



# Ysgol Gymraeg Casnewydd's Attendance Policy

**'Success Starts at School'**

**Date: 22/11/16**



## **Introduction**

Our school is committed to ensure regular attendance at school is a priority which will in turn provide pupils with the best possible chances in life to succeed and to achieve their goals. **Governors and the school do not recommend that pupils are taken out of school during term time.**

Regular school attendance is essential for all children and young people. Failure to regularly attend can increase the risk of leaving school without any qualifications, and can also increase the likelihood of pupils being drawn into criminal and antisocial behaviour.

Our school will endeavour to work with parents, pupils, the local authority and the Education Achievement Service (EAS) to ensure that all pupils receive an appropriate education and to attend school regularly.

This attendance policy reflects the local authority's Attendance Strategy.

## **Aims**

This policy aims to ensure that attendance and punctuality remains a key focus for all, including governors, teachers, parents, pupils and partner agencies. We will strive to:

- offer a safe and friendly environment which welcomes children regardless of race, gender or ability.
- raise standards and ensure all pupils reach their full potential, through a high level of school attendance and punctuality.
- ensure all stakeholders receive communication about information on the importance of regular school attendance.
- identify those pupils with irregular attendance at an early stage and work with partner agencies to try and address any barriers that stop pupils from attending school regularly.
- keep accurate and up to date attendance data.
- ensure all pupils are safe, and for schools to follow the local authority's 'Children Missing Education' guidance.
- reward those pupils who have made significant progress in raising attendance levels.

This document is supported by the All Wales Attendance Framework.

<http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/pupilsupport/framework/?lang=en>

## **Legal Framework**

The law outlining attendance is:

**The Education Act 1996 which places a legal obligation on:**

- the local authority to provide and enforce attendance;
- school to register attendance and notify the local authority of a child's absence.



**Section 7 of the above act states that:**

'The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient, full time education suitable to his/her age, aptitude and ability and to any special educational 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'.

**School Attendance Orders (SAO):**

Under the Education Act 1996 section 437- 443 a School Attendance Order applies when a parent of compulsory school age fails to prove that the child is receiving a suitable education and where the authority believes the child should attend school. A School Attendance Order 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.

**The Education (Penalty Notice) Wales Regulations 2013:**

This legislation came into force in September 2014 and has given Local Authorities powers to issue fixed penalty notices (FPN). A code of conduct has been agreed by Newport City Council on the issuing of the FPN which includes the following criteria:

- Minimum of 10 unauthorised absences in a twelve week rolling term which do not have to be consecutive.
- Minimum of 10 sessions of lateness after the close of registration.
- Parents/carers who chose to take their children out of school on holiday during term time without authorisation from the Head teacher for a minimum of 10 unauthorised sessions.

The Head teacher will inform the parent by letter that the school may request a fixed penalty notice for unauthorised absence. If a FPN is requested, the Senior Education Welfare Officer (Senior EWO) for the Local Authority will review the case with the school, taking into account levels of absence, level of parental engagement, any equality implications, history of attendance and also any statement of special educational needs.

A fixed penalty notice warning may be issued and a period of 15 days will be monitored for an immediate improvement. A warning may not be issued in respect of an unauthorised holiday in term time.

A penalty notice is £60 if paid within 28 days in receipt of the notice, increasing to £120 if not paid within 28 days. If not received by 42 days then the local authority can prosecute parents for the child's absence.



## **Definitions**

Compulsory school age - under section 8 of the Education Act 1996, children and young people should attend school from the start of the first term commencing after their fifth birthday. The ends of the term dates are 31<sup>st</sup> March, 31<sup>st</sup> August and 31<sup>st</sup> December. A young person ceases to be compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they have their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday.

'Parents' section 576 of the Education Act 1996 includes:

- All natural parents whether married or not.
- Any person who although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a young person or child, and any person, who although not a natural parent has care of a child or young person.

Meanings:

'EWS' - Education Welfare Service

'EWO' - Education Welfare Officer

'CME' - Children missing education'

Attendance is everybody's concern and the school will expect all stakeholders to play a part in improving attendance. This will contain all having clear expectations and roles which include:

## **Role of Head teacher:**

- To be responsible for overall management and implementation of this policy.
- Work closely with the school's governing body.
- Set attendance targets with the Local Authority, EAS challenge advisors and governors.
- To use discretion when receiving applications for holiday requests and to provide reasons to parents when a holiday in term time is not authorised.
- Regular attendance reports shared and provided to governors.
- Work closely with the local authority's Lead EWO and nominated school EWO, and other support services.
- To notify the local authority when a 'child is missing education' and follow the local authority's CME procedures.
- Ensure policy is readily available for stakeholders including on the school, and website.
- To work with the Local Authority and EAS Challenge advisors and to provide a comprehensive plan in terms of attendance.

## **Governing Body:**

- Approve the policy and amend if necessary.
- Receive reports from the head teacher on a regular basis.
- Attend meetings as and when required.
- Ensure policy is shared with all relevant stakeholders.



### **Head Teacher:**

- Ensure all pupil absences are recorded, and notes received.
- Registers are completed on a daily basis.
- Work closely with the schools attendance clerk.
- Work closely with the schools EWO, providing valid attendance data on individual pupils.
- To attend set and pre-arranged meetings with the EWO.
- Ensure arrangements are in place to contact parents/guardians of those pupils who have not attended and not provided reasons for absence on a daily basis.
- Truancy concerns are dealt with.
- To arrange letters and meetings for those parents whose children's attendance poses a concern.
- To monitor patterns of irregular attendance.
- To provide rewards to those pupils with improved or excellent attendance.

### **Senior Management Team:**

- Work with all staff responsible for attendance and punctuality.
- To look at attendance data on a weekly basis, linking in with the school EWO.
- Regularly check registers.
- Ensure all absences are recorded in line with the guidance of codes document including those unauthorised absence and no reasons provided.
- Regular and updated training on attendance for all relevant staff, using the Local Authority school data team.
- Raise issues of those staff not compliant with the completion of registers.
- Discuss any initiatives with all staff.

### **Class Teacher/Form Tutors:**

- To carry out the statutory role of completing attendance registers twice a day, once in the morning and once in the afternoon.
- Ensure absences are accounted for by ways of a daily phone call to school, leaving a message on the answerphone during the absence and a note can be provided by parents once the child is back in school.
- Follow up unaccounted reasons for absence and concerns raised to the Head Teacher.
- To continue to raise the profile of attendance to all pupils.
- Contact attendance clerk with any queries.
- Contact parents to raise concerns.



### **Pupils:**

- Attend regularly and on time unless unwell or received an authorised absence.
- Understand the importance of regular attendance and the impact on their learning.

### **Parents:**

- To ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually.
- To notify the school if their child is unable to attend, on the first day of absence and every day thereafter.
- To keep the school updated on parents/guardians contact details, including mobile numbers and new addresses.
- To work with school and partner agencies to address any issues of irregular attendance of their children.
- To work with their child in relation to homework, not completing homework is not a reason for missing school.

### **Role of Attendance Clerk:**

- To speak with parents on a daily basis to establish reasons for pupil's absence.
- To record absences daily, registers as and when required.
- To 'mop up' missing marks, providing reasons and inputting reasons on the red flag system on SIMS.
- To send text messages to those parents who haven't contacted school, or by telephoning parents individually in order to establish reasons.
- To send letters to those parents who haven't contacted school.
- To work closely with EWO and support staff in school.
- To work with SMT and Head teacher closely.
- To ensure transfer of CTF of pupils are completed in a timely manner and pupils are not removed from roll unnecessarily.
- To check messages, if necessary, either on the schools answerphone or letters.

### **Keeping school registers**

The school's register is a legal document and under The Education (pupil registration) (Wales) regulations 2010 the school is required to keep an accurate record of attendance. Registers need to be marked twice a day, once in the morning and once in the afternoon.

Registers may be needed in a court of law if deemed appropriate.



Schools Information Management System (SIMS) is used to record all pupils attendance.

By the end of the school week the schools overall attendance registers will be completed and an overall attendance figure will be calculated by the school.

### **Types of absences**

It is important for parents to understand the definition of the different types of absences. They are classed as unauthorised absence and authorised absence.

The schools head teacher can only decide on whether an absence should be classed in either one of these categories, parents cannot.

Absences may be authorised for the following reasons:

- Illness.
- Religious observance.
- Medical/Dental appointments during school hours (proof of appointment is needed by the school in order to authorise the appointment).
- Fixed term and permanent exclusions.
- Holiday agreed by the head teacher.

Examples of what are classified as unauthorised absence are the following, however they are not limited:  
Absences may be unauthorised for the following reasons:

- Truancy.
- Late after the close of registration.
- Staying at home for no reason - condoned absence.
- Going shopping.
- Birthdays.
- Holiday not agreed by the head teacher.

In addition there are several codes classed as a present mark which include the following:

- Late before the close of register.
- Educated off site, pupils attending vocational courses at college/pupils attending alternative provision agreed by school.
- Sporting activity.
- Educational visit.
- Traveller absence.
- Where pupils are on roll at school and also at another education establishment.



Please see appendix 1 which includes a breakdown of codes set by Welsh Government.

### **Punctuality**

Punctuality is a legal requirement and pupils must attend on time. Persistent lateness has a detrimental effect on a child's learning and also disrupts other pupils within the class and throughout the school.

Those parents of pupils who are persistently late will be contacted by the class teacher/Attendance clerk/Senior Management team.

All pupils who are late must sign the 'late book' in school and must enter through the main doors of the school.

### **Medical absences**

Where a child is continually absent from school on the grounds of medical reasons, it will be necessary for the parent to provide medical evidence to school. This will be initiated by the school and the EWO which will result in the pupil and family receiving the appropriate support in assisting in attending school regularly. There may be times where a reintegration plan may be necessary which will be a partnership agreement between the family, pupil, EWO and school.

### **Holidays during term time**

Parents do not have an automatic right to withdraw pupils from school during the school term for a holiday. Under the Education (pupil registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010, head teachers have discretion to authorise a holiday of up to 10 days during term time, over 10 days can only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

All requests for holidays must be completed on the schools holiday request form and completed by the parents/guardians. (please see Appendix 2).

The head teacher will make the decision and may include the following contributory factors:

- Time of year.
- Length of time.
- Overall percentage of attendance.
- Impact on the child's learning.

### **School procedures**

Parents are expected to contact school on the first day of absence and to provide reasons for their child's absence. This will then need to be followed up by an explanation note and handed into the class teacher/form tutor which will be kept on record by school.



If parents fail to notify school, then the school will make every effort to contact the parents and also other persons listed as a point of contact. The absence will be recorded as unauthorised if no contact is made. Failure to receive any contact on the third day of absence may result in the involvement of the EWO.

As a school we have a duty to safeguard all our pupils and under the Education & Inspections Act 2006, requires the local authority to make arrangements to enable them to establish the identities of children residing within Newport who are not receiving an education. For example these may be pupils who have not attended school for an excessive amount of time without any contact or reason for the absence. The duty lies within the Local Authority to investigate further. The Common Transfer File (CTF) will be sent to the forwarding school once being notified.

### **Schools Strategies to improve attendance**

We aim that all pupils achieve 100% attendance, however there may be instances where pupils unfortunately are unwell or have other legitimate reasons for school absence.

### **Pupil Involvement**

Pupils are nominated as school councillors, mentors and mediators in order to assist other pupils in achieving improved attendance and behavioural levels. By leading a good example this has a positive impact with those pupils underachieving due to irregular attendance.

By ensuring pupils are involved in this process and giving them responsibilities, it will improve their confidence and self-esteem.

### **Parents Text Service**

The parents receive regular updates on attendance from the text service.

### **School Website**

The school's website will also provide parents, pupils, governors and the public with all the relevant attendance information including the schools attendance policy, along with all other schools policies and procedures.

### **School's Newsletters**

This is another way of communicating with parents, and our school's newsletters are sent out on a termly basis. This sometimes includes information about overall attendance figures.

Parents will need to check the attendance information on a regular basis and also check on school holiday dates and inset dates for the school. Please ensure that you check regularly to ensure there is no confusion as wrong dates are not reasons for children to be absent from school.



### **The School Environment**

The school will provide a happy, welcoming and organised environment to ensure all pupils enjoy learning which results in good attendance. It is staffs' responsibility to ensure that the classroom and the school is a happy place.

### **Breakfast Club**

Our school has the privilege of offering a breakfast to all our pupils. Breakfast club starts at 8:10, which is supervised by school staff. By children having this opportunity it allows them to have breakfast with friends, and ensures they have had a meal at the start of the day which statistics shows helps the thinking process.

### **Staff Awareness**

All staff are fully aware of the importance of regular school attendance, and pupils will regularly be made aware of this during the school day from staff.

### **Attendance Assemblies**

Celebrating attendance should be a priority, and involving pupils gives them an incentive, motivation and encouragement, with a sense of self - worth. This promotes the wellbeing of children as well as rewarding them.

This is sometimes delivered by power point, or by inviting our pupils on stage to receive their reward.

### **Transition Process**

As we are all aware it is difficult at times to deal with change. We as a school appreciate that pupils find it hard to cope with the transition from year groups and also from primary to secondary school. Our school ensures that we have all staff involved in this process and taster days for all pupils are set.

### **Parents evening**

Parent's evenings may offer the support of the EWO if parents need advice and guidance or additional support in trying to ensure the regular school attendance.

### **School Sanctions**

Where pupils are continually absent from school we instigate pupil sanctions if there is no improvement. This may be in the form of letters or texts. The EWO will be in contact if there is no improvement.

### **Rewards**

Our reward scheme includes pupils, and also local businesses within the community. Rewards can include the following:

- Pupil Certificate.
- Extra playtime.



- Class Disco.

### Additional Attendance Strategies

#### Role of the Local Authority Education Welfare Service

The Education Welfare service is a statutory service which supports schools in ensuring all pupils attend school regularly. We have a designated EWO who visits the school on a regular basis, depending on need.

The school, in a joint discussion will then refer the pupil to the EWO if necessary. Individual circumstances of each pupil will be considered. The EWO will then either send a letter home informing parents of your child's attendance, make a telephone call home, invite you into school or/and will conduct a home visit.

Parents have a legal duty to ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually, or otherwise, under the Education Act 1996. Where parents fail to ensure the regular attendance of their child or otherwise are committing an offence and the EWO will need to be informed.

It is unfortunate on occasions but a punitive approach may be needed which may result in prosecution of parents. However the EWS does not take this lightly and will endeavour to work and support parents, schools and pupils to improve attendance levels.

#### Role of School's Challenge Advisors

Our school works closely with the Education Achievement Service (EAS) which provides us with a nominated Challenge Advisor who visits our school and advises and supports us in our school improvement process. Challenge Advisors, senior Local Authority Staff and EWO's work closely with those schools needing additional support where attendance is a concern.

#### Good Practice Strategies

In addition to the strategies above, other initiatives may be conducted at any point.

#### First Day contact

Whilst we as a school operate a first day contact, there may be times where the Education Welfare Officer will conduct this, and contact parents of those pupils who are absent on a specified day. This is deemed as good practice and identifies those pupils who are regularly absent at an early stage with a view to referring to additional support services.

#### Data Collection

Our school's attendance data is continually being tracked and monitored electronically both on an individual pupil level and also as a whole school. This data is collated by the Lead EWO and shared amongst all schools across Newport on a monthly basis.



### **Monitoring and reporting**

The school will regularly provide reports to the governing body, senior management and challenge advisors, and the local authority which will inform them of current attendance.

In addition parents will also be notified through the schools regular communication channels.

Appendix 1



<b>Cod e</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Statistical meaning</b>
/ \	Present at registration	Present
L	Late but arrived before register closed	Present
B	Educated off-site	Approved educational activity
D	Dual registered	Approved educational activity
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved educational activity
V	Educational trip or visit	Approved educational activity
J	Interview	Approved educational activity
W	Work experience ( not work based learning )	Approved educational activity
C	Other authorised circumstances ( not covered by another code)	Authorised absence
F	Agreed extended family holiday	Authorised absence
H	Agreed family holiday	Authorised absence
I	Illness	Authorised absence
M	Medical/dental	Authorised absence



	<b>appointment</b>	
<b>S</b>	<b>Study leave</b>	<b>Authorised absence</b>
<b>E</b>	<b>Exclusion</b>	<b>Authorised absence</b>
<b>R</b>	<b>Religious observance</b>	<b>Authorised absence</b>
<b>T</b>	<b>Traveller Absence</b>	<b>Authorised absence</b>
<b>N</b>	<b>No reason provided for absence</b>	<b>Unauthorised absence</b>
<b>O</b>	<b>Other unauthorised absence( no explanation provided)</b>	<b>Unauthorised absence</b>
<b>G</b>	<b>Family Holiday ( not agreed )</b>	<b>Unauthorised absence</b>
<b>U</b>	<b>Late arrival after the close of registration</b>	<b>Unauthorised absence</b>
<b>X</b>	<b>Un-timetabled sessions for non-compulsory school age</b>	<b>Not required to attend</b>
<b>Y</b>	<b>Partial and forced closure</b>	<b>Not required to attend</b>
<b>Z</b>	<b>Pupil not yet on roll</b>	<b>Not required to attend</b>
<b>#</b>	<b>School closed to all pupils</b>	<b>Not required to attend</b>

**Appendix 2**

**Ysgol Gymraeg Casnewydd**



**Request for Absence During**

**term Time**

**Governors and the school do not recommend that pupils are taken out of school during term time.**

It is a legal requirement for parents/ carers to obtain the permission of the Headteacher before removing their child from school. Headteachers are not obliged to authorise absences or holidays. School can only authorise absence (non – sickness) in special or exceptional circumstances. Parents should complete this form at least three weeks before the proposed absence.

The Local Authority do not support term time absence and unauthorised leave may result in the issue of a Penalty Notice. The fine at present is £60 if paid within 28 days or £120 if paid within 42 days.

**Parent’s section**

Pupil/s name:		Year and form:	
Proposed first day of absence:		Total number of school days requested:	
Proposed last day of absence:		Number of days absence during the previous or this academic year:	
Please give a full explanation of why this absence should be approved, including why you consider the need to be an exceptional circumstance:			
I am aware that I may be contacted by the Local Authority Welfare Officer if my child’s absence is considered excessive.			
Signed: (parent)..... Date .....			

**School Section**

**Child’s name .....**

Last year’s attendance %	Current % Attendance	Number of previous days authorised	Number of previous days unauthorised

Will the absence occur during examinations or national tests (May)? Yes / No

Your request for absence during term time has been considered and will be:

Authorised

Unauthorised  as it does not fall into a category which we are able to authorise.

Headteacher’s comments:

Signed..... Date.....

## Ysgol Gymraeg Casnewydd

### Cais am absenoldeb yn ystod y

### Nid yw'r Llywodraethwyr na'r plentyn o'r ysgol yn ystod y tymor.



### Tymor

### ysgol yn awgrymu eich bod yn tynnu'ch

Mae'n ofyniad cyfreithiol ar rieni / ofalwyr i gael caniatâd y Pennaeth cyn tynnu eu plant o'r ysgol. Ni does yn rhaid i Benaethiaid awdurdodi absenoldeb neu wyliau. Bydd yr ysgol yn awdurdodi absenoldeb (heb fod yn salwch) mewn amgylchiadau arbennig neu eithriadol yn unig. Dylai rieni lenwi'r ffurflen hon o leiaf 3 wythnos cyn yr absenoldeb arfaethedig.

Nid yw'r awdurdod lleol yn cefnogi absenoldeb yn ystod y tymor ysgol. Gall absenoldeb heb awdurdod arwain at gyhoeddi Hysbysiad Cosb. £60 yw'r ddirwy os telir o fewn 28 diwrnod neu £120 o fewn 42 diwrnod.

Adran Rhieni:

Enw'r disgybl/ion:	Blwyddyn a dosbarth:	
Diwrnod cyntaf yr absenoldeb:	Nifer o ddiwrnodau'r cais:	
Diwrnod ola'r absenoldeb:	Nifer o ddiwrnodau absenoldeb a gofnodwyd eisoes y flwyddyn academaidd hon:	
Rhowch esboniad llawn pam y dylai'r absenoldeb hwn gael ei gymeradwyo, gan gynnwys pam yr ydych yn ystyried ei fod yn amgylchiad eithriadol:		
Yr wyf yn ymwybodol y gall y Swyddog Iles o'r Awdurdod Lleol gysylltu â mi os ystyri'r absenoldeb fy mhlentyn / plant yn ormodol.		
Llofnod: (Rhiant)..... Dyddiad .....		

### Adran yr ysgol

Enw'r disgybl .....

Canran presenoldeb llynedd	Canran presenoldeb cyfredol	Nifer o ddiwrnodau blaenorol wedi'u hawdurdodi	Nifer o ddiwrnodau blaenorol anawdurdodedig
A fydd yr absenoldeb yn digwydd yn ystod arholiadau neu brofion cenedlaethol (Mai)? Bydd / Na fydd			

Mae eich cais am absenoldeb yn ystod y tymor wedi ei ystyried ac fe'i gofnodir fel a ganlyn:

Absenoldeb gydag Awdurdod

Absenoldeb heb Awdurdod  gan nad yw'n perthyn i gategori yr ydym yn gallu awdurdodi.

Sylwadau'r pennaeth:

Llofnod..... Dyddiad.....