



Bro Edern Cluster Attendance and Punctuality Policy containing every day practices at Ysgol Gymraeg Pen-y-Groes

General

In the Bro Edern cluster we acknowledge that a high level of attendance is essential in order to allow children to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding that will enable them to become valuable members of their community.

Pupils must attend school every day when the school is open. Pupils should arrive on time for school and lessons. They should be present in every lesson unless there is a valid reason for them not to be, e.g. musical instrument examinations, medical reasons.

Parents and carers of children of compulsory school age have a legal duty to ensure that their children receive an effective full time education by attending school or by other arrangements (Section 7, Education Act 1996).

If a child of compulsory school age is not regularly attending the school where they are registered then the parent/carer is guilty of an offence (Section 444(1), Education Act 1996).

Every pupil of compulsory school age must arrive on time and must be registered twice a day; once at the beginning of the morning session and once at the beginning of the afternoon session. (The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010).

The school officially registers the pupils twice a day, once at the beginning of the morning session and once after dinner.

Operational Procedures

The pupils should wait outside on the yard at the beginning of the day or in the school classrooms during poor weather.

When the bell rings pupils are expected to line-up in their classes on the school yard. Teachers are expected to be there ready to greet the pupils and to lead them into the school in a quiet and orderly fashion.

If a pupil arrives at school after the close of registration then they should report in at school reception before attending any lessons or break times. The parent or guardian of the child is expected to provide the school with an explanation of why the child is late to school and to fill in an entry into the 'late book'.

The school register closes at 9.35am in the morning and 1.25pm in the afternoon.

Pupils who arrive after the close of registration will receive a mark denoting 'late after the register closed' unless there is a valid reason for the absence such as a medical appointment. This is an unauthorised absence.

Definitions

'Authorised absence'

If the school has been notified by a parent or guardian of the reason for an absence and the school deem the reason to be a valid one then the absence will be classed as an authorised absence. Only the school has the authority to authorise an absence. Parents and guardians do not have this authority. As a result, not all absences that are supported by parents and guardians will be authorised by the school.

'Unauthorised absence'

An absence is classified as unauthorised if a pupil is absent from school without the permission of the parent/guardian and/or the permission of the school. An absence will be unauthorised if the school does not deem the reason for the absence to be acceptable even if the parent/guardian supports the absence.

'An authorised educational activity'

There will be occasions when pupils will receive educational activities or experiences outside of the classroom or even off the school site. Examples of this would be, sporting activities and fixtures, field work, residential visits, educational visits or periods where pupils may receive a part of their education at an alternative venue but remain on the school register and are still under the supervision of the school. In these cases pupils receive a code indicating that they are present but that they are taking part in an activity outside of the classroom or even off the school site.

'Attendance is not required'

This is used on rare occasions such as when roads are closed due to adverse weather.

Absence

There is an obvious link between poor attendance and lack of achievement. Pupils should attend school every day when they are able to do so. Parents and guardians should encourage their children to attend school and they should emphasise the need to maintain a high level of attendance in order to fulfil their potential.

If a pupil is not present in school then parents and guardians are expected to phone the school on that day in order to notify the school of the reason for the absence.

In order to ensure that pupils are safe at home and that there is a valid reason for the absence the school operates a first day response policy. The school will phone a parent or carer on every day that there is an unexplained absence.

A valid reason for an absence is always expected. If a pupil is absent for more than one day or if the parent/guardian has not phoned the school in order to give a reason for the absence then the parent/guardian is expected to write a note of explanation. The pupil is expected to present the note to the class teacher on the first day back. If you have explained all absences by phone or by responding to the school phone calls then you do not need to supply an absence note.

Unauthorised absences are a serious matter and the school has a duty to reduce the number of unauthorised absences. We therefore ask parents to work with the school by providing valid reasons for all absences.

Monitoring Absences

Absences are reviewed on a weekly basis; the data is analysed and patterns of absences are identified. The school will work with parents, guardians, the attendance officer and the Education Welfare Service in order to overcome any attendance problems.

Medical appointments or other

Parents and guardians are asked to write a *note informing the school of any medical appointments. Pupils should present the note to the class teacher prior to the appointment. The school should always be informed in advance of any instances where a pupil must leave the school early.

**An appointment card or copy of a medical letter will suffice as a note.*

Before leaving the site the pupil must be signed out in the reception. It is imperative that everybody does this so that the school knows exactly who is present on the school site if the fire alarm is raised or there is another similar occurrence. Parents and guardians should always come to collect their child from the school reception if a child has to leave the site before the end of the day.

Apart from the above situations pupils are not allowed to leave the school site at any time during the school day.

Holidays during term time

Parents and guardians are expected to take their family holidays during the school holidays. The school is committed to the local authority's policy of not authorising holidays during term time.

If a pupil goes on a holiday that has not been authorised by the school then this will be noted as an unauthorised absence.

We do foresee that there will be some exceptional circumstances where the school will authorise a family holiday and the school will have to look at requests where the circumstances are exceptional on an individual basis. These exceptional circumstances include:

- Families of personnel who are serving with the Military Forces who have been away on duty for a long period of time or are unable to have leave of duty during school holidays.
- A parent or child suffering from a life threatening illness.
- Families who have suffered an acute trauma.

If a family wish to request that the school authorise a family term time holiday due to exceptional circumstances a written application should be made to the Head Teacher, Anne Fenner. The school may request written evidence in some circumstances.

Frequent unauthorised absences

The school will contact parents/guardians of pupils who have unauthorised absences. If a pupil is frequently absent due to unauthorised absences then the parents/guardians will be invited into the school to discuss the problem.

If the attendance does not improve or falls below 86% during the 6 weeks following the meeting the school will refer the matter to the Education Welfare Service. The Education Welfare Service will visit the home in order to ensure that the parents/guardians understand how serious the situation is.

The Education Welfare Service works in partnership with the home, school and other outside agencies in order to try and improve the pupil's attendance. If the pupil's attendance does not improve following this meeting and the parents/guardian are unable to provide any evidence to justify this then the Education Welfare Service may issue a FPN warning.

Fixed Penalty Notices

In Wales, legislation (The Education (Penalty Notices) (Wales) Regulations 2013) has given local authorities new powers to issue Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) to the parents of children and young people who are persistently absent from school and/or pupil referral units (PRUs) without authority.

In the following circumstances the school will request that the Education Welfare Service issues a FPN:

- When a pupil reaches 10 unauthorised absences (5 school days) during a term (the absences do not have to be consecutive);
- A pupil arrives at school constantly after the closing of the register i.e. more than 10 times during a term.
- When the parent/guardian has not taken any steps to contact the school or Education Welfare Service in order to improve the child's attendance providing the Education Welfare Service has not already commenced court proceedings;
- A period of holidays during term time that has not been authorised by the school and has resulted in at least 10 unauthorised absences.

- The child has come to the attention of the police on a regular basis during school hours whilst absent from school with no valid reason.

Attendance targets

Every pupil has a target of 96% attendance for the academic year.

An attendance report will be sent home at Christmas, Easter and with the full report in the summer.

The school has to set targets for attendance and absences on a yearly basis. These targets are ambitious and in line with national targets.

In order for the school to reach these targets, we ask parents to conform with the requirements of this policy.

Rewarding good attendance

In order to promote good attendance each week every class will have the opportunity to win the 'Llew Llwyddiant Trophy' where the class with the best attendance that week will look after the trophy in their classrooms that week.

Each pupil who has 100% attendance in the academic year will receive a certificate of good attendance to celebrate their achievement.

Closing statement

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that parents/guardians, pupils, the school and outside agencies work together to ensure that every pupil at Ysgol Gymraeg Pen-y-Groes maintains the highest possible attendance. By doing this we will ensure that every pupil has the best possible opportunity to fulfil his/her potential.

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