

Clytha Primary School

Attendance Policy

# Attendance Policy



**'To Lift Ourselves and Others into our Best Future' 'I godi'n hunain a phawb ar gyfer dyfodol  
disglair'**

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Link Governor	Chris Roberts

# CLYTHA PRIMARY SCHOOL

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

### **School Attendance**

Promoting positive behaviour and excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school and wider community. All children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for absence is unavoidable such as illness. Schools have a legal duty to publish attendance figures and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a legal duty and responsibility to ensure that their children attend school on a regular basis.

We believe that children, regardless of ethnic group, age, disability, gender and additional educational needs can reach their full potential only by receiving full-time education, through regular and structured attendance. All children should have an expectation of receiving an education of the highest possible quality, part of which relies on children arriving on time and being ready and prepared for the day's learning, without interruption from late arrivals.

We expect all children on roll to attend every day, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and put in place appropriate procedures. We believe the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school and our partnership with families.

Clytha will follow the All Wales Safeguarding Procedures and local protocols in relation to specific and identifiable wellbeing issues that may prevent a child 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 families the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

### **AIMS**

- To offer a safe and friendly environment which welcomes children regardless of race, gender or ability.
- To keep accurate and up to date attendance data
- To improve the attendance in the school
- To reduce any occurrence of lateness in the school
- To create a partnership between school and home based on the understanding of the importance of regular attendance at school
- To create an ethos of punctuality in the school
- To ensure all pupils are safe and to follow the local authority's 'Children Missing in Education' guidance

## COMMUNICATION

Information on punctuality and attendance is set out in the School Prospectus. Parents are informed about the importance of attendance and punctuality during the New Intake Meeting for parents in the summer term prior to their children starting in the following September, during annual Meet the Teacher Events in September and through our weekly newsletter where attendance celebrations and issues are included. The Headteacher maintains a robust monitoring system and has regular contact with families where needed.

## REGISTRATION

School is open from 8.50am. Registers are taken by all class teachers at the start of every morning and afternoon session. A child is late if they arrive after 9.00am and before 9.30am. If a child arrives after 9.30am they are marked as absent. Registers are taken at 1.30pm in the afternoon session. All children arriving after 9.00am or 1.30pm must report to the school office before going to class.

### **Starting the School Day**

Teachers are prepared to receive the children from 8.50am with a designated task, either a morning activity or perhaps focused work in an intervention group with a Teaching Assistant. If your child is absent from this short but vital session, their work for the whole day may be affected. Late arrivals are often disruptive to the class and can also be an embarrassment for your child; most importantly children miss crucial learning opportunities.

- Morning registration is at 9.00am. This is the latest time your child should arrive in the classroom.
- Children arriving after 9.00am must report to the School Office where a late mark will be recorded. The school gates are locked at 9:10am and parents will need to telephone the School Office for admittance.
- Patterns of late arrival at school will be closely monitored, and concerns addressed with parents.
- The Headteacher and Educational Welfare Officer monitors school attendance and pupil punctuality both through school logs and sporadic late monitoring. Lateness is monitored through our school sign-in system.

## SCHOOL PROCEDURES

Parents are expected to contact school on the first day of absence before 9am to provide reasons for their child's absence. Parents must state the full reason for the child's absence (not just 'feeling unwell or under the weather') and indicate the likely date that they will return to school.

Parents are aware that only the Headteacher can authorise an absence and that further information such as a letter/appointment card from a GP or Consultant may be required to support reasons for absence.

- We operate a First Response system from the close of registration whereby all unexplained absences are followed up with a phone call to the parent in order to establish a reason for a child's absence.
- Parents informed by letter (s) if their child's attendance falls below 90% and our school target of 96% for this year.
- The Education Welfare Officer will work closely with the school to monitor on-going concerns.

If parents fail to contact 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 may result in the involvement of the EWO and school will duly follow its Safeguarding Procedures.

Any pupil may be subject to a visit from the Education Welfare Officer where the school has any concern around attendance or lack of contact from parents.

As a school, we have a duty to safeguard all our pupils and under the Education and Inspections Act 2006, requires the local authority to make arrangements to enable them to establish the identities of children residing in Newport who are not receiving an education. 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.

## TYPES OF ABSENCE

### Attendance Definitions

Schools are required to take an attendance register twice a day, and this shows whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved off site activity, or absent. If a pupil of compulsory school age is absent, every half day absence from school has to be classified by the school, as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**.

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has been notified by a parent or guardian. Only the Headteacher can authorise an absence. Unexplained absences will be recorded as unauthorised.

### Authorised Absence

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as illness or other unavoidable causes (e.g., bereavement of a close family member).

### Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absences are those which the Local Authority do not consider to be reasonable and for which no 'leave of absence' has been agreed by the school.

These include:

- Holidays during school time
- Parent condoned absence
- Truancy
- Absences which have not been properly explained

These codes are for those sessions where pupils are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid. Evidence may be requested to support the reason given (e.g. medical evidence, appointment cards, etc.)

### Approved Educational Activity

These codes cover types of supervised educational activity undertaken off the school site but with the approval of the school and/or the LA, where the session has been supervised by an approved tutor.

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)

### MEDICAL AND ILLNESS ABSENCE

Where possible medical appointments should be booked outside of the school day. However, if this is not possible then such absences will be recorded as authorised if proof of the appointment is provided. **Parents should be made aware that unless there is a valid medical reason, then a child should return to school following such appointments.** Where the absence is authorised, schools will use the appropriate code to record the absence. This, however, does not apply to routine GP or dental appointments, which can and should be arranged for times outside of the school day.

If a pupil is repeatedly absent due to illness, the school may request supporting evidence that the pupil is receiving the necessary medical treatment. An appointment card, consultant letter, photograph of prescription medication, would all suffice as medical evidence. Without the necessary evidence, the school may notify the parent or carer that all future absences will be unauthorised until the necessary medical evidence has been provided, and a referral to the Education Welfare Service may be made.

## CONTINUING AND FREQUENT ABSENCE

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem as soon as possible. This may involve inviting the parents/ carers and the pupil into school for a meeting. However, should this absence persist a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service.

## PERSISTENT ABSENCE

Welsh Government defines persistent absence as pupils whose absence level is more than 10% (less than 90% attendance). These pupils will be subject to an action plan to support their return to full attendance. This plan may include a referral to the Education Welfare Service for additional support for the pupil and their family. If the pupil and family do not engage with the action plan, court action may be taken against the main parent(s) or carer(s) via the Education Welfare Service.

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

## REQUESTS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible.

In these circumstances, we expect parents to complete a 'Leave of Absence' form and return to the Head teacher for approval, **two weeks in advance**. Forms can be obtained from the school office or from the school website. A letter stating whether this absence will be authorised will be returned to the family prior to the event.

Regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 (amended) gives schools discretionary power to grant leave for the purpose of an annual family holiday during term time. **Parents do not have an automatic right to withdraw pupils from school for a holiday, and in law, have to apply for permission in advance by completing a Request for Holiday Absence Form.** All requests for holiday leave are required to be in writing and the application must be made by

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parent/parents with day-to-day care of the child even if they are not actually going on holiday themselves. If the parent with whom the child lives does not give consent to the holiday, leave cannot be given lawfully by the school except by a Court Order. Such permission is granted in accordance with arrangements made by the governing body of the school.

**Parents should not expect, or be led to expect, that schools will agree to family holidays during term time.** The Headteacher will consider each request **individually** – there is no ‘blanket approval’. The Governing Body have agreed that school will **not** authorise any absence if a child’s attendance is below 96.0% for the two terms preceding the holiday.

**If a parent requests a holiday absence of more than 10 days a discussion between the Headteacher and family must take place and if the holiday takes place a Home School Contract for Extended Holidays must be completed and signed by the parent/ guardian prior to the holiday commencing. The additional days will be classified as unauthorised. If the child does not return to school on the agreed date and contact hasn’t been made with school, the child’s place at school is at risk. The maximum period for extended holidays is four weeks, after this time the child’s place at the school is at risk.**

#### FIXED PENALTY NOTICES

The Local Authority has recently adopted a Code of Conduct for Fixed Penalty Notices which came into effect on 1st September 2014. The law empowers designated Local Authority (LA) officers, head teachers, including their nominated deputies to issue Fixed Penalty Notices to the parents of children who have unauthorised absence from schools.

Fixed Penalty Notices may be considered appropriate from September 1st 2015, as agreed by School Governors, when:

- At least 10 sessions (5 school days) are lost due to unauthorised absence during the current term. These do not need to be consecutive;
- Unauthorised absences of at least 10 sessions (5 school days) due to holidays in term time or delayed return from extended holidays; or
- Persistent late arrival at school, i.e. after the register has closed. ‘Persistent’ means at least 10 sessions of late arrival in any academic year;
- Truancy, where the child has come to the attention of the Police or public during school hours for being absent from school, without an acceptable reason.

#### PUNCTUALITY

Any child who attends school between 9.00am and 9.30am and between 1.30pm and 2.00pm is recorded as being late alongside the reason. School monitors punctuality closely and keeps a running total of those late arrivals to school. In the event of **three** late arrivals, the school will contact the parent by phone/or letter to inform the parent of the impact of lateness on their child’s attendance and progress. If a child’s punctuality is causing continuing concern, the Head teacher will request a meeting with the family to find ways to resolve the issue. If punctuality does not improve, the school may refer the family to the Education Welfare Officer.

#### IN SUMMARY

Parents can do a great deal to support regular and punctual attendance of their children.

- Take an active interest in their child’s school life and work;
- Attend, when possible, parents’ evenings and other school events;

- Ensure that their child completes his/her homework and goes to bed at an appropriate time;
- Be aware of letters from school which their child brings home;
- Ensure that their child arrives at school on time each day;
- Ensure that their child only misses school for reasons which are unavoidable or justified, such as illness or days of religious observance;
- Always notify the school as soon as possible - preferably on the first morning of any absence;
- Avoid booking family holidays during term-time;
- Talk to the school if they are concerned that their child may be reluctant to attend school.

## KEEPING SCHOOL REGISTERS

The school's register is a legal document and 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.

By the end of each week, the school's overall attendance registers will be completed and overall attendance figure will be calculated by the school.

## PROMOTING AND REWARDING GOOD ATTENDANCE

School understands the importance of rewarding good attendance. There is 'Attendance Ted' which is given to the class with the highest weekly attendance in our Friday assembly. This is communicated with families in our regular newsletter. Each week, one child in every class who has achieved 100% attendance the previous week will have their name put into our 'Attendance Box' to get the chance to win a special treat. All 100% classes will receive a treat, e.g an extra play or Art session, for example. Children with 100% attendance for the whole term are rewarded with a certificate and a badge.

Children who have 100% for the whole academic year receive a gift voucher and certificate in the last assembly of the year in July. Children who meet the school's attendance target at the end of the year also receive a certificate in the last assembly of the year.

## SCHOOL WEBSITE

Our school website will also provide parents, pupils, governors and the public with all the relevant information including our Attendance Policy and all other school procedures.

## TRACKING OF ATTENDANCE

The school monitors attendance and punctuality on a daily basis. The Headteacher works closely with families where attendance and/or punctuality is of concern and aims to set up additional rewards and motivation schemes to improve attendance. There is a focus on developing positive working relationships with parents to remove any possible barriers to good attendance.

Individual attendance is also recorded on a child's end of year school report. The Head teacher will contact families to discuss attendance where there may be a concern and follow-up letters are sent from school to families if there is limited improvement.

School works closely with the Education Welfare Officer, with whom there are half termly meetings. At these meetings, the Headteacher will raise any pupils of concern whom she feels would benefit from a discussion with the EWO.

The Headteacher provides attendance data to the Governing Body on a half termly basis. It is the Governing Body who has the responsibility for this policy and for seeing that it is carried out. Attendance rates are published in the Governors' Annual Report to Parents.