



Charles Williams Church in Wales Primary School

Attendance Policy - Updated January 2020

School Attendance

There is a proven link between attendance and attainment at school. At Charles Williams Primary, high attendance for pupils is considered a priority and is rigorously monitored to ensure equality of opportunity for all. Absence and exclusion from school are associated with a higher risk of poor educational achievement and attainment, limited job prospects and criminal activity. The significance of school attendance must not and cannot be underestimated, particularly for those children and young people who show signs of disaffection or unhappiness.

Promoting positive behaviour and excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school and wider community. All children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for absence is unavoidable such as illness. Schools have a legal duty to publish attendance figures and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a legal duty and responsibility to ensure that their children attend school on time and on a regular basis. Absences, other than for illness, must be kept to a minimum.

Good attendance is rewarded to classes on a weekly, half-termly and annual basis. Pupils who achieve 100% attendance at the end of the school year are rewarded with a tea party.

Attendance Definitions

Schools are required to take an attendance register twice a day, and this shows whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved off site activity, or absent. If a pupil of compulsory school age is absent, every half day absence from school has to be classified by the school, as either authorised or unauthorised.

Authorised Absence

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as illness or other unavoidable causes (e.g. bereavement of a close family member).

The first two days of an absence due to illness can be authorised. In order to authorise absence due to illness for three or more days, evidence from a medical practitioner must be provided.

Where possible, medical appointments should be booked outside of the school day. However, if this is not possible then such absences will be recorded as authorised if proof of the appointment is provided. Parents should be made aware that unless there is a valid medical reason, children should return to school following such appointments.

In order for an absence due to a medical appointment or illness to be authorised, evidence must be provided e.g. produce a medical appointment card or medication bearing a dispensing label with the relevant date. Should a child be sent home from school due to illness, that day's absence and the following day, if appropriate, will also be authorised.

Where the absence is authorised, schools will use the appropriate code to record the absence.

Only school can authorise an absence (not a parent).

Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absences are those which the Local Authority does not consider to be reasonable and for which no 'leave of absence' has been agreed by the school.

These can include:

- Holidays during school time - this includes part of a session
- Parent condoned absence - e.g. shopping trip, attend a sporting event, visit to Father Christmas
- Truancy
- Absences which have not been properly explained

Notification of Absence

If you know in advance that your child will absent from school due to a holiday or day trip etc., please complete a Notification of Absence form and return it to the office. The reason for the absence will be considered and you will be notified if the absence will be authorised or unauthorised.

Starting the School Day

- In Years 3 to 6, doors open at 8.45am. The school day starts at 8.55am. This is the latest time your child should arrive in the classroom. In nursery to Year 2, doors open at 8.50am; the school day starts at 9.00am. This is the latest time your child should arrive in the classroom.
- Children arriving after the start of the school day must report to the school office where a late mark will be recorded and a slip will be given to your child. This must be handed to the class teacher on arrival at the classroom to ensure that the teacher knows that they have been registered. Should your child arrive at their classroom without a slip after the doors have closed, they will be sent back to the office to collect one. Children in nursery to Year 2 who are late will need to be taken to their classroom by their parent/responsible adult.
- Patterns of late arrival at school will be closely monitored, and concerns addressed with parents.
- Arrival after 9.25 a.m / 9.30 a.m. (as detailed above) will be classified as an unauthorised absence unless a suitable reason is given e.g. a notified medical appointment.
- The Educational Welfare Officer monitors school attendance and pupil punctuality both through school logs and 'late gate' monitoring.

Reporting A Child's Absence

- We request that all parents contact the school at the earliest opportunity should their

child be absent through illness. Messages can be left on the school's sickness reporting telephone line or via ParentMail. These are picked up by the school administrators promptly each morning and throughout the day.

- Parents are requested to contact the school each day of your child's continued absence.
- Medical appointments should be made out of school hours or during school breaks, and must be reported to the school prior to the appointment.
- In advance of a planned absence (e.g. due to a holiday), this must be reported via ParentMail.

School Monitoring of Absence:

- We operate a First Response system from the close of registration whereby all unexplained absences are followed up with a phone call to the parent in order to establish a reason for a child's absence.
- Parents informed by letter if their child's attendance falls below 85%.
- Parents informed by letter if their child has 10 late marks during an academic year, or where there is a concern.
- The Education Welfare Officer will work closely with the school to monitor on-going concerns.
- Parents are issued with letters on a termly basis that keep them up to date with their child's attendance.

Holiday Absence and Fixed Penalty Notices

The Local Authority has adopted a Code of Conduct for Fixed Penalty Notices which came into effect on 1st September 2014. The law empowers designated Local Authority (LA) officers, head teachers, including their nominated deputies to issue Fixed Penalty Notices to the parents of children who have unauthorised absence from schools.

Fixed Penalty Notices will be issued from 20th January 2020, as agreed by School Governors, in the following circumstances:

- At least 10 sessions are lost due to any unauthorised absence during a term. These do not need to be consecutive.
- Persistent late arrival at school, i.e. after the register has closed. "Persistent" means at least 10 sessions of late arrival in any academic year.
- Truancy, being absent from school, without an acceptable reason.

Penalty notices are issued at £120 however, if paid within 21 days of being issued, the cost is £60. Parents have up to 28 days from receipt of the notice to pay the penalty.

The protocol for issuing Fixed Penalty Notices adheres to The Education Act 1996 and The Education (Penalty Notice) Wales Regulations 2013.

The Education Welfare Service (EWS) works in partnership with pupils, parents and the school to promote regular attendance. Regular meetings take place between the attendance officer and the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) at which referrals to the Service are made. A referral is accepted when action on the part of the school has failed to bring about an improvement in the child's attendance. Various actions are then open to the Educational

Welfare Service. These form part of different levels of intervention open to the Service and are, in most cases, followed sequentially. They include:

- contact with the home (by telephone, letter and/or a home visit) to assess the situation and provide remedial intervention if appropriate and possible;
- arranging a meeting between the school, parents and child;
- offering specific support to the parents and individual children;
- arranging planning meetings and case conferences;
- arranging the involvement of other agencies, and,
- statutory intervention – court proceedings.

Supporting Good Attendance

Parents can do a great deal to support regular and punctual attendance of their children e.g.:

- take an active interest in their child's school life and work;
- attend, when possible, parents' evenings and other school events;
- ensure that their child completes his/her homework and goes to bed at an appropriate time;
- be aware of letters from school which their child brings home;
- ensure that their child arrives at school on time each day;
- ensure that their child only misses school for reasons which are unavoidable or justified, such as illness or days of religious observance;
- always notify the school as soon as possible - preferably on the first morning of any absence;
- avoid booking family holidays during term-time, and,
- talk to the school if they are concerned that their child may be reluctant to go to school.