Ysgol Gynradd Maes-y-Deri
Oaklands Primary School



Together Everyone Achieves More

Attendance, Punctuality and Well-being Policy

Oaklands Primary Policy on Attendance

1. Introduction

1.1 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. 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.

1.2 Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, the governing body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

2. 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 writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents and carers do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents and carers will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent 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.
- Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

If a child is late/absent

When a child is absent unexpectedly or late, the class teacher will undertake the following procedure

- Pupils arriving late for registration i.e. up to 9.30am will be entered using the appropriate code L = late for registration
- If a pupil has not arrived by 9.30am (close of registration) they will be entered as late -U
- Inform the school clerk, who will endeavour to contact a parent or guardian for a reason (First response).

- Children/parents arriving late should let the School Secretary (in the office) know they have arrived in school in order that they are recorded on the late register
- Record the absence on the electronic register as an N if no reason is given

When the child returns to school, an explanation should be given for the absence.

A note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence, e.g. if a child has a medical appointment.

If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child.

Requests for leave of absence

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. We expect parents and carers to contact the school at least a week in advance, but normally this request will be granted.

Parents and carers do have the right to withdraw their children from school for up to ten days for an annual holiday. We naturally prefer parents and carers to take their family holiday in the normal school holiday periods.

To comply with The Education (Penalty Notices) (Wales) Regulations 2013, the school will operate in accordance with the local authority's Code of Conduct for fixed penalty notices for regular non-attendance at school. It remains the discretion of the head teacher to authorise absences in line with The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 attendance codes and supplementary guidance provided by the local authority.

It is the responsibility of schools/PRUs and/or police to request that the Attendance and Wellbeing Service (AWS) issue a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) and those requests will only be considered where there is proven evidence of unauthorised absence due to the following circumstances: -

- Where there is a minimum of 10 unauthorised sessions (5 school days) in the current term (these do not need to be consecutive);
- Pupils are persistently arriving after the close of the registration period i.e. more than 10 sessions in the current term; (Recommended that registers be kept open for thirty minutes);
- Where parent/carers have failed to engage with the school and/or the AWS in attempts to improve attendance but where court sanctions have not been instigated;
- A period of absence from school due to a holiday that was not authorised by school;

- A pupil has regularly come to the attention of the police during school hours and is absent from school without an acceptable reason.

Once the circumstances are proven the AWS will then assess whether an FPN should be issued taking the following into account: -

- The level of absence;
- Any Equalities considerations relating to the child or family (as listed in the Council's Equality Policy);
- Any statement of Special Educational Needs;
- History of the attendance issues and action taken;
- Welsh Government (WG) Guidance;
- The likely effectiveness of an FPN as a tool for obtaining compliance;
- The level of parent engagement/cooperation.
- Any adverse effect a fine will have on the welfare of the family.

Procedure for Issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice

The AWS will respond to all requests to issue an FPN within ten school days and where satisfied that all relevant criteria are met will:-

- Send a formal written warning to the parent/carer notifying them that they may receive a fixed penalty notice and why;
- Set a period of 15 days during which the pupil must not have any unauthorised absences from school;
- If at the end of the 15 days there has been no improvement a penalty notice will be issued via first class post;
- If there is an improvement and there are no unauthorised absences then the FPN will not be issued.

Please note that where a school requests that an FPN be issued as a response to a period of unauthorised holiday absence the formal warning letter and 15 day improvement period will not apply.

Legal practicalities

An FPN is £60 if paid within 28 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 28 days (but within 42 days of receipt). If the FPN is not paid in full by the end of the 42 days the local authority must either: -

- Prosecute parents/carers in the usual way using section 444(1) and (1A) of the Education Act 1996) or
- Withdraw the FPN (in limited circumstances as set out in this Code of Conduct).

Only one FPN will be issued to a parent in any one academic year but where there may be more than one poorly attending pupil in a family, FPNs may be issued on more than one child in that family. It will be at the discretion of the AWS whether to issue an FPN on one or both parents/carers.

Whilst there are no restrictions on the number of times a parent may receive a formal warning of an FPN it would not be acceptable to issue "warnings" repeatedly without making further investigations of the wider circumstances.

Long-term absence

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, 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 support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

Repeated unauthorised absences/lateness

The school will contact the parent or guardian of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child is repeatedly late or unauthorised, the parents or 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 (AWO), who will visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or guardians understand the seriousness of the situation.

The governors, supported by the LA, 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.

Rewards for good attendance

All the children who have 100 per cent attendance in any one term will receive an excellence certificate for attendance, awarded at the last assembly of the term. There are special certificates for any child who has 100 per cent attendance for a whole year.

Attendance targets

The LA sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the senior staff and governors. The targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years and related to the FSM index. These targets are made known to the children and during the weekly Celebration Assembly each class' attendance is announced.

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.

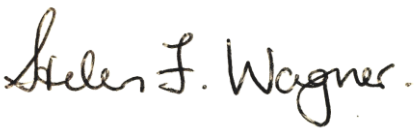
Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's absence, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the head teacher, who will contact the parents or guardians.

This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every two years, or earlier if considered necessary.

Date reviewed: Autumn 2016

Date of next review: Autumn 2018

Signed: (Chair of Governors)



Signed: (Headteacher)

