

# PUPIL ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Signed by chair of governors: Mr J.D Rugg  
Date ratified: (by full governing body) 05/02/2018  
Date of review: Feb 2019

**Feb 2018**

*'Learning and Growing Together'*

*'Dysgu a Thyfu Gyda'n Gilydd.'*

**DESIGNATED STAFF MEMBER WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR MONITORING ATTENDANCE**

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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

- Llanmiloe School's target attendance rate for 2016-2017 was 95.5%.
- Llanmiloe School's target attendance rate for 2017-2018 is 96%

In order to achieve this, the School will:-

- ❖ Involve all stakeholders including pupils and provide them with a voice in achieving our target
- ❖ Aim to achieve excellent levels of attendance and punctuality to enable all pupils to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

## OBJECTIVES

- ***To promote good attendance as this is vital to educational achievement.***
- ***To convey 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.
- ***To keep records of attendance which:***
  - clearly distinguish between authorised and unauthorised absence by pupils;
  - provide accurate information on actual attendance to enable monitoring and evaluation of school attendance rates through centrally held statistics.
- ***To 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.
- ***To be sensitive to situations where regular attendance patterns are disrupted by external factors such as family bereavement.***

## 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 16<sup>th</sup> 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;
- holidays / day trips taken in term time.

Parents are asked to make all medical and dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible.

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.

The Welsh Government (WG) Education (Penalty Notice) (Wales) Regulations 2013 states that Local Authorities (LAs) are required by law to adhere to the Education Act 1996 section 444 to include penalty notices as one of the interventions to promote better school attendance.

Sections 444A and 444B of the Education Act 1996 provide that certain cases of unauthorised absence can be dealt with by way of a penalty notice. A penalty notice is a fine of up to £120 and may be issued to a parent / carer as a result of a child's regular non-attendance at school / education provision.

## **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.

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, e.g. lunch passes and tokens, attendance levels considered before a pupil is eligible for merit trips;
- rewarding children who attend the first 100 days
- rewarding 100% attendance at the end of the summer term.
- 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;
- 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: the initial transition meeting prior to admission and also annually at the end of each term when the pupils attendance is reported to parents.
- The school will also communicate the importance of attendance to parents and pupils through assemblies, the school prospectus, newsletters and the school website and Twitter page.
- If no contact is received by the parent/ carer of an absent pupil on the first morning of the absence, a text message or 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 Inclusion 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 (as outlined in the 'Procedures for Non-Attendance document'), then a referral will be made to the LA Service for further investigation.
- A request to the Local Authority for a penalty notice can be made by the school, police or from within the local authority itself in relation to poor attendance at school.

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 **30** minutes and closes at **9.30** am;
- 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 LA 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 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:

- monitors the school's registers;
- liaises with teaching staff,
- meets with the LA Officer on a regular pre-arranged basis;
- refers to other agencies if appropriate;
- 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);
- ensures that the LA Officer's role is known and understood in school.

## **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 Llanmiloe 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.

## **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.

## **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.

All children arriving after 9.30 am must be accompanied to the school office by the parent /carer, where they will be asked to sign them in. Lateness is monitored regularly. Where children have persistent lateness problems the head will invite the parents into the school to a formal meeting.

## HOLIDAYS

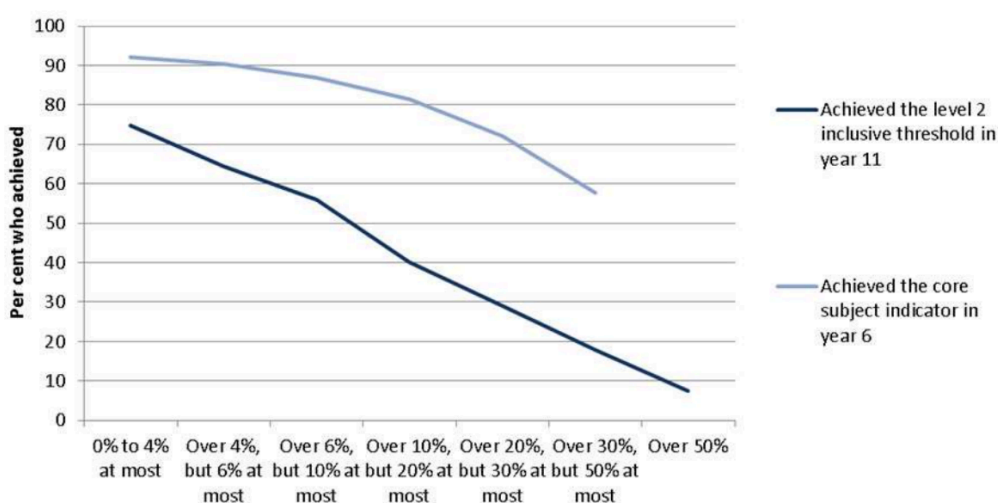
### Welsh Government Guidance on Term Time holidays (August 2017) states that:

Information to parents and carers who are considering booking a holiday during term time There are many experiences outside school that children can learn from that will enrich their lives. However, learners are only in school for a limited amount of time and we must ensure that we can make the most of this time for your child.

If you do decide that you must book a holiday during term-time, please take into consideration that if your child misses school he/she can fall behind with school work and do less well in exams. Research suggests that there is a link between a child's regular attendance at school and how well they perform in exams.

The graph below shows that in general, pupils with higher rates of absence are less likely to achieve five A\*-C grades (including English or Welsh) at GCSE. The light blue line shows how many children were achieving the expected level in both Maths and Science, and either English or Welsh first language (Core Subject Indicator), at Year 6. The dark blue line shows how many pupils aged 15 got five A\*- C GCSEs including English or Welsh (Level 2 Inclusive). In both cases, the chart suggests that in general, pupils with higher absence rates achieve lower results.

**Table 1 – Achievement of learners in Years 6 and 11, by overall absence rate, 2016**



### 1: What is the Supreme Court case *Isle of Wight V Platt* about?

A: The case taken by the Isle of Wight Council to the Supreme Court relates to school fines for unauthorised absence. Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 provides that if a child of compulsory school age fails to attend school regularly, the parents may be guilty of an offence and is liable to a fine.

The case sought clarity on what constitutes regular attendance at school. If a parent knows that their child is failing to attend regularly at the school and fails to make them to do so, they are guilty of a more serious offence and are liable to a higher fine or a term of imprisonment.

The Isle of Wight Council believed Mr. Platt had committed an offence under section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996. It issued a penalty notice which Mr Platt refused to pay. Consequently, the local authority prosecuted Mr. Platt under section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996. A penalty notice is issued by the local authority and is a notice offering a person the opportunity of discharging any liability to conviction for the offence under section 444(1) to which the notice relates by payment of a penalty in accordance with the notice.

Payment of the fine would have meant there would not have been a criminal prosecution.

## **2: Does the Supreme Court's ruling of the case apply in Wales?**

A: Yes. Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 applies to England and Wales Therefore the ruling of the Supreme Court also applies to England and Wales.

## **3: What is the outcome of the case and how does this affect Wales?**

A: The case sought clarity from the Court about what constitutes a pupil's regular attendance at school. The ruling confirms that 'regular attendance' at school means attendance in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school.

This means that a governing body, rather than a child's parent, must decide what constitutes 'regular attendance' at school.

## **4: What does this mean in practical terms for Wales?**

A: It means that a parent still needs the permission of the headteacher to remove their child from school for a family holiday.

If the headteacher does not give permission for the leave of absence, the absence is treated as an 'unauthorised absence'. As such a parent can be issued with a fixed penalty notice (fine) for not ensuring their child attends school regularly.

## **5: Does this mean that I cannot take my child on holiday in term time?**

A: No, the ruling of the Supreme Court provides clarity under Section 444 of the Education Act about what constitutes regular attendance at school. It does not change the position in Wales where secondary legislation - the Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 (the 2010 Regulations) - already set out the arrangements relating to holidays in term time.

## **6: Does the school have the authority to allow term time absence for holidays?**

A: Yes. The ruling reached by the Supreme Court has no impact on the existing arrangements in Wales. Parents should not take their children out of school for a holiday without first obtaining the permission of the headteacher in advance. Under the 2010 Regulations, schools have a discretionary power to authorise up to 10 days absence during a school year for family holidays during term time if it is considered necessary.

## **7: Why is this decision made by the school?**

A: Headteachers have access to all the necessary information to make an informed decision. A headteacher is able to consider individual circumstances on a case-by case basis. A number of things will be taken into account before reaching a decision, including the time of year, length of the holiday, the reason for the holiday, impact on learning, timing of exams or tests, family circumstances and the wishes of parents, as well as the overall attendance and attainment of the child.

Headteachers do have the discretionary power to grant up to 10 days leave for the purpose of a family holiday or trips. The pupil's previous and current year's attendance will be looked at.

**A holiday request form (See Appendix 1) for parents to submit their request will be available via the school website or from the office at the school. This form will include a section for the Headteacher to reply and provide his/her decision as to whether the absence will be authorised or unauthorised.**

### **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

### Term Time Absence Request Form

**In line with government recommendations we request that you do not take holidays during term time as this can be disruptive for your child’s progress.**

Absent and late marks also reflect badly on the reputation of the school and information on attendance is sometimes requested by secondary schools.

The Head teacher can authorise a period of leave up to **ten days in any school year depending on pupil progress**. If you wish to request a period of absence please complete this form.

The form must be completed then signed by the head teacher **before** the absence.

**CHILD’S NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_ **CLASS:** \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate below the dates you wish to take

From \_\_\_\_\_ To \_\_\_\_\_

**Please explain reason for request for absence**

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Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

.....

**REPLY**

**1.1 Absence so far this year \_\_\_\_\_ days Absence Authorized Yes / No**

**2 Comment**

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## APPENDIX 2 - EXAMPLE OF TERMLY ATTENDANCE RECORDS TO PARENTS

### COFNOD PRESENOLDEB/ATTENDANCE RECORD

Monitoring Period/Cofnod Monitro:

Pupil Name/Enw Disgybl:

Class/Dosbarth:

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

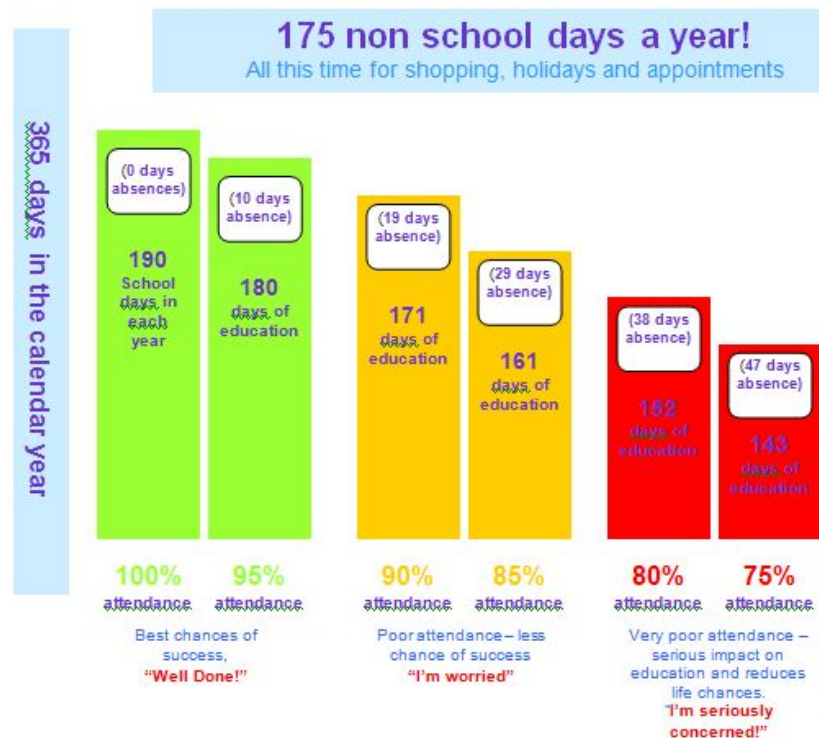
Percentage of sessions marked as late: %

Percentage of Authorised Absence: % ( *sessions*)

Percentage of Unauthorised Absence: % ( *sessions*)

Good attendance at [Llanmiloe](#) 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



## **MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF POLICY**

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Date passed by Governing Body .....

Chairman .....

Designated Governor for school attendance .....