



ATTENDANCE POLICY

RHOS Y FEDWEN PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Rhos y Fedwen Primary School Attendance Policy

School Attendance

There is a proven link between attendance and attainment at school. At Rhos y Fedwen Primary, high attendance for pupils is considered a priority and is rigorously monitored, to ensure equality of opportunity for all. Absence and exclusion from school are associated with a higher risk of poor educational achievement and attainment, limited job prospects and criminal activity. The significance of school attendance must not and cannot be underestimated, particularly for those children and young people who show signs of disaffection or unhappiness.

Promoting positive behaviour and excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole School and wider Community. All children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for absence is unavoidable such as illness. Schools have a legal duty to **publish attendance figures** and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a legal duty and responsibility to ensure that their children attend school on a regular basis.

Legal Framework

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that

“... the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive full-time education suitable to his/her age, aptitude and ability and to any special education needs he/she may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise”

Section 444 further states that

“... .. the parent of a child of compulsory school age registered at school and failing to attend regularly is guilty of an offence punishable in law”

An offence is not committed if it can be demonstrated that:

- the pupil was absent with leave (authorised absence)
- the pupil was ill or prevented from attending by unavoidable cause
- the absence occurred on a day set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil/parents belong
- the school is not within the prescribed walking distance of the child's home and suitable transport arrangements have not been made by the LA

Attendance Definitions

Schools are required to take an attendance register twice a day, and this shows whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved off-site activity, or absent. If a pupil of compulsory school age is absent, every half day absence from school has to be classified by the school, as either authorised or unauthorised.

Authorised Absence

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as illness or other unavoidable causes (e.g. bereavement of a close family member). Where possible medical appointments should be booked outside of the school day. However, if this is not possible then such absences will be recorded as authorised if proof of the appointment is provided. Parents should be made aware that unless there is a valid medical reason children should return to school following such appointments.

Where the absence is authorised, schools will use the appropriate code to record the absence.

Only a Head teacher can authorise an absence. Parents and the LA do not have the power to authorise absences.

Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absences are those which the Local Authority does not consider to be reasonable and for which no 'leave of absence' has been agreed by the school.

These include:

- Holidays during school time
- Parent condoned absence
- Truancy
- Absences which have never been properly explained

Starting the School Day

- Morning registration is at 8.55 a.m. This is the latest time your child should arrive in the classroom.
- Children arriving after 8.55 a.m. must report to the School Office, parents are required to sign the child into school via the school signing in system. A late mark will then be recorded.
- Patterns of late arrival at school will be closely monitored, and concerns addressed with parents.
- Arrival after 9.30 a.m. will be classified as an unauthorised absence, unless a suitable reason is given e.g. a notified medical appointment.
- The Educational Welfare Officer monitors school attendance and pupil punctuality both through school logs.

Reporting A Child's Absence

- We request that all parents contact the school at the earliest opportunity should their child be absent through illness. Messages can be left on the school's sickness reporting line (Parentmail, school voicemail) These are picked up by the school clerk promptly each morning, and regularly throughout the day.
- Parents are requested to contact the school each day of your child's continued absence.
- Medical appointments should be made out of school hours or during school breaks, and must be reported to the school prior to the appointment.

School Monitoring of Absence:

- We operate a First Response system from the close of registration whereby all unexplained absences are followed up with a phone call to the parent in order to establish a reason for a child's absence.
- Parents informed if their child's attendance falls below 85%.
- Parents informed if their child has 10 late marks during an academic year, or where there is a concern.
- The Education Welfare Officer will work closely with the school to monitor on-going concerns.
- We operate the AIM pathway process. Regardless of the reasons for absence you will receive a letter when attendance trigger points are met. This is with the aim of supporting

improvement in attendance. The pathway may then progress to a meeting with the Head Teacher and the Education Welfare Officer. If all supportive methods are exhausted and improvement is not sustained, fining may occur.

Holiday Absence and Fixed Penalty Notices

The Local Authority has recently adopted a Code of Conduct for Fixed Penalty Notices which came into effect on 1st September 2014. The law empowers designated Local Authority (LA) officers, head teachers, including their nominated deputies to issue Fixed Penalty Notices to the parents of children who have unauthorised absence from schools.

Fixed Penalty Notices may be considered appropriate from September 1st 2016, as agreed by School Governors, 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. "Persistent" means at least 10 sessions of late arrival in any academic year;
- 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.

In Summary

Parents can do a great deal to support regular and punctual attendance of their children.

- Take an active interest in their child's school life and work;
- Attend, when possible, parents' evenings and other school events;
- Ensure that their child completes his / her homework and goes to bed at an appropriate time;
- Be aware of letters from school which their child brings home;
- Ensure that their child arrives at school on time each day;
- Ensure that their child only misses school for reasons which are unavoidable or justified, such as illness or days of religious observance;
- Always notify the school as soon as possible - preferably on the first morning of any absence;
- Avoid booking family holidays during term-time;

- Talk to the school if they are concerned that their child may be reluctant to go to school.