Pontarddulais Primary School

Attendance Policy

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is at the heart of our school's planning, policies, practice and ethos. As a rights-respecting school we not only teach about children's rights but also model rights and respect in all relationships – Linked to Article 28

This policy was reviewed October 2025. This policy will be monitored and reviewed as and when required and in line with changes to guidance and practice.

Rationale

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 feelings of frustration and unhappiness. As inclusive schools within the Pontarddulais Comprehensive Cluster, we seek to provide environments in which all young people can flourish as a member of a happy, caring and safe community. It is our goal that each of our pupils attends school regularly and on time, making the most of the opportunities available to them. In the Pontarddulais Comprehensive Cluster, we believe that promoting positive behaviour and excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school and wider Community.

In the Pontarddulais Comprehensive School Cluster, we promote positive behaviour and good attendance through our use of an appropriate curriculum which is geared to the child's age and ability. We aim to create a learning community, which benefits from the positive behaviour, regular attendance and well-being of its pupils and staff. Good attendance and behaviour are recognised and praised.

All children should be at school, on time, every day that it is open, unless the reason for absence is unavoidable. Schools have a legal duty to publish attendance figures and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty and responsibility to ensure that their children attend school on a regular basis.

It is acknowledged that all children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems, which arise with attendance, are best resolved between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend it is inappropriate to cover up this absence or to give into pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the parents and the child the impression that attendance does not matter and in fact will only make the situation worse.

ESTYN states:

"There is a strong link between attendance rates and examination success. Research shows that missing 17 days of school a year (an attendance rate of 91%) can result in a drop of a GCSE grade across all subjects. In the workplace unauthorised absences would not be accepted and we need to help our children and young people to prepare for the workplace"

"The statistical link between attendance and attainment is strong. In Wales in 2014, over 92% of pupils with NO absence attained the expected level 4 in English, mathematics and science at the end of key stage 2. For pupils with attendance between 80 – 90%, this figure drops notably to 77% of pupils. Based on the statutory number of 190 school days per year, a pupil with 90% attendance will miss 19 days of schooling each year. Between entering primary school in the reception class to the end of primary education in Year 6, a pupil with an average attendance of 90% will miss 133 full days of school. This is well over half a year of learning."

Non-attendance is an important issue that is treated seriously. However, every case is different and we will always try to support families to improve the situation. The Pontarddulais Comprehensive Cluster Attendance Framework is designed to help teachers, parents and pupils understand their rights, responsibilities and roles when it comes to school attendance. By working in partnership, it is our hope that every pupil achieves at least over 96%, whilst our expectation is that our pupils will be in school 100% of the time.

Purpose

The purpose of this framework is to:

- give attendance and punctuality a high priority;
- clearly define roles and responsibilities to ensure consistency and rigour;
- provide support, advice and guidance to families;
- use attendance data systematically to evaluate success;
- use rewards to celebrate good attendance;
- use sanctions sensitively and only when necessary;
- work in partnership with the Education Welfare Service to improve attendance;
- support pupils returning to school after significant periods of absence.

Commitments (rights, responsibilities and roles)

- The Pontarddulais Comprehensive Cluster Attendance Framework has its basis in Article 28 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). We believe that all young people have the right to education, based on equality of opportunity, and that the school, in partnership with parents and other parties, must take

measures to encourage regular school attendance and reduce rates of absenteeism.
- All schools within the Pontarddulais Cluster are 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 efficient full-time education.
- The Pontarddulais Cluster Attendance Framework is written to ensure compliance with statutory requirements.

All schools within the Pontarddulais Cluster will work in partnership with young people, parents and families so that pupils can benefit from the educational opportunities provided to them at school.

Key members of staff within each school include:
- School Attendance Leads
- Lead SLT from each of the Primary Schools

Interplay with Other Guidance
This framework is to be interpreted in accordance with Welsh Government Guidance and Codes of Practice that may be issued from time to time. It is acknowledged that new guidance may be issued by Welsh Government after the adoption of this policy.

It is expected that this policy will be interpreted in light of any subsequent formal guidance from Welsh Government. Should any subsequent guidance significantly change the operation of any aspect of this policy the Headteacher acting in conjunction with the Chair of Governors shall publish as soon as is practicable on the school website any temporary arrangements pending the policy being reviewed by the Governing Body. It is expected that only those sections affected by any subsequent guidance will require temporary arrangements and that the remainder of the policy shall remain in force until formal review.

Should the Local Authority change its Code of Practice relating to fixed penalty notices the same procedure applies as in the case of subsequent Welsh Government Guidance affecting any part of this policy. School staff and parents are able to view the current Code of Conduct arrangements on the City and County of Swansea public website.

Pontarddulais Cluster Attendance Framework

1 Registration

- To ensure accuracy and consistency, all pupils' attendance marks are registered electronically via the Bromcom system.
- Pupils are registered at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session.
- Teachers are required to record present or absent against each pupil's name. Absence marks must be followed up with the appropriate code being added once the reason for absence has been ascertained (see below).
- The individual schools, upon investigating incidents of absence, use the following codes as set out by the Welsh Government Guidance on School Attendance Codes 2010:

B Educated off-site	Approved Educational Activity
C Other authorised circumstance	Authorised Absence
D Dual-registered	Approved Educational Activity
E Excluded	Authorised Absence
F Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised Absence
G Family holiday (not agreed)	Unauthorised Absence
H Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised Absence
I Illness	Authorised Absence
J Interview	Approved Educational Activity
L Late (before registers close)	Present
M Medical appointment	Authorised absence
N No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised Absence
O Unauthorised absence	Unauthorised Absence
P Approved sporting activity	Approved Educational Activity
R Religious observance	Authorised Absence
S Study Leave	Authorised Absence
T Traveller absence	Authorised Absence
U Late after registers close	Unauthorised Absence
V Educational Visit or Trip	Approved Educational Activity
W Work Experience	Approved Educational Activity
Y Partial or enforced closure	Attendance not required
X Non-compulsory school age abs	Attendance not required
# School closed to all pupils	Attendance
Z Pupils not on role	Attendance not required

2. Absence, lateness and medical appointments

- Parents are asked to contact the school by telephone or email by 9.30am at the beginning of the first day of their child's absence. Individual schools monitor telephone calls each morning.
- Should a pupil be absent from school without explanation, the individual school will follow its own procedures for contacting home (telephone, text, etc) where a request will be sent to parents asking them to make contact with the school both as a safeguarding precaution and also to allow parents to indicate the reason for absence and provide an indication of when their child will be able to return to school.
- Lateness, especially if persistent should be treated in the same way as irregular attendance.
- Parents can be prosecuted if the issue of persistent lateness is not resolved.
- Lateness can be as damaging to a pupil's educational career as persistent absence can impact upon learning. For instance, in Y5 and Y6 learning takes place with Monster Phonics at the start of every day.
- If a child arrives late to school, parents or carers must sign them in as late in the main foyer. They will then be collected and taken to their class by a designated member of staff.
- If pupils are required to leave school within the day, the parent/ guardian must come to the main foyer / office in the Primary schools to 'sign out' the pupil and give a reason for leaving early.
- Whenever possible medical appointments should be booked outside of the school day.
- If appointments are not possible outside of the school day, then proof of the appointment will be required and pupils should return to school afterwards unless there is a valid medical reason given.
- Where an absence is authorised, the school will use the appropriate code to record the absence.
- If a pupil is feeling unwell during the school day, at this point, a decision will be made by the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher, as to whether the pupil should be sent home or not.

3. Authorisation of absence (including holidays)

- Absences may only be approved by authorised representatives of the school within the Pontarddulais Comprehensive Cluster.
- Schools will exercise caution in the authorisation of absence and parents must seek to provide the school with a full picture of the

reasons and in some circumstances documentary evidence relating to their child's absence.

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 states that all absences are to be treated as unauthorised until schools have agreed that a satisfactory explanation has been given which should normally be within one day.
- If a reason is accepted it needs to be recorded on the Bromcom system using the correct code.
- 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. Schools within the Pontarddulais Comprehensive Cluster will only authorise family holidays at the head teacher's discretion where parents are able to demonstrate that the individual circumstances warrant it being authorised.
- We, in Pontarddulais Comprehensive School Cluster are very clear about the effect of term time holiday absence on student attainment performance and progress as they will be at a severe disadvantage compared to their peers.
- The Social Worker and not the Foster Carer would ordinarily make requests for leave of absence for Children who are Looked After; if such a request is received, the school should liaise with the social worker and the Local Authority LAC team. It is noted however that Social Services in appropriate cases are moving towards a system of delegating more parental responsibility and day to day decision making to foster carers. This scheme of delegation is designed to ensure a LAC child can have a more normal family experience rather than having all decisions delayed and passed via social services. The school will accept a request from a foster carer upon production of a delegation form signed by social services.
- When assessing requests for a holiday, the Headteacher will consider:
- The age of the child
- The time of year of the proposed trip;
- The length and purpose of the time off;
- Any impact on continuity of learning;
- Overall attendance pattern;
- The stage of education

- The child's progress
- Any guidance issued by Welsh Government
- Balanced with
    - The circumstances of the family
    - The wishes and views of the parents; and
    - The purpose of the holiday

- The above list is not exhaustive and the Headteacher is entitled to take into account other factors which they feel to be relevant to the exercise of their discretion. Parents are expected to be clear at the time of making their request the family circumstances, purpose of the trip and any views they have.
- Should the holiday take the total absence due to holidays for the year to being over 10 days then only in exceptional circumstances should this holiday be granted.
- The test of exceptional circumstances applies only to holidays which accumulate over the course of the year to more than 10 days.
- Holidays which accumulate to 10 days or less throughout the year need to be considered in accordance with paragraph 3.3 above.
- The fundamental principle underlying this policy is that schools are open for 190 days a year. Children and families have 175 days off school to spend time together, including weekends and school holidays. Parents are to be actively encouraged to take time off and book holidays outside of term time as it is only with parental cooperation will it be possible to achieve and maintain a high level of attendance and attainment.
- If an event can reasonably be scheduled outside of term time, it would be normal for the Headteacher to closely scrutinise the individual circumstances of the request if it relates to a term time absence.
- Parents should not expect and head teachers should not assume that because a term time absence is agreed one year that it will be authorised the next. As children become older and progress through the stages of education there will inevitably be different circumstances applicable as they will be learning new topics and studying for a different progression step.
- Likewise, it should also not be assumed that if there is an extended family / friends holiday where the children attend different schools that if the term time absence is agreed in one school that the other

school will also agree the absence. The exercise of discretion lies solely with the individual Headteacher of any particular school and the circumstances and attendance records of individual children will inevitably differ.

- Head teachers also have the discretion to authorise only part of a term time absence. If the request is for a 10 day term time absence the head teacher can authorise 5 days and inform the parent that any days taken beyond the 5 days will be unauthorised.
- It will be good practice that our schools within the cluster periodically discusses on an anonymous basis the cases whereby the discretion has been exercised to authorise a term time absence and when it has been refused. Whilst the discretion to authorise term time absences ultimately lies with individual head teachers it would be helpful to discuss with other head teachers your approach to try and work towards achieving greater consistency across the cluster. Care should be taken when seeking consistency not to develop rigid rules or blanket approaches to absences and the head teacher must always have in mind that each request must be considered in light of its individual circumstances.
- For non-holiday related requests for absence the Headteacher should consider the Welsh Government School Attendance Codes Guidance 2010.

4. Early Intervention

- Pontarddulais Primary School recognises the important role that parents play in promoting good school attendance. The school therefore seeks to provide professional, quality information and advice, communicated frequently by text message, social media, leaflets, parents' evenings, school reports and the school website.
- When a pupil has been absent for an extended period, they are welcomed positively on their return. Where possible work will be provided to ensure that the pupil can keep as up to date as possible with the curriculum.
- The EWO, in conjunction with all the schools in the cluster, will ensure that attendance and punctuality is given a high priority throughout the duration of pupils' compulsory education.
- There are a range of initiatives and rewards that can be utilised across Swansea schools and some examples include:
    - Certificates- for attendance, punctuality, best achievement, most improved attendance etc

    - Head teachers and school staff are encouraged to try new strategies and continually seek to try and promote positive attendance.
- Hierarchy of Sanctions
    - Schools within the Pontarddulais Comprehensive Cluster always seek to resolve matters of poor attendance through effective partnership working with parents. On the rare occasion that the school is unable to elicit from parents the support deemed necessary to ensure pupils attend school, sanctions may be used. In the first instance, parents may receive letters and questionnaires which:
        - Request reasons for their child's absence;
        - Request medical evidence for their child's absence;
        - Express concern about their child's absence and offer advice and support;
        - Advise them about their child's lateness and ask for their support in getting their child to school on time;
        - Advise them that the school has taken the decision not to authorise an absence and the consequences of this in relation to penalty notices and involvement of EWS.;
        - Advise them of their legal responsibilities to ensure their child attends school regularly;
        - Advise them that they are at risk of receiving a Fixed Penalty Notice;
        - Advise them that a referral has been made to the Educational Welfare Service.
    - In some circumstances following warning letters, the school may seek further advice and recommendation from EWS or request that the EWS issue parents/carers with a Fixed Penalty Notice under The Education (Penalty Notices) (Wales) Regulations 2013. The school should warn a parent when their child's attendance is approaching the criteria for a fixed penalty notice. Once the criteria is met for a fixed penalty notice the Headteacher should consider whether a warning is sufficient or contact should be made with the EWS to discuss issuing a fixed penalty notice or prosecuting the parent for failing to secure regular attendance.
    - The criteria for issuing a fixed penalty notice is set by the Local Authority. As the criteria may be reviewed or updated the school should always ensure they are working with the most up

to date version of any code of conduct. The code of conduct can be located on the City and County of Swansea website.

- http://www.swansea.gov.uk/educationpenalty
- The criterion for considering a fixed penalty notice is currently as follows:
  - when a pupil has a minimum of 10 sessions (five school days) that have been lost due to unauthorised absences during the current term and this brings the pupils overall pupil attendance to below 90% in the school year to date (these absences do not have to be consecutive);
  - unauthorised absences of at least 10 sessions (5 school days) due to holidays in term-time if the absences take the pupils overall school attendance to below 90% in the school year to date (these absences do not have to be consecutive);
  - persistent late arrival at school i.e. after the register has closed ('U' code as in the Codes Guidance Document 2010). Persistent for the purpose of this document means at least 10 sessions of late arrival within a term; these do not need to be consecutive but should bring the pupils overall school attendance to under 90% in the school year to date;
- Should the Local Authority alter the criteria for issuing a fixed penalty notice the newly published code of conduct will take precedence over the criteria set out in this paragraph. The school should be sure to ensure that parents are made aware of any changes made to the code of conduct via their school website or newsletters and the school should as soon as is reasonably practicable revise this policy to reflect the new criteria.
- 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. A referral might be made when, for example:
  - A pattern of irregular unauthorised attendance has developed;
  - A period of non-attendance has become established with the pupil attendance dropping to below 90% with unauthorised absences.

        - There is a lack of parental cooperation in ensuring a child's regular attendance; or
        - A pattern of truancy is persisting.
    - Schools within the Pontarddulais Comprehensive Cluster 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.
    - Before considering whether to make a referral to the local authority, action should be taken by the school to improve a pupils' attendance and investigate and address any underlying cause of problems.

5. Monitoring and evaluation

- The HT and attendance officer and EWO are responsible for maintaining accurate attendance records through Bromcom for each pupil.
- An EWO meets regularly with every school in the cluster to discuss individual cases of absenteeism, truancy or lateness and reflect upon the effectiveness of interventions to date. Decisions are taken at this time as to whether individual cases meet the criteria for referral to the Educational Welfare Service. All EWO's will strive to promote consistency when working with a family that might have children in more than one cluster school.
- The appropriate member of staff in each school will meet with the Educational Welfare Officer as required to review cases and seek support. The Educational Welfare Officer is responsible for contributing to the Pontarddulais Comprehensive Cluster's drive for school effectiveness through providing advice on proven good practice and promoting attendance.
- Attendance data is reviewed at the end of the academic year by the Senior Leadership Teams of the Pontarddulais Comprehensive cluster schools and is used to populate the Self-Evaluation document and inform the School Development Plan
- The school and EWO should make use of attendance data to try and identify trends or problems and to evaluate the effectiveness of attendance strategies.

School Targets

- Parents are informed of their child's attendance via reports.
- Attendance is reported to governors in every termly meeting via the head teacher report.

School-based Procedures
The following strategies are implemented throughout the school in order to improve standards of attendance and punctuality at Pontarddulais Primary:

Attendance Officer & Admin Team:
Registers are monitored by admin staff and the headteacher first thing each morning and "first call" implemented for any 'N' codes (no reason for absence). Parents can be contacted either by parentmail app / email and telephone call.

Daily Monitoring Processes:
1. Check telephone messages
2. Check Pontarddulais Primary School emails
3. Check InVentry (Signing in system)
4. Update registers (codes and reasons)
5. L code should be used for lates between 9am – 9:30am.
6. U code should be used for lates after 9:30am.
7. Number of minutes late should be recorded in the "minutes late" box
8. @ 9:20am check for any remaining N codes and collect absence data from teachers
9. Update register with any new information
10. Any remaining N codes – communication to home to clarify reason for absence.
11. If a child is sent home unwell or leaves to attend an appointment during the day the office will ensure that the register is coded appropriately when the parent or guardian arrives at the main entrance to collect the child. Parents to ensure that their child is signed out of the electronic system.

Classroom Responsibilities:
1. The responsibility of completing the register remains with the Teacher / TA until 9:00am in the morning registration period and 1:00pm for the afternoon period.
2. The office will then take over any updates after 9:00am and 1:00pm.

3. There are two register periods that should be undertaken the same way, to establish children who are present, onsite and safe.
    a. **AM Register period = 8:50am to 9:30am**
    b. **PM Register period = 12.50pm to 1:30pm**
4. A "/" (present) mark for children arriving between 8:40am to 8:50am
5. A "L" (late) mark for a child arriving between 8:50am and 9:30am
6. Completion and updating of Fire Registers throughout the day.
7. The Bromcom system is web based and so will automatically save information inputted from the class staff member.
8. Please do not alter any codes that have been entered by the office.
9. The following codes are the only ones that class staff can use:
    a. / = Present
    b. X = Absent
    c. ***All other codes will be inputted by the school office***

Parental Responsibilities:

- Contact the school office on 01792 882383 to record the reason for absence.
- You should state your child's name, class, reason for absence and expected return date.
- **If you are unable to predict how long your child will be away from school you should report the absence each day until their return.**
- If you wish to request absence from school for a planned event such as a family event or holidays, you will be required to complete a **Request for Absence Form** which can be obtained from the school office. Request for absence forms should be completed before the planned absence.
- Please note that failure to notify the school of an absence will result in an "unauthorised" mark.
- Multiple options available for absence reporting:
    - Phone – can leave voicemail message at any time
    - Email - PontarddulaisPrimarySchool@pontarddulais-pri.swansea.sch.uk with reason for absence
    - In person – when dropping off siblings an absence can be reported directly to a member of admin staff in the main office. Please do not notify staff members on the door when dropping off siblings.

Ongoing Monitoring Processes:

- Regular meetings with Education Welfare Officer and Family Liaison Officer.
- Weekly attendance meetings during the Admin Meetings (Headteacher & Admin Team).
- Admin Team rigorously monitor the 'I' register code.
- Lates on InVentry monitoring. Persistent lateness monitored regularly.
- Useful information/statistics regarding attendance on school website, newsletters, noticeboards, emails and information letters sent out regularly.
- 'G & H' codes used for term-time holidays in accordance with LA guidelines.
- Questionnaires sent out to parents whose child falls below 90% attendance asking how school can support with improvement
- Regular monitoring of registers by admin staff and discussion with class teachers in order to identify any issues as early as possible.
- Fortnightly meetings with EWO (more frequent if necessary) to discuss pupil referrals.
- Good relationships between staff and parents cultivated. This allows parents to feel confident in asking for help when attendance becomes a problem (e.g. family illness; disabled siblings). The school will endeavour to help wherever possible.
- The school can identify pupils/classes where attendance is poor by:
    - Ensuring attendance data in Bromcom is timely and accurate (daily monitoring by admin staff)
    - Using this data to produce reports to use in discussion with Headteacher and EWO

Incentivising:

- Weekly Class Winner Award – every awards assembly finishes with notification of the class with the best attendance of the week from Reception to Year 2 and Year 3 to Year 6. The winning class receives a certificate and recognition from the rest of the school.
- Weekly class attendance is highlighted on a board outside the school canteen for childrent to see and receive recognition on.

Termly & Annual Monitoring Strategies:

1. Undertake regular reviews of attendance codes in order to reduce persistent absenteeism.

2. Undertake termly analysis of broken weeks to establish patterns and persistence.
3. During Pontarddualis Primary Review Fortnight the attendance officer and SLT analyse attendance issues and strategies for improving. Focusing on:

- Persistent absenteeism
- Broken weeks
- Patterns of absence or punctuality
- Holiday requests
- Illness
- Cohort and phase issues
- Coding queries
- Staff training requirements
- Vulnerability issues

Contingency Planning:

In the event of the absence of the admin team the following procedures will be followed:

1. Headteacher to undertake the daily monitoring process as described above.
2. Headteacher to update the admin team on their return regarding any concerns or important information.