

**Caldicot School
Ysgol Cil-y-Coed**



Caldicot School

Attendance Policy

Ratified by the Governing Body on 10th July 2018

CALDICOT SCHOOL – ATTENDANCE POLICY

1. Opening Statement

We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our pupils/students and endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome. Parents and pupils play a part in making our school successful. Every child has a right to access the education to which he/she is entitled. Parents and teachers share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all.

It is our duty to strive consistently to achieve a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

For our children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered, it is vital that children are at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. The routines children develop around attendance and punctuality at school are the same as the expectations of any future employer in the world of work. High attainment, confidence with peers and staff, and future aspirations depend on good attendance.

Good attendance is important because:

- statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%;
- regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically;
- regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with;
- regular attenders find learning more satisfying;
- regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school, and higher education, employment or training.

2. Aims

We aim to:

- 2.1 promote and support excellent attendance by direct partnership working with pupils, their families and appropriate agencies;
- 2.2 promote excellent attendance, punctuality and re-integration of long-term absentees through rewards and incentives and curricular differentiation;
- 2.3 record and investigate each case of absenteeism in order to reduce its effect on pupil progress and welfare.

3. Outcomes

The school is committed to achieving the following outcomes from this policy:

- 3.1 The successful management of all aspects of this policy to ensure the highest levels of attendance and punctuality for all pupils.

3.2 The promotion of increasing standards of attainment through full attendance from pupils.

3.3 The establishment of a successful working partnership with parents and carers to secure full attendance

4. Absence

There are two different types of absence, **authorised** and **unauthorised**.

Authorised absence

In accordance with Monmouthshire County Council guidance, parents should be aware that only the Headteacher may decide whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised. Parents should also be aware that a letter does not in itself authorise an absence, only the school's acceptance of the explanation offered by the letter authorises the absence. Examples of authorised absence include:

- Sickness
- Unavoidable medical/dental appointments
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional family circumstances, such as bereavement

Holidays during term time

Parents must, in law, apply for permission in advance to withdraw a pupil from school for a holiday. Parents should be aware that only the head teacher has the right to agree to a pupil's absence for family holidays in term time. Monmouthshire County Council advises all Governing Bodies not to authorise any holiday requests during term time, except where there are exceptional and extenuating circumstances.

Exceptional and extenuating circumstances include and would normally be limited to:

- i. family holiday request from parents who are employed by the Ministry of Defence;
- ii. family requests for holiday due to religious beliefs.

Such considerations, in exceptional circumstances, may result in the school agreeing with the request and authorising the absence accordingly. This means that holiday requests during term time **will not be authorised** by the school unless there is agreement between the school and the parent/carer that exceptional and extenuating circumstances apply, as aforementioned.

Where parents fail to abide by the agreement reached with the school and keep a child away from school, or where parents fail to seek permission, the time taken will be treated as an **unauthorised absence** in accordance with the application of this policy.

All requests for holiday in exceptional circumstances during term time should be made in writing by completing a holiday request form. Requests should be made by a parent/carer of the child even if they are not going on holiday with them. If the parent with whom the child lives does not give consent to the holiday, leave cannot be given lawfully by the school except by a court order.

Absence due to Medical Conditions

Children who are absent for prolonged periods due to illness certified by a medical practitioner will be supported by a Pastoral Support Plan which will outline a range of strategies to support the child's education at home for the period of illness.

Unauthorised Absence

An explanation is required for every absence. If one is not forthcoming, the absence will be treated as unauthorised. Unauthorised absence is defined as absence without approval from the Headteacher and includes all unexplained absences.

5. Punctuality

A pupil's punctuality is also a legal requirement and the law treats persistent lateness (after the close of the register) in the same way as irregular attendance. Schools are directed to record lateness after the close of the register, without a satisfactory explanation, as an unauthorised absence.

Unauthorised absence is perceived as truancy which could ultimately result in the Education Welfare Service (EWS) having to prosecute parents for the non school attendance of their child.

In line with Welsh Government guidance, Monmouthshire County Council has adopted Fixed Penalty Notices and Fines for parents who have children with more than ten sessions of unauthorised absences in any one term. A session is a morning or an afternoon session. Fixed Penalty Notices and Fines may be issued for any absences not authorised by the school, including holidays. Monmouthshire County Council will issue these notices when concerns are raised by the school or the police.

6. Procedure

6.1 Recording Attendance and Punctuality

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 register may be requested in a court of law as evidence in a prosecution for non-attendance. It may also contribute information to pupils' end-of-year reports, records of achievement and leavers' references.

6.1.1 Morning Session Register: Form Tutors will ensure the accurate marking of registers for the morning session of school. This will normally be carried out electronically using the SIMs Lesson Register system. Where SIMs is unavailable a paper system may be used.

6.1.2 Afternoon Session Register: Staff will ensure the accurate marking of registers within the first 10 minutes of Period 5 as this is used as the official afternoon register.

6.1.3 Lesson Registers: It is the responsibility of each member of staff to maintain an accurate electronic lesson register for each lesson, to support the school's safeguarding and health and safety procedures, and to allow the checking of an individual pupil's attendance to lessons within subjects. Attendance concerns to lessons should be reported to the relevant Subject Leader and Year Tutor as soon as possible.

6.1.4 Late marks: Pupils arriving late, but before the end of registration, should report to their Form Tutor on arrival. Pupils arriving late after the end of registration should sign in at the school office.

Form Tutors should inform Year Tutors if a pupil has been late for 2 or more sessions in a school week. Pupils who are late for registration without authorisation or legitimate explanation will receive an appropriate sanction (see 4.2.4).

6.1.5 First Day Absence: An electronic first day absence contact system is in place. Parents/carers will receive a telephone call or text if their child fails to register, and the school has not been notified of the reason for absence. The call will continue until a reason is provided by parents/carers. The register will then be updated with the relevant code.

6.1.5 Authorisation of Absence: If no valid reason for absence has been established by the electronic system, pupils will be required to produce a note signed by their parent/carer each time he/she returns after a period of absence.

6.1.7 Unauthorised Absence: Where no reason is provided for a pupil's absence, the Engagement Coach will provide pupils with a "Reason for Absence" slip, or send this to their parents via email or post. If there is still no reason provided for the pupil's absence, the school will liaise with parents and the Educational Welfare Officer to identify and resolve unauthorised absence.

6.1.8 Absconding: It is the responsibility of all members of staff to notify the school office staff of any pupil who, they believe, has absconded from school. Office staff will inform the Engagement Coach for the relevant Key Stage, who will try to find the pupil. If the pupil cannot be found, the Engagement Coach will contact parents/carers and also inform the police.

6.1.9 Signing Out: Any pupil from Year 7 to Year 11 who wishes to leave school during the school day must present a parental note of authorisation. Pupils who sign out without a parental note will be viewed as absconding. The pupil's Form Tutor or Year Tutor will sign the note and the pupil will then present it to the school office when signing out. Sixth Form pupils are not required to have parental authorisation, but must sign out from the school office. Sixth Form pupils must sign in on their return to comply with Health and Safety requirements.

6.2 Monitoring Attendance and Punctuality

6.2.1 Form Tutors should inform Year Tutors on a weekly basis of any absence that gives them cause for concern.

6.2.2 Year Tutors/Engagement Coaches will meet with the Educational Welfare Officer weekly. Meeting notes will be updated weekly with attendance figures, absence codes and details of action taken. They will also record whether any improvement has been made and whether any further actions/referrals should be made.

6.2.3 Pupils who abscond or who take unauthorised absence(s) will be placed 'on report' for a minimum period of 2 weeks and parents informed. This report will be checked and signed daily by the relevant Year Tutor.

6.2.4 Pupils who are late for registration without authorisation or legitimate explanation will receive an appropriate sanction as follows:

- 2 or more late sessions in a school week with no valid reason from parents/carers will result in parents/carers being notified by text;

- 5 late marks with no valid reason from parents/carers will result in a detention;
 - 10 late marks with no valid reason from parents/carers will result in parents/carers being invited to attend a meeting with the Year Tutor or Pathway Leader
- 6.2.5 All parents/carers will receive a letter from the relevant Pathway Leader informing them of their child's attendance. Letters will detail the attendance category of the pupil: 95% and above; 94.9% to 90%; below 90%.
- 6.2.6 Parents/carers of pupils whose termly attendance falls below 90%, even with medical reasons provided, and with or without Medical Certification, will be contacted by the relevant Pathway Leader. Attendance henceforth will be closely monitored by the Pathway Leader. Where no improvement is seen, parents/Carers will be invited to a meeting to discuss attendance. Further failure to improve attendance will result in a referral to the Educational Welfare Officer.
- 6.2.7 Holiday forms must be completed by parents/carers and returned to the school office. Holidays taken during term time are discouraged as they have a negative impact on the pupil's attainment and progress.
- 6.2.8 Full attendance will be rewarded termly with personalised "Attendance Matters" pencils, rulers, post-its and highlighters. 100% attendance for the whole academic year will be rewarded with an invitation to the Awards Ceremony, where pupils will receive a certificate/badge.

7. Roles and Responsibilities other than school staff

7.1 Role of Parents

- 7.1.1 Parents and carers have a duty to ensure that their child of compulsory school age receives suitable full-time education (Education Act 1996, Section 7) suitable to his/her age, ability and aptitude and any special educational needs s/he may have
- 7.1.2 Parents and carers are responsible for ensuring their child arrives at school on time
- 7.1.3 Parents and carers should ensure that their child stays at school for the day unless alternative arrangements are made
- 7.1.4 Parents and carers are responsible for informing schools of the reason for their child's absence as soon as possible, preferably on the first day of absence
- 7.1.5 Parents and carers may allow their child to be absent from school:
- i. with the permission of the Headteacher for a day of religious observance
 - ii. because they live beyond the statutory walking distance and no transport has been provided by the LA (unless the parent has chosen a school outside the prescribed catchment area)
 - iii. because he or she is prevented from attending school by an unavoidable cause directly affecting the pupil (e.g. illness)
- 7.1.6 Parents and carers are discouraged from taking their child out of school for holidays, even though the head teacher may authorise up to 10 days per academic year
- 7.1.7 Parents and carers are encouraged to see themselves as partners with schools in the education of their children

7.2 Roles and Responsibilities of Education Welfare Service and School Attendance Leads

- 7.2.1 The EWS and School Attendance Leads will provide support to schools, pupils and parents to ensure regular attendance and address problems relating to absenteeism.
- 7.2.2 The EWS will liaise with other agencies and provides an important link between home and school helping parents and teachers to work in partnership in order that pupils benefit from the educational opportunities available locally.
- 7.2.3 The EWS will also undertake other related duties, which may include: working with other agencies to address underlying issues which may impact upon attendance; playing an active role in the safeguarding agenda; regulating child employment and performance licences for school age children;
- 7.2.4 The EWS will seek to work effectively and proactively with School Attendance Leads to increase attendance, reduce absence and improve pupil wellbeing.

7.3 Role of the Local Authority

- 7.3.1 Under section 437 of the Education Act 1996, Monmouthshire Local Authority has a duty to ensure that a child for whom they are responsible is receiving a suitable education.
- 7.3.2 In September 2009 the Welsh Assembly Government commenced Section 436A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 which requires local authorities to make arrangements to enable them to establish (so far as it is possible to do so) the identities of children residing in their area who are not receiving a 'suitable education'.
- 7.3.3 Implementation of the duty under section 436A is integrated with the wider range of duties placed on local authorities, including the Children's Act 2004 (sections 25-29) and the Welsh Assembly Government's Safeguarding Children Working Together under the Children's Act 2004 that aims to improve outcomes, and safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- 7.3.4 Legislation has empowered a designated officer from Monmouthshire to issue Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) to parents of children and young people who have unauthorised absence from school. The issuing of FPNs will be the responsibility of the Principal Officer Inclusion in response to requests made by head teachers, their nominated deputies and the police.
- 7.3.5 A School Attendance Order (SAO) applies in cases when a parent of a child of compulsory school age fails to prove that the child is receiving suitable education and where the authority believes the child should attend school. A SAO may be used to direct a parent to send their child to a specified school, and should be used when a pupil is not on roll at any school. They are not intended for pupils who attend irregularly.
- 7.3.6 The Local Authority is charged in law with enforcing attendance
- 7.3.7 The Local Authority can apply to the courts for an Education Supervision Order (Children Act 1989, Section 36) and where necessary can prosecute parents who fail to ensure their child's attendance at school (Education Act 1996, Section 444)
- 7.3.8 The Education Welfare Service works on behalf of the Local Authority with schools, Social Services, Youth Offending Service (YOS), the Police and other relevant agencies in helping parents and the Local Authority to meet their statutory obligations on school attendance
- 7.3.9 The Local Authority works with schools to develop whole-school policies to improve pupils' attendance at school
- 7.3.10 The Local Authority liaises with the police in arranging and conducting truancy patrols when appropriate

Summary of Responsibilities

WHO	RESPONSIBILITIES
Deputy Headteacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To have oversight of whole school attendance and reporting on it as appropriate.
Pathway Leaders, Additional Learning Needs Coordinator (ALNCo) and Attendance Officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To lead and manage strategies to maintain high levels of attendance. • To take appropriate action in partnership with parents/pupil/school.
Year Tutors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To monitor attendance for their relevant section and take the required action as per their identified role.
Form Tutors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure accurate registration information is input into the SIMS Attendance Systems each morning. • To ensure the required action is taken as defined in the role in accordance with sections 4 of this policy, to promote the attendance of their tutor group.
Subject Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support the school Attendance Policy by maintaining accurate class records of attendance, normally utilising the Sims Attendance System. • To ensure the required action is taken as defined in the role in accordance with section 4 of this policy, to support attendance in their teaching groups.
Education Welfare Officer (EWO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To meet weekly with Engagement Coaches/Year Tutors • To take action as required and directed by MCC
Local Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To enforce attendance • To issue Fixed Penalty Notices as appropriate

6. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

- 6.1 The Deputy Headteacher with oversight for Attendance, in consultation with the Safeguarding and Wellbeing team, will annually review the policy and make any further recommendations to the Governing Body.
- 6.2 The Governing Body will regularly review this policy and associated procedures in order to ensure its continuing effectiveness.