



**PONTARDDULAIS COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL**  
**YSGOL GYFUN PONTARDDULAIS**



## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

### **Polisi Presenoldeb**

Mr. G. Rees  
Headteacher

Mrs. S. Bradshaw  
Chair of Governors

Review Date: 2021  
Next Review Date: 2024

**Learn to live...**  
live to learn

**Byw I ddysgu...**  
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# PONTARDDULAIS COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

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### **Attendance Policy**

*'When a child attends school on a regular basis, they take an important step towards reaching their full potential, and are given the greatest opportunity to learn new things and develop their skills.'* (Strategies for Schools to Manage Attendance - Welsh Assembly Government 2012)

Pontarddulais Comprehensive School fully endorses this belief. The raising of attendance is given priority in the School Evaluation Development Plan and it anticipates all staff complying with the clear and detailed guidelines for register keeping, the effective working procedures for detecting and dealing with non-attendance and its closely associated problem of lateness.

In February 2007 the school was granted funding via WAG by the LA for the implementation of electronic lesson monitoring. The grant provided laptops for all teachers in the school and funded the development of the network so that every classroom had a network point thus enabling lesson by lesson electronic registration to take place to improve the monitoring of pupil attendance. Using these methods and communicating personally with parents/carers, the school has worked hard to secure quartile 2 in Attendance for 2 consecutive years.

### **Procedures for Recording and Monitoring Attendance**

Along with all other secondary schools in the City and County of Swansea, Pontarddulais operates a computerised attendance recording system. This enables attendance records to be processed on computer, allowing immediate access to individual pupil data and whole school attendance data.

As with any form of registration process however, the computerised attendance data will only be of value to the school as long as individual class registers are scrupulously kept, according to agreed procedures, by all participating staff and as long as careful housekeeping procedures are maintained by the Affective Team. It is a combination of these methods, supported by close working relationships with parents/carers and pupils which has secured significant improvement in pupil attendance.

### **Staff Guidelines for Marking Computerised Registers**

All staff have access to Lesson Monitor in SIMS.net in the classroom. Accessing the register is done via the homepage which is unique to every member of staff. Teachers will see their timetable for the day displayed in the My Classes Today panel on the homepage. By double clicking on a lesson in this panel allows the Take Register page for that lesson or registration session to open.

It is important to note that absence codes are issued by WAG and it is the school's responsibility to ensure that the most current codes are in use and that staff are aware of any changes.



### Lateness Procedures

Pupils arriving late, after the registration period, **MUST** report to the Attendance Officer in Room 8 and sign in. A late mark will be assigned thereby recording the pupil present on school premises. Any pupil found disregarding this Health and Safety requirement, when questioned about absences appearing on the weekly attendance data sheet, should be reported to their Progress Manager for a warning and for monitoring procedures to be implemented.

Similarly, pupils who are required to leave the school premises **MUST** report to the Attendance Officer / Progress Manager:

- a) their leaving of school premises to be noted for Health and Safety procedures
- b) to show appointment cards / letters if appropriate

Regular incidents of lateness as well as being unsatisfactory, may, if not discouraged, lead eventually to absenteeism. When initially recognised, by the number of late marks 'L' on the weekly attendance data sheets, the pupil should be spoken to by the Attendance Officer / Form Tutor and referred on to the Progress Manager if the situation persists.

If a pupil is late on three occasions within a week a Room 10 Lunchtime detention is issued by the Progress Manager.

Detentions for persistent lateness will be imposed by the Progress Manager for those pupils who continue to incur late marks. If an after school detention is issued this requires 24 hours' notice to parents/carers.

The requested parental/carer signature on a detention form ensures that they are kept informed of the continuing problem.

### Parental Responsibilities and School Procedures following pupil absences

It is believed that early intervention following an absence will prevent pupils drifting into more frequent or prolonged absences. The fact that the pupil knows their absence will be noted, and that there will be a prompt following up, may in itself be a sufficient deterrent for many having unnecessary absences. Parents/guardians are required to contact the school on the first day of absence, if no contact is made the Attendance Officer makes a 'first day' call. The parents are required to contact the school on the third day of absence to clarify the situation. If no contact is made the Attendance Officer will again contact the parents/guardians on the third day of absence. The relevant Progress Manager will routinely contact the parents of pupils who systematically lose time from school and record the reason given for the absence. The appropriate code will then be assigned to the absence, where it is deemed appropriate, thereby authorising it.



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Where an absence occurs and phone contact has not been established between the parent and the Attendance Officer or the relevant Progress Manager, it is anticipated that a letter of explanation, from the parent, will be provided for the form tutor. These letters are to be dated and marked by the form tutor prior to sending them to the Attendance Officer for recording appropriate absence codes.

NB It is the daily duty of the form tutor to question and chase up absences that are indicated on the absence data sheet as N. Those occurring in the preceding week, which pupils claim have been explained in a parental phone call need to be checked by the Form Tutor who needs to contact the Attendance Officer. They will be assigned a new absence code and will no longer appear as N on the following absence data sheet. Where the letter N remains however, and the pupil still maintains that a phone call has been made, the pupils should be referred to the Attendance Officer who can confirm the contact or not. When the Attendance Officer, Form Tutor, Progress Manager and EWO work together to pursue absences without an explanation, the most effective outcomes are likely.

### Truancy

If, by following procedures outlined above, it is established that the pupil was in fact sent to school and that the parent was unaware of the absence(s), the period(s) of absence will be coded by the Attendance Officer working with the Progress Manager as a truancy.

### Internal Truancy

Truancy lessons after registration can have the same adverse effect on a pupil's progress as other forms of absence. All teaching staff are therefore required to use the electronic attendance register, lesson monitor, for each group they teach. This registration of attendance is to precede the lesson and should always be carried out in a formal manner in order that pupils become accustomed to the fact that an attendance check will always be made by the teacher. Furthermore, recording pupil attendance at the very beginning of each lesson, ideally within the first 10 minutes, may also deter lateness, especially if staff routinely discipline those who incur an unacceptable number of 'lates' on their class registers with a detention.

Regular truancy spot checks will be carried out by the Attendance Officer using the extensive reports available within the SIMS Lesson Monitor module. Staff will monitor attendance when they register their classes and they can raise concerns with the Attendance Officer if they note any irregularities i.e pupil missing from registration, missing from previous lesson etc. This can be done without disruption to lessons and the Attendance Officer will be able to note absences from the class register and compare these with the official daily register.

Any pupil found to be truanting from a lesson may be checked against registers in previous lessons for that day. If additional absences have taken place the pupil's official attendance mark will be cancelled and coded as truancy for that specific morning or afternoon session.



### Sanctions imposed for truancy

In all cases of truancy the Attendance Officer will notify the Progress Manager, who in turn will inform parents/carers that truancy has taken place. This can be done either by telephoning, or by obtaining the parent's signature on a reply slip of a standard detention letter. The pupil is then placed in the appropriate detention.

### Persistent Truancy

In cases of persistent truancy, the pupil should be placed on a daily report and his/her attendance monitored. Following identification of repeated truancy the pupil is referred to the Affective Area Co-ordinator. The sanction can be repeated if truancy occurs again. The pupil will be monitored on a lesson by lesson basis by the class teachers and the Attendance Officer. If there are concerns relevant Progress Managers will contact parents.

This detailed monitoring will provide information for the Progress Manager, Affective Area Co-ordinator and the parents. If required a Monitoring Sheet is issued whereby teachers can comment on attendance, punctuality and behaviour. The duration of this daily report will depend on the comments received.

Pupils will **NEVER** be excluded for truancy, but will be most likely to be referred to the Affective Area Co-ordinator and the 'Team Around the Child' (TAC). Pupils can expect to be picked up by multi agency truancy patrols if they miss school.

### Term-time Holidays

The Headteacher will consider every application individually. Policy is NOT to grant leave of absence for a holiday other than in the most exceptional circumstances. Time off school for family holidays is **not a right**. An application must be made in writing, with appropriate evidence, **in advance** of the intended holiday. Please address all correspondence to Miss Rachel Thomas, Assistant Headteacher.

The Headteacher will consider authorising holidays for:

- service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays during term-time;
- when a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis;
- parents who are subject to a strict and non-negotiable holiday rota and evidence is provided to this effect.

### Expected Long Term Absence

In the event of expected long-term absence (more than 4 weeks), due to injury or other health reasons, Progress Managers and the Team Around the Child should make the necessary referral to initiate Home Tuition provided by the Authority.



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### Irregular Attendance

Where concern regarding irregular attendance exists at a subject level, a lesson attendance/behavioural referral should be completed and passed on to the Progress Manager for further enquiries to be made.

Where infrequent attendance exists and intervention by the Progress Manager and the EWO fail to make a significant improvement, a formal written warning from the EWO should be sent to the pupil's parent or guardian, giving details of attendance over a specified period of time. Please refer to letter from EWO.

This particular document:

- Provides the parent with an accurate record of their child's attendance.
- Invites them to attend a meeting with the EWO and Progress Manager to discuss the situation.

These may bring to light changes in family circumstances which could be making regular attendance very difficult. Should this be the case, then the school would be in a better position to understand the events surrounding the absences and therefore be able to advise or even initiate assistance which may prevent further absenteeism and to authorise the current absence.

Where such circumstances do not exist, these documents serve as a clear warning of further action being taken that could well lead to a prosecution for non-attendance. This procedure will be carried out by the Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

### Penalty notice statement for school to include in their attendance policies

#### Education Welfare Officer

The school currently has the benefit of a shared Education Welfare Officer who is able to provide intensive input to help address issues relating to attendance, attitude and behaviour.

Through specific interventions she is able to support children who would otherwise be persistent non-attenders.

The EWO, Mr. Lee Osbourne, works in conjunction with the Attendance Officer, Progress Managers and the Team Around the Child co-ordinator.



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### **Dissemination of the Attendance Policy**

Copies of the Attendance policy will be reviewed annually and copies given to all teaching Staff and Governors. A suitable summary of the document will be placed in pupil planners.

### **Review Procedure for the Attendance Policy**

The Attendance Policy will be reviewed annually. Any updates / changes will be made and communicated to staff, governors and parents & pupils.

### **Penalty notice statement for school to include in their attendance policies and websites.**

The Welsh Government (WG) Education (Penalty Notice)(Wales) Regulations 2013 states that Local Authorities (LA's) are required by law to adhere to the Education Act 1996 section 444 to include penalty notices as one of the interventions to promote better school attendance.

Sections 444A and 444B of the Education Act 1996 provide that certain cases of unauthorised absences can be dealt with by way of a penalty notice. A penalty notice is a fine of up to £120 and may be issued to a parent / carer as a result of a child's regular non-attendance at school / educational provision.

The school adheres to the code of conduct for penalty notices as issued by ERW and agreed by the Local Authority, and therefore may request the local authority to issue a penalty notice in certain cases.