

ATTENDANCE POLICY



*Giving our children the best
possible start in life*

Written January 2023

1.0- A. Mills

2.0- A. Mills (August 2023)

Date Approved by Governing Body:

Article 28: All children and young people have a right to a primary education.
United Nations Convention for the Rights on the Child (UNCRC)

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Introduction:

At Twynyrodyn Community School, we believe that regular attendance and good time keeping are essential for effective learning and continuity of experience. All school staff are committed to working with parents / carers and pupils to ensure that the best possible attendance is achieved for everyone.

Regular attendance at school is essential if children are to reach their full potential. We seek to ensure that our children appreciate the importance of coming to school regularly. The school council play a part in organising initiatives to celebrate the good attendance of our pupils.

We believe that developing positive attitudes towards school is key to promoting good attendance. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and positive 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.

This Policy sets out how both the school and parents /carers together can achieve this.

Why Regular Attendance is so important:

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning.

It is a legal obligation of all parents / carers to ensure that their child attends school regularly and failure to do so could result in court proceedings being implemented against them under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act.

Annex A of this policy provides further detail of the legal requirements governing school attendance.

Understanding types of absence:

Where children are of compulsory school age (5-16) are registered at school, the law says they should attend regularly.

Registers must show whether each pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off site, or absent. In addition, where a pupil of compulsory school age is absent from school, this absence has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absence means, either the school has given approval; or that a satisfactory explanation has been given for the absence. Registers need to be up to date so that schools can account for all pupils particularly in an emergency.

Authorised absences are morning or afternoon sessions away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments (which unavoidably fall in school time) emergencies or other unavoidable causes. Only the Headteacher can authorise the absence. It is vital that all absences are reported to school immediately.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed by the Headteacher.

As a school, we must inform the LEA at agreed intervals of the name and address of any registered pupils who fail to attend school regularly or have been absent continuously for 10 or more school days without a reason.

Further details of the registration processes operating at Heolgerrig Community School can be found in ANNEX B.

Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence and on each subsequent day by 9.30am (unless otherwise agreed by the Headteacher)
- Or, you can call into school and report to reception.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone/text you on the first day of absence by 10.00 am (and each subsequent day of absence) if we have not heard from you;
 - Invite you in to discuss the situation if absences persist;
 - Refer the matter to the Education Inclusion Officer if attendance falls below 85%.
- Contact on the first day of absence

As a school we do emphasise the need for all parents / carers, to inform us as soon as possible if your child will not be attending school on a particular day.

If a pupil is absent without explanation and no message has been left with the school by 10.00 a.m., a telephone call/text will be made/sent. If we are unable to get an answer, we will make a record and it may be reported to the Education Inclusion Officer.

There are often times when we may need to contact you .We therefore ask that you keep us up to date with emergency contact details. There will be checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

Family Holidays during Term Time

Parents do not have an automatic right to withdraw pupils for holidays during school time. We strongly advise that children are not taken out of school during term time as good attendance is so important. However, if parents or carers do request to take children on holiday during term time, by law they will need to complete a holiday form to notify the school of this in advance. All holiday requests during term time are considered on a case by case basis, following Welsh Government guidance.

The following factors are considered when assessing requests, with no one factor regarded as conclusive:

- time of year of proposed trip;

- length and purpose of the holiday;
- duration of the holiday and its impact on continuity of learning;
- circumstances of the family and the wishes of parents;
- the overall attendance pattern of the child; and
- leave of absence for more than two weeks must be seen as exceptional.

School will explore with parents why such leave of absence is necessary. Where such absences are sanctioned they should be counted as an authorised absence. Parents should be aware that unauthorised holidays may lead to a Fixed Penalty Notice.

What is a Fixed Penalty Notice?

It is a fine given for unauthorised absence from school. It does not require a court appearance and does not result in a criminal record.

Payment of a Fixed Penalty Notice is an alternative to parents being prosecuted in Magistrate's Court.

When are they used?

MTCBC protocols and procedures in relation to Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs).

(See also Merthyr Tydfil's Local Code of conduct – Fixed Penalty Notices)

Fixed Penalty Notices may be considered appropriate when:

- at least ten sessions (five school days) are lost due to any unauthorised absence during the current term (this could include holidays taken within term time – these do not need to be consecutive);
- Persistent late arrival at school, i.e. after the register has closed in the current term. "Persistent" means at least ten sessions of late arrival;
- parent/carers have failed to engage with the school and/or the EWS in attempts to improve attendance but where court sanctions have not been instigated; and
- a pupil regularly comes to the attention of the police during school hours for being absent from school without an acceptable reason.

Before a Penalty Notice is issued, you will receive a written warning outlining the extent of your child's absence and the possibility of you receiving a Penalty Notice. A period of 15 days is offered to improve the attendance and if there are NO unauthorised absences recorded during this 15-day timescale then the FPN will not be issued.

(The 15-day warning period does NOT apply to an FPN issued for an unauthorised holiday absence.)

There is no limit to the number of times a warning notice may be issued.

I have received a Warning Notice and I want to avoid a Penalty Notice. What should I do?

- Ensure that your child attends school every day and arrives on time
- If your child is ill make sure you make contact with the school on the first day and explain the circumstances
- Avoid arranging holidays during term time

How much is the fine?

£60 if paid within 28 days of receipt of the notice rising to £120 if paid within 42 of

receipt.

It will be at the discretion of the local authority whether to issue an FPN on one or both parents/carers.

How do I pay?

The Penalty Notice will be sent by first class post to your home address and information on how to pay will be included.

What happens if I don't pay?

If you do not pay the penalty in full within the maximum allowed timescale of 42 days of issue, the local authority will be obliged to start legal proceedings against you for an offence under Section 444 (1) Education Act 1996 i.e. for failing to ensure regular school attendance.

Can I appeal?

No. There is no statutory right of appeal, but where a parent contests the issuing of a FPN, they can submit any complaints to the EWS and/or face proceedings in the Magistrates' Court under section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996.

Can I still be prosecuted if I pay the FPN?

You cannot be prosecuted for the same period of absence identified in the Fixed Penalty Notice but you may be subsequently prosecuted for further periods of unauthorised absences from school.

Why is attendance at school so important?

- Good attendance increases attainment and achievement
- Good attendance improves opportunities
- Good attendance supports children and young people and keeps them safer
- Attending school reduces the risks attached to absenteeism

The LOCAL AUTHORITY would rather work with parents/carers to resolve poor attendance than resort to enforcement actions such as Fixed Penalty Notices or Court.

Lateness

As a school we actively discourage late arrivals and staff must be alert to emerging patterns of late arrival that may provide grounds for prosecution. We work closely with our Education Inclusion Officer around lateness issues, periodically undertaking lateness monitoring initiative. ALL late comers should report to the main offices on arrival, and sign the late book to record the time of arrival and reasons.

How we manage lateness:

The classroom doors are open at 8.50 am. By 9.00am we expect your child to be in class.

The gates are closed at 9am. Anyone arriving after this time needs to enter via the main entrance.

Registers are marked by 9.10am and your child will receive a late mark if they are not

in by that time.

At 9.30am, the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they may have an unauthorised absence. Persistent lateness is recorded by the school and parents that regularly bring their children to school late will receive a termly letter; if there is no improvement after two terms, this may be referred to the Education Inclusion Officer.

If your child has a persistent late record that shows no improvement you will be asked to meet with the Headteacher/Deputy Head teacher and/or Education Inclusion Officer to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Good attendance

We will celebrate good attendance in various ways throughout the school year. For every full week that a child attends school, they will be entered into a raffle for a book. Rewards are also given to classes with the best attendance each week.

Monitoring attendance/punctuality

If your child is becoming regularly late or their attendance is not improving, we will contact you to discuss the matter with you, and to see what can be done to improve the situation.

The Education Inclusion Officer

The school has a service level agreement with the Education Inclusion Officer (EIO) who visits every week but will be contacted and informed of serious concerns and breaches of attendance.

As a school we will make a referral to the EIO when:

- a pattern of irregular attendance is either continuing or worsening (sporadic days or blocks of absence)
- parents do not accept their responsibilities for ensuring the child attends school and are refusing to discuss ways of improving attendance with the school.
- condoned unjustified absence is increasingly a problem.
- parents request excessive authorised absence
- if there are concerns involving the welfare of children.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the EIO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Education Authority.

Attendance Targets

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets. We share our attendance figures weekly via social media.

Where there are changes to policy/procedure we will inform you via the website.

The people responsible for attendance matters at Twynyrodyn Community School are:

Mr A. Mills, Headteacher

Mrs. N. Shahrivari, Deputy Headteacher

Miss. S. Pollard, School Clerk

Miss C. Harris, Education Inclusion Officer

Mrs. K. Smart, Governor with responsibility for attendance

Evaluation and Review

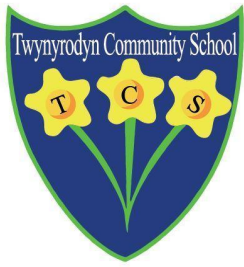
This policy is monitored by the head teacher and is reviewed annually following consultation with the Governing Body.

Date of last Review: N/A

Agreed with pupils via School Council:

Agreed by staff:

Agreed by Governors:



Twynnyrodyn Community School Home School Agreement



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As a parent/carers I will:

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- Make sure my child attends school regularly and arrives at school between 8:50 and 9:00am wearing school uniform (or PE kit on the appropriate day);
- Inform the school of any concerns or worries that may be affecting my child's learning in an appropriate and respectful way;
- Attend meetings with my child's teacher and other staff, aiming to be positive and productive, working towards moving my child on in their learning;
- Support and work with the school to ensure that the behaviour policies of the school are maintained;
- Respect the confidentiality of each child;
- Regularly read information on the weekly newsletter, website and Seesaw app so that I am kept-up-to-date with important details of relevant policies, meetings, events and information about my child;
- Endeavour to complete any additional activities with my child suggested by the school to support their learning.

Agreement signed by:

Mr A. Mills
Headteacher

Parent/ Carer:

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Parent/ Carer:

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____