

PUPIL ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Signed by chair of governors:

Date ratified: (by full governing body) 18/05/16

Date of review: May 2018

May 2016

**“Living and Learning Together. Always trying our best”
“Byw a Dysgu Gyda’n Gilydd. Bob Amser Yn Gwneud Ein Gorau.”**

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Statutory Documents: Supporting Attendance – Guidance for Schools on the Education
Welfare Service
ERW Directives on attendance

POLICY STATEMENT

This is the attendance and punctuality policy for Ysgol Tremoilet V.C.P.School. It is based on guidelines set out in the ERW regional policy for maximising attendance and has been accepted by the school's Governing Body. We believe that regular attendance is crucial if a child wants to maximise his/her time at the school. The school emphasises that regular attendance is essential to ensure the child's educational and social development. The majority of parents and carers are keen to ensure that their child gets every opportunity to develop to the full, and want their child to receive an education of the highest quality. Persistent absences mean that there is no continuity in the learning process and therefore leads to underachievement. You cannot make up for the time that has been lost in the classroom; learning experience and the social experience - this can lead to problems establishing relationships with peers or staff within the school. Often, a child who is absent or late regularly will feel uncomfortable at school. A child does not enjoy the experience of reaching school late and having to walking into the class or hall after everyone else.

Improving and maintaining a high level of attendance is the responsibility of everyone in the School Community, i.e. pupils, parents/carers, governors and staff.

DESIGNATED STAFF MEMBER WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR MONITORING ATTENDANCE

NAME: *Mrs Jayne Phillips, Acting Head Teacher*

CONTACT NUMBER: 01994 453622

SECOND STAFF MEMBER WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR MONITORING ATTENDANCE AT THE SCHOOL

NAME: *Mrs Irene Davies*

CONTACT NUMBER: 01994453622

NOMINATED MEMBER OF THE GOVERNING BODY FOR MONITORING ATTENDANCE

NAME: *Mr Richard Smith, Vice chair of Governors*

CONTACTS WITHIN THE LOCAL AUTHORITY

The named officer within Carmarthenshire LA is SARAH JOHN

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RATIONALE

- The school bases its attendance policy on the guidelines as set out by the
- ERW Consortium.
- Whilst the legal responsibility for regular school attendance rests with
- parents, the school shares with them, and the local authority (LA),
- responsibility for encouraging good attendance and improving poor
- attendance.
- The school is required by law to maintain specific records and to produce
- specified information on the attendance of pupils.
- Statutory obligation apart, the school is committed to improvements in
- attendance standards as a direct stimulus to raising pupil achievement.

- Poor attendance is destructive of educational achievement, undermines
- the well-being of each pupil and demoralises staff.
- The LA has a statutory duty to ensure that a child for whom they are
- responsible is receiving suitable education and, if a registered pupil at
- school, this means attending school regularly and on time

POLICY AIMS AND TARGETS

- Tremoilet School's target attendance rate for 2015-2016 is 95%.
- Tremoilet School's target attendance rate for 2016-2017 is 95.5%

In order to achieve this, the School will:-

- Involve pupils and provide them with a voice in achieving our targets
- Promote good attendance as this is vital to educational achievement ; encouraging and assisting all pupils to achieve the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Work in partnership with parents to ensure the highest possible levels of attendance and
- punctuality through developing clear procedures to enable pupils to come to School conveying clearly to parents and pupils that:
 - regular attendance is essential
 - unauthorised absence and persistent lateness is not acceptable;
 - only the Headteacher in the context of the law can approve absence;
 - Parental condoned, unjustifiable absence will be investigated and will be recorded as unauthorised absence.
- Build on existing good practice that fosters a positive attitude to good attendance by:
 - responding rapidly to pupil absence;
 - recognising pupils who maintain 'excellent', 'good' and 'improving' attendance records.
 - being sensitive to situations where regular attendance patterns are disrupted by external factors such as family bereavement.
- Aim to achieve excellent levels of attendance and punctuality to enable all pupils to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

RIGHTS AND STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES

The legal framework governing attendance is set by the Education Acts and their associated regulations (which relate to schools and Pupil Referral Units).

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that "...the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/ her to receive full time education suitable to his/ her age, aptitude and ability and to any special education needs he/she may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise..."

Section 444 further states "the parent of a child of compulsory school age registered at school and failing to attend regularly is guilty of an offence punishable by law."

Compulsory school age means that children and young people should attend school from the start of the first term commencing after their fifth birthday and are of compulsory school age until after the last Friday in June of the school year in which they have their 16th birthday

An offence is not committed if it can be demonstrated that:

- the pupil was absent with leave (authorised absence);
- the pupil was ill or prevented from attending by an unavoidable cause;

- the absence occurred on a day set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil/ parent belongs;
- the school is not within the prescribed walking distance of the child's home and suitable transport arrangements have not been made by the LA;. The law relating to walking distance effectively is defined as two miles for pupils under eight and three miles for all other pupils. Distance will be measured by nearest available walking route;

Absence from the centres will be authorised if it is for the following reasons:

- sickness;
- unavoidable medical or dental appointments;
- days of religious observance;
- exceptional family circumstances,

Absence from school will not be authorised for:

- shopping;
- haircuts;
- missed bus;
- overslept;
- no uniform;
- looking after brothers, sisters or unwell parents;
- minding the house;
- birthdays;
- holiday / day trips taken in term time.

Parents are asked to make all medical and dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Unauthorised absence of an individual pupil, which brings the pupil's attendance to below 90% in any one term, or when unauthorised absence is due to a family holiday taken in term time, the Education (Penalty Notice) (Wales) Regulations gives the school the ability to request that the Local Authority (Education Welfare Service) consider issuing a Penalty Notice to a parent(s)/day to day carer of the named pupil. This request, when made, will be in accordance with conditions laid down in ERW's Code of Conduct.

Schools are required under the Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 to take an attendance register twice a day: at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. The accuracy of the register is important to support any statutory interventions that may be required. It should be noted that it is an offence not to maintain accurate registers.

PRACTICE AND PROCEDURES

Clear systems and procedures will govern response to all pupil absence. The school will follow the 'Procedures for Non Attendance' flowchart as agreed by the ERW Consortium.

The school adheres to the descriptors received from ERW and has applied a RAG rating to the descriptors to make them easily identifiable to all stakeholders.

95-100% attendance	Best chance of success	Your child is taking full advantage of every learning opportunity
90-95% attendance	At least 2 weeks of learning missed Satisfactory	Your child may have to spend time catching up with work
85-90% attendance	At least 4 weeks of learning missed	Your child may be at risk of underachieving and may need extra support from you to catch up with work.
80-85% attendance	At least 5 ½ weeks of learning missed	Your child's poor attendance has a significant impact on learning.
Below 80% attendance	At least 7½ weeks of learning missed	Your child is missing out on a broad and balanced education. You are at risk of prosecution.

The school encourages good attendance and punctuality by;

- creating a caring and nurturing environment whereby pupils' feels safe and appreciated as young adults;
- ensuring that attendance and punctuality are recognised within the whole school reward system;
- a weekly attendance prize every Friday. The winning class is awarded 10 minutes additional play / Club with Superstars Instructor on a Thursday lunchtime. The best classes receive recognition for excellent attendance.
- Excellent Attendance (100%) is rewarded at the end of every school term.
- Also, at the end of the academic year, pupils with 100% attendance throughout the year receive 'Special Attendance Certificates and Gold 100% badges'.
- developing positive relationships with parents / carers and external agencies working with the family/ pupil;
- monitoring and evaluating the early intervention strategies adopted by the school;
- using of a colour-coded letter scheme i.e. at the end of every term the parents/ carers of each child will receive a colour-coded letter which indicates their level of attendance.

Green higher than 95%

Amber between 92% and 85%

Red below 85%

- working closely with multi agency colleagues and the Education Inclusion Service to improve attendance and punctuality;
- monitoring attendance data and trends and reporting this information termly to the Governing Body.

Specific Actions

- The school will make its policy on attendance clear to parents and pupils through:
 - o School Prospectus
 - o Home/School Agreement
 - o Governors Annual Report to Parents
 - o School Website / Blog
 - o Newsletters
 - o General Letters
 - o Special Services

- If no contact is received by the parent/ carer of an absent pupil on the first morning of the absence, a telephone call is made by the school's staff to investigate the reason for the absence. If the school is not able to contact the family then this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (N no reason yet provided for absence).
- Details of the absence are recorded, if later received, and discussed with the headteacher and a decision will be made with regards to authorisation as soon as possible. The headteacher may ask the Education Welfare Service for advice with regards to this but the decision to authorise any absence remains with the school.
- If the pupil is registered as a Child in Need or on the Child Protection register and absent from school without reason, then the school should contact Social Services as soon as possible.
- If an absence remains unexplained for 3 consecutive days then arrangements should be made to visit the home.
- When a pupil returns to school from an absence, but no explanation is offered, a letter will be sent to the parent.
- A letter will also be sent out if a pupil is persistently late to school.
- Ultimately, if an attendance matter cannot be resolved by the school and the appropriate steps have been followed, then a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service for further investigation. The school will also:
 - ensure that all staff are aware of the registration procedures, registration regulations and education law relating to school attendance;
 - complete school registers at the start of the morning session and afternoon session – the register is open for 15 minutes and closes at 9:15am;
 - stress to parents and carers the importance of contacting the school as early as possible on the first day of absence;
 - promote positive staff attitudes to pupils returning after absence;
 - consult with all members of the school's community and Education Welfare Service in developing and maintaining the whole school attendance policy;
 - ensure regular evaluation of attendance by the Governing Body;
 - work towards ensuring all pupils are supported and valued and so want to attend school.

THE ROLE OF THE DESIGNATED MEMBER OF STAFF

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 should demonstrate a commitment to promoting good attendance by:-

- Ensures regular celebrations of good attendance take place.
- Provide regular reports to the parents about the attendance of their children.
- Ensuring the monitoring and implementation of the agreed policy and procedures.
- Being available, if appropriate, for parents who may wish to discuss specific problems or in-school difficulties which their child is experiencing.
- Ensure that appropriate training is provided as required on attendance.
- Providing regular information to Governors, parents, LA regarding training undertaken, monitoring and evaluation of the School Attendance Policy and the associated in-school practices.
- If a pupil is persistently late or absent, and the School's efforts to improve the situation have been unsuccessful, a referral be made to the Education Welfare Officer.

- Review attendance on a regular basis. All parents will receive a half termly letter outlining the percentage of their child's attendance. They will be invited in to discuss the child/ children's absence if patterns emerge in the data. Attendance falling below 85% will be referred to the Educational Welfare Officer.
- Ensure an efficient tracking system for absence is in place and is communicated to all staff.
- Ensure that parents not reporting absences will be contacted to ascertain child's whereabouts. This is deemed to be a safeguarding issue.
- refers to the school nurse if there are doubts about the validity of an illness;
- 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);

THE ROLE OF ALL OTHER STAFF

The Class Teachers are ideally placed due to their regular contact with pupils and parents to assess whether the explanations received for a child's absence are reasonable, or if the child is developing a pattern of absence. Every Class Teacher therefore will be actively involved in monitoring pupil attendance by:-

- Publicly praising those pupils who attend well
- Using the County Registration System accurately and consistently in accordance with the School guidelines.
- Identify pupils who are beginning to develop, or have developed a pattern of absence and refer to Headteacher.
- Welcome children back after they have been absent because of illness.
- Taking specific steps to assist children returning to School when they have been absent.
- Providing a positive role model through their own attendance and punctuality.
- Referring any concerns to the Headteacher.

THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL COUNCIL

Our School council play a key role at Tremoilet School. Participating as a school council member is a rewarding and challenging experience that provides the school a pupil voice. The school council supports the Headteacher and staff to provide the best possible educational outcomes for the pupils. The role includes:

- Expressing both their views and those of other children.
- Communicating their feelings to adults.
- Attending regular meetings.
- Giving up some of their personal time.
- Helping to make positive changes and improvements to the school
- Sharing their work with Governors during the Termly meetings.

When dealing with improving attendance, the School Council is proactive as it is vital to ensure both pupils and parents fully understood the impact poor attendance has on the educational attainment and behaviour, particularly at primary level where the foundations of learning are laid. Members of the council are annually elected as attendance officers to monitor the weekly attendance in each class. Weekly rewards are given for the class with the highest attendance. The introduction of a yearly prize draw, (for pupils attending full weeks 95% of year) is led by the school council who were conscious of the inclusion of all pupils. The 'Every Week Counts' campaign offers the designated member of staff the opportunity to monitor patterns of absence at a glance. Through class sheets completed by the council officers it is easy to identify pupils regularly not achieving full weeks or with patterns in their absence. Those pupils who achieve 95% of full weeks in the year are entered into the prize draw that is drawn during the final Celebration assembly in the summer term.

THE ROLE AND 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) avoid booking family holidays during term-time;
- i) talk to the school if they are concerned that their child may be reluctant to attend.

THE ROLE OF THE GOVERNING BODY

The Governing Body of the School will be actively engaged in promoting good attendance by supporting and encouraging pupils and teachers in their work. They will achieve this by appointing an Attendance Link Governor who will support the School by:-

- Being available if required to monitor and evaluate attendance trends in the School.
- Being available to meet with parents where appropriate.

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.

LATENESS

A pupil's punctuality is a legal requirement and the parent of a pupil who is persistently late is guilty of an offence. The law treats persistent lateness in the same way as irregular attendance and parents can be prosecuted if persistent late arrival is not resolved.

HOLIDAYS

Headteachers do have the discretionary power to grant leave for the purpose of a family holiday or trips. However, the ERW Consortium is strongly advising that any holidays or day trips in term time should be unauthorised, and that there should be no exceptions to this policy. The school adheres to this and family holidays during term time will not be authorised.

INSET DAYS

Inset Days are designated by the Welsh Assembly Government. Currently 5 Inset days are allocated per academic year. It is the Headteacher's responsibility to inform parents/carers of such closure by giving a months' notice (where possible).

It is also necessary that the Headteacher informs the County Schools database of any inset closure.

ADVERSE WEATHER CONDITIONS AND SCHOOL CLOSURE

The decision as to whether the School stays open in bad weather is delegated to the Headteacher. The Headteacher will keep the School open during severe weather whenever reasonably practicable, balancing any risks from lower supervision levels, late return journeys, or minor slips and bumps, against disruption to pupils' learning. The School will only close when there are serious risks. We recognise that there might be fewer staff to supervise pupils on days of bad weather but should the School remain open, we will continue to supervise pupils and deliver as much of the curriculum as possible.

The decision whether to authorise pupil absence due to inclement weather rests with the Headteacher but the Governing Body has made the decision that absence due to bad weather will not be authorised for children living in the immediate vicinity of the School. For children who live further away, each case will be considered individually.

Notification of School closure in Adverse Weather will be on:-

- School Website
- Carmarthenshire County Council Website (this triggers notification to local radio stations)

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.

SIGNED : _____ SIGNED : _____

CHAIR OF GOVERNORS

HEADTEACHER

DATED : _____

APPENDIX 1 - EXAMPLE OF HALF TERMLY ATTENDANCE RECORDS TO PARENTS

COFNOD PRESENOLDEB/ATTENDANCE RECORD

Monitoring Period/Cofnod Monitro: 02.09.15-24.03.16

Pupil Name/Enw Disgybl:

Class/Dosbarth: /

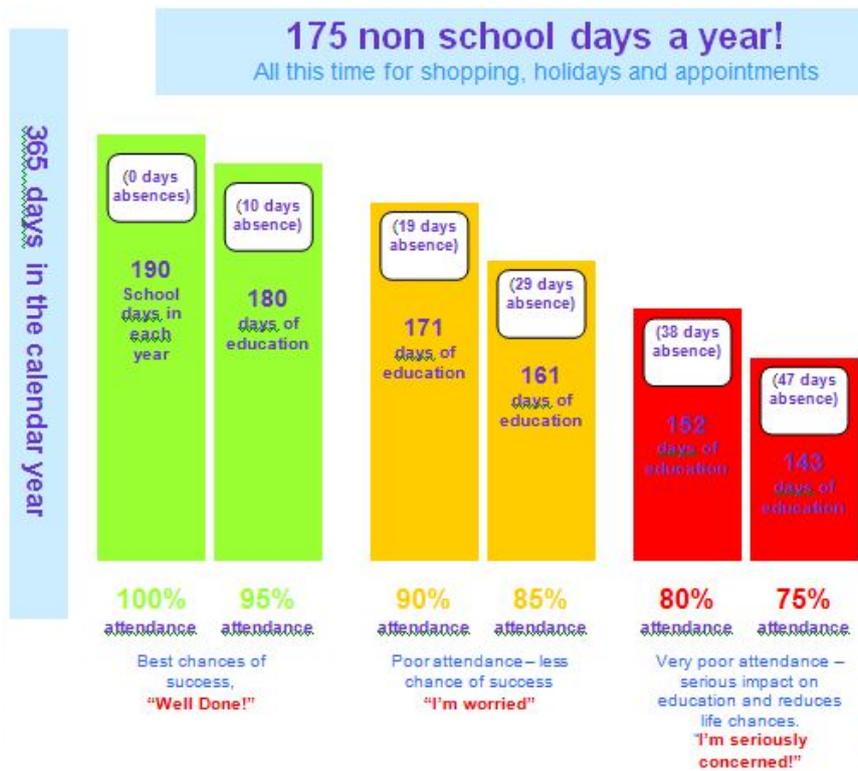
Percentage attendance for the above period: 95% (???) / 250 sessions) *Well done!*

Percentage of sessions marked as late: %

Percentage of Authorised Absence: % (sessions)

Percentage of Unauthorised Absence: % (sessions)

Good attendance at Tremoilet means...
Being at school at least 95% of the time or 180 to 190 days!



Should you wish to discuss the above information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Jayne Phillips
ACTING HEADTEACHER