

## Policy on Attendance

### 1 Introduction

- 1.1 We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.
- 1.2 Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, the governing body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

### 2 Definitions

#### 2.1 Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents and carers do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents and carers will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

#### 2.2 Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent.
- Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

### 3 If a child is absent

- 3.1 When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, and will inform the school office, which will endeavour to contact a parent or guardian.
- 3.2 On first day of absence parents are expected to ring into school and leave a message on the answer phone to provide reason why their child isn't attending school that day.
- 3.3 When the child returns to school, a note should be brought from a parent or guardian to explain the absence.
- 3.4 A note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence, e.g. if a child has a medical appointment.
- 3.5 If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child.

## **4 Requests for leave of absence**

- 4.1 We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are circumstances under which a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child to attend, e.g. a special event. We expect parents and carers to contact the school at least a week in advance, but normally this request will be granted.
- 4.2 Parents and carers do have the right to withdraw their children from school for up to 5 days for an annual holiday. We naturally prefer parents and carers to take their family holiday in the normal school holiday periods, but if this is not possible, the school will, of course, grant the leave of absence.

## **5 Long-term absence**

- 5.1 When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.
- 5.2 If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

## **6 Repeated unauthorised absences**

- 6.1 The school will contact the parent or guardian of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or guardians will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school will then contact the LA support services, who will visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or guardians understand the seriousness of the situation.

## **7 Rewards for good attendance**

- 7.1 All the children who have 100 per cent attendance in any one term will receive an excellence certificate for attendance, awarded at the last assembly of the term. There are special certificates for any child who has 100 per cent attendance for a whole year.

## **8 Attendance targets**

- 8.1 The school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the senior staff and governors at the annual target-setting meeting. The attendance targets are then agreed with the LA link inspector as well. The targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. The school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools when setting its own targets.

## **9 Monitoring and review**

- 9.1 It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report from the headteacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.
- 9.2 The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.

- 9.3 The rates of attendance will be reported in the school prospectus, and in the annual governors' report.
- 9.4 Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class, and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's absence, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the headteacher, who will contact the parents or guardians.
- 9.5 This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every two years, or earlier if considered necessary.

### Rhondda Fach Attendance Cluster



### **Cluster Attendance Policy Compliment - December 2013**

In response to the RCT "Attendance and Wellbeing Service" (AWS) framework a "Rhondda Fach Attendance Cluster" has been formed which consists of the Rhondda Fach Infant's, the Primaries and the Secondary school. Within this Cluster it has been agreed to standardise our approach to reducing pupil absence/punctuality. Agreement has been reached regarding the following aspects of school attendance/punctuality. This document serves to complement existing Schools Attendance and Wellbeing Policies.

#### Scope of this Document

This document addresses standardised procedures in respect of:-

- Absence Letters 1 and 2
- Punctuality Letters 1 and 2
- Attendance and Wellbeing Service (AWS) Referrals
- Holidays during Term Time

#### Absence Letters 1 and 2

##### Absence Letter 1

The AWS framework has provided template letters to be sent to Parents/Guardians in response to low levels of pupil attendance. Absence Letter 1, serves to outline and inform the expectations and importance of excellent attendance to Parents and Guardians. The letter will include details of the individual pupil's current attendance level, and the school contact number to access guidance and support.

- From December 2013, pupils with **below 93%** attendance will receive an Absence Letter 1.
- The individual pupil attendance will then be closely monitored over a six week period.

## Policy on Attendance

- If the attendance improves an “Improvement Letter” will be posted home, congratulating the improvement made in respect of attendance.
- If no improvement is made over this period an Absence Letter 2 will be posted to Parents/Guardians.

### Absence Letter 2

Absence Letter 2 will contain current pupil attendance details, and also request that Parents/Guardians contact the school. A meeting at the school will be required, to discuss specific pupil attendance, and to agree an “Attendance Improvement Plan” with Parents/Guardians, the pupil and the school.

- Parents /Guardians need to respond to Absence Letter 2 and be party to the plan to improve attendance.
- If attendance improves to **above 93%**, an “Improvement Letter” will be posted home celebrating this achievement, and reinforcing the importance of excellent attendance.
- If no improvement is made over the agreed period, an AWS Referral may be made at the discretion of the Head Teacher.

### Punctuality Letters 1 and 2

#### Punctuality Letter 1

Poor punctuality can have a severe negative impact on your child’s progress. Getting a “Good Start” to the day serves to settle the pupil and involve them in planned school activities from the outset. Poor punctuality will lead to your child missing out on the beginning of lessons, missing vital instruction and context. Often these pupils find it difficult to catch up or engage in lessons which have begun. Late pupils also cause disruption to classes which are engaged in teaching and learning activities. Punctuality Letter 1 will be used by the Cluster to inform Parents/Guardians of the need for pupils to be on time. The Cluster has agreed that:-

- Pupils which are late will be required to sign a “Late Book.”
- If pupils are late more than five (5) occasions over any half term a Punctuality Letter1 will be sent to Parents/Guardians.
- If no improvement, a Punctuality Letter 2 will be posted to Parents/Guardians.

#### Punctuality Letter 2

Punctuality Letter 2 will require the Parents/Guardians to attend the school to discuss the issue, and discuss a “Punctuality Improvement Plan.”

- If no improvement is made over the agreed period, an AWS Referral regarding poor punctuality will be made at the discretion of the Head Teacher.

### Attendance and Wellbeing Service (AWS) Referral

The AWS are directed by RCT to respond to any referral made regarding pupil wellbeing and or attendance. This service works in close conjunction with schools and supporting bodies. Pupils with poor attendance/punctuality will be referred to the AWS. Involvement with the AWS could lead to court action. AWS Referrals can be made when:-

## Policy on Attendance

- No improvement is made following the Absence / Punctuality Letter 2, in respects of the “Attendance/Punctuality Improvement Plan” agreed at the school.
- If a pupil attendance falls **below 90%** at any time during the academic year.
- If a pupil is absent for more than five (5) consecutive days without Parent/Guardian contact.

### Holiday during Term Time

Taking holidays within term time can significantly reduce the progress which pupils make. Please carefully consider the impact for your child before making any such decisions or commitments. There is no automatic right to withdraw pupils from school during term time for holidays. Parents/Guardians wishing to do so must adhere to the following conditions:-

- Parents/Guardians intending to take pupils out of school during term time must apply in advance to the Head Teacher for permission, using the “Holiday within Term Time” Cluster application form.
- Twenty one (21) days advanced notice will be required before permission can be considered.
- Pupils with below 93% attendance will not be granted permission.
- A strict maximum of five (5) days, each academic year, can be authorised by the Head Teacher.
- Link Governor Approval will be required for applications of over five (5) days holidays within term time, within each academic year.
- Each application will be recorded by the school, and the original application form retained for future reference.