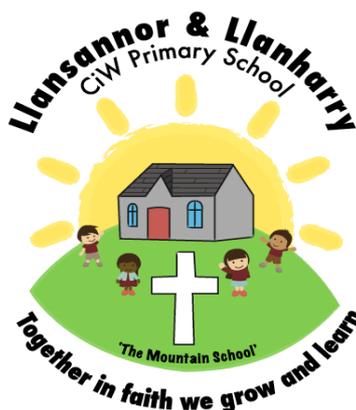


Llansannor & Llanharry C/W Primary School



Attendance Policy



Developed in partnership with the
Vale of Glamorgan Local Authority

Attendance Policy

DOCUMENT INFORMATION			
Created by :	Mrs S. Prosser (in conjunction with the Local Authority)	Reviewed by :	Policy Sub Committee
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Headteacher :	Signed electronically by Mrs S. Prosser 		

Introduction

At Llansannor and Llanharry CiW Primary School we believe that every pupil is entitled to the highest possible quality of education. We are committed to providing a full, rich, effective and appropriate education for all our pupils. The importance of regular attendance cannot be overestimated. It is a prerequisite to a good education and securing it is a high priority for our school and governing body. Pupils who fail to attend regularly not only diminish the value of the education provided but may also jeopardise their future life chances to succeed.

We have adopted a **whole school approach** to attendance which requires commitment from all staff employed within our school, together with our governors, parents, pupils and the LA.

This approach relates to a wide range of other issues, including punctuality, rewards and incentives, re-integration of long-term absentees, curricular differentiation, home-school links and the role of the Education Welfare Service (EWS).

1. Legal Framework

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 that “... *the parent of a child of compulsory school age registered at school and failing to attend regularly is guilty of an offence punishable in law ...*”

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 unavoidable cause
- the absence occurred on a day set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil/parents belong
- 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 Act also places a legal obligation on:

- the LA to provide and enforce attendance
- the schools to register attendance and notify the LA of a child’s absence from school. (Welsh Assembly circular 47/2006) and the Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010.

The Legislative Framework:

The following legislation, guidelines and documents underpin this policy:

- Education Act 1996
- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- SEN Code of Practice for Wales 2004
- The Learning Country and Learning Country II: Vision into Action, WAG (2006)
- School Effectiveness Framework
- The National Model for School Improvement
- National Service Framework for Children, Young People & Maternity Services in Wales, WAG (2005)
- Children and Young People’s Workforce Development Strategy

- Behaving and Attending: Action Plan Responding to the National Behaviour and Attendance Review, WAG (2009)
- Inclusion and Pupil Support, WAG Circular 47/2006
- Exclusion from Schools and Pupil Referral Units, WAG Circular 001/2004
- Improving Attendance 2006, Estyn
- Education (Admission of Looked After Children) (Wales) Regulations 2009
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (Wales) Regulations 2013
- Right of the Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child (the right to an education)
- Services for children and young people with emotional and mental health needs, Wales Audit Office and Healthcare Inspectorate Wales, 2009

Parents and pupils are also directed to the Vale guidance document "Attendance Matters".
<http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/files/Working/Education%20and%20skills/Education%20Welfare/02701%20-%20Attendance.pdf>

2. School Attendance Register

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 register may be requested in a court of law as evidence in a prosecution for non-attendance. It may also contribute information to pupils' end-of-term reports, records of achievement and leavers' references. An accurate and consistent registration system is crucial if poor attendance and punctuality within a school are to be tackled. It is vital that pupils are aware that registration is a significant part of the school day.

All staff involved with the registration process should be made aware that the law is specific regarding the keeping of registers. Marking and keeping the register is of the utmost importance.

Unauthorised absence is absence without approval from an authorised representative of the school and includes all unexplained absences. The decision taken by the school to give or withhold authorisation for an absence is a critical factor in determining the local authority's decision to prosecute parents as prosecution is only possible for unauthorised absences. There will be occasions when the school may authorise a pupil's absence and hence no offence is deemed to have been committed.

It is important that schools exercise caution in the authorisation of absence. If they are suspicious of the explanation given by parents, the absence should be further investigated and left unauthorised until the matter has been clarified to the satisfaction of the school. The decision taken by the school to authorise absence or not, is of critical importance in determining the level of involvement of the EWS. If the school has authorised a pupil's absence they have, in effect, given leave, therefore there is no case in law for the parents to answer. It should be noted that it is an offence not to maintain accurate registers.

Llansannor School's Attendance Policy

1. Aims

The aims of this policy on attendance and punctuality are to maximise pupils' attendance by:

- encouraging parents to enable their children to take full advantage of their education opportunities by regular and punctual attendance at school;
- monitoring and maintaining a high level of attendance across all year groups and for all groups of pupils;
- raising the profile of attendance and making it a priority for staff, pupils, parents and governors;
- ensuring attendance procedures are effective and consistent;
- ensuring marking of registers is completed accurately, consistently, reliably and within agreed timescales;
- using attendance data to provide an effective monitoring system to inform practice and target resources;
- identifying 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.
- promoting 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.

2. Encouraging Good Attendance

At our school we encourage all children to have good attendance. We place great importance on creating an environment that welcomes pupils and encourages them to attend. Recognising the importance of early intervention, our 'Tree House' Nurture Class further helps provide a safe and supportive learning environment for those children that may be experiencing difficulties at particular times. When areas of concern are raised that may lead to poor attendance such as anxiety, bullying, racism, the curriculum, etc. we ensure these are quickly and effectively addressed.

Alongside attendance, we recognise that punctuality is also of vital importance in order that children arrive ready to learn and opportunities for learning are maximised. In our experience, children do not enjoy walking in to class late and take a while to overcome this feeling of anxiety and focus on their learning. Parents should ensure that their children arrive on time, properly attired and in a condition to learn.

Provision has been made for a range of regular and frequent attendance incentives to ensure that all pupils with excellent attendance are rewarded for their success. These may include attendance information displays, class targets and attendance awards, 100% attendance certificates etc.

Our school governors have adopted the **whole school Callio Attendance Model** (the Authority's preferred approach for schools.) This requires commitment from all staff employed within the school, together with governors, parents, pupils and the LA.

This approach relates to a wide range of other issues, including punctuality, rewards and incentives, re-integration of long-term absentees, curricular differentiation, home-school links and the role of the Education Welfare Service (EWS).

Clear individual information about attendance levels are communicated each half term to parents. The school uses red, amber & green letters to remind parents of how their child's absence can impact upon their education. Pupils are made aware of weekly class levels in merit assemblies. Each term the school website publishes how each class has performed.

Approximate Days and Hours of Learning Missed Over the Year		
Green	100%	Not missing any lessons. Your child has the optimum chance to achieve well and is taking full advantage of every learning opportunity.
	99%	Missing 1 day – approximately 6 lessons.
	98%	Missing approximately 12 lessons.
	97%	Missing 6 days – approximately 36 lessons.
Amber	96%	Missing about 7 days of school. It will be difficult to catch up on the lost learning from approximately 42 lessons.
	95%	Missing approximately 8 days, 48 lessons.
	93%	Missing 14 days of school is a significant amount of education to lose.
Red		Missing more than 15 days.
	92% and below	A serious loss of learning which is likely to have a detrimental effect on achievement and life chances. Research shows that an attendance rate of 92% or below can result in a drop of a GCSE grade across all subjects.

We will make every effort to enlist the support of the community, police and neighbours to help in improving our attendance record and in reporting incidents of misbehavior when children are on their way to and from school on the buses. In this way our school is emphasising the importance of good attendance.

Opportunities such as parents' evenings and the school prospectus are used to remind parents of our school policy on attendance and ensure that clear information is regularly communicated to parents and pupils;

3. The Process

We have clear procedures to identify and follow up all absence and lateness and are alert to critical times (e.g. transition, return to school following school holidays).

Once teachers have collected children from the school doors at 8.55am, the gates to the school are locked, ensuring that access can only be gained through the main Reception entrance. All children arriving late for school must buzz to gain access and sign in the 'Late' book. The headteacher is responsible for monitoring punctuality.

If the attendance or punctuality of a pupil is giving the school cause for concern, the parents/carer of the said pupil are contacted to give reasons for the pupil's pattern of attendance/punctuality e.g.

- Less than 80% attendance per term
- Regular lateness, missing the introduction of lessons at the start of the day

If the pattern continues the school's Education Welfare Officer is informed of the school's concern and will then be actively involved in monitoring the child's attendance / punctuality. This may take the form of a letter being sent to the child's home or a home visit by the E.W.O. (Adherence to EWO guidance and procedures). If attendance remains poor after this intervention the LEA has the right to take the matter further through the judiciary system.

4. Absence

There are two different types of absence, **authorised** and **unauthorised**; unauthorised absence is perceived as truancy which could ultimately result in the Education Welfare Service (EWS) having to prosecute parents for the non school attendance of their child/ren.

Parents are reminded that **it is only the head teacher who may decide whether an absence is to be authorised or unauthorised**. Parents are also made aware 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. It is important to clarify precisely what constitutes authorised or unauthorised absence.

5. Authorised Absence

The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 state that head teachers have a discretionary power to authorise leave for a family holiday during term time where parents seek permission. Except for exceptional circumstances, no more than 10 days' leave should be granted for this purpose. Parents **must** contact the school in advance in order to complete an official leave of absence form. All requests should be in writing, which should be made by a parent / carer of the child even if they are not going on holiday with them.

Each application for leave will be considered in view of the specific circumstances of the family and any previous absence. The maximum period granted in any one school year will be two weeks (ten school days); any period beyond this will be deemed "unauthorised" except for exceptional circumstances.

N.B. Holiday requests during National Testing periods will not be granted.

Parents should consider the implications on the education of their children if they take holidays during school time. Ten school days per year for annual leave of absence falls within the amber Callio band. To illustrate this; if a child took the authorised ten days per year of their twelve year statutory school life they would miss twenty four weeks – almost a whole year of education.

Only a Head teacher can authorise an absence. Parents and the LA do not have the power to authorise absences. The key points our Headteacher will consider when deciding to authorise an absence are:

- It is a legal requirement that registered pupils of compulsory school age attend school regularly and punctually.
- Schools are not obliged to accept a parental explanation for pupil absence where there is doubt as to the validity of that explanation. (Please note that medical evidence will usually be needed for a bout of illness lasting longer than a few days.)
- Parents should be aware that only **the head teacher** has the right to agree to a pupil's absence for family holidays in term time. Each application for leave should be considered in view of the specific circumstances of the family.
- Schools should always expect regular and punctual attendance, even when the school is aware of family difficulties.
- An explanation is required for every absence. If one is not forthcoming the absence will be treated as unauthorised.
- Where absence is authorised, our school will remain vigilant to emerging patterns of non-attendance.
- Lateness will be actively discouraged and persistent lateness treated in the same way as irregular attendance.

6. Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence is absence without approval from our school's Headteacher and includes all unexplained absences. If we are suspicious of the explanation given by parents, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised until further investigations have satisfactorily clarified the circumstances.

7. Fixed Penalty Notices

In September 2014, The Education (Penalty Notices) (Wales) Regulations 2013 came into force, giving local authorities powers to issue Fixed Penalty notices (FPNs) to parents/guardians who fail to secure their child's regular attendance at school. The Vale of Glamorgan actively employed these regulations from January 2015.

Parents/guardians are legally responsible for ensuring their children have good school attendance and punctuality. If our school finds this is persistently unsatisfactory it is possible an FPN will be issued by the EWS.

An FPN can be issued for:

- Unauthorised absences – minimum of 10 sessions (5 days) - no need to be consecutive.
- Punctuality – minimum of 10 sessions with a U code within each term.
- Unauthorised term time holidays.
- Failure of parent/guardian to engage with our school to improve attendance.
- Pupil has come to the attention of the police during school hours and is absent without an acceptable reason.

One FPN will be issued per academic year. There are no restrictions on the number of times a parent/guardian may receive a formal warning of a FPN. However, once a warning is issued, it will remain in place for the next 3 school weeks (15 days). No authorised absence must occur during this 15 day period. School will carry out stringent monitoring and not authorise absences without appropriate evidence from parents/guardians. Parents/guardians may use this period to challenge the decision. No warning will be issued by the EWS if an absence is in relation to a term-time holiday.

An FPN of £60 is issued to each parent/guardian individually for each child, payable within 28 days. This will increase to £120 if not paid on time. The FPN must be paid in full and cannot be paid in installments. Failure to pay within 42 days could result in prosecution at the Magistrates' Court under Section 444(1/1A) of the Education Act 1996.

Once an FPN has been issued, there is no statutory right of appeal. Payment details can be found on each Fixed Penalty Notice issued by the EWS. Our school will not be responsible for the collection of fines.

Payment of a FPN discharges the parents/guardians liability for the period in question and they cannot subsequently be prosecuted under other enforcement powers for the period covered by the FPN. Nevertheless, if attendance concerns persist beyond the period in question and intervention by the EWS, a further prosecution at the Magistrates' Courts could ensue.

8. Targets

There is a statutory requirement to set attendance targets annually, which have to be agreed by the school governors. These targets are set in consultation with the LA. The targets should be both realistic and sufficiently challenging in order to raise school attendance in general. The Governing Body set targets for three year attendance figures. These are reported in the Annual Report to Parents and school Prospectus.

9. Communicating the Policy

A copy of this document is distributed to all teaching staff and governors. Parents receive a summary within the Prospectus and the Annual Governors Report to Parents. They can view the complete Attendance Policy on the school website.

10. Evaluation and Review

The implementation and effectiveness of the "Attendance" policy is monitored by the Chairman of Governors and the Headteacher. The policy will be subject to review annually by the Governing Body.

When evaluating procedures, the school will consider whether or not:

- Attendance has improved
- Punctuality has improved
- Parental response to absences has improved
- Reintegration plans have been successful

- The school has been successful in raising the profile of attendance, with the school, the governing body, parents and the local community

Schools need to be aware of the interventions that have been successful as part of their evaluation process.

11. Roles and Responsibilities

The Role of the Governing Body:

- Delegate powers and responsibilities to the Headteacher to ensure all school personnel are aware of and comply with this policy;
- Nominate a link governor to visit the school regularly to liaise with the Headteacher and/or Business Manager and report back to the Governing Body;
- Ensure that the attendance policy is carried out;
- Set the attendance targets for the year;
- Ask questions about trends and what is being done to prevent persistent poor attenders;
- Monitor termly progress towards these targets;
- Responsibility for ensuring that the school complies with all equalities legislation;
- Responsibility for ensuring this policy is maintained and updated regularly;
- Responsibility for ensuring all policies are made available to parents;
- Responsibility for the effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of this policy.

Role of the Headteacher:

- ensure all personnel, pupils and parents are aware of and comply with this policy;
- undertake the daily monitoring of school attendance via the school Business Manager by using an appropriate and effective registration system;
- monitor attendance according to gender, age, ethnicity, first language, eligibility for Free School Meals (FSM) and Additional Learning needs (ALN);
- monitor trends by using data effectively to help strategic planning;
- target intervention and support to those children that have been highlighted as poor attenders;
- have in place a system for parents to report a child's absence;
- report to Governing Body attendance figures and progress to achieving the set targets;
- remind parents of their commitment to this policy;
- promote the importance of attendance during collective worship;
- promote good attendance during assemblies, newsletters, the termly report to the Governing Body;
- award good attendance with certificates and awards to pupils where they have achieved 100% attendance (termly and yearly);
- organise training for school personnel on the use and understanding of attendance codes and authorised and unauthorised attendance;
- work closely with the Link Governor and School Business Manager;
- provide leadership and vision in respect of equality;
- provide guidance, support and training to all staff;
- monitor the effectiveness of this policy;
- annually report to the Governing Body on the success and development of this policy.

The Role of the School Business Manager:

- implement the policy with the Headteacher;
- monitor individual and class attendance on a daily basis;
- attend meetings with the EWO;
- contact parents regarding concerns about their child's attendance;
- compile attendance data for the Headteacher, the Governing Body and the EWO;
- ensure registers are distributed to the teaching staff and are kept up to date;
- contact parents if they have not reported their child's absence on the first day of absence;
- send a letter email or text if no contact is made.
- continue to contact the parents throughout the day until contact is made;
- keep the Headteacher informed of attendance figures and trends.

The Role of School Personnel:

- comply with and implement this policy;
- set an example of punctuality and good attendance;
- ensure that registers are taken at appropriate times and are accurate and up to date using the correct absence codes (see Appendix A);
- monitor class and individual attendance trends;
- inform the school office of any concerns about attendance or suspected truancy;
- emphasis the importance of punctuality and good attendance;
- discuss individual pupil attendance at parent-teacher consultation meetings.

The Role of the Nominated Governor

- work closely with the Headteacher and Business Manager;
- ensure this policy and other linked policies are up to date;
- ensure that everyone connected with the school is aware of this policy;
- report to the Governing Body on the success and development of this policy.

The Role of Parents and Guardians:

- ensure that their children are punctual and know the importance of good attendance;
- promote the value of education and the importance of regular attendance in school;
- inform the school on the first day of absence;
- ensure that the school is kept informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance;
- sign the 'Late' book if their child is late for school;
- inform the school of any changes to their contact details;
- collect their children on time;
- ensure medical and dental appointments are made outside of school hours;
- follow the school's holiday in term time protocol and procedures;

The Role of Pupils

- arrive at school on time;
- know the value of good attendance;
- know the seriousness of truancy, attending classes during the school day and not playing truant;
- support our School Code of Conduct and Guidance necessary to ensure the smooth running of the school.

Role of the Education Welfare Officer

- monitor pupil attendance and absence half termly;
- issue letters / warning notices / FPNSs when thresholds are reached;
- provide additional support for school, pupils, parents/carers when needed;
- meet with parents/carers and pupils and undertaking home visits.

Appendix A

Registration Codes

A	Present at registration
L	Late but arrived before the register closed
B	Educated off-site (not dual registration)
D	Dual registered (ie present at another school or at a PRU)
P	Approved sporting activity
V	Educational visit or trip
J	Interview
W	Work experience (not work based training)
C	Other authorised circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)
F	Agreed extended family holiday
H	Agreed family holiday
I	Illness
M	Medical or dental appointment
S	Study leave
E	Excluded but no alternative provision made
R	Day set aside exclusively for religious observance
T	Traveller absence
N	No reason for the absence provided yet
O	Other unauthorised (not covered by other codes or descriptions)
G	Family holiday (not agreed or sessions in excess of agreement)
U	Late and arrived after the register closed
X	Un-timetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils
Y	Partial and forced closure
Z	Pupil not yet on roll
#	School closed to all pupils