



Nant-y-Parc Primary School



Attendance Policy



This policy has been created in line with Welsh Government policy (*All Wales Attendance Framework - An operating toolkit for the Education Welfare Service and Strategies for Schools to improve attendance and manage lateness.*), cluster policy and whole school approaches to attendance.

At Nant-Y-Parc Primary School, we believe it is vital that children and young people have access to appropriate and effective learning opportunities and provision. Any barriers to learning need to be identified early and removed so that children and young people can engage in the educational provision they need to achieve their full potential.

A child's success at school is likely to be affected negatively by poor attendance. Those who do not attend regularly may not be able to keep up with their work and in a busy school day it can sometimes be difficult for schools to find the extra time needed to help a child catch up. In addition, research shows that children who are not in school are more vulnerable can be easily drawn into crime and anti-social behaviour and are more likely to be unemployed after leaving school.

Equal Opportunities

All children should expect to receive an education of the highest possible quality, part of which relies on children and staff arriving on time and being ready and prepared for a day's work without interruption from late arrivals. There is also an expectation that all children and staff will attend regularly unless there are genuine extenuating circumstances which prevent this. Therefore, this policy applies to all staff and pupils, regardless of race, religion, culture, gender, or ability.

Aims

The aim of this policy is:

- To improve the attendance in the school.
- To reduce the occurrence of lateness in the school.
- To create a partnership based on the understanding of the importance of regular attendance at school.
- To create an ethos of punctuality in the school.
- To raise the standards of pupil attainment.

Organisation

Schools are required under The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010, to take an attendance register twice a day, at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. All staff are responsible for monitoring lateness and absence. Teachers are responsible for accurate and efficient registration of pupils at the beginning of each session (Morning and Afternoon).

All staff involved with the registration process will be made aware that the law is specific regarding the keeping of registers. Marking and keeping the register is of the utmost importance.

The Family Engagement Officer with the support of administrative staff is responsible for sending out any correspondence to parents and for entering attendance data into the computerised attendance system. Staff will raise concerns with the Headteacher or The Family Engagement Officer. The Family Engagement Officer will monitor individuals and whole school attendance and liaise with the Education Welfare Officer

regularly. The Governing Body will be informed of attendance rates and a target for improvement set. This is currently set at 92%.

Roles and Responsibilities

Ensuring regular school attendance is a demanding area of work that depends on establishing and utilising close working relationships between parents, pupils, schools, the EWS and other professionals working with children and young people in social, educational and health care settings.

Parental Responsibility

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, the parent is responsible for making sure that their child of compulsory age (5-16) receives efficient full-time education that is suitable to the child's age, ability, and aptitude as well as to any additional learning needs the child may have. This can be by regular attendance at school or by alternative education where agreed (the parent can choose to educate their child at home). If a child of compulsory school age who is registered at the school fails to attend regularly then the parent is guilty of an offence under section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

It is the responsibility of parents to inform the school of the reason for their child's absence as soon as possible on the first day of absence. This can be by telephone, text, letter or by personal contact with the school. The school should be notified in advance of any medical or dental appointments which necessitate the child's absence from school. If parents do not notify the school, they will be telephoned, texted or receive a letter requesting the information. If the information is not received the school will inform the EWO who may make a home visit.

Absences are authorised at the discretion of the Headteacher or Family Engagement Officer. Unauthorised absences or absences which take the child's overall attendance below 85% are automatically referred to the Education Welfare Officer via the Education Welfare Service Referral Form.

Educational Welfare Officer

The Education Welfare Service (EWS) will aim to provide professional, quality support to children, young people, families, and schools so that children and young people living in Wales, benefit from the educational opportunities provided to them.

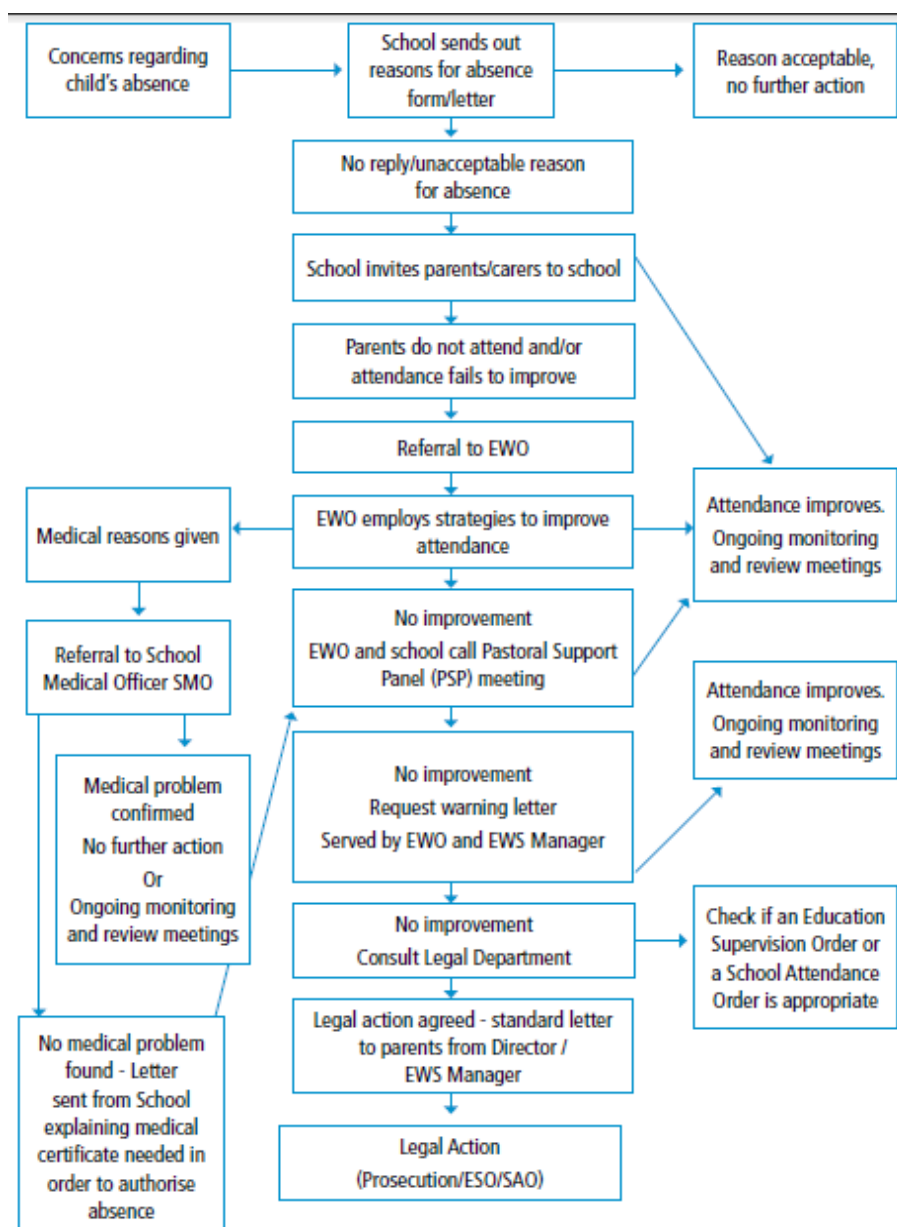
The Welfare Officer visits the school regularly to monitor attendance and punctuality. The service will investigate the reasons behind school absence, offer information and guidance, undertake planned interventions, advise families about specialist support services and make referrals to appropriate services when and where required. The school will contact the Welfare Officer if there are difficulties in determining whether the absence is justified.

School Responsibility

Schools are required under the Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 to take an attendance register twice a day, at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. The accuracy of the register is important to support any statutory interventions that may be required. It should be noted that it is an offence not to maintain accurate registers.

Below is the school's procedure if there is a concern about a child's absence.

Procedures for Non-Attendance



Further to the procedures outlined above, for those pupils whose attendance is of concern, if parents do not contact the school with a valid reason on the day of absence, the school will contact the parent via text. If no response is received, the school will then endeavour to phone home. If there is no contact at this time, the school will contact the EWO, and a home visit may take place to check on the child's welfare.

Children Missing in Education

The school has adopted the CME policy from the local authority and follows these procedures to safeguard children missing in education. Please see the separate policy for further information.

Family Holidays and Extended Trips during Term Time

Under regulation 12 of the Education Regulations 1981, there is discretionary power for leave to be granted for an annual holiday during term time. Parents are required to make their requests in writing for holidays or overseas trips during term time. Requests will be considered individually, and we may invite parents in to discuss any such proposals. Schools can only agree to absence for a family holiday or trip if **they believe that there are exceptional circumstances**. If a school agrees to the absence and the pupil goes on holiday or trip for 10 days or less, then the absence is authorised. If a child fails to return within ten school days of the agreed start date, and this is not due to illness or any other unavoidable cause, then his/her name may be removed from the register. Where absence has already caused concern (under 95%), the Headteacher will not grant holiday leave. Parents should be aware of the impact that absence has on their child's education, particularly in terms of continuity of learning. The time allowed for families for holidays and extended trips during term time has been agreed as a cluster. All cluster primary schools will allow up to ten school days of authorised holiday depending on the child's attendance percentage. Before and after a family holiday/extended trip families will be reminded of the importance of attendance via letter. If a school does not agree to the absence and the pupil goes on a holiday or trip, absence is unauthorised. If parents keep a child away for longer than was agreed, any extra time is also recorded as unauthorised.

Please note:

- advance application for term time absence must be made in line with school attendance policy.
- the absence should be planned carefully with the school – leave and return date to be agreed the school will decide if the visit will be authorised.
- where possible, extended visits should be made during school holidays.
- Absences may have a detrimental effect on pupil progress.
- examination periods should be avoided.

Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN)

In line with the Welsh Government's commitment to *improving schools* (Welsh Government, 2012) we aim to strengthen our approaches to inclusion and safeguarding. We agreed to consult on legislation for the introduction of fixed penalty notices for non-school attendance. Having considered the responses to this consultation the Welsh Government has made the Education (Penalty Notice) (Wales) Regulations 2013. The regulations came into force in September 2013.

Local authorities (LAs), school governing bodies, school staff, and the police are required by law to have regard to the relevant parts of this guidance when carrying out their functions concerning penalty notices, including making decisions on issuing a penalty notice under section 444A of the Education Act 1996.

Penalty notices are one option among several different interventions available to promote better school attendance. School attendance is essential to improve children's educational prospects and to avoid putting them at risk of criminal or antisocial behaviour.

Headteachers are empowered to issue penalty notices and to authorise their Deputy and Assistant heads to do the same. They may only issue penalty notices to parents/carers in respect of the irregular attendance of a child registered at their school.

Issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice

- A Fixed Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence.
- Fixed Penalty Notices will be restricted to one notice per parent of a pupil in an academic year.
- In cases where there is more than one poorly attending pupil in a family, Notices may be issued for more than one child.
- There will be no restriction on the number of times a parent may receive a formal warning of a possible Fixed Penalty Notice.

Fixed Penalty Notices may be considered appropriate when:

- At least 10 sessions (5 school days) are lost due to unauthorised absence within a rolling 12-week period. These do not need to be consecutive.
- Unauthorised absences of at least 10 sessions (5 school days) due to holidays taken in term time or delayed return from extended holidays.
- Persistent late arrival at school, i.e. after the register has closed, in the current term. "Persistent" means at least 10 sessions of late arrival.
- 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.

With regard to a request from a school for a Fixed Penalty Notice linked to a holiday-related unauthorised absence, the LA will only issue a Notice where the school has provided the necessary paperwork and evidence. This paperwork should comprise:

- A copy of a newsletter or letter sent to all parents during the current academic year which clearly states that parents may receive a Fixed Penalty Notice for an unauthorised holiday in term time. (The LA will not need a hard copy of this newsletter/letter each time a school applies for an unauthorised holiday Fixed Penalty Notice, just on the first occasion of each academic year).
- A copy of the holiday request form submitted by a parent, and a copy of the response sent to the parent by school. In the event of the holiday request being denied, the school's response should state the reason why the holiday is unauthorised and should again advise the parent that they may receive a Fixed Penalty Notice if they take their child out of school.
- A copy of the letter sent by the school to the parent advising that the school has referred the matter to the LA and that a Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued.

- Signed registration certificate from the Headteacher or their nominated Deputy confirming that non-attendance during the period was unauthorised.

Considerations and Assessment as to whether a Fixed Penalty Notice should be issued.

Headteachers, their nominated Deputy and the Education Welfare Service (EWS) will take into account the following when determining whether a Fixed Penalty Notice should be issued:

- Level of absence to date.
- Any Equalities considerations relating to the child or family (as listed in the Council's Strategic Equality Plan).
- Any additional learning needs (ALN). LAs should consider whether attendance problems may be related to a pupil's ALN. Schools should be able to demonstrate that they have made appropriate provisions for the pupil's needs, which may include consideration to support through universal, targeted or specific intervention, or in collaboration with the LA, via a statutory assessment.
- History of the attendance issues and action taken.
- Welsh Government (WG) Guidance.
- Likely effectiveness of Fixed Penalty Notice as a tool for obtaining compliance.
- Level of parent engagement/cooperation.
- Any substantial adverse effect a fine will have on the welfare of the family.

Procedure for Issuing Fixed Penalty Notices

The designated officer(s) within the EWS will be the only individuals permitted to issue Fixed Penalty Notices, which will ensure consistent and equitable delivery allow schools to maintain good relationships with parents and ensure that they reinforce any other enforcement sanctions.

Fixed Penalty Notices will never be issued as an instant action, e.g. during a 'truancy sweep'. This will enable officers to ensure that all evidential requirements are in place and limit the health and safety risks to individuals.

Responding to requests for the issuing of a Fixed Penalty Notices

Following the advisory warning notice issued by the school or Police, parents have a period of 15 school days within which to respond. During this time, the pupil must have no unauthorised absence. This information can be included in the formal written warning letter, where one has been issued.

The EWS will respond to all requests from schools or Police within 10 school days of receipt of a request. When satisfied that all the relevant criteria have been met the LA will then issue a fixed penalty notice.

Fixed Penalty Notices for an unauthorised holiday

Where the requested Fixed Penalty Notice is in response to a holiday-related unauthorised absence or is about an offence under section 108 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, the formal warning letter and 15-day improvement period will not apply.

Attendance

The Family Engagement Officer will have responsibility for monitoring attendance and punctuality. Every week, the Family Engagement Officer will run a check of attendance for all pupils under 95%. The Family Engagement Officer will track all pupil's attendance using the Callio tracking system on SIMS. If there is a concern about attendance over some time, the Family Engagement officer will respond by highlighting the concern to parents. They will then continue to monitor pupils showing concern continually. After sharing concerns and if no improvement is noted the Family Engagement officer will make a referral to the Educational Welfare Officer via the EWS.

Children must arrive at school on time. Children should arrive before the bell is rung but no earlier than ten minutes before, as supervision cannot be guaranteed before that.

All classroom doors open at 8.50 a.m. to ensure that the children are ready to begin lessons at 9:00 a.m. Parents should avoid disturbing lessons at the start of the day. Children who arrive late are often unable to give their best to the morning activities and will miss vital information at the beginning of the session. It is also disruptive to lessons when children arrive after the teacher has begun.

If a child does arrive after the bell has been rung, they must enter the school via the main entrance to be registered. The time of their arrival will be noted. This allows them to be booked in for lunch and their attendance is known in case of emergency.

Punctuality will be monitored on a half-termly basis and responded to if appropriate. The Family Engagement Officer will check all children who have arrived late more than five times during the half term. Letters will be sent to parents reminding them of their responsibilities if punctuality is deemed unacceptable. It is however the responsibility of any staff member responsible for registration to inform the Family Engagement Officer of any concerns concerning the regular lateness of an individual pupil before half-termly checks are conducted.

Continuing concerns will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer. A record of the child's lateness will be kept. It is necessary to implement these procedures for the smooth running of the school and to maximise every child's entitlement to education. We aim to work with parents and are happy to discuss this policy at any time.

Signing In / Out Book

When a pupil is taken from school during the day then the parent/carer is required to sign the pupil out on leaving and in on return. The book is located at reception.

Improving Attendance

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher, the Family Engagement Officer, all other staff, and the Educational Welfare Officer to improve the attendance of pupils within the school.

The school and the Educational Welfare officer will employ a range of strategies to improve the overall attendance of the school and individual pupils.

Register Codes

All staff responsible for the registration of pupils will receive training in the use of SIMS and will be made aware of the codes to be used when registering pupils to ensure a consistent approach across the whole school.

Code	Description
/	Present (AM)
\	Present (PM)
B	Educated Off Site (Not Dual Reg)
C	Other authorised circumstances
D	Dual Registration (attending other estab)
E	Excluded (No ALternative Provision Made)
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)
G	Family Holiday (not agreed or days in excess)
H	Family holiday (agreed)
I	Illness
J	Interview
L	Late (before reg closed)
M	Medical / Dental Appointments
N	No reason yet provided for absence
O	Unauthorized absence (Not Covered by Other Code)
P	Approved Sporting Activity
R	Religious Observance
S	Study Leave
T	Traveller Absence
U	Late after registers closed
V	Educational visit
W	Work experience
X	Non-compulsory school age abs
-	All should attend / No mark recorded

Attendance Tracking

As stated previously in this policy the Family Engagement officer will track pupil's attendance using the Callio approach.

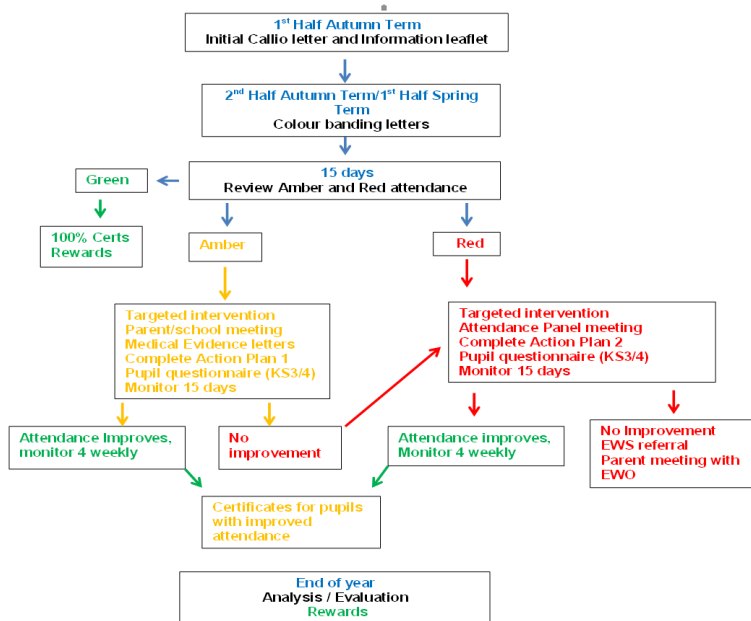
Raising the Profile of Attendance

Research has shown that rewards are far more effective than punishment in motivating pupils to attend school regularly. As well as encouraging and rewarding attendance, these schemes can also increase the profile of attendance, both within the school and in the wider community.

The school will continually raise the profile of attendance with pupils, parents and the wider community through newsletters, the school website, and social media. Pupils will be made aware of prizes and other awards for good attendance. During the celebration assembly, the class with the best attendance during the week will receive the attendance cup and each pupil will receive a small prize. Pupils with 100% attendance will receive prizes at the end of the term. Prizes for 100% attendance in a term and 100% attendance throughout the year will be given. Pupils with the most improved attendance will also be celebrated through the Callio approach. Links with local businesses will be formed that will sponsor prizes and raise the profile of the school's attendance achievement on social media and publications. The Family Engagement Officer will meet with the Parent Panel on a termly basis to discuss attendance and decide upon attendance prizes.

Attendance Standards – Callio Approach

The family Engagement Officer will follow the Callio approach to attendance, which is outlined below.



This approach is followed on a termly basis.

Involving Parents

As a school, we will communicate frequently with parents about positive achievements and improvements and will emphasise the responsibility and role of parents in partnership with the school. We will ensure, through an open-door policy, that parents are welcomed into the school and can gain easy access to staff.

We will also work with parents on a range of projects that give them a positive outlook on the school and what we are trying to achieve.

EWS Referral Procedures

To request a welfare, visit if you cannot contact a family at all, the school will send the pupil's name and address to the following email educationwelfare@caerphilly.gov.uk

If a referral is needed for persistent absenteeism then the school will complete the usual EWS referral form and send to the email address above.

Attendance policy and procedures will be updated in accordance with Welsh Government and Local Authority guidance.

In drawing up this Attendance policy the following were consulted – All teaching and support staff.

It was approved by the Governing Body on

Signed:

Chair of
Governors.....

Headteacher.....

Date to be reviewed: