attendance was a cause for concern. Unfortunately there has been no significant improvement in this and your child's attendance now stands at _____%.

As you will be aware, low attendance can seriously impair progress in school and therefore your child is at risk of not achieving their full educational potential.

We would like to invite you to an informal meeting to discuss your child's attendance and offer our support in helping to improve the matter.

Date of meeting: _____ Time: _____

Your child's attendance will continue to be monitored.

I look forward to meeting with you,

Yours sincerely,

Miss. Jones

I will be attending the meeting to discuss my child's attendance:

I will not be attending the meeting and would like an alternative date/time:

Best time/date: _____ Signed: _____

Absence – Letter 3

Third follow-up Attendance Letter

Dear _____,

Your child's attendance continues to be a cause for concern. Despite previous letters and a meeting, there is still no improvement and your child's attendance now stands at _____%.

Your child is at risk of not achieving their full educational potential.

We will now be referring your child to the Education Welfare Officer, who may wish to call in to your home to discuss this matter with you.

Your child's attendance will continue to be monitored.

Yours sincerely,

Miss. Jones

Punctuality – Letter 1

Dear Parent / Carer,

We have noticed that your child is regularly late coming to school in the mornings.

In order to get the most out of their lessons, it is vital that children are punctual. The school day starts at 8:55am and we expect all pupils to be ready to learn by that time.

We will be monitoring your child's punctuality over the course of the next few weeks, therefore please could you ensure that he/she arrives to school on time.

Thank you for your co-operation,

Miss. Jones

Punctuality – Letter 2

Dear Parent / Carer,

We have noticed that your child is now persistently late arriving at school.

In order to get the most out of their lessons, it is vital that children are punctual. The school day starts at 8:55am and we expect all pupils to be ready to learn by that time.

We would like you to attend a meeting at school in order for us to support you in developing strategies to help with the morning routine with your child.

Meeting date: _____ time: _____

Thank you for your co-operation,

Miss. Jones

Punctuality – Letter 3

Dear Parent / Carer,

Your child continues to attend school late, which is a cause for concern.

We will now be referring our concerns to the Educational Welfare Officer, who may wish to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice fine.

The Educational Welfare Officer will contact you to discuss the situation, and in the meantime, we will continue to monitor your child's punctuality.

Yours sincerely,

Miss. Jones

