

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

Introduction

For pupils to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend school regularly, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. It is very important that parents and school work together to support attendance.

Why regular attendance is so important

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is the parents' legal 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, school will:-

- Upon request, report to parents termly on their child's attendance and punctuality rate and how this relates to their attainments
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements
- Reward good or improving attendance through house points, certificates and outings/events

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, preferably in writing.

- AUTHORISED absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like 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. This includes:-
 - parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
 - 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 which have not been agreed

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 sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 20% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

School has a set of letters to be sent to parents regarding their child's persistent absence and to try to create a dialogue to develop a support system to improve attendance. If this does not succeed, the case is referred to Conwy County Education Department.

On a half term basis we will monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents will be informed of this immediately.

Absence procedures

If a child is absent parents must:-

- Contact school as soon as possible on the first day of absence
- Or, parents can call into school and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with them

If a child is absent school will:-

- Telephone parents on the first day of absence if school have not heard from them
- Invite parents in to discuss the situation with the Headteacher if absences persist

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 news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons and can be embarrassing for the child.

How we manage lateness:-

The school day starts at **9.00am** and school expects each child to be in class at that time.

Registers are marked and closed as soon as possible but may remain open until 9.20am, if a child arrives between 9.20am and 9.30am they will receive a late (L) mark. Pupils arriving after 9.30am will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that parents could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

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

Holidays in term time

Taking holidays in term time will affect a child's schooling as much as any other absence and school expect parents to help by not taking children away in school time.

Remember that any savings made by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to a child's education.

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

All applications for leave must be made in advance and at the discretion of the Headteacher a maximum of 10 days in any academic year may be authorised. In making a decision the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave in term time.



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Full details of the school's policy and procedures are available from the school, but it is important that parents understand the circumstances when leave in term time will **not** be agreed by school:-

- When a pupil is just starting the school. This is very important as a child needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible.
- When a pupil's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence.
- Where a pupil's attendance rate is already below (90%) or will fall to or below that level as a result of taking holiday leave.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

Telephone numbers

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence. Parents should ensure that school are informed of any new contact details. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

People who are responsible for attendance at Ysgol y Gogarth

Headteacher

Administration Officer (Pupils)



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