



Attendance Policy

‘Success Starts at School’

Llanwern Cluster Joint Policy

Date Agreed by Governors:

Chair of Governors :

Headteacher:

Review: January 2020

(Collaboration with Cluster)

Introduction

Our school is committed to ensure regular attendance is a priority which will in turn provide pupils with the best possible chances in life to succeed and to achieve their goals.

Regular school attendance is essential for all children and young people. Failure to regularly attend can increase the risk of leaving school without any qualifications, and can also increase the likelihood of pupils being drawn into criminal and antisocial behaviour.

Milton Primary School will endeavour to work with parents, pupils, cluster of schools, the Local Authority and the Education Achievement Service (EAS) to ensure that all pupils receive an appropriate education and to attend school regularly.

This attendance policy reflects the local authority's Attendance Strategy.

Aims

This policy aims to ensure that attendance and punctuality remains a key focus for all, including governors, teachers, parents, pupils and partner agencies. We will strive to:

- offer a safe and friendly environment which welcomes children regardless of race, gender or ability.
- raise standards and ensure all pupils reach their full potential, through a high level of school attendance and punctuality.
- ensure all stakeholders receive communication about information on the importance of regular school attendance.
- identify those pupils with irregular attendance at an early stage and work with partner agencies to try and address any barriers that stop pupils from attending school regularly.
- keep accurate and up to date attendance data.
- ensure all pupils are safe, and for schools to follow the local authority's 'Children Missing Education' guidance.
- reward those pupils who have made significant progress in raising attendance levels.

This document is supported by the All Wales Attendance Framework.

<http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/pupilsupport/framework/?lang=en>

Legal Framework

The law outlining attendance is:

The Education Act 1996 which places a legal obligation on:

- the local authority to provide and enforce attendance;
- school to register attendance and notify the local authority of a child's absence.

Section 7 of the above act states that:

'The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient, full time

education suitable to his/her age, aptitude and ability and to any special educational needs he/she may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise’.

Section 444 further states that:

‘The parent of a child of compulsory school age registered at school and failing to attend regularly is guilty of an offence punishable in law’.

The Education (Penalty Notice) Wales Regulations 2013:

This legislation came into force in September 2014 and has given Local Authorities powers to issue fixed penalty notices (FPN). A code of conduct has been agreed by Newport City Council on the issuing of the FPN which includes the following criteria:

- Minimum of 10 unauthorised absences in a twelve week rolling term which do not have to be consecutive.
- Attendance below 92%
- Minimum of 10 sessions of lateness after the close of registration. Registration closes half an hour after the start of the school day.
- Parents/carers who choose to take their children out of school to go on holiday during term time without authorisation from the Head teacher for a minimum of 10 unauthorised sessions and rolling from one school year to the next.

The Head teacher will inform the parent by letter that the school may request a fixed penalty notice for unauthorised absence. If a FPN is requested, the Senior Education Welfare Officer (Senior EWO) for the Local Authority will review the case with the school, taking into account levels of absence, level of parental engagement, any equality implications, history of attendance and also any statement of special educational needs.

A fixed penalty notice warning may be issued and a period of 15 days will be monitored for an immediate improvement. A warning may not be issued in respect of an unauthorised holiday in term time.

A penalty notice is £60 if paid within 28 days in receipt of the notice, increasing to £120 if not paid within 28 days. If not received by 42 days then the local authority can prosecute parents for the child’s absence.

Definitions

Compulsory school age – under section 8 of the Education Act 1996, children and young people should attend school from the start of the first term commencing after their fifth birthday. The ends of the term dates are 31st March, 31st August and 31st December. A young person ceases to be compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they have their 16th birthday.

‘Parents’ section 576 of the Education Act 1996 includes:

- All natural parents whether married or not.
- Any person who although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a young person or child, and any person, who although not a natural parent has care of a child or young person.

Meanings:

'EWS' – Education Welfare Service

'EWO' – Education Welfare Officer

'CME' – Children missing education'

Attendance is everybody's concern and the school will expect all stakeholders to play a part in improving attendance. This will contain all having clear expectations and roles which include:

Role of Head teacher:

- To be responsible for overall management and implementation of this policy.
- Work closely with the school's governing body.
- Set attendance targets with the Local Authority, EAS challenge advisors and governors.
- To use discretion when receiving applications for holiday requests and to provide reasons to parents when a holiday in term time is not authorised.
- Regular attendance reports shared and provided to governors.
- Work closely with the local authority's Lead EWO and nominated school EWO, and other support services.
- To notify the local authority when a 'child is missing education' and follow the local authority's CME procedures.
- Ensure policy is readily available for stakeholders including on the school, and website.
- To work with the Local Authority and EAS Challenge advisors and to provide a comprehensive plan in terms of attendance.
- Ensure all absences are recorded in line with the guidance of codes document including those unauthorised absence and no reasons provided.
- Work with all staff responsible for attendance and punctuality.
- To look at attendance data on a weekly basis, linking in with the school EWO.
- Regular and updated training on attendance for all relevant staff, using the Local Authority school data team.
- Raise issues of those staff not compliant with the completion of registers.
- Discuss any initiatives with all staff.
- To provide rewards to those pupils with improved or excellent attendance.
- Work closely with the schools EWO, providing valid attendance data on individual pupils.
- To attend set and pre-arranged meetings with the EWO.
- To arrange letters and meetings for those parents whose children's attendance poses a concern.
- To monitor patterns of irregular attendance.

Governing Body:

- Approve the policy and amend if necessary.
- Receive reports from the head teacher on a regular basis.
- Attend meetings as and when required.
- Ensure policy is shared with all relevant stakeholders.
- Lead governor for attendance is appointed.

Class Teacher:

- To carry out the statutory role of completing attendance registers twice a day, once in the morning and once in the afternoon.
- Ensure absences are accounted for by ways of a note provided by parents.
- Follow up unaccounted reasons for absence and concerns raised to the Head of year.
- To continue to raise the profile of attendance to all pupils.
- Contact attendance clerk with any queries.

Pupils:

- Attend regularly and on time unless unwell or received an authorised absence.

Parents:

- To ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually.
- To notify the school if their child is unable to attend, on the first day of absence and every day thereafter.
- To keep the school updated on parents/guardians contact details, including mobile numbers and new addresses.
- To work with school and partner agencies to address any issues of irregular attendance of their children.
- To work with their child in relation to homework, not completing homework is not a reason for missing school.
- To ensure their children attend regardless of the weather, the need to have haircuts, new shoes or if it is their birthday.
- To work with the school immediately to solve issues rather than keeping a child at home.

Role of School Support Officer:

- To speak with parents on a daily basis to establish reasons for pupil's absence.
- To record absences daily, registers as and when required.
- To 'mop up' missing marks, providing reasons and inputting reasons on the red flag system on SIMS.
- To send text messages to those parents who haven't contacted school, or by telephoning parents individually in order to establish reasons.
- To work closely with EWO and support staff in school.
- To work with SLT and Head teacher closely.
- To check messages, if necessary, either on the schools answerphone or text messaging system.

Keeping school registers

The school's register is a legal document and under The Education (pupil registration) (Wales) regulations 2010 the school is required to keep an accurate record of attendance. Registers need to be marked twice a day, once in the morning and once in the afternoon.

Registers may be needed in a court of law if deemed appropriate.

Schools' Information Management System (SIMS) is used in Milton Primary School to record all pupils' attendance.

By the end of the school week the schools' overall attendance registers will be completed and an overall attendance figure will be calculated by the school.

Types of absences

It is important for parents to understand the definition of the different types of absences. They are classed as unauthorised absence and authorised absence.

The schools' head teacher can only decide on whether an absence should be classed in either one of these categories, parents cannot.

Absences may be authorised for the following reasons:

- Illness.
- Religious observance.
- Medical/Dental appointments during school hours.
- Fixed term and permanent exclusions.
- Holiday agreed by the head teacher – this will be on a very rare occasion where it is deemed exceptional circumstances.

Examples of what are classified as unauthorised absence are listed below. They are, however, not limited: Absences may be unauthorised for the following reasons:

- Truancy.
- Late after the close of registration.
- Staying at home for no reason – condoned absence.
- Going shopping.
- Birthdays.
- Holiday not agreed by the head teacher.

In addition there are several codes classed as a present mark which include the following:

- Late before the close of register.
- Educated off site, pupils attending vocational courses at college/pupils attending alternative provision agreed by school.
- Sporting activity.
- Educational visit.
- Traveller absence.
- Where pupils are on roll at school and also at another education establishment.
- Intervention

Punctuality

Punctuality is a legal requirement and pupils must attend on time. Persistent lateness has a detrimental effect on a child's learning and also disrupts other pupils within the class and throughout the school.

Those parents of pupils who are persistently late will be contacted by the class teacher/Head of year/Senior Management team.

Parents of pupils who are late must sign in on the Inventory system and must enter through the main doors of the school.

Medical absences

Where a child is continually absent from school on the grounds of medical reasons, it will be necessary for the parent to provide medical evidence to school. This will be initiated by the school and the EWO which will result in the pupil and family receiving the appropriate support in assisting in attending school regularly. There may be times where a reintegration plan may be necessary which will be a partnership agreement between the family, pupil, EWO and school.

Holidays during term time

Parents do not have an automatic right to withdraw pupils from school during the school term for a holiday. Under the Education (pupil registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010, head teachers have discretion to authorise a holiday. This will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

All requests for holidays must be completed on the schools holiday request form and completed by the parents/guardians. (Please see Appendix 2).

The head teacher will make the decision and may include the following contributory factors:

- Time of year.
- Length of time.
- Overall percentage of attendance.
- Impact on the child's learning.

School procedures

Parents are expected to contact school on the first day of absence and to provide reasons for their child's absence. This will then need to be followed up by an explanatory note and handed into the class teacher/form tutor which will be kept on record by school.

If parents fail to notify school, then the school will make every effort to contact the parents and also other persons listed as a point of contact. The absence will be recorded as unauthorised if no contact is made. Failure to receive any contact on the third day of absence may result in the involvement of the Education Welfare Officer and other agencies.

As a school we have a duty to safeguard all our pupils; the Education & Inspections Act 2006, requires the

local authority to make arrangements to enable them to establish the identities of children residing within Newport who are not receiving an education. These may be pupils who have not attended school for an excessive amount of time without any contact or reason for the absence, for example. The duty lies within the Local Authority to investigate further. The Common Transfer File (CTF) will be sent to the forwarding school once being notified.

Schools' Strategies to improve attendance

We aim that all pupils achieve 100% attendance, however there may be instances where pupils unfortunately are unwell or have other legitimate reasons for school absence.

Milton Primary School operates a 'Callio' process which provides parents with information of the links between attendance and attainment. This shows which category the child's attendance falls into when attendance is as follows:

100% - Gold
95-99% Green
92-95% Amber
Below 92% Red

NB: Where a child falls in between these categories they will be rounded up to the nearest whole figure.

Each parent will receive a 'Callio letter' in the Spring and Summer terms informing them of which category they are currently in. This ensures that early intervention is received to pupils and families who are in need. (See appendix 3).

Schools Newsletters

This is another way of communicating with parents, and our school's newsletters are sent out on a weekly basis. This includes informing parents and pupils where the school stands showing overall attendance figures.

The School Environment

The school will provide a happy, welcoming and organised environment to ensure all pupils enjoy learning which results in good attendance. It is staffs' responsibility to ensure that the classroom and the school is a happy place.

Schools Website

The school's website will also provide parents, pupils, governors and the public with all the relevant attendance information including the schools attendance policy, along with information regarding the school's strategies and approaches.

Staff Awareness

All staff are fully aware of the importance of regular school attendance, and pupils will regularly be made aware of this during the school day from staff.

Attendance Assemblies

Celebrating attendance should be a priority, and involving pupils gives them an incentive, motivation and encouragement, with a sense of self-worth. This promotes the wellbeing of children as well as rewarding them.

Transition Process

As we are all aware it is difficult at times to deal with change. We as a school appreciate that pupils find it hard to cope with the transition from year groups and also from primary to secondary school. Our school ensures that we have all staff involved in this process and taster days for all pupils are set.

Rewards

Rewards can include the following:

- Pupil certificates
- Weekly non-uniform day for classes above the school target
- 100% certificates and prizes throughout the academic year for pupils.
- Attendance postcards home

Role of the Local Authority Education Welfare Service

The Education Welfare service is a statutory service which supports schools in ensuring all pupils attend school regularly. We have a designated EWO who visits the school on a regular basis, depending on need.

The school can refer the pupil to the EWS providing a series of letters and a meeting has already taken place. Individual circumstances of each pupil will be considered. The EWO will then either send a letter home informing parents of their child's attendance, make a telephone call home, invite them into school or/and will conduct a home visit.

Parents have a legal duty to ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually, or otherwise, under the Education Act 1996. Where parents fail to ensure the regular attendance of their child or otherwise are committing an offence and the EWO will need to be informed.

It is unfortunate on occasions but a punitive approach may be needed which may result in prosecution of parents. However the EWS does not take this lightly and will endeavour to work and support parents, schools and pupils to improve attendance levels.

Role of School's Challenge Advisors

Our school works closely with the Education Achievement Service (EAS) which provides us with a nominated

Challenge Advisor who visits our school and advises and supports us in our school improvement process. Challenge Advisors, senior Local Authority Staff and EWOs work closely with those schools needing additional support where attendance is a concern.

Attendance Panels

Attendance panels are seen as good practice in schools and involve school governors, the Headteacher and EWO.

Parents are invited into school to discuss their child's attendance, with a view for an action plan to be completed and signed which will regularly be reviewed. Letters of invitation will be sent to parents in advance and parents are asked to notify school as to whether they will be attending or not. If they are not available to attend then another letter will be sent. Failure to attend without notification may result in a visit or telephone call from the EWO.

(Please see appendices for a list of actions and timescales)

First Day contact

Whilst we as a school operate a first day contact via our School Support Officer, there may be times where the Education Welfare Officer will conduct this, and contact parents of those pupils who are absent on a specified day. This is deemed as good practice and identifies those pupils who are regularly absent at an early stage with a view to referring to additional support services.

Data Collection

Our school's attendance data is continually being tracked and monitored electronically both on an individual pupil level and also as a whole school. This data is collated by the Lead EWO and shared amongst all schools across Newport on a monthly basis.

Monitoring and reporting

The school will regularly provide reports to the governing body, senior management and challenge advisors, and the local authority which will inform them of current attendance.

In addition parents will also be notified through the schools regular communication channels.

Appendix 1

Code	Meaning	Statistical meaning
/\	Present at registration	Present
L	Late but arrived before register closed	Present
B	Educated off-site	Approved educational activity
D	Dual registered	Approved educational activity
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved educational activity
V	Educational trip or visit	Approved educational activity
J	Interview	Approved educational activity
W	Work experience (not work based learning)	Approved educational activity
C	Other authorised circumstances(not covered by another code)	Authorised absence
F	Agreed extended family holiday	Authorised absence
H	Agreed family holiday	Authorised absence
I	Illness	Authorised absence
M	Medical/dental appointment	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
E	Exclusion	Authorised absence
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
T	Traveller Absence	Authorised absence
N	No reason provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Other unauthorised absence(no explanation provided)	Unauthorised absence
G	Family Holiday (not agreed)	Unauthorised absence
U	Late arrival after the close of registration	Unauthorised absence

X	Un-timetabled sessions for non- compulsory school age	Not required to attend
Y	Partial and forced closure	Not required to attend
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not required to attend
#	School closed to all pupils	Not required to attend

Appendix 2

Absence in term time request

Section A

To be completed by the Parent/Guardian at least 2 weeks in advance.

Name of Child:	Class	Date of Birth	Address	Tel no.
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				

Dates

From: to

Destination

(NB – This is for child protection reasons ensuring all our children are safeguarded)

Declaration:

I understand that this request may be authorised or not authorised and the head teacher will use his/her discretion in making the decision based on my child's circumstances. If the head teacher does not authorise this holiday, this may lead to a request for a Fixed Penalty Notice to the Local Authority Lead EWO which will be determined in line with the schools attendance policy. (Please ask for a copy at school or the schools website)

Parent/Guardian

Section B

To be completed by the head teacher within at least 1 week from the request.

Reasons for not authorising

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Reasons for authorising

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I, as head teacher has authorised/unauthorised (* delete) the following request for the reasons specified above.

Please see attached attendance registration certificate.

Signed

Head teacher

A copy will be retained on file for our records.

Appendix 3 – ‘Callio’

Communicating children’s attendance levels on a regular basis with parents is vital when improving attendance. Therefore through the use of SIMS and SIMS Discover colour coded letters are sent each half term to all parents informing them of their child’s current attendance and where this falls on the colour chart. It is very clear and easy to understand; explaining how much school time has been lost to absence and the impact on their child’s education as a result.

Annual Attendance	School Missed	Result
100%	No lessons missed	Gold Standard – Superb! These pupils have the best chance of getting the top grades and jobs.
95 - 99%	95% = missing about two weeks of school	Green Standard – these pupils are more likely to gain the best grades in school and have the best employment chances.
92 – 95%	92% = missing about three weeks of school	Amber Standard – it will be much harder for these pupils to keep up with work and gain the best grades at school.
Below 92%	Missing more than three weeks of school	Red Standard – these pupils are missing too much school. This is likely to affect their grades and therefore the jobs available to them after leaving school..

When a child fall into the ‘red zone’ i.e. less than 92%, a set of clear procedures that follow to manage this level of attendance. These procedures are detailed on the final page of this policy.

An example letter that may be sent to a parent/carer highlighting a pupil’s attendance is on the following page.

EXAMPLE LETTER

Attendance Information

Name of child Class

Your child's attendance is currently 100%

We wish to congratulate your child on their excellent attendance of 100% so far this year. This is an excellent achievement and what we would consider to be the GOLD standard.

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Below 92%	Missing more than three weeks of school	Red Standard – these pupils are missing too much school. This is likely to affect their grades and therefore the jobs available to them after leaving school..

As a school we believe that good attendance is where success starts.

Thank you for your continued support in our drive to ensure good attendance.

Best wishes,

Head teacher

