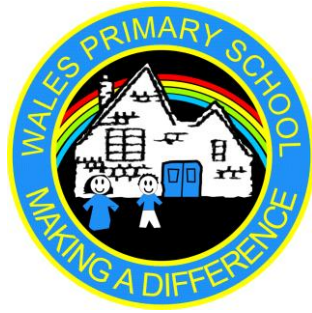


Wales Primary School Attendance Policy



Written / updated July 2023

Review July 2024

Introduction

As a school, we are committed to ensuring that all children achieve the highest possible level of attendance. We promote good attendance and punctuality because it has a positive effect on achievement and progress and is a necessary life skill. Our policy applies to all children on roll in this school and is available to all parents/carers on the school website. Children who are persistently late or absent from school soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning. This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department of Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority. Following the ruling of the Supreme Court in April 2017, to be a regular attender, you must 'comply with the rules prescribed by the school'. 96% constitutes the school's expectation of regular attendance.

Reference to Parent/Carer throughout this document also includes any person who has parental responsibility or who cares for children.

Aims and expectations

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school (target 96%)
- Provide clear guidelines for pupils and their families and regularly remind them of these.
- Raise the profile of attendance among pupils and their families
- Carefully monitor attendance and take appropriate action to promote and encourage good attendance

Statement of Expectations

The school expects of the pupils:

- To attend regularly.
- To arrive on time, appropriately prepared for the day.
- To report to the school office when late

The school expects of the parents/carers:

- To fulfil their responsibility by ensuring their children attend school regularly and on time.
- To inform the school of any reason that will prevent their child from attending.
- To ensure that they contact the school on the first day their child is unable to attend and at regular intervals with updates giving a valid reason for absence.
- To contact the school in confidence whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school.
- To inform the school of any forthcoming appointments and provide evidence of this appointment. This could be through a letter, appointment card or a text message. (where possible, appointments to be arranged outside of the school day)
 - Where appointments are booked for after registration time, pupils must attend school first.
 - The pupil needs to return to school as soon as possible after the appointment, where possible.

If a pupil leaves the school premises for any reason during the school day, staff will ensure that this is recorded, (together with signing back in if they return) to comply with Health and Safety Regulations.

What parents and pupils can expect of the school and staff:

- A broad and balanced education that is dependant on regular attendance at school.
- The encouragement and promotion of good attendance with a rewards system in place.
- Efficient and accurate recordings of attendances and punctuality.
- First day and regular contact with parents when a pupil fails to attend school.
- Any barriers to attendance dealt with efficiently.
- Liaison with Early Help to assist and support families where needed.
- Notification to parents/carers of attendance through letters home and meetings in school.

Registration procedure

- The school doors open at 8.45 a.m. Members of staff wait at the entrance to each building to welcome children in to school.
- All children should arrive at school by 8:55am when the doors to the buildings will close
- The teaching staff use electronic registration to register children at the beginning of both morning and afternoon sessions
- Children who arrive after 8:55am will be deemed to be late and will receive a late mark with the relevant code used with the time noted and the reason why.

Responding to lateness

- Pupils arriving after morning or afternoon registration will report to the school office where the office staff will record on Arbor both the time arrived and the reason for the lateness. After 5 recordings of lateness within half a term, a punctuality letter will be sent and punctuality will be monitored by the attendance officer and headteacher. After a further 5 recordings of lateness, a second letter will be sent inviting parent/carers to meet with the headteacher.

Appointments

- Parents are requested to provide written proof of medical appointments during the school day to the school office. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence, school does require evidence from the doctor/dentist (appointment card/letter/text message)

Understanding Different Types of Absence

Only school can authorise absence as authorised or unauthorised, not parents/carers. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required to ensure a pupil's attendance is correctly categorised.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for an acceptable reason, for example; illness and/or medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in the school day, emergencies or other unavoidable reasons.

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

- Parents keeping children away from school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absence that has never been properly explained
- Leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday in term time that has not been agreed with the headteacher.

Whilst most pupils will be away from school because of illness, some individuals can be reluctant to attend. Any such problems with regular attendance are best resolved between the school and the family. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school, then school encourages the family to work with all involved to understand the root problem. When necessary, school engages the support of other agencies such as Early Help.

- Each day counts for two (am/pm) marks of attendance or absence.

Absence Procedures

- Parents/carers are requested to inform school, on the first day of absence, giving a reason for the absence. All telephone messages are logged and explanations recorded via Arbor
- If a child's attendance is cause for concern, the headteacher will contact parents directly to discuss the issues.

Unreported Absences

- First day action is implemented through a phone call from the school office staff. The reason for absence is recorded via Arbor.
- In the case of unexplained absences for pupils who are absent, a member of SLT may visit the pupil's home address in line with our safeguarding arrangements.

Leave of Absence Requests

In line with amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 with effect from 1st September 2013.

- **No requests for leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during term time can be authorised except in exceptional circumstances in which the headteacher has to establish how many days a child may be absent,**

Examples of exceptional circumstances are:

- Service personnel returning from/scheduled to embark upon a tour of duty abroad
- Where a holiday is recommended as part of a child or parent's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
Evidence must be produced from a doctor or professional body.

If a parent/carer takes their child out of school during term time, without authorisation, the headteacher may have to make a request to the Local Authority to issue a **Fixed Penalty Notice**. If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued, the penalty is £60 per child per parent/carer when the payment is made within 21 days. After that time, it will increase to £120. Failure to pay within 28 days will result in a summons to appear before the Magistrates Court on the grounds that the parent/carer has failed to secure their child's regular attendance at school. Please note that a separate Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued to each parent for each child and all monies are payable to the Local Authority.

Any applications where there are deemed to be exceptional circumstances may be required to attend an appointment with the headteacher.

Additional leave of absence procedures

- Parents/carers are requested to complete a leave of absence form, available from the school office, at least four weeks in advance of the proposed holiday so that all pupil absence is accounted for.
- Parents/carers who feel strongly that their circumstances are exceptional are asked to put their request for leave of absence during term time in writing directly to the headteacher for consideration.
- Penalty notices may be issued to parents who choose to remove their child from school to take a family holiday; discretion may be given where attendance during the previous 2 terms has been above 96%. Term time holidays will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the headteacher.
- Following a request for a holiday, parents will receive a letter from the headteacher either informing them that: the absence is unauthorised and will incur a penalty 4 notice, the absence is unauthorised but not incur a

penalty notice or that due to exceptional circumstances the absence will be authorised.

- Completed forms are retained in the office and the information recorded on the school's holiday recording sheet and inputted into Arbor. This makes it easier to track absences due to holidays
- All applications for leave (authorised or unauthorised) will only be confirmed two weeks before the holiday date in order that a decision can take into account a child's current attendance (even in exceptional circumstances).

Response to Attendance Issues

- Wales Primary School will identify and monitor pupils whose attendance gives cause for concern.
- Returns on persistent absences will be made to the Local Authority each half term.
- Appropriate strategies will be employed in order to address the attendance of individual pupils.
- Attendance data will be collected, analysed and monitored on a regular basis. The headteacher will respond to any areas of concern identified.

Monitoring Attendance

- **Arbor** computerised system is used to collect attendance data. This is imputed daily by class teachers and monitored daily by the attendance officer
- This system of recording enables the headteacher to have access to a variety of reports and is used to monitor trends and patterns of absence
- Class attendance is monitored by the headteacher weekly and is shared with the children in a weekly assembly and with parents weekly in the fortnightly newsletter
- The school attendance officer monitors individual attendance alongside the headteacher and issues letters to those parents whose children's attendance is cause for concern
- Termly attendance returns are submitted to the LA via the school census

Rewards

- The Class with the best attendance for the week will receive a special mention in assembly and a trophy for the week
- Individuals with 96% or above attendance at the end of each term will receive a certificate with 100% attenders achieving a special certificate and prize along with an email to parents.

Involvement of Governors

- Governors take an active interest in the monitoring of attendance through the Head Teacher's termly report to the Governing Board

