

ATTENDANCE POLICY YSGOL GYFUN GŴYR

Preface

Ensuring pupil attendance is a priority in our school. Consistent attendance is a must if our pupils are to reach their full potential. Inconsistent attendance undermines the educational process, limits the opportunities available to pupils, and promotes anti-social attitudes and behaviour. Our aim, therefore, is to form a close partnership between parents and the school.

The school has set an **attendance target of 96.5%**. Pupils are regularly reminded of this target and encouraged as individuals to aim to achieve this target

Requests from parents for term-time absence for holidays

The local authority fully supports the national campaign to increase school attendance, recognising the essential link between attendance and achievement. From attendance data to date, it is already obvious that the strategy, which involves encouraging parents not to take holidays during term-time, has led to a substantial improvement in school attendance throughout the City and County of Swansea.

Therefore, the local authority intends to continue with this strategy as part of its campaign to increase school attendance. Although requests are considered on an individual basis, the headteacher will not permit absence for holidays during the school term, except in outstanding circumstances. As a result, term-time absences for holidays will be recoded as unauthorised absence.

ERW Letter to parents - Holidays/Absence during term time



Dear Parent/Guardian

Holidays/Absence during Term Time

This letter is going out to all our parents to provide information about a change in policy in relation to holidays in term time.

In Wales we want all of our pupils to achieve success, so it is important that parents do their best to support pupils in attending school for the full 190 days in an academic year, as stated in the Education (School Day and School Year) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2006.

Under the Education Act (1996), it is the responsibility of the parent to ensure that their son/daughter attends school.

Regular school attendance is vital and missing school can have a significant impact on achievement over the school year, as outlined below.

Attendance 95-100%	The best chance of success	Your child is taking full advantage of all learning opportunities.
Attendance 90-95%	Absent for at least 2 weeks of learning	Satisfactory. Your child may need to spend time copying up.
Attendance 85-90%	Absent for at least 4 weeks of learning	Your child could be at risk of underachieving and needs additional support from you to copy up.
Attendance 80-85%	Absent for at least 5 ½ weeks of learning	Your child's poor attendance has a significant effect on learning.
Attendance below 80%	Absent for at least 7 ½ weeks of learning	Your child is missing out on a wide and balanced education. You are at risk of prosecution.

To support our drive to increase pupil attendance a decision has been taken by ERW, our Regional Education Consortium, that no absences due to holidays during term times will be authorised by Headteachers. This means absences due to pupils being taken on holiday during term time will be recorded as unauthorised unless the Headteacher has permitted the absence.

We hope that you can support this aim and arrange your holidays around the existing 175 days the schools are closed through weekends and school holidays and help us support your child in achieving success in school.

The school's statement on penalty notices is included in its attendance policies on our website

Welsh Government Education (Penalty Notices) (Wales) Regulations 2013 state that it is a legal requirement for local authorities (LAs) to conform to the Education Act 1996, Section 444, to include penalty notices as one of the interventions for promoting better school attendance.

According to the provisions set out in Section 444A and 444B of the Education Act 1996, a penalty notice can be issued for specific cases of unauthorised absence. A penalty notice is a fine of up to £120 and it can be issued to a parent/carer as a result of a child being regularly absent from school/educational provision.

The school follows the code of conduct for penalty notices issued by ERW and agreed by your local authority. As such, the school can ask the local authority to issue a penalty notice in specific cases

REGISTRATION ARRANGEMENTS - SUMMARY OF GUIDELINES

We officially register pupils twice a day, and follow the arrangements set out below:

Morning Session:8.40 – 9.00

Afternoon Session (during lesson 5) 1.30 - 2.20

We ask all involved to be especially careful when taking the register in order to ensure that the information is accurate on the computer. On no account shall the process of taking the school's official register be delegated to a pupil.

A computer system is used to register the attendance of pupils, during the morning's registration session and in all lessons. All teachers will receive training on how to access the computer programme. . The register is taken on the classroom computer . Should a problem arise with the computer system, there will be a paper register available from the Registry Office.

ALL pupils must be registered either **present** or **absent** on the computer.

Please remember to 'send' the register back electronically and to do so promptly.

Morning registration

THE MORNING REGISTER MUST BE TAKEN PROMPTLY.

- Registration should take place before 9.00am

Afternoon registration

THE LESSON 5 REGISTER MUST BE TAKEN PROMPTLY

- This should be done before 1.40pm

Registration during lessons

All teachers are also expected to register pupils in all lessons, and to do so as soon as possible at the beginning of the lesson.

MONITORING ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE

Monitoring pupil attendance is an essential part of the wider pastoral regime that exists within this school. Regular absence has a detrimental effect on the development of the individual as a whole person as well as on the individual's academic work. As we have proved time and time

again during the past years, a pattern of absences is one of the first signs of a child feeling unhappy in anyway, either about schoolwork or external issues. Quite often, this is an individual's way of drawing attention to the fact that he/she has a problem.

It is therefore essential that we are alert to those signs and messages and keep a close eye on absence patterns by:

1. asking for a note from the child explaining the absence on the first day back following the absence. **There is a specific area in the home-school contact book allocated for this very purpose.**
2. persisting in asking a pupil for an explanation for an absence that has continued over several days
3. drawing the Registration Officer's attention to constant absences or any absences that are cause for concern, so that they can be acted upon.
4. to be aware of the fact that the absence patterns emerging with some pupils mean that they do not spend a full week for every five weeks at school - draw the Registration Officer's attention to this. The Registration Officer will regularly discuss this with the Head of Year
5. use the Welfare Officer effectively - the officer calls on a weekly basis and can therefore act quickly on any concerns. The Head of Year will liaise regularly with the Officer.

If the pupil has not responded, there will be a second level of action in seeking an explanation for the absence. The Registration Office will contact the home after 5 days if no explanation has been provided for the absence.

TAKING CHILDREN OUT OF SCHOOL TO REPRESENT THE SCHOOL/ON AN EXCURSION etc.

Anyone taking pupils out of school during a normal school day is required to provide a list via e-mail or on the wall of the staff room, so that everyone knows who will be absent from lessons, as well as providing information through EVOLVE. It is also requested that you give a copy of the list to the attendance officer - beforehand - so that the officer can record this immediately on the computer. This procedure is extremely important as the school now phones home on the first day of absence. This procedure also minimises the time spent by the Form Tutor seeking an explanation for periods of absence. You will also need to contact the refectory to advise them when groups of children are away from school premises during lunchtime.

CLEARING ABSENCES

- Parents/guardians are expected to explain absences by communicating via letter or the home-school contact book, or a phone call.
- All form tutors receive training on clearing pupils' absences on the system, following explanation
- The relevant code should be used to explain an absence. If the Form Tutor is unsure of the code, he/she should contact the Head of Year for clarification.
- SIMS records the code used to identify the reason for absence.
- Any absences that remain unexplained after a week will constitute a serious issue. It will require collaboration with the Registration Officer to ensure that an explanation is given.
- A computer system is used that will contact parents automatically if they haven't provided a reason for their child's absence.

PUPILS WHO ARRIVE LATE

- If a pupil arrives before morning break, he/she will be considered present
- Any pupils arriving during assembly or following the morning registration period, must register in the Attendance Officer's room. If the officer is not available, he/she should register in the Office.
- If a pupil arrives during assembly, the Officer will record that directly on the register
- If the pupil arrives after the morning registration session, the Attendance Officer will record this. Pupils sign in and out at the Attendance Officer's office. This process is essential, especially in a state of emergency.
- The Attendance Officer remains by the school gate from 8.45 to target pupils arriving late. Parents will be contacted if a pattern emerges.

PHONECALLS FROM PARENTS TO EXPLAIN ABSENCES

When a parent phones the school to inform of an absence, the Attendance Officer will clear the absence on the computer.

CONTACTING THE HOME

The Attendance Officer will phone home in line with the first-day-phone call procedure, using the county computer programme, 'Truancy Call'.

INFORMATION ISSUED TO PUPILS

It is necessary for the pupil to provide an explanation for the absence on the **FIRST DAY** back at school. It should also be made explicit that any unexplained absence is now considered truancy.

Procedure for late arrival:

- During the registration period (8.40 - 9.00) - they should go straight to the Form Tutor
- During assembly - register in the Attendance Officer's room.
- After 9.00 - register with the Attendance Officer. If the Officer is unavailable, the pupil is expected to sign the 'Late Arrivals' list'.

LEAVING SCHOOL PREMISES

A. Medical Appointment:

- (i) Pupils must show their appointment cards/letters from parents, to the Form Tutor during registration period, although such appointments should be avoided as much as is reasonably possible during school hours.

The Attendance Officer should also be informed of this in order to avoid unnecessary first-day-phone calls.

- (ii) Before leaving the school, the pupil must sign the appropriate book in the Attendance Officer's room. Likewise, the pupil must register in the Officer's room if he/she returns to school following a visit of this kind.

B. Illness/Accidents:

Should pupils have to go home ill during the morning session, the Attendance Officer will record the absence for the afternoon session on the register. In all cases, a record is kept of the illness/injury in a dedicated book kept in the Office.

C. Sixth Form Students Travelling between Gŵyr and Bryn Tawe

Having arrived at the partner school, the student must go to reception immediately in order to sign-in and must also sign-out before leaving, for health and safety reasons.

THE PROCEDURE FOR ABSENT PUPILS

ABSENT

REACT

- Absence** Phone call from home. If not, the Office will contact the home on the first morning of absence
- A day or two** There should be a letter from the home or an entry in the Contact Book after the pupil has returned to school, unless a phone call has already been made
- 3 days** The home is expected to contact the School. If you have not received an explanation, then the home needs to be contacted. An 'ABSENCE' letter can be filled in and sent to the Attendance Officer who will then contact the home on your behalf or you can send it directly. You could also phone the child's home to seek an explanation. This procedure has drawn parents' attention to absences of which they were unaware many a time.

Any absence that hasn't been adequately explained, by the school or the home, is considered an 'unauthorised absence' (i.e. truancy) for the purposes of public statistics. It is therefore essential that the Form Tutor insists on a response and records it on the register. The 'Truancy Calls' computer system is implemented when there is no explanation for the absence from parents.

- Over a week** The Form Tutor will collaborate with the Office to seek an explanation
- Long term - (illness)** Contact the Psychology Service via the Head of Year
- Long term - (suspicious)** Inform the School Welfare Officer via the Head of Year
- REGULAR pattern** Follow the Attendance Monitoring STEPS procedure
- Doctor's appointment etc.** Appointment card and/or note from parents to the Form Tutor (**this should not require a full day's absence**) and to the Attendance Officer (who registers late arrivals and records pupils leaving the premises during the day)

To take holidays during the term (up to 10 days in the year) apart from special circumstances Parents should contact the Form Tutor before hand to request permission. A dedicated form is available from the Attendance Officer for this purpose. The information should be given to the Head of Year/Attendance Officer

From a lesson when at School Contact the Office directly in order to provide the information. Office to inform the Head of Year or Assistant Head or Pastoral Officer immediately.

MONITORING ATTENDANCE

Procedure

Beginning of year STEPS: Head of Year to correspond with parents of pupils with attendance below 95% who are cause for concern, including the pupil's attendance sheet from the previous school year, highlighting the low %, stating the school target and stating that we will be carefully monitoring the situation this year

STEP 1: Look at the attendance of any one below the target of 96% ** (we need to be reasonable with short term data but must bear in mind the pattern that emerged last year). Inform the Welfare Officer that we are monitoring individuals.

STEP 2: Monitoring the pupil's attendance over a period of three weeks: when a pupil is below 90%, let's say, within the first three weeks of term, then we should proceed to the next step.

STEP 3: If there is no improvement, then the Attendance Officer is to contact the home – a Certificate of Attendance should be sent to the home with the letter, or figures should be discussed over the phone if this is the chosen method of contact.

STEP 4: If there is improvement, the pupil will return to the whole school monitoring procedure - if not - STEP 5

STEP 5: Invite parents to the school to discuss the serious nature of the situation, and to agree on a detailed monitoring programme with the Welfare Officer

(Reviewed: September 2019)