YSGOL GYNRADD
A MEITHRIN
PONTNEWYDD

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Pennaeth: **Ann-Marie Maloney** - Cadeirydd y Llywodraethwyr: **Allan Tait**

5th September 2025

Dear parents/carers,

Please find attached with this letter information from Torfaen regarding their 'Not in, miss out' and 'Strive for 95+%' scheme promoting the importance of good school attendance and within this letter is the Request for Term Time Leave form and our Attendance Policy for your reference.

Your child's teacher will be setting attendance targets with you for your child at the parent/carer consultations coming up in October. Your child's attendance is monitored and tracked throughout the year and if there are any cause for concerns we will contact you.

Illness

We understand that children get ill and if they do need time off school as they're too unwell to attend please notify the office on the morning of their absence with a brief description of the nature of the illness. There an answerphone facility for you to be able to do this or you can use the text system or Dojo the School Office directly. **Please do not use Dojo to message the class teacher for this.**

Medical Appointments

If your child needs to have a medical appointment please try to arrange it outside of school hours if possible. If this is not possible please consider if you're able to send your child before and/or after the appointment so they miss as little school as possible.

Late Arrival

Please ensure your child arrives at school on time so they are not missing out on any school time. The vast majority of pupils are here on time which is excellent but there are a few who are often late which impacts not just their education but the education of others in their class with the disruption when they arrive. If your child will be late please notify the office of when we can expect to see them and let them know if they need a lunch ordered with the canteen.

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Schools Curriculum Award

The Care Collective

Junior pupils must report to the office when they arrive and Foundation Phase pupils to their class teacher.

Holidays

We request that where possible holidays are taken during the school holidays and not in term time as a week or fortnight out of school will have a big effect on your child's education for that academic year. Where attendance for the last 12 months is over 95% or in very exceptional circumstances, holidays will be granted as an authorised absence. Please ensure you put in a 'Request for Term Time Leave' form in plenty of advance before your holiday. Please note it is a little different from the one used last year. There is one attached with this letter and it can also be found on the website under 'Forms' or paper copies are available from the school office. If your holiday request is not granted the absence will be marked as 'unauthorised'. This means, in line with our Attendance Policy and Torfaen's policy, a 'Fixed Penalty Notice' fine could be issued by the Education Welfare Officer and Torfaen's legal team. You can find out more about this in our Attendance Policy which is included with this letter and a copy of which is available on our website under 'School Policies'.

Absence Without Reason

Please be aware if we cannot get a response from you with regards to why your child (if they are of legal school age) is absent from school we have to report to the Education Welfare Officer after three days (or two days if before a weekend). This is for safeguarding reasons, we need to be aware of where your child is and if they are safe. We will try texting, calling and emailing you before we do this. Persistent absence without reason can result in warnings and 'Fixed Penalty Notice' fines from Torfaen also.

Celebrating

We love to celebrate good attendance and each week the class with the best attendance is announced in assembly and there will be notification on Dojo. That class get extra play in the following week. Pupils with over 95% attendance in a term are entered into a prize draw to win high street vouchers. We also celebrate with termly certificates.

I also would like to extend my thanks to all the parents and carers who consistently work hard to ensure their child's attendance at school is good.

Yours sincerely,

K.Strong

Mrs K. Strong
Leader for Attendance

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Pontnewydd Primary



School

Pupil Attendance Policy

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Meithrin, Ysbrydoli, Cyflawni - Nurture, Inspire, Achieve

1. Introduction and aims

All children have the right to education, based on equality of opportunity, and at Pontnewydd Primary School, in partnership with parents and other parties, we must take measures to encourage regular school attendance and reduce rates of absenteeism.

A child's success at school is likely to be affected negatively if their attendance is poor. Those who do not attend regularly may fall behind in their learning, leading to underachievement, both academically and socially.

Pontnewydd Primary School recognises the crucial role that parents play in promoting good school attendance. The school therefore seeks to provide professional, quality information and advice, communicated frequently by telephone, email, parents' evenings, Class Dojo, school reports and via our school website.

Pontnewydd Primary School aims to:

- Give attendance and punctuality a high priority;
- Clearly define roles and responsibilities to ensure consistency and accuracy;
- Provide support, advice and guidance to families;
- Use attendance data systematically to evaluate success and to prioritise appropriate
- follow-up procedures;
- Use rewards to celebrate good attendance;
- Use sanctions sensitively and only when necessary;
- Work in partnership with the Education Welfare Service to improve attendance; and
- Support pupils returning to school after significant periods of absence.

2. Rights, responsibilities and roles

Pontnewydd Primary School is required under The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010, to take attendance registers twice a day; at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session.

Parents are required under section 7 of the Education Act 1996, to ensure that their child receives effective full-time education.

Torfaen Local Authority is required under section 437 of the Education Act 1996, to ensure that a child for whom they are responsible is receiving suitable education by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

The school operates in conjunction with the Local Authority's System of Attendance Management.

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Pontnewydd Primary School aims to work in partnership with children, parents and families so that pupils can benefit from the educational opportunities provided to them at school. Key members of staff include:

- Headteacher
- School Attendance Administrator
- School Attendance Co-ordinator
- Family Engagement Officer

3. Procedures

Class Teacher procedures:

- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance, looking particularly for
- either poor overall attendance, improvement in attendance, anomalies in
- patterns of attendance and/or unusual explanations for absence offered by
- children and their parents/guardians.
- Informing the School Attendance Officer where there are concerns and acting
- upon them.
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and
- promptness.
- Discussing attendance at consultation evenings/days.

Registration procedures:

To ensure accuracy and consistency, all pupils are registered electronically via the School Information Management System (SIMS).

Pupils are registered at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions. Pupils' attendance is therefore recorded on two occasions during the school day.

Teachers and Supply Teachers are each provided with login credentials for SIMS and are required to record present or absent against each pupil's name. No pupil may be left with a 'missing' mark.

In instances of lateness, the administration team alter the absent mark to the late mark. The degree of lateness may be recorded as necessary, using the appropriate function within SIMS.

Attendance registers for all classes must be completed on time.

Class teachers must keep a 'Fire Register' in case of emergency during the school day.

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A paper dinner register must be taken and information forwarded to the school office in the event that the online SIMS registration system is not working.

Procedures for absence and lateness:

Parents are asked to contact the school by telephone, or email every day of their child's absence. These communications are monitored by the administration team throughout the day.

The school operates a first response system and if a parent or carer fails to notify the school of an absence, the school will attempt to contact the parent. If the school is unsuccessful, the absence will be marked as unauthorised.

The administrative team are kept informed of any vulnerable pupils and if there is an unexplained absence then the school DSP is informed and he will contact Social Services.

Pupils arriving after the registers have closed will receive a late mark.

Authorisation of absence:

Absences may only be approved by the Headteacher. Parents and the LA do not have the power to authorise absence. "Unauthorised absence" is absence without the approval of the Headteacher and includes all unexplained absences.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 give schools discretionary power to grant leave for the purpose of a family holiday during term time. Parents do not have an automatic right to withdraw their child from school for a holiday and, in law, have to apply for permission from the school in advance. Pontnewydd Primary School will only authorise family holidays where the child has attendance of over 95%.

4. Promoting good attendance

The school promotes high levels of attendance in a variety of ways including contacting parents regarding the importance of good attendance, school prospectus, social media and on our school website.

Good attendance is celebrated weekly with an extra play for the class with the highest attendance and the parents of the winning class notified by text.

Good attendance is also recognised by awarding 100% attendance certificates at the end of each term and at the end of the academic year.

Pupils with over 95% attendance are entered into a termly raffle and the winning pupil receives £200 in High Street vouchers.

5. Intervention

We write to all parents on a termly basis with an update of their child's attendance rated against a traffic light system.

In cases of concern where the attendance level is falling or consistently low, the School Attendance Officer and the Family Engagement Officer will engage with the pupil and family by use of appropriate means. This may include telephone conversations, letters, home visits and meetings in school which may involve other senior members of staff.

Medical evidence is requested in longstanding cases before absence can be authorised.

The School Attendance Officer will provide information and advice and seek to support the pupil in returning to school.

In some circumstances following the Education (Penalty Notices) (Wales) Regulations 2013 and Welsh Assembly Government guidelines, it may be appropriate that Educational Welfare Service in consultation with Pontnewydd Primary School, issue parents/carers with a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN). Circumstances when they could be used as follows:

- When a child has a minimum of ten unauthorised sessions recorded during the current term (these do not need to be consecutive and please note that a school day is divided into two sessions, am and pm);
- In response to persistent late arrival at school i.e. after the registration period. Again this will be when there are at least ten recorded late marks in the current term;
- For unauthorised holiday absence. Parents are advised that taking a family holiday during term time may result in an FPN payment;
- If a parent /carer does not attempt to engage with the school or Local Authority regarding their child's absence;
- If a pupil regularly comes to the attention of the police during school hours without an acceptable reason, the police authority may request the Local Authority issue an FPN.

Before a Penalty Notice is issued, parents will receive a written warning outlining the extent of their child's absence and the possibility of them receiving a Penalty Notice if attendance isn't improved.

In addition to Fixed Penalty Notice when the school feels that, despite its best efforts to support the family, attendance is not improving, a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service or to Social Services. A referral might be made when, for example:

- A pattern of irregular attendance has developed;
- Parents/carers have failed to engage in attempts to improve attendance
- A period of entrenched non-attendance has become established;

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- There is a lack of parental cooperation in ensuring a child's regular attendance

Pontnewydd Primary School will liaise with the Education Welfare Service to provide the evidence required to prosecute parents who fail, without reasonable justification, to cause their child to attend school regularly, under sections 444(1) and 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996.

6. Punctuality

The School actively discourages late arrival, by staff setting a good example and by challenging it whenever it occurs. Here at Pontnewydd all children who arrive at school late will have their names recorded.

If a child is frequently late, normally defined by two late arrivals in any one school week, the school will take action:

- In the first instance the school will write to the parent and explain the disruptive effect that tardiness can have on a child's education and on the education of others in the class.
- If the lateness continues, then the parent will be invited to meet with the Headteacher to discuss the problem further.
- If the matter is not settled, then the Headteacher will involve the Education Welfare Service
  - Frequent lateness of pupils can provide grounds for prosecution of parents.
- Any child arriving after the register has been called will receive a late mark. However, in the case of known delays such as bus breakdowns or severe weather, the register may be kept open for longer.

7. Target Setting, Monitoring, and evaluation

The Attendance Officer and the school administrative staff are responsible for maintaining accurate attendance records for each pupil and for monitoring pupil attendance and punctuality.

It is a statutory requirement for the school to set targets on attendance. The Governing Body will set, monitor, and evaluate annual targets which are both realistic and sufficiently challenging in order to raise school attendance.

The Attendance Officer and the Headteacher meet regularly and decisions are taken at this time as to whether individual cases meet the criteria for referral to the Educational Welfare Service, for either Fixed Penalty Notices or possible legal action.

The Attendance Officer meets with their designated Educational Welfare Officer once per half term (or as required) to review cases and seek advice when required.

Attendance data is reviewed each academic year by the Leader Senior Leadership Team and is used to populate the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) and inform the School Development Plan (SDP).

8. Exceptional Circumstances

The COVID -19 pandemic is an example of the exceptional circumstances in which the school may need to deviate from this Policy. A global crisis such as this would require the adaptation of this attendance policy to consider expert guidance from the UK government, Welsh Government, the local authority, and Public Health Wales. This expert guidance will inevitably evolve, and it will be the responsibility of the school to evolve policy, as the guidance changes.

Experience gained from this crisis has highlighted that parents react in different ways towards the perceived risks to their children, with a number making the decision to keep their children at home. In these circumstances, LA and EWS trigger points around enforcement of parent's statutory requirements for children to attend school need to be considered in light of the circumstances, and if appropriate, no action for breach of policy taken.

In these exceptional circumstances, the welfare of the child is paramount in any policy decision. All policy deviations should be fully documented during the period of the exceptional circumstances.

This Policy Was Last Reviewed on 10/01/23