



# Abernant Primary School Cluster School Attendance Policy

<b>Date of policy implementation:</b>	03:03:26
<b>GB member/staff responsible for policy review:</b>	Curriculum Group
<b>GB Link Governor:</b>	Laura Mckeown

**Policy Control**

<b>Policy Title:</b>	Attendance
<b>Staff responsible for review:</b>	Head teacher
<b>Link Governor:</b>	
<b>Owner:</b>	Head teacher
<b>Review Cycle:</b>	Every 2 years or earlier if required

## 1. Mission statement

Abernant Primary School is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.

We will provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcomed and are committed to the fundamental principle that early intervention and partnership working is crucial in ensuring the attendance, protection, and wellbeing of all children.

The school will follow the All Wales Child Protection procedures and local protocols in relation to specific and identifiable wellbeing issues that prevent a child from accessing education, or where there are safeguarding concerns.

For a pupil to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all pupils. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

School attendance is subject to education law and guidance and our school attendance policy is written to reflect this legislation and the guidance produced by the Welsh Government. For information relating to this legislation and guidance, see Appendix 2.

The legislation makes provision for a school day which is to be divided into two sessions with a lunch break in the middle and to be available for 190 days in any school year.

The school will review its systems for improving attendance on an annual basis to ensure that it is achieving its set goals and targets as identified by the Governors, local authority, Central South Consortium and the Welsh Government.

This policy will contain the procedures that the school will use to work towards meeting its attendance targets, as set by the local authority.

## **2. Promoting attendance**

Every child has the right to an education. Primary education should be free. Secondary and higher education should be available to every child. Children should be encouraged to go to school to the highest level possible. (article 28, UNCRC)

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents, carers, and pupils.

We will ensure that our pupils are made aware of the importance of good attendance and how this will benefit them, both now and in the future; we will offer reward schemes for individual learners, classes and year groups who have high levels of school attendance, no unauthorised absence and/or have shown to significantly improve their attendance rates.

We will use a variety of strategies to intervene at an early stage to encourage improved attendance of individual pupils and assist to overcome any barriers that may be preventing the expected level of attendance. These strategies may be school-based, or may be implemented jointly with other partners to ensure the most appropriate support for the individual and their family.

We will reward those children whose attendance is very good through half-termly 'Awards' assemblies and encourage children to improve their attendance, most improved are also rewarded in half-termly assemblies. We have also the punch card initiative, where every child has a card and are rewarded termly for each full week they achieve at school. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

We also issue advisory letters when a child is at risk of falling below 90%, to keep parents informed.

This policy contains details of how we will work with parents and carers and our expectations of what they will need to do to ensure pupils achieve good attendance. These expectations and potential consequences of not meeting the expectations will be regularly communicated to parents throughout the academic year in various ways such as text messages, the school website, newsletters and at parents' evenings.

### **3. School procedures**

Any pupil who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period will have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity (attendance out of school). Only the head teacher, or a member of staff acting on their behalf, can authorise absence.

If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence will be recorded in the first instance as O code and promptly followed up by the school as part of its early intervention and safeguarding strategies. This will be in the form of a text message, telephone call or letter to the parent or carer to enquire about the whereabouts of the pupil.

The coding for any absences will be in accordance with the guidance provided by the Welsh Government's All Wales Attendance Framework as in Appendix 1.

### **4. Punctuality**

Morning registration will take place at the start of school at 9:00am. The registers will remain open for a maximum of 30 minutes from this start time, in accordance with Welsh Government guidance. Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence (U code) unless there is an acceptable explanation i.e. school transport was delayed. In addition, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered (M code in this instance).

Pupils arriving after the start of school but before the end of the 30 minute registration period will be coded as late (L code) and your child does not get the mark.

If your child is late, you will be asked to fill in a late slip, If you receive three late slips within a 2 week period, you will be invited into school to speak to the HT to discuss the matter.

Parents and carers are reminded that the local authority may issue a fixed penalty notice for persistent lateness after the close of the register in accordance with the local authority's Code of Conduct for the Issuing of Fixed penalty Notice for Non-School

Attendance, if the number of unauthorised absences or lates (O or U codes) is 10 sessions or greater in the current term.

## **5. First day absence**

Parents and carers are reminded that they should contact the school by 9:00am if their child is not able to attend school on that day. Parents and carers must state the **full** reason for the child's non-attendance (not just "feeling unwell") and indicate the likely date they will return to school. Parents should be prepared for the members of school staff to ask questions about the pupil's condition, the patterns or trends in their absences and any treatment they may be receiving.

If a parent or carer does not contact the school, staff will endeavour to ascertain the specific reason for non-attendance as soon as possible on the first day of absence, after registration. This may include a telephone call, texting service, a home visit from a member of school staff or an Attendance and Wellbeing Officer. Once the specific information is received, the register will be amended to reflect the appropriate absence code (see Appendix 1 for the types of code).

Priority will be given to children who are deemed to be particularly vulnerable, e.g. those known to Children's Services or are looked after (CLA). The local authority's Attendance and Wellbeing Service will be notified of unexplained absences of five days or more, which will be reduced to only 24 hours if the pupil is on the child protection register, who may conduct an unscheduled home visit to determine if the pupil is safe and well.

Any learners may be subject to a Wellbeing Response Visit from the Attendance and Wellbeing Service where the school has any concern around attendance, or lack of contact from parents. These visits are intended to offer the right support to overcome any barriers to attending schools at an early stage.

## **6. Absence notes and supporting evidence**

Information received from parents explaining the reason for the absence will be kept on file in line with school retention policies. Parents and carers are aware that only the head teacher or their representative can authorise an absence and that further information such as a letter from a GP or consultant may be required to support reasons given for absence.

## **7. Medical and illness absences**

The school appreciates that there are times a pupil has to attend a medical appointment during the school day. In these instances, a copy of the hospital appointment letter should be provided to the school **prior** to appointment date to inform the school of the set scheduled time. This, however, does not apply to routine GP or dental appointments, which can and should be arranged for times outside of the school day.

If a pupil is repeatedly absent due to illness, the school may request supporting evidence that the pupil is receiving the necessary medical treatment. An appointment card,

consultant letter, photograph of prescription medication, would all suffice as medical evidence. Without the necessary evidence, the school may notify the parent or carer that they will unauthorise all future absences until the necessary medical evidence has been provided, and a referral to the Attendance and Wellbeing Service may be made.

## **8. Continuing and frequent absence**

Within the school it is the responsibility of the class teacher or attendance officer to be aware of and bring attention to the head teacher (or person to whom they have delegated responsibility for attendance), any emerging attendance concerns.

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem as soon as possible. This may involve inviting the parents or carers and the pupil into school for a meeting. However, should this absence persist a referral will be made to the Attendance and Wellbeing Service when the attendance drops below 86% for the preceding six school weeks.

For unauthorised absences of 10 sessions or more in a school term (there are two sessions in a day, morning and afternoon), the local authority may issue a fixed penalty notice in accordance with the local authority's Code of Conduct.

## **9. Persistent absence**

Welsh Government defines persistent absence as pupils whose absence level is more than 10% (less than 90% attendance). These pupils will be subject to an action plan to support their return to full attendance. At this point parents may be invited into a meeting to discuss the attendance.

## **10. Absence related to discrimination**

A pupil's absence from school may be due to bullying, which can take many forms and can be direct (either physical or verbal). Some of this bullying may be discriminatory.

As a school, we will monitor and report all discriminatory incidents each term and if the reason for a pupil's absence is related to any of the above issues, we will take action to deal with the situation in line with the school's policy.

## **11. Leave of absence/holidays in term time**

Leave of absence during term time is actively discouraged as it negatively impacts on the pupil's ability to engage with the full curriculum. Parents and carers do not have the automatic right to withdraw their children from school for a family holiday and will be reminded of the effect that absence can have on a pupil's potential achievement.

The school will consider any application for leave of absence; parents and carers must apply in advance for permission for their child to have leave of absence (four weeks

minimum notice for a family holiday). Forms to request a leave of absence can be obtained from the school, either in paper copy from the school office or from the school website. The head teacher will consider the request and respond in writing within 10 school days to inform the parent or carer whether the request has been authorised. Subsequently, a parent or carer can make an informed decision whether they wish to pursue the absence in the knowledge of any potential consequences.

Parents and carers are advised that a fixed penalty notice may be issued by the local authority when permission for a holiday or leave of absence has not been authorised by the school. The local authority's Code of Conduct for Issuing Fixed Penalty Notices can be obtained from the school, the local authority's website or the Attendance and Wellbeing Service.

## **12. Fixed Penalty Notices for Non-Attendance at School**

The school may request the local authority to issue a fixed penalty notices where a parent/carer has failed to secure their child's regular attendance at school. A penalty notice can be requested against one of following five criteria:

1. Where there is a minimum of 10 unauthorised sessions (5 school days) in the current term (these do not need to be consecutive) which may or may not include pupils who are persistently arriving after the close of the registration period (Recommended that registers be kept open for thirty minutes);
2. Where a parent(s)/carer(s) refuses to engage with a school in the interest of improving their child's school attendance levels;
3. Where a pupil is repeatedly caught truanting in public places during school hours (Police can request a penalty notice be issued for this offence);
4. Where a holiday in term time has been requested but has been unauthorised.

To comply with The Education (Penalty Notices) (Wales) Regulations 2013, Abernant Primary Abernant Primary School will operate in accordance with the local authority's Code of Conduct for fixed penalty notices for regular non-attendance at school. It remains the discretion of the head teacher to authorise absences in line with The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 attendance codes and supplementary guidance provided by the local authority.

Each pupil's absence will be considered on its own merits and if appropriate, a fixed penalty notice may be requested to encourage improved future attendance as part of monitoring procedures. If a pupil's attendance is significantly low, a referral to the Attendance and Wellbeing Service may be considered as an alternative to requesting a penalty notice.

## **13.Roles and responsibilities**

Abernant Primary School is aware that ensuring regular school attendance is a demanding area of work that depends on establishing and utilising close working relationships between parents, pupils, schools, the local authority and other professionals who work with children.

A key part of any successful working relationship is a clear understanding of each person's role and responsibilities, and as such the following sets out to clarify the roles and responsibilities for those people engaged with tackling absence issues.

### **13.1 The Parent**

Under section 7 of the Education Act 1996, the parent is responsible for ensuring that their child of compulsory school age receives efficient full-time education that is suitable to their child's age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs the child may have. This can be by regular attendance at school, alternative provision or by elective home education (the parent can choose to provide education for their child).

A pupil's punctuality is also a legal requirement and parents/carers of a pupil who is persistently late (after the close of the register) can also face legal proceedings. Sometimes, there are situations at home that may make it difficult for a pupil to arrive on time and as such due consideration is given to any help or assistance a family may need in these circumstances.

### **13.2 The School**

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 accuracy of the register is important in order to support any statutory interventions that may be required. It should be noted that it is an offence not to maintain accurate registers.

The school has the responsibility to monitor individual attendance rates at least weekly and use their own intervention methods to tackle individual pupil attendance issues where the pupil's attendance rate is 86% and above. A referral to the Attendance and Wellbeing Service should be made by the school when an individual's attendance falls to 86% or below over a six week period and there is no exceptional reason for this (i.e. the majority of the absence is unauthorised). However, the school can refer a pupil to the Attendance and Wellbeing Service should there be concerns for the individual's wellbeing with attendance above 86% or for Wellbeing Response Visits.

Attendance Lead will be responsible for the strategic management of attendance across the school. They will scrutinise the data on a regular basis, monitor trends and patterns across cohort of pupils, and evaluate interventions for their impact and effectiveness and direct resources for the best possible outcome.

Attendance Officer/Attendance Administrator will be responsible for the daily operation duties of the attendance team. They will ensure that all registers, both session and lesson, are completed on a daily basis and if not will escalate this to the Attendance Lead for action. They will undertake the 'first day response' on each morning for those pupils whose families have not made contact. They will collate the supporting evidence, and chase any outstanding forms, absence notes, holiday request forms etc. The officers will compile the data in preparation for analysis by the Attendance Lead, form tutors and heads of year, and make the referrals to the Attendance and Wellbeing Service.

In order to request a fixed penalty notice, the school will monitor the individual attendance patterns of their pupils. If trends are identified that match the criteria stated in the local authority's Code of Conduct, a school has the opportunity to make a formal request to the local authority to issue a penalty notice.

### 13.3 The Attendance and Wellbeing Service (AWS)

The principal function of the Attendance and Wellbeing Service is to improve attendance in all schools and alternative education provisions across Rhondda Cynon Taf by supporting pupils and their families to overcome their barriers to engagement.

The service provides support to schools, pupils and their families to ensure regular attendance and address any difficulties relating to absenteeism. The Attendance and Wellbeing Service works collaboratively with a range of support services and agencies and provides an essential link between home and school to ensure that pupils benefit from the educational opportunities available to them.

The service acts on behalf of the authority in its statutory enforcement capacity and is responsible for a number of related duties that include:

- the regulating and issuing of child employment and performance licenses for school age children and young people, and their chaperones;
- to investigate, locate and track children who are referred as "Children Missing from Education";
- to oversee the education needs of vulnerable pupils e.g. Gypsy Traveller families;
- to work in partnership with South Wales Police in the arrangement and coordination of formal truancy operations in accordance with Crime and Disorder legislation.

## **14.Attendance initiatives**

All the children who have 100% per cent attendance in any one half term will receive an excellence certificate for attendance awarded at the last assembly of the half-term.

Any child who has 100% for the whole year is awarded with a voucher at the end of the year.

During our 'Celebration Assembly' each Friday, we also award our 'Class of the Week' for attendance. We also celebrate most improved attenders throughout the half term and we have recently introduced a punch card. For every week a child is on time and makes a full week in school, they get a star punch in their card. If they make 9 weeks or more, they get entered into a raffle and receive a certificate of achievement.

**All children have the right to give their opinions freely on issues that affect them.  
(article 12, UNCRC)**

## **15. Categorisation of absence**

All pupils who are on role but not present in the school must be recorded within one of these categories.

- Authorised Absence
- Unauthorised Absence
- Approved Educational Activity

### *Unauthorised absence*

These codes are for those sessions where pupils were absent and no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason.

### *Authorised absence*

These codes are for those sessions where pupils are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid. Evidence may be requested to support the reason given (e.g. medical evidence, appointment cards, etc.)

### *Approved educational activity*

These codes cover types of supervised educational activity undertaken off the school site but with the approval of the school and/or the LA, where the session has been supervised by an approved tutor.

This would include:

- Work experience placements
- Field trips and educational visits

- Sporting activities
- Link courses or approved education at another venue
- Education arranged by the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)

## **16.Dual Registration**

Pupils who attend another school or unit will be dually registered at both venues. The enrolment status within the management information system (MIS) indicates the main place of education and which the subsidiary is. An example would be a pupil registered at this school but attending EOTAS provision or a pupil referral unit for certain days each week. The main school will be whichever the child attends for more than 50% of their time. The other will be the subsidiary.

The school or provision where the child is expected to attend is responsible for accurately recording the pupil's attendance and chasing up non-attendance. School will liaise with the other education provider on a daily basis in order to identify pupils who are absent for the session and mark the register accordingly.

## **17.Retention of records**

Computer registers are preserved as electronic back-ups copies. Attendance regulations stipulate that attendance records should be retained for at least three years; however it is good practice to extend this period in line with the education record retention schedule.

## **18.Register checks**

The local authority will formally check the school registers on a termly basis to ensure there is compliance with the national legislation. It should be noted that registers are legal documents and it is an offence not to maintain accurate records.

## **19.Attendance targets**

A system for analysing performance towards the targets has been established and the head teacher is responsible for overseeing this work. The school and Governing body will make use of the attendance data available from the Local Authority and the local authority when reviewing its targets and analysis of the outcomes in comparison with similar schools from across the region.

The head teacher/attendance lead will present the attendance data in each of the termly reports to the Governing body for the figures to be scrutinised against the attainment data. The Governors will have the opportunity to challenge the data alongside the practices for

managing attendance, in order to tackle the overall absence rates across the school and within specific cohorts of learners. Our school target this year is 92.5%.

## **20. Monitoring and review**

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance. The Head teacher informs governors via termly Head teacher reports. 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.

The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years. The rates of attendance will be reported in the annual governors' report. 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 head teacher, who will contact the parents or guardians.

This policy will be reviewed by the governing body annually, or earlier if considered necessary.

**This policy has been approved by the G.B. of Abernant primary School**

## APPENDIX 1

### The registration system

The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorized absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Un-timetabled sessions for noncompulsory school-age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

<b>Y</b>	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>#</b>	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

## **APPENDIX 2 Legislation and guidance**

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable:

- (a) to his age, ability and aptitude and
- (b) to any special needs he may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent means natural parents and includes any person who has parental responsibility or has day to day care of the child.

Section 444 1, 1(a) and (ZA) contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school or alternative provision arranged by the Local Authority.

The Education (Penalty Notices) (Wales) Regulations 2013 set out the framework for the operation of the Fixed Penalty Notice scheme. The Equalities Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011

### **Registers and admission.**

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010
- The Education (School Day and School Year) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2006

### **Attendance targets**

- The Education (School Performance and Unauthorised Absence Targets) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2006.

## Guidance documents relating to attendance

- All Wales Child Protection Procedures
- Keeping Learners safe
- The All Wales Attendance Framework
- The National Assembly for Wales Circular 47/2006 Inclusion and Pupil Support.
- South East Wales Consortium's Attendance Strategy
- Local Code of Conduct relating to the Fixed Penalty Notice scheme
- Welsh Government Guidance on penalty notices for regular non-attendance at school
- Welsh Government Guidance on attendance codes

Sign:   
Sign: 

Designation: Headteacher  
Designation: COG

Date: 03:03:26  
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