

Abbey Primary School Ysgol Gynradd Abbey



Attendance Policy

September 2024

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Signed: Cllr. Mike Harvey

Rights Respecting

Article 28 – The right to education



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Introduction and background

Abbey Primary School recognises that positive behaviour and good attendance are central to raising standards and pupil attainment.

This policy is written with the above statement in mind and this policy underpins our school ethos to:

- *promote children's welfare and safeguarding*
- *ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled*
- *ensure that pupils succeed whilst at school; and*
- *ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities when they leave school.*

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Promoting Regular Attendance:

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- *Give parents/carers details on attendance in our newsletters*
- *Report to parents/carers termly on their child's attendance rate.*
- *Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below the school's target for attendance.*
- *Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements;*

Understanding types of absence:

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. Unauthorised absences include:

- *Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily*
- *truancy before or during the school day*
- *absences which have never been properly explained*
- *children who arrive at school too late to get a mark*
- *shopping, looking after other children or birthdays*
- *day trips and holidays in term time.*

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and

the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school then we will work with that family to understand the root problem. We can use outside agencies to help with this such as the Education Welfare Officer.

Persistent Absenteeism

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's education and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. We monitor all absence and the reasons given thoroughly. If your child falls below 90% attendance or risks falling below attendance, then we will work with our Education Welfare Officer to investigate the reasons further. We expect full parental cooperation to improve the child's attendance. These pupils are tracked and monitored carefully we also combine this with academic tracking where absence affects attainment.

Absence Procedures

If your child is absent the parent/carer must follow the following procedures:

Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence before 9.15 am.

The school has an answer phone available to report a pupil's absence, or they can call into school and report to the office.

If your child is absent, we will **telephone or message you on ClassDojo on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you.**

We may invite you in to discuss the situation with our Attendance Officer.

The Education Welfare Officer

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school will refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer from the Local Authority. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can in extreme cases begin prosecution proceedings in the Magistrates Court.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Education Authority.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day, they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and information for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence. Good time keeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

How we manage lateness:

Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 8.45am - Registers marked at 8.50am

Year 3 to Year 6 8.40am - Registers marked at 8.45am

Children arriving after this time need to report to the school office.

Our Education Welfare Officer will also take note if there is a record of persistent lateness.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Headteacher to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

We will encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our children and celebrate good class punctuality.

Holidays in Term Time

There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday. Neath and Port Talbot have directed all their schools not to authorise holidays taken in term time.

Targets

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. This information can be found in the Governors report to parents and school Prospectus which can be found on our website. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Penalty notices

Abbey Primary school follows the Neath & Port Talbot Code of conduct for Penalty Notices as set out in the document 'Code of Conduct for Penalty Notices, irregular attendance at school /alternative education provision' .