



## RHYDRI PRIMARY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

*(This policy should be read in conjunction with child protection, behaviour and other safeguarding policies.)*

### **Introduction**

Rhydri Primary School is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.

The school will provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcomed and are committed to 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 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. The school will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all pupils. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or 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 (see appendix 1 - school codes).

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, South East Wales Consortium and the Welsh Government.

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

### **Promoting attendance**

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents/carers and pupils.

The school will ensure that our pupils are made aware of the importance of good attendance and how this will benefit them. The school will also use a variety of strategies to intervene at an early stage to encourage improved attendance of individual learners.

The home/school agreement will contain details of how we will work with parents and our expectations of what parents will need to do to ensure pupils achieve good attendance.

## **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 and will be reminded of the effect that absence can have on a pupil's potential achievement.

It is only in exceptional circumstances that a leave of absence will be authorised if the pupils' current attendance percentage is below the Rhydri Primary School target. Parents/carers must apply for a leave of absence no more than one week in advance.

In addition to the guidelines introduced by Welsh Government and enforced via the local authority and East Wales Consortium, the school Governing Body has agreed upon a number of actions to supplement the legislation:

- A maximum of twenty sessions (ten days) per academic year will be authorised. However, there may be 'exceptional' circumstances where absence over five days may be authorised. Governors will monitor the number of 'exceptional' circumstances which are granted during the school year.
- To ensure a successful transition to the child's new class, no days will be authorised in September.
- To ensure that the school fulfills its statutory obligation to administer national tests in reading and numeracy, no days will be authorised the month of testing.
- To ensure that pupils are fully prepared for the next phase of their education, no days will be authorised on Year 6 transition days to the High School.
- Holidays will be automatically refused authorisation if a child's attendance is already below the cluster target of 95%. However, there may be 'exceptional' circumstances where absence may be granted.
- Approval for attendance data will be checked retrospectively to ascertain a full year of attendance data.

Parents/carers are advised that A Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) can be issued by the Local Authority when permission for a holiday or leave of absence has not been authorised by the school and exceeds 10 sessions (5 days) in an academic year. The Local Authorities Local Code of Conduct has more information on this.

## **School procedures**

Any pupil who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period will have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity (attendance out of school). Only the Head Teacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence.

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

The coding for any absences will be in accordance with the guidance provided by the Welsh Government as in Appendix 1.

## **Lateness**

Morning registration will take place at the start of school at 9:00am. The registers will remain open for a maximum of 20 minutes. 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. In cases for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered.

Pupils arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be coded as late (L). Registration takes place from 9:00am - 9:20am. Therefore, anyone arriving after 9:00am and before 9:20am will be identified as late (L). Non attendance in school is coded as (O).

Afternoon registration will be from 1:00pm - 1:05pm. Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as late (L) unless there is an acceptable explanation (i.e. 1:00pm - 1:50pm will be coded as late.). Pupils arriving after the start of afternoon registration period will be identified as having an unauthorised absence (code U).

Parents/carers are reminded that The Local Authority 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 in a term.

### **First day absence**

School will endeavour to ascertain the specific reason for non-attendance as soon as possible on the first day of absence. Once the specific information is received, the register will be amended to reflect the appropriate absence code (Appendix 1 - school codes).

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 (LAC).

### **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/carer requesting this information. The absences will remain unauthorised, until an adequate explanation is received. The school will also contact the Education Welfare Officer to share concerns about the pupil's non-attendance.

### **Absence notes**

Notes received from parents explaining absence will be kept for an academic year in the pupils' individual file. 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.

### **Continuing and frequent absence**

Within the school it is the responsibility of the class teacher or wellbeing assistant to be aware of and bring attention to the Head teacher (or person to whom they have delegated responsibility for attendance), 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. This may involve inviting the parents/carers/pupil into school for a meeting.

For unauthorised absences of 10 sessions or more in a school year (there are two sessions in a day, morning and afternoon), the school can request that the Local Authority issue a FPN in accordance with the Local Code of Conduct.

## **Persistent absence**

Welsh Government defines persistent absence as pupils whose absence level is more than 20% (less than 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 will include the school's Education Welfare Officer.

## **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 Local Authority 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.

## **Approved educational activity**

Approved educational activity is undertaken off the school site but with the approval of the school.

This would include:

- Field trips and educational visits;
- Sporting activities;
- Link courses or approved education at another venue;
- Performances;
- Musical examinations.

If a pupil is receiving education off site or is attending at a school where they are dual registered, the school will liaise with the other education provider on a daily basis, to check on the pupil's attendance and mark the register accordingly.

## **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.

## **Register checks**

The Local Authority 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.

## Attendance targets

Each year the school and Governing Body, will set absence targets and submit to the Local Authority by no later than 31<sup>st</sup> December in every school year.

A system for analysing performance towards the targets will be established and the Head Teacher and/or a senior school manager will be responsible for overseeing this work. The school and Governing Body will make use of the attendance data available from the South East Wales Consortium and the Local Authority when setting its targets.

Policy written by the Inclusion Team  
Based on LA model policy  
May 2015

Date of review: May 2017

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Judith Wright Rees". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line above the first few letters.

Signature of Chair of Governors:

### 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 <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised 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 non-compulsory 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 biological 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.**

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010
- 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
- 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