YSGOL Y LAWNT

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

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1. Mission statement

Ysgol y Lawnt is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.

We will provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcomed and are committed to the the fundamental principle that early intervention and partnership working is crucial in ensuring the attendance, protection and well-being of all children and young people.

The school will follow the All Wales Child Protection procedures and local protocols in relation to specific and identifiable welfare issues that prevent a child or young pupil from accessing education, or where there are safeguarding concerns.

For a pupil to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all pupils. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents/carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

School attendance is subject to education law and guidance and this school attendance policy is written to reflect this legislation and the guidance produced by the Welsh Government (WG).

The legislation makes provision for a school day which is to be divided into two sessions with a lunch break in the middle and to be available for at least 190 days in any school year.

The school will review its systems for improving attendance on an annual basis to ensure that it is achieving its set goals and targets as identified by the Governors, Local Authority (LA), EAS and the WG.

This policy will contain the procedures that the school will use to work towards meeting its attendance targets.

2. Promoting attendance

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents/carers and pupils. The home school agreement contains details of how we will work with parents and carers and our expectations of what they will need to do to ensure pupils' achieve good attendance.

We ensure that our pupils are made aware of the importance of good attendance and how this will benefit them; we use a variety of strategies to promote attendance including;

- Termly 95^{+}% and 100% attendance certificates awarded in Whole School Assembly.
- Annual 95^{+}% and 100% attendance certificates awarded in Whole School Assembly-Medals awarded for 100% attendance.
- Whole school Attendance Target Board- weekly celebration of classes who have achieved 95^{+}% attendance. Class Award for highest weekly attendance.
- Stickers for improved attendance.
- Our PSE programme and Anti-Bullying Policy ensure that we promote a healthy and happy environment for all pupils. Consideration is given to pupils needs when planning to ensure that we offer a stimulating, engaging and challenging curriculum to all learners.

3. School procedures

3.1 Notification and authorisation of absences

Categorisation of absence

All pupils who are on role but not present in the school must be recorded within one of these categories.

- Authorised Absence
- Unauthorised Absence
- Approved Educational Activity

Unauthorised absence

This is for those pupils where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason.

Authorised absence

This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid; only the Head Teacher can authorise an absence.

Approved educational activity

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off the school site but with the approval of the school and or the LA.

This would include:

- Field trips and educational visits
- Sporting activities
- Link courses or approved education at another venue
- Education arranged by the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)

Parents are asked to notify the school immediately if their child is absent from school. Only the Head Teacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. The coding for any absences will be in accordance with the guidance provided by the WG as in Appendix 2a.

Excessive amounts of authorised absence can be just as damaging to continuity of learning as unauthorised absence. In cases of concern, the school may request further evidence before authorising absences .i.e. medical evidence.

If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence will be recorded in the first instance as unexplained (code N) and promptly followed up by the school, as part of its early intervention and safeguarding strategies. (See section 3.2).

First day absence

School will endeavour to ascertain the specific reason for non- attendance as soon as possible on the first day of absence, after both morning and afternoon registration. This may include a telephone call or texting service. Once the specific information is received, the register will be amended to reflect the appropriate absence code (Appendix 1).

Priority will be given to children who are deemed to be particularly vulnerable, eg. those known to child protection/safeguarding services or are looked after (CLA).
The local Children Services team will be notified of unexplained absences of more than two days of a pupil on the child protection register, or one day following the week-end.

Third day absence

On the third day of absence and if school has not received an adequate explanation, a letter will be sent to the parent or carer requesting this information. The absences will remain unauthorised, until an adequate explanation is received.

Absence notes

Notes received from parents explaining absence will be kept for an academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil, that may require further investigation, then the notes should be retained in line with education retention schedule. Parents and carers are aware that only the Head Teacher or their representative can authorise an absence and that further information such as a letter from a GP or Consultant may be required to support reasons given for absence.

3.2 Leave of absence/holidays in term time

Leave of absence during term time will be discouraged. Parents and carers do not have the automatic right to withdraw their children from school for an annual holiday or routine appointments and will be reminded of the effect that absence can have on a pupil's potential achievement.

Parents and carers must apply in writing at least a week in advance for permission for their child to have leave of absence. The school will consider any application for leave of absence, taking into account factors such as the time of year and overall attendance pattern of the pupil.

Only 5 days holiday will be authorised each academic year. The Head Teacher may only agree to an extended leave of absence in exceptional circumstances.

3.3. Lateness

The school gates are opened at 8.40am and staff are in attendance to welcome pupils into school. The school has an early morning breakfast club for those who need to arrive early. Morning registration will take place at the start of school at 9am. Gates will be closed at this point and all pupils arriving after this time will need to report to main reception and will be asked to sign the Late Book, giving reasons for their lateness. The registers will remain open for a maximum of 30 minutes, in accordance with WG guidance. Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence (code U) unless there is an acceptable explanation i.e. school transport was delayed.

Pupils arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be coded as late (L).

Afternoon registration will be at 1pm. All pupils who leave the school during a session (e.g. to attend medical appointment) are recorded in the school log book in the main office.

Parents and carers are reminded that The LA may issue a FPN for persistent lateness after the close of the register in accordance with the Local Code of Conduct, if in excess of 10 sessions.

4. Continuing and frequent absence

Within the school it is the responsibility of the class teacher and attendance officer to be aware of and bring attention to the Head Teacher any emerging attendance concerns.

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem as soon as possible, before a referral is made to the Education Welfare Service (EWS). This will involve inviting the parents or carers and the pupil into school for a meeting.

For unauthorised absences of 10 sessions or more in a rolling 12 week period (there are two sessions in a day, morning and afternoon) and following a period of monitoring, the school can request that the LA issue a FPN in accordance with the Local Code of Conduct.

4.1. Persistent absence

Welsh Government defines persistent absence as pupils whose absence level is more than 20% (80% attendance). These pupils will be subject to an action plan to support their return to full attendance.

The action plan will include engagement with relevant agencies that can support the pupil's attendance and could include the schools Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

4.2. Absence related to discrimination

A pupil's absence from school may be due to bullying, which can take many forms and can be direct (either physical or verbal) or indirect, for example, ignoring a pupil or not talking to them. Some of this bullying may be discriminatory.

It is against the law for a school, governing body or the LA not to take action where this type of bullying takes place between pupils.

As a school, we are required to monitor and report on discriminatory incidents each term and if the reason for a pupil's absence is related to any of the above issues, must take action to deal with the situation.

5. Retention of records

Attendance regulations stipulate that attendance records should be retained for at least three years; however it is good practice to extend this period in line with the education record retention schedule.

6. Register checks

The LA will formally check the registers on a regular basis to ensure there is compliance with legislation. It should be noted that registers are legal documents and it is an offence not to maintain accurate records.

7. Attendance targets

Each year the school and governing body, will set absence targets and submit to the Local Authority/ Consortium by no later than 31st December in every school year.

A system for analysing performance towards the targets will be established and the Head Teacher or senior school manager will be responsible for overseeing this work. The school and Governing body make use of the attendance data available from the SEWC and the LA when setting its targets.

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endix 1 The registration system The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
****	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorized absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence

N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Un-timetabled sessions for noncompulsory school-age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

Legislation and guidance

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable:

(a) to his age, ability and aptitude and

(b) to any special needs he may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent means natural parents and includes any person who has parental responsibility or has day to day care of the child.

Section 444 1, 1(a) and (ZA) contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school or alternative provision arranged by the Local Authority.

The Education (Penalty Notices) (Wales) Regulations 2013 set out the framework for the operation of the Fixed Penalty Notice scheme.

The Equalities Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011

Registers and admission.

4. The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010
5. The Education (School Day and School Year) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2006

Attendance targets

- The Education (School Performance and Unauthorised Absence Targets) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2006.

Guidance documents relating to attendance

- All Wales Child Protection Procedures
- Keeping Learners safe
- The All Wales Attendance Framework
- The National Assembly for Wales Circular 47/2006 Inclusion and Pupil Support.
- South East Wales Consortium's Attendance Strategy
- Local Code of Conduct relating to the Fixed Penalty Notice scheme
- Welsh Government Guidance on penalty notices for regular non-attendance at school
- Welsh Government Guidance on attendance codes

Figure 1: Responding to Non-Attendance

