

Carreghofa Community Primary School

Attendance Policy

Introduction

Regular attendance at school is essential to ensure uninterrupted progress and to enable children to extend their potential. The attendance pattern for all children is monitored weekly with the school seeking to work actively with parents to ensure a regular pattern is maintained. We expect all children on roll and of compulsory school age to attend every day, when the school is in session as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. Those children in Nursery who are not of compulsory school age are encouraged to attend school full time. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures to support this. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school and learning.

Poor attendance can seriously affect each child's:-

- * attainment in school
- * relationships with other children and their ability to form lasting friendships
- * confidence to attempt new work and work alongside others

Each child's attendance can be summarised as:

96%+

Excellent – Well done! This will help all aspects of their progress and life in school. This will give them a good start in life and supports a positive work ethic.

95 - 96%

Average – Well done, strive to build on this.

85- 95%

Poor – Absence is now affecting attainment and progress at school. Please work with the school urgently to improve the situation.

Below 85%

Unacceptable – Absence IS causing SERIOUS CONCERN. It IS affecting attainment and progress and is disrupting your child's learning. We will work with you and the Education Welfare Officer [EWO] to improve your child's attendance.

Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent. Only the school can 'authorise' absence. The school will not assess all reasons as 'valid'.

Non-attendance is an important issue that is treated seriously. However each case is different and the school acknowledges that no one standard response will be appropriate in every case. Consideration is given to all factors affecting attendance before deciding what intervention strategies to apply.

a) In every case, early intervention is essential to prevent the problem from worsening. It is essential that parents keep the school fully informed of any matters that may affect their child's attendance; they are reminded of this duty in the school prospectus.

b) Prior to the engagement of the EWO, the school may issue letters to parents clearly defining the concerns within school regarding a pupils' absence. It is hoped that a quick response and change in levels of absence will prevent the need for EWO involvement.

Responsibilities

Headteacher

- Operational management of the policy.
- Consider requests for authorised absence. Give approval in advance in appropriate circumstances, taking account of the child's attendance record.
- Authorise absence after it occurs when a satisfactory explanation is accepted.
- Ensure that anti-bullying and behaviour policies are followed and ensure action is taken in response to any difficulties reported and [e.g. bullying/behaviour] which impact on attendance.
- Complete HT witness statements on pupil absence for court use.
- Oversee day to day attendance where there is cause for concern, working closely with parents and children to improve poor attendance..
- Monitor pupil attendance monthly and take action according to this policy.
- Analyse trends in attendance data to identify appropriate action.
- Investigate reasons for absence exploring any underlying cause either at home or in school.
- Liaise with the Education Welfare Officer and make referrals as necessary.
- Work with the EWO towards improved patterns of attendance for referred pupils identifying the course of action that should be taken.
- Make referrals to other agencies where appropriate.
- Work with Class Teachers to agree and implement strategies to re-engage pupils with emerging attendance problems.
- Work with the class teacher to plan reintegration for pupils who have been absent for a period.
- With the Secretary, compile and update standard letters re: % attendance , notification of reasons for absence and lateness and send to parents when necessary.

Class Teachers

- Prepare and deliver stimulating and enjoyable learning for all children.
- Registration of pupils at the start of morning and afternoon sessions.
- Alert the Head Teacher of any children who demonstrate an unsettled pattern of attendance or whose attendance pattern changes.
- Ensure all absence notes are passed to the secretary.
- Work with the Head Teacher to agree and implement strategies to re-engage pupils with emerging attendance problems.

Secretary

- Make calls to parents when first day of absence contact has not been made by parents.
- Accurately record attendance data daily using agreed codes.
- Ensure reasons for absences are accurately recorded.
- Prepare standard letters requesting reasons for absence when this is unexplained.
- Prepare letters to inform parents when a child's attendance is giving cause for concern and is thus being monitored.
- Collect absence notes and record reasons for absence.
- Provide attendance reports when requested and ensure attendance returns are accurately inputted.

Parents

- Ensure their child attends daily and on time.

- Keep the school fully informed on all matters that might affect attendance and their child in school.
- Telephone school on the first day of any absence to inform school of the reason.
- If attendance becomes a problem – work with the school to improve matters.
- Give serious consideration to whether it is appropriate or necessary to request term time absence.
- Make application for any term time leave of absence prior to proposed dates.

Education Welfare Officer

- Work closely with school and families to resolve attendance issues.
- Visit school for meetings at agreed times.
- Identify, with school, cases of unauthorised absence which necessitate action and advise on responses.
- Provide written reports to school in the form of consultation sheets.
- Complete regular register checks.

On receipt of a written referral, take appropriate action, which may include:

- * advice on strategies to improve attendance
- * assessment home visits
- * action planning
- * agreed time-limited intervention
- * attendance at school meetings
- * written record of work undertaken
- * verbal feedback where appropriate
- * written response to referral within 10 days
- * liaise with other agencies
- * onward referral to other agencies
- * liaison with other Local Authority departments
- * preparation of cases for prosecution including sending warning letters
- * preparing Witness Statements for Magistrates Court

Governing Body

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance. The Governing Body also has the responsibility for Attendance 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 the school's attendance figures remain high.

Arrival and Registration

All children should be in the school ready to register at 8.55 a.m. each day although children are entitled to enter the classroom from 8.45 a.m. when doors open. The register is taken twice a day. A day counts as 2 attendances. Morning registration ends at 9.15 a.m. If a child arrives after the registration period, he / she must report to the school office and will be marked in as 'Late'. Arrival after 9.30am is recorded as an unauthorised late mark.

Parental Responsibility

Throughout this policy the term 'parent' represents one parent, both parents, or carer with whom the child resides.

Parents are informed of their responsibility to ensure their children attend regularly, in the school prospectus. Punctuality is also stressed, as lateness impacts on learning not only for the individual, but the class as a whole.

Attendance is discussed with each parent at consultation evenings if the child's attendance is of concern to the school.

Parents have a legal obligation to ensure their children receive a full time education. This is achieved by regular attendance at school.

Illness and Medical Appointments

When a child is unwell, parents should contact the school before 9.15am on the first day of absence informing the school of the reason for absence.

When a child is absent, the class teacher will record the absence in the register. As part of our Safeguarding Procedures, the school office will endeavour to contact the parent or carer and other emergency contacts if no message has been received regarding the reason for the absence to check on the safety of the child.

- a) Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours.
- b) If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment.
- c) If your child is absent due to vomiting or diarrhoea then they should not return to school for **the next 48 hours** after the last time that the child is sick. This is to reduce the risk of infection to other children and adults at the school.

School Responsibility – THE LAW and School Attendance

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, the governing body is responsible for making sure that two registers are kept, one for admissions and one for attendance. An admission register is the school's roll. It must give details of every pupil currently on roll at the school including their full name, date of birth and the name and address of at least one parent or guardian in case of emergency.

New regulations came into force in Wales on 1 February 2006 which made amendments to a previous set of regulations which set out the requirements on schools to set targets on school attendance. The Education (School Performance and Unauthorised Absence Targets) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 were made under section 63 of the SSFA 1998 as amended by section 53 of the Education Act 2002. These amendments introduced 3 main changes:

- targets to be set on total absence rather than unauthorised absence;
- primary schools to be required to set targets on school attendance; and for
- targets to be submitted to the LA.

Under the new consolidated regulations (The Education (School Performance and Absence Targets) (Wales) Regulations 1999), governing bodies of every maintained school (other than a special school established in a hospital) will be required to set targets for the reduction of all absences of the day pupils at the school. They require the following targets for total absences to be set and submitted to the LA by no later than the 31 December in each school year:

- a final target for the next school year;
- a reviewed target for the school year next but one (to be reviewed in light of actual outcomes in the previous school year); and
- a provisional target for the school year next but two.

Regulations also place a duty on schools to publish within the annual report for every school year, the following information:

- actual absence rate in the relevant school year;
- all absence targets (as outlined above); and

- a statement setting out the extent to which the actual absence rate met the final target set for the same school year.

Data will continue to be collected on both authorised and unauthorised absences to enable schools to continue to target their action to tackle attendance issues, and to aid in early intervention.

Parents should not normally take pupils on holiday in term time. Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 schools have the discretion to grant up to ten school days authorised absence for the purpose of family holidays during term time. Each request for holiday absence should be considered individually, taking into account the pupil's age, the timing of the proposed holiday, its nature and parental wishes, the overall attendance pattern of the pupil and their stage of education and progress. Schools should use their discretion sparingly.

The Senior Leadership Team and all staff work to ensure a high level of enjoyment and commitment to learning as a means of ensuring regular attendance.

Specific responsibilities for attendance matters are identified in the appendix. The Head Teacher holds responsibility for attendance matters.

Where school attendance problems occur, the school will endeavour to work with parents in the interests of the child to achieve a resolution.

It is a statutory duty for class teachers to call and maintain accurate registers; these are legal documents, and may be called for as evidence by the court. Class Teachers are legally responsible for marking their class attendance register twice per day at the start of each session.

The Head Teacher, not parents, authorises absence;

Absence for any reason during term time is discouraged.

Absence known to be for the following reasons would be authorised:

- * Illness
- * Religious observance
- * Attendance at medical appointments which cannot be made outside school hours

When it has become necessary to make a referral to the Education Welfare Officer [EWO], all further absences will be unauthorised pending investigation. The EWO liaises with the school regarding absences following contact with the parents.

Family Holidays/ Absence during Term Time

The Governors recognise that pupil absence during term time can seriously disrupt a pupil's continuity of learning. **Parents are therefore strongly urged to avoid booking a family holiday in term time.** If a holiday is taken in term time then a request form needs to be completed to gain authorisation.

When application is made for authorised absence during term time, the Head Teacher gives consideration to:

- * The age of the child
- * The nature of the proposed absence
- * The timing of the proposed absence
- * The attendance pattern in the present and previous academic years.
- * The child's progress

Examples of what may constitute exceptional circumstances:

- To have a short absence to attend a family wedding, or a special family celebration (e.g. an 80th birthday of a grandparent); or to attend a special family reunion; or to attend a special religious/cultural festival, may constitute an exceptional circumstance.
- If a parent, due to the nature of their work, cannot possibly take time off during the regular school holidays, then this might constitute an exceptional circumstance. Factors indicated above will still be taken in to account.

When an absence is authorised, parents will be provided with written evidence which can be presented in the event of being stopped as part of a truancy sweep.

Definitions

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school (not by the parents) as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing or by telephone.

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 and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence. Only the school can make an absence authorised.

Unauthorised Absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the Head Teacher.

Unauthorised absences are those, which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no authorisation has been given. This includes:

Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily.

Truancy before or during the school day.

Absences that have never been properly explained.

Encouraging Attendance

Where positive impact is required, all staff in contact with the child must take extra care to welcome the child each morning, praise punctual attendance and acknowledge the effort the child has made. It is also appropriate to recognise the effort the parent has made to secure the child's attendance.

For guidance on attendance see the Welsh Assembly document 'Young Wales'.

<http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/publications/110308section3en.pdf>

Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years. Date of next review is **January 2020**

This policy has been agreed and ratified by

The Governing Body:

Signed _____ (Chair of Governors)

The Head Teacher:

Signed _____ (Head Teacher)

The School Council:

Signed _____ (Chair person of the School Council)

Date of Issue:	
Agreed by:	
Date of Previous Issue:	
Review Date:	