



*"Together We Care, Share and Achieve"*

## Llanhari Primary School Curriculum Policies

### Attendance Policy

Date	Review Date
March 2016	Spring term 2018

This policy takes account of the Attendance and Wellbeing Service Tool kit in Rhondda Cynon Taff. The policy statement below summarises the content and approach taken by the school.

#### Legal context:

*Parents/Carers of pupils of compulsory school age have a legal duty to ensure that their children receive efficient, full-time education by attendance at school or otherwise. (Section 7, Education Act 1996).*

*If a pupil of compulsory school age who is registered at school fails to attend regularly at the school then the parent is guilty of an offence. (Section 444(1), Education Act 1996)*

*It is the legal duty of the school to keep an accurate attendance register of all pupils. (Section 434(1), Education Act 1996)*

*All pupil's of compulsory age must be punctual and registered twice a day; at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. (The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010)*

*"To comply with The Education (Penalty Notices) (Wales) Regulations 2013, the 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. "*

## • Introduction

We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so.

- Pupils must arrive at school between 8.50 and 9.00.
- Pupils must be punctual for registration at the following times:
  - Morning registration between 9.00am (reg close 9.30am)
  - Afternoon registration between 1.00 -1.05 pm

Any pupil who arrives after 9:00am will be marked on the register as late. Any pupil arriving after the registration period, an unauthorised late mark will be issued. The accuracy of the register is important in order to support any statutory intervention that may be required.

This register must record whether a pupil is present, absent, not required to attend or attending an approved educational activity (treated as present)

Importantly, every half-day absence must be classified as either 'authorised' or 'unauthorised', only the school can make this decision

We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

The school follows the regulation of the Welsh Government and guidelines from the LA. The governing body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

## 2 Definitions

### 2.1 Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from

a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.

- Medical appointments must be supported by an official appointment card or letter.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents and carers do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents and carers will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

## 2.2 Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent.
- Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.
- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school due to a holiday that was not agreed by the head teacher under her discretion.

## 3 If a child is absent

- When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, and will inform the school office.
- If a parent telephones the school to report an absence, it will be recorded in the absence book.
- The school admin assistant will collate the names of pupils absent without reason and will endeavour to contact a parent or guardian by telephone or text.
- When the child returns to school, a note should be brought from a parent or guardian to explain the absence.
- A note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence, e.g. if a child has a medical appointment.

## 4 Requests for holidays

- We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are circumstances under which a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child to attend, e.g. a special event.

## **Authorised Holidays**

- The school (Governing Body) uses its discretion to authorise pupils' absence from school for holidays up to 10 days in one academic year during the school term, in accordance with Welsh Government guidelines.
- The school (Governing Body) will authorise holidays under the following circumstances:
  - ✓ Attendance at the time of the holiday is above 95% for the year up to the date the holiday starts
  - ✓ Is NOT more than 10 days in one academic year.
  - ✓ Is NOT in the first week of the new September term
  - ✓ Is NOT during testing week in May for pupils in Years 2-6
  - ✓ There have been no exclusions in the previous 3 terms
  - ✓ The head teacher has used her discretion in special circumstances
- Requests for holidays must be received at least a week before the start of the holiday.
- Holidays requested well in advance will be unauthorised in principle but the decision to mark them authorised or unauthorised will depend on the above criteria being met on the date the holiday starts.
- Holidays that are marked unauthorised will be issued with a fixed penalty notice in line with RCT guidelines.

## **Unauthorised holidays**

- The school has adopted the guidelines as set out the RCT Toolkit for Attendance and Wellbeing. All unauthorised holidays will be referred to the Attendance and Wellbeing Service and issued with a fixed penalty notice.

## **5 Long-term absence**

- When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.
- If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

## **6 Repeated unauthorised absences**

- The school will contact the parent or guardian of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or guardians will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school will then contact the LA support services, who will visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or guardians understand the seriousness of the situation.
- The school has adopted the procedure as stated in the RCT Attendance Toolkit document. This is as follows -

*The school will contact the parent, guardian or guardian of any pupil who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or guardians will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem.*

*If the situation does not improve and the pupil's attendance drops below 88% within the previous 6 week period, the school will then refer to the Attendance and Wellbeing Service (AWS), who will visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or guardians understand the seriousness of the situation.*

*The AWS provides support to schools, pupils and parents to ensure regular attendance and address problems relating to absenteeism. The service liaises with other agencies and provides an important link between home and school. It helps parents and teachers to work in partnership to ensure that pupils benefit from regular attendance.*

*The responsibility of the Local Authority is devolved to the AWS. Where 'persistent absenteeism' continues despite input from the governors, supported by the AWS, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.*

- The governors, supported by the LA, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

## **7 Fixed Penalty Notices**

In September 2013, the Education (Penalty Notices) (Wales) Regulations 2013 came into force, as part of Welsh Government's commitment to addressing poor school attendance. All local authorities across Wales are expected to use the

fixed penalty notices to assist them to prevent unnecessary absence from school:

*A requirement of this is for every local authority to develop a Code of Conduct outlining how the scheme would operate ensuring consistency in the issuing of fixed penalty notices across the county. The implementation of the regulations will affect all pupils of compulsory school age (5 to 16 years) registered at any infant, junior, primary, secondary and special school, including pupil referral units in Rhondda Cynon Taf.*

*On 31<sup>st</sup> July 2014, Rhondda Cynon Taf Cabinet approved the Code of Conduct, including the criteria for issuing fixed penalty notices:*

- Where a pupil has accrued 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absences in the current term;*
- Where a pupil has been persistently late on 10 or more occasions in the current term, arriving more than 30 minutes after the registration period;*
- Where a parent refuses to engage with a school in the interest of improving their child's school attendance levels;*
- Where a pupil is repeatedly caught truanting in public places during school hours;*
- Where a holiday in term time has been requested but has been unauthorised.*

*Fixed penalty notices will offer a means of intervention to prevent individual cases becoming persistent non-attendance cases and progressing to the local magistrates' court. Only one notice will be issued to a parent/carer (who has parental responsibility) in any one academic year but notices can be issued for more than one child in that family. A fixed penalty notice is a £60 fine if paid within 28 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 28 days but within 42 days of receipt. If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 42 days, the local authority must either prosecute parents/carers for the offence or withdraw the notice.*

*Therefore, from the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2014, the Code of Conduct will be operational across Rhondda Cynon Taf.*

## **8 Rewards for good attendance**

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

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- Weekly class attendance awards will take place every Friday with the best class each term receiving rewards (eg choc-ices)
- Classes with 100% attendance in any one week will receive a reward
- There are special certificates for any child who has 100 per cent attendance for a whole year.
- At present school is working with local businesses to provide extra incentives, the current reward is:

***100% attendance for the year special award:***

*All children with 100% attendance for a year will receive a discount voucher off a meal for 4 in 'The Fox and Hounds', one lucky winner will be pulled out of a hat to receive a voucher for a free family 'Meal for 4' at The Fox and Hounds, Llanharry*

## **9 Parents**

- Parents are reminded of the importance of attendance through newsletters and the website.
- The school has produced a guidebook for parents in partnership with the Parent Council. (Appendix 1)

## **10 Attendance targets**

- The school is set attendance targets each year by the Local Authority. The school strives to achieve these targets.

## **11 Monitoring and review**

- It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report from the headteacher. 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 school prospectus, and in the annual governors' report.
- The school clerk and the headteacher will be responsible for monitoring attendance in the school and for following up absences in the appropriate way. The school has agreed that it is the responsibility of the school to:

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- *monitor pupil attendance on a weekly basis;*
- *monitor overall attendance on a half-termly (six week) basis;*
- *send letters to parents for attendance under 90%*
- *submit attendance rates to the LA on a half-termly (six week) basis;*
- *liaise with the LEA to discuss targets to improve attendance; and*
- *for Estyn and Welsh Government Purposes make attendance data available.*

If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the Attendance and Wellbeing Service, who will contact the parents or guardians.

- The Governors accepted the principles of the RCT Toolkit on attendance in the Autumn Term 2013. This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every two years, or earlier if considered necessary.

<b>Headteacher:</b>	E Coates	<b>Date:</b>	15 <sup>th</sup> March 2016
<b>Chair of Governing Body:</b>	C Lewis	<b>Date:</b>	15 <sup>th</sup> March 2016

# Appendix 1

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