Troedyrhiw Community Primary School

Attendance Policy



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1. Introduction

At Troedyrhiw Community Primary School, believe that regular school attendance and punctuality are essential for pupils to achieve their full educational potential, wellbeing and wider development.

We are committed to working in partnership with parents/carers, pupils, the Local Authority and external agencies to promote positive attendance habits and provide early support where barriers to attendance arise.

This policy reflects current **Welsh Government legislation and guidance (up to March 2026)** and supports children's rights under:

- **Article 28 – United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC):**
  Every child has the right to education.

2. Legal Framework (Wales)

Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their child attends school regularly. This policy complies with, but is not limited to, the following legislation and guidance:

- **Education Act 1996 –** Sections 7, 437 and 444
- **Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010**
- **Education (Penalty Notices) (Wales) Regulations 2013**
- **Senedd Cymru/Welsh Government Guidance: Inclusion and Pupil Support (updated March 2026)**
- **Belonging, Engaging and Participating Guidance**

3. Why Regular Attendance Matters

Regular attendance: -

- Improves attainment and achievement
- Supports pupils' well-being and safeguarding
- Builds positive routines and resilience
- Reduces risk of social exclusion and disengagement

Miss school… Miss out!

Improving educational outcomes for our children and young people is a key priority for the school as well as the Local Authority. There is a clear link between attendance and attainment, therefore it is vital that the root cause of low or non-attendance is discussed and supported. At Troedyrhiw, we aim to develop positive relationships with our families so that we can meet and support one another to address any concerns relating to attendance.

4. Types of Absence

For pupils of compulsory school ages (children reach compulsory school age on the first "school day, term time" following their 5th birthday, until the last Friday in June in the school year they turn 16), absences are classified by the school and not parents, as either: -

4.1 Authorised Absence

Absences that the school considers unavoidable, including: -

- Illness (short term)
- Medical or dental appointments (where these cannot be made outside of school hours, e.g. consultant appointments. General dental check-ups and eye screening appointments should be made outside of school hours)

- Exceptional circumstances agreed by the Headteacher

If a pupil is frequently absent or their attendance is low, school are likely to ask for medical evidence.

The school may request medical evidence for: -

- Repeated absences
- Patterns of absences e.g. same day each week
- Absences of 4 of more consecutive days or if attendance rates are lower than 93%
- Absences that occur either side of a holiday

Medical evidence may include:

- appointment cards
- Prescriptions
- or photographs of medication showing the name/date.

<u>Please do not send in photographs of pupils unwell</u>

4.2 Unauthorised Absence

Absences not considered acceptable by the school, including: -

- Holidays during term time
- Truancy
- Unexplained absences
- Persistent lateness after registers close
- Absence where requested evidence is not provided
- Persistent leaving school early

Unauthorised absences may lead to school monitoring proceedings and the implementation of an agreed action plan to improve attendance. Initially, the school will work with families to improve attendance. **However, should attendance continue to be a concern, the school may**

refer the matter to the Local Authority to initiate statutory proceedings, including Fixed Penalty Notices or court proceedings.

5. Holidays During Term Time

Parents/carers do **not** have an automatic right to take pupils out of school during term time. For any holidays that are taken during term time, parents must inform the School Clerks in advance. As per our policy, parents may request up to a MAXIMUM OF 5 DAYS per academic year for holidays. This will be authorised if a pupil's attendance is 95% or above at the time of the holiday. If the pupil's attendance is below 95%, parents/guardians will be subject to a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) from the Local Authority (5 days taken consecutively or separately in the same term).

Exceptional circumstances may be considered only at the Governing Body's discretion. If any parent/carer feels they are eligible for exceptional circumstances, this must be applied prior to booking holidays during term time.

If parents are separated (and both have Parental Responsibility - PR) and they wish to apply for exceptional circumstances, both parents must agree to this application.

6. Absence Procedures

If a child is absent, parents/carers must: -

- Contact the school on the first day of absence by 9:30am
- Provide reason for the absence and expected date of return
- Continue to provide daily updates unless otherwise agreed

If a child is absent, the school will: -

- Contact parents/carers by phone/text if no message is received by 10am
- Record the absence using Welsh Government attendance codes
- Make welfare checks where appropriate
- Escalate concerns to the Headteacher and consider further escalations to the Local Authority where necessary

It is vital that parents ensure the office is informed of any changes to personal details e.g. Contact names, numbers and addresses. This is to ensure that our system remains up-to-date and accurate for safeguarding purposes.

7. Recording Attendance

Registers are taken twice daily in the morning and the afternoon. This is to be made aware: -

- Who is absent day-by-day
- Patterns of behaviour – If a learner's missing some lessons, some parts of the day or times of the year

All registers are completed in line with Welsh Government coding. The data from registers are accessible to the Local Authority daily. They also monitor persistent absenteeism and request school action updates from this type of data.

The Local Authority also provides the school with multiple reports concerning attendance – this is to provide the school with updated information on any proceedings picked up by them and to request further information from the school on any specific pupils/families.

8. Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs)

Under the Education (Penalty Notices) (Wales) Regulations 2013, Local Authorities can issue Fixed Penalty Notices as an alternative to taking legal action against parent/carers when responding to absenteeism. An FPN may be issued when: -

- A minimum of 10 unauthorised sessions (5 school days) are recorded in a term
- There is an unauthorised holiday absence
- Persistent lateness occurs
- Parents fail to engage with school attendance report

The current penalty / fine amounts are: -
A fixed penalty notice fine will be sent at £120 pounds however if paid within 28 days this is reduced to £60 pounds. The parent has up to 42 days to pay the fine.

NB: Fines are issued **per parent per child**, if both parents have parental responsibility. Both names can be on 1 warning letter, but fines are issued individually.

9. Lateness

We expect all students to attend school on time and promptly. The only agreed circumstances are if pupils have any early appointments (GP, speech and language) or if a reduced timetable has been put in place. The school timetable is as below: -

- Classroom doors open – 8:45am
- School day begins – 8:55am
- Registers taken – 9:00am / 1pm
- Registers close – 9:30am / 1:30pm

Any pupils arriving after 9am will receive a **late mark** and arrivals after 9:30am in the morning or 1:30pm in the afternoon, the session will be recorded as an **unauthorised absence.**

Persistent lateness is monitored and may result in the following: -

- Warning letters being issued as per the school's Attend & Achieve process
- Meetings with the School Clerk/Attendance Lead Officer (ALO) – Miss E Jones
- Referral to the Local Authority to carry out statutory proceedings (where applicable) such as issuing FPNs

We understand there are some circumstances where pupils may need to leave school early, however pupils are expected to remain in school for the full daily session. Any pupils who are collected early will be monitored closely – this is to ensure that pupils receive their full education and do not miss any vital sessions in their learning. The ALO and Headteacher will work with families if this becomes a concern.

10. Supporting and Improving Attendance

As part of our strategy with supporting and improving attendance, we adopt an early intervention approach which is monitored daily. We ensure communication is regular with families, offering as much support as possible to any families who may be struggling or who may be unsure of our attendance processes as a school. This is done by holding parent/carer meetings and implementing support plans with clear targets for support and improvement.

As part of our Attend & Achieve strategy, parents/carers are informed each term via Red, Amber & Green letters on which category their child currently falls into. This is to ensure that families are aware of which category their child currently sits, and helps the ALO to understand which families would benefit from school and/or local service intervention to try and improve the low attendance.

The ALO also works closely with class teachers and the Headteacher to understand why individual pupils' attendance may be low, to understand if there are any underlying factors/barriers and whether any support is required from the school or local services. The school will do their utmost to help improve the situation, as supportive partnership with parents/carers is always the preferred approach before any type of referral and/or enforcement.

10.1 Vulnerable Groups

The school takes a sensitive and inclusive approach to all families, but understand particular care is needed with the following groups: -

- Children Looked After
- Traveller families (as defined by Section 444(6) Education Act 1996)
- Pupils with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) or medical needs
- Pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL)

11. Rewards and Promotion of Good Attendance

The importance of attendance is consistently pushed at Troedyrhiw Community Primary School, and we continue to work closely with families and our pupils to help them understand its importance.

Within the school, attendance is celebrated by providing certificates for excellent and improved attendance, class attendance recognition, celebration assemblies as well as termly and annual rewards.

12. Roles and Responsibilities

12.1 The Attendance Lead Officer (ALO)

The Attendance Lead Officer monitors all pupils' attendance daily and pupils below the 92% threshold are targeted for improvement. On a weekly basis, the ALO meets with the Headteacher to discuss pupils' attendance and agree to any actions that are deemed necessary.

The ALO will make a referral to the Local Authority when: -

- a pattern of irregular attendance is either continuing or worsening (sporadic days or blocks of absence)
- parents do not accept their responsibilities for ensuring the child attends school and are refusing to discuss ways of improving attendance with the school
- condoned unjustified absence is increasingly a problem
- if there are concerns involving the welfare of children
- parents who have been asked to provide medical evidence fail to do so

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the Local Authority themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Education directorate.

The ALO works closely with the below individuals who also have their own responsibilities concerning attendance: -

- Headteacher – Strategic responsibility and decision-making
- Governing Body – Oversight and policy approval
- Local Authority Education Welfare Service – Statutory support
- Parents/carers – Ensuring regular attendance
- Pupils – Attending school regularly and on time

13. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

Attendance data is reviewed regularly by Senior Leaders – including fortnightly meetings between the ALO and the Headteacher. Attendance reports are also shared with Governors termly (Headteacher Termly Report) and termly meetings between the ALO and Link Governor are also held.

This policy is monitored by the Headteacher and is reviewed annually following consultation with staff, parents and Governing Body. This policy is also reviewed annually following any legislative changes.