

# LLISWERRY HIGH SCHOOL

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

The school fully recognises the importance of regular attendance if pupils are to develop personally, socially and academically to their full potential and are to be prepared to meet the attendance and punctuality requirements of the work place. It is an important contributor to the school's mission of 'Learning for Life'. Furthermore, attendance levels of below 93% are viewed as unacceptable by the Welsh Government and the School Inspectorate. Our aim must therefore be for all pupils to achieve attendances above this figure.

There is clear evidence to suggest that irregular and low levels of attendance contribute to:

- academic underachievement
- the under-development of personal and social skills
- low levels of self-esteem and ambition
- difficulty in securing and staying in regular employment.

The school, parents and the LA's Education Welfare Service (EWS) all have a responsibility to promote the importance of regular attendance and to monitor and respond to cases of irregular attendance. It is important that this responsibility is carried out in a partnership with us all working together for the ultimate benefit of the pupils. It is however recognised that some pupils may have an impairment or condition which prevents them from attending on a regular basis. For these, every effort will be made to support the continuation of their education by for example, the providing of work for them to do at home together with additional support and guidance. Their attendance codes will also be adjusted in line with agreed procedures.

**Parents** have a legal responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly and on time. Absences, other than for illness, should be kept to a minimum. Unacceptable reasons for absences which the school regards as unauthorised absence or truancy include

- Whole mornings or full days being taken off for doctor or dentist appointments.
- Holidays taken during term time or other reasons
- Occasions such as birthdays and shopping trips
- Looking after and taking to school younger brothers/sisters which results in non-attendance or late arrival in school
- Staying at home in order to let delivery people and other visitors into the house
- Part-time employment which results in school time being missed
- Taking the day off when a sibling attending another school has a training day
- Failing to attend school on the last days of each term

Parents have a right to withdraw their children from school in order for them to take part in acts of religious worship. The days when this occurs are known to the school and pupils will not be disadvantaged in their education by attendance at such worship.

When their children are absent parents must to let the school know as soon as possible – preferably by telephoning on the first morning. On their return, a note giving the reason for the absence is required. Without such notification the absence will, for record/reporting purposes, be counted as 'unauthorised'.

It is helpful for parents to discuss with their children what they have done in school each day. If they suspect that they may have not attended or truanted for part of the day, they should contact the school immediately. Equally, if they feel that there are particular problems which may be preventing their children from wishing to attend, they should seek the assistance/support of the appropriate Head of Year, Head of Key Stage or schools attendance officers and/or the Education Welfare Officer.

**The School** has a responsibility to record and monitor pupil attendance. Attendance data is supplied to the Local Authority each month and the Welsh Government annually for publication in the School Performance Tables. The Headteacher reports termly to Governors on attendance patterns and issues. There is also a Governor with delegated responsibility for attendance matters. Tutor group registration is held every morning, and teaching group registers are taken at the start of each lesson.

The schools Attendance Officer monitors pupil's attendance throughout the school day and informs the Head of Key Stage/Head of Year of any absences or truancy.

Form tutors are required to monitor the attendance of the pupils in their forms ensuring that adequate reasons are received for absences and noting/responding, with the assistance of the Head of Key Stage / Head of Year, to both prolonged and regular patterns (broken weeks etc.) of absence. They also, in their work with pupils, stress the importance of regular attendance and discuss the reasons for and counsel against irregular attendance.

Among the systems/measures in place to promote and monitor attendance are

- Weekly attendance is discussed each week at an SLT meeting with Heads of key Stages, the Attendance Officer, FSM Attendance Officer & the EAL Attendance Officer.
- The Head of each Key Stage meets the schools EWO weekly to discuss individual pupil attendance in order to target pupils.
- The use of the SIMS system which monitors attendance throughout the day.
- First day response – resources and workload permitting, members of the school's support staff telephone parents or carers of absentees. Specifically targeted pupils, in conjunction with parents and external agencies, are also closely monitored and supported. Feedback is provided to the relevant HOY and form tutor weekly.
- Target setting – for each pupil an attendance target is set and the attendance of each pupil is recorded against that target. The information is displayed in form rooms and at parents' evenings. Individual improvement targets are also set and communicated via reports to parents. In the setting of these, consideration is given to any impairment or condition which may prevent pupils from attending on a regular basis.
- Rewards for good attendance – various rewards are offered on an individual pupil basis. For example; Attendance raffles, Vivo rewards and gold 100% badges given out after a pupil achieves 100% attendance the pre-seeding term.
- Assembly/tutorial programme – attendance issues are included in assemblies and the tutorial programme
- Attendance Panel Meetings with parents – these are held in school and at home and allow for the reasons for poor attendance to be identified and strategies developed to support/encourage regular attendance.
- The school calls on GEMS support to get letters translated into the home language of pupils with poor attendance issues. Interpreters also accompany the schools EWO on home visits whereby parents do not speak English

- Sixth Form students on collaborative courses at alternative venues, will be monitored and followed up, if and when appropriate, by the Director of Post 16 Education at Lliswerry High School.

### **Intervention Strategies**

A number of intervention strategies are used to address ongoing attendance issues.

Early intervention strategies include:

- Meetings with parents and pupils
- Meetings with the Form Tutor
- Counselling
- Support within the learning Support Centre
- Visits to the home address by the EWO or Assistant Headteacher and Head of Key Stage

**The Education Welfare Service (EWS)** works in partnership with pupils, parents and the school to promote regular attendance. Regular meetings take place between Head of Key Stage/Head of Year and the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) at which referrals to the Service are made. A referral is accepted when action on the part of the school has failed to bring about an improvement in the child's attendance. Various actions are then open to the Educational Welfare Service. These form part of different levels of intervention open to the Service and are, in most cases, followed sequentially. They include

- contact with the home (by telephone, letter and/or a home visit) to assess the situation and provide remedial intervention if appropriate and possible
- arranging a meeting between the school, parents and child
- offering specific support to the parents and individual children
- arranging planning meetings and case conferences
- arranging the involvement of other agencies
- Statutory intervention – court proceedings.

### **Fixed Penalty Notices**

A fixed penalty Notice can be issued for any absences not authorised by the school, including holidays. Newport City Council will issue these notices when concerns are raised by school or the police. The fine is £120 unless paid within 28 days when it is £60.

#### **Fixed Penalty Notices may be considered appropriate 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, 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.

The school will issue Warning Notice letters to parents to warn them of a Fixed Penalty Notice is likely to be issued if their child's attendance does not improve.

Policy updated 29<sup>th</sup> February 2016

Governor Representative for Attendance – Councillor Roger Jeavons

Policy Validated at the Curriculum Governors Meeting