
POLICY FOR ATTENDANCE AND TRUANCY

At Aberdare Park Primary School we believe that children can only learn effectively if they attend school regularly. It is important too, that children arrive and leave school on time. It is equally important that children should not be at school if they are unwell.

Aberdare Park Primary School is a happy school. Children learn best when they are happy and relaxed. All staff display concern and care about each child's welfare.

As attendance is crucial to effective learning and the continuity of learning experiences, school places great emphasis on this in its communication with parents.

Communication

Information on lateness, illness and absence is given to parents in the School Brochure. This highlights the importance of being at school on time and notifying school if their child is absent for any reason.

At the pre-school induction meetings held for children, about to enter either the reception class or the nursery class, the importance of regular attendance is discussed and explained. This talk also includes parents and children arriving at school on time so that each child can be given the best possible start to each school day.

Parents are asked to share any worries their child might have in school. Sometimes little things upset children which mean they become unhappy, and may not want to come to school. Parents need to be aware of this.

Parents are informed about the importance of arranging their family holidays within the school holidays, rather than in term time so that their child's education is not disrupted. The Headteacher follows LA guidance in terms of authorising holidays during term time, and only allows those that fall within the three categories below:-

- Families of serving armed forces personnel;
- Parent or child experiencing a life limiting illness;
- Families that have suffered an acute trauma.

Children are also admitted to school at various times of the year, and into various year groups. All parents requesting a place are asked to make an appointment with the Headteacher. At this meeting the importance of regular attendance and punctuality is always highlighted along with other school routines.

Authorised and unauthorised absences are explained to parents. All parents are asked to contact school if their child is absent. A Pupil Absence Book is kept by the Office Manager to record any messages regarding pupil absence. This information is recorded under the headings: date, child, class, and reason for absence. Parents can alternatively send a letter to school when their child returns explaining the absence. Parents can also call into school to see the class teacher to explain an absence.

(These records are kept by the class teacher.) All information is used to inform teachers when filling in class registers.

Callio

The school has introduced the Callio system. Parents are given a table and a chart which illustrates the relationship between attendance and achievement at school. Callio provides parents with a colour representing their child's attendance. It explains that the rewards for good attendance are clear and that pupils are more likely to enjoy school, achieve better results and increase their life chances. Pupil's attendance data is updated on a termly basis and the appropriately coloured letter sent home to parents.

Green	100%	Not missing any lessons
	99%	Missing about 10 lessons
	98%	Missing about 20 lessons
	97%	Missing about 30 lessons

Amber	96%	Missing about 8 days of school. It will be difficult to catch up on lost lessons.
	95%	Missing about 2 weeks of school. Time to 'callio'.
	93%	Missing 14 days of school. This is almost 3 weeks which is a significant amount of education to lose.

Red	92% and below	Missing more than 3 weeks of education. A serious loss of learning which has a detrimental effect on achievement and life chances.
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Lateness/Concerns

If pupils arrive after 9am they must enter school through the main Reception door where parents are asked to complete the 'Late Book', recording the pupil's name, reason for lateness and time of arrival. This is monitored by the Attendance Team. If no contact is received by the parent/carer of an absent pupil on the first morning of the absence, a telephone call/text is made by the school's attendance team to investigate the reason for absence. If the school is unable to contact the family then this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. Details of the absence are recorded, if later received and discussed with the Headteacher and a decision is made with regards to authorisation as soon as possible.

If the pupil is registered as Child in Need or on the Child Protection register and absent from school without reason, then the school will contact Social Services as soon as possible.

If absenteeism persists then concerns are raised with the Headteacher. She will contact the parent in the first instance and if the matter cannot be resolved she will inform the AWO for further investigation.

The attendance book is scrutinised regularly, patterns of absence looked for and the Attendance and Wellbeing Officer for the school is contacted if needed.

The Attendance and Wellbeing Officer meets with the Headteacher/Attendance Team each term to discuss attendance issues, and offers advice and support.

Fixed Penalty Notices

In September 2013, the Education (Penalty Notices) (Wales) Regulations 2013 came into force, as part of Welsh Government's commitment to addressing poor school attendance. All local authorities across Wales are expected to use the fixed penalty notices to assist them to prevent unnecessary absence from school.

On 31st July 2014, Rhondda Cynon Taf Cabinet approved the Code of Conduct, including the criteria for issuing fixed penalty notices:

- Where a pupil has accrued 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absences in the current term;
- Where a pupil has been persistently late on 10 or more occasions in the current term, arriving more than 30 minutes after the registration period;
- Where a parent refuses to engage with a school in the interest of improving their child's school attendance levels;
- Where a pupil is repeatedly caught truanting in public places during school hours;
- Where a holiday in term time has been requested but has been unauthorised. Given the need to ensure high attendance, we have reviewed the impact of holidays taken in term-time. We are now asking Headteachers not to authorise requests for a holiday in term-time. There is no right that enables parents and carers to take a child out of school for a term-time holiday. We realise that there will be certain exceptional circumstances when it would not be appropriate to unauthorise a holiday absence, and therefore, the following reasons have been agreed that a Headteacher may approve such a request:
 - Families of serving armed forces personnel;
 - Parent or child experiencing a life limiting illness;
 - Families that have suffered an acute trauma.

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.

The Designated Member of Staff - Headteacher

Attendance is the responsibility of all staff. There is, however, a designated member of staff for attendance matters and all staff are able to discuss individual pupil attendance with this person. The Designated Member of Staff for Attendance:

- monitors the school's registers;
- liaises with the attendance team;
- liaises with teaching staff;
- refers to other agencies if appropriate;
- oversees the use of standardised letters to parents addressing specific aspects of attendance and requiring parental response,
- arranges for an attendance meeting in the case of repeated, unexplained absences (school will consider inviting the named governor for attendance to such a meeting);
- ensures that the Attendance and Wellbeing Officer's role is known and understood in school.

Responsibilities of parents

Parents are responsible in law for ensuring that their children attend the school at which they are registered, regularly, on time, properly dressed and in a fit condition to learn (parents are also responsible for ensuring that their children stay at school once they have registered).

Parents can do a great deal to support the regular and punctual attendance of their children. Parents should:

- a) take an active interest in their child's school life and work;
- b) attend parents' evenings and other school events, if possible;
- c) ensure that their child completes his/her homework and goes to bed at an appropriate time;
- d) be aware of letters from school which their child brings home;
- e) ensure that their child arrives at school on time each day;
- f) ensure that their child only misses school for reasons which are unavoidable or justified, such as illness or days of religious observance;
- g) always notify the school as soon as possible - preferably on the first morning - of any absence;

- h) confirm this in writing when the child returns to school;
- i) avoid booking family holidays during term-time;
- j) talk to the school if they are concerned that their child may be reluctant to attend.

Registration

Keeping the registers

The register is a legal document and must be kept accurately. The register may be requested in a court of law as evidence in a prosecution for non- attendance. It will also be used for end of term reports, records of achievement and reference requests, and information for other schools, LAs and external agencies.

- No pupil should be marked present unless actually in attendance at school or other agreed educational activity.
- The register should not have missing marks.
- When a pupil arrives late but the register is still open, the pupils should be marked as late but counted as present for the session.
- When a pupil misses registration, she/ he should be marked as an unauthorised absence, unless a medical letter/ phone call by parent is received and deemed to be genuine.
- Pupils should not have access to the register.
- The headteacher is the only person who can authorise that a pupil be removed from the register – this can only be done with the agreement of the LA.

Registration Codes

/	Present (AM)
\	Present (PM)
B	Off Site Education
C	Other Authorised Circumstances
D	Dual Registered i.e Present at another school or PRU
E	Excluded (No alternative provision made)
G	Family holiday (Not agreed)
I	Illness

- J Interview
- L Late (Before the registers closed)
- M Medical / Dental Appointment
- N No reason yet provided for absence
- O Unauthorised Absence (Not covered by other code)
- P Approved Sporting Activity
- R Religious Observance
- S Study Leave
- T Traveller Absence
- U Late (after registers closed)
- V Educational Visit or Trip
- W Work experience
- Y Partial or Enforced closure
- X Non-compulsory school age absence
- # School closed to all pupils
- Z Pupils not on roll yet

Monitoring and evaluation of policy

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Date passed by Governing Body:

Chairperson: Cllr Ann Crimmings.....

Designated Governors for school attendance:

Mr D Davies

Mr G Roberts.....

April 2015