

# CAEDRAW PRIMARY SCHOOL



*'Looking to the Future'*

## Attendance Policy

Date agreed: 10th April 2024

Next review: April 2025

Signed: Headteacher: D M Williams

Chair of Governors: Mr P Jones

## **Introduction:**

At Caedraw Primary School we consider that regular attendance and good time keeping are crucial for effective learning and continuity of experience. All school staff are committed to working with parents / carers and pupils and see this as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

This is a successful school and every child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the school to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that we make sure that all our children attend regularly and this Policy sets out how both the school and parents /carers together can achieve this. The Attendance Policy at Caedraw Primary has been discussed and agreed with staff and the Governing Body, taking account of Welsh Assembly Government's guidance on Inclusion and Pupil Support, and good practice identified by the Local Authority.

### **Why Regular Attendance is so important:**

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning.

It is a legal obligation of all parents / carers to ensure that their child attends school regularly and failure to do so could result in court proceedings being implemented against them under section 444(1) or 1 (a) of the 1996 Education Act.

Annex A of this policy provides further detail of the legal requirements governing school attendance.

### **Understanding types of absence:**

Where children are of compulsory school age (5-16) are registered at school, the law says they should attend regularly.

Registers must show whether each pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off site, or absent. In addition, where a pupil of compulsory school age is absent from school, this absence has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, either by telephone or in writing.

Authorised absence means, either the school has given approval; or that a satisfactory explanation has been given afterwards. Registers need to be up to date so that schools can account for all pupils particularly in an emergency.

Authorised absences are morning or afternoon sessions away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments, which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause. It is the school's discretion as to whether an absence will be authorised.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed by the Headteacher.
- frequent sickness absence without medical evidence

As a school, we must inform the LA at agreed intervals of the name and address of any registered pupils who fail to attend the school regularly or have been absent continuously or has been absent continuously for 10 or more school days without a reason .

Further details of the registration processes operating at Caedraw Primary School can be found in ANNEX B

**Absence Procedures:**

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence;
- Notify the school of the reason for the absence and likely day of return to school.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone/text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the Education Inclusion Officer if attendance falls below 92%.

**Contact on the first day of absence**

As a school we do emphasise the need for all parents / carers, to inform us as soon as possible if your child will not be attending school on a particular day, much in the same way that you would notify an employer of your non-attendance at work.

If a pupil is absent without explanation and no message has been left with the school by 9:30 a.m., a telephone call/text will be made/sent. If we are unable to get an answer, we will make a record and it may be reported to the Education Inclusion Officer.

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. So help us to help you and your son / daughter by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

**Family Holidays during Term Time**

Parents do not have an automatic right to withdraw pupils for holidays while schools are in session.

As a school we do not operate a 'blanket approval' policy.

We consider each request individually, and we take into account relevant factors such as:

- the age of the child (under 5 as non-statutory school age);
- the time of year proposed for the trip;

- its nature and parental wishes (e.g. exceptional circumstances);
- the overall attendance pattern of the pupil;
- the child's stage of education and progress.

The following examples for granting an absence for exceptional circumstances can be utilised as illustrative guidance;

- A bereavement of a close family member ,
- To visit a close family member who is terminally ill,
- A prison visit for a close member of the family,
- For those whose holidays are governed by strict working timetables e.g. Service Personnel and at times the Police (e.g. when leave was cancelled due to NATO).
- For the wedding of an immediate family member.

Where school does not grant leave of absence and the pupil still goes on holiday, we will record the absence as unauthorised (G code).

If parents fail to abide by the agreement reached with the school and keep a child away for a period in excess of that agreed, we will record any extra time as unauthorised.

You may wish to note that schools may delete from roll a pupil who fails to return within 10 school days of the agreed return date unless there is a good reason for the continued absence, such as illness.

In addition, pupils under the age of 5 may also be removed from roll (Nursery class) if they fail to attend school regularly.

Where there are difficulties with holidays in the term time, consideration should be given to:

- raising the issue at parents / carers meetings
- issuing a letter on the subject to parents / carers

Only in exceptional circumstances will the school agree leave of absence in excess of 10 school days in any school year (and 10 days should not be regarded as the norm in any event). Where a lengthy absence is agreed, we will discuss timing issues with parents, including the possibility of making up a study pack to be completed while away.

### **Lateness**

As a school we actively discourage late arrivals and staff must be alert to emerging patterns of late arrival that may provide grounds for prosecution. We work closely with our Education Inclusion Officer around lateness issues, periodically undertaking lateness monitoring initiative. ALL late comers should report to the main offices on arrival, where the time of entry is recorded.

How we manage lateness:

The school day starts at 8.50 am and we expect your child to be in class at that time. Children should therefore arrive at school by 8.50am to ensure a prompt start.

Registers are marked by 9.00 am and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At 9.30am the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. Persistent lateness is recorded by the school and parents that regularly bring their children to school late will receive a termly letter; if there is no improvement after two terms, this may be referred to the Education Inclusion Officer.

If your child has a persistent late record that shows no improvement you will be asked to meet with the Headteacher/Deputy Head teacher and/or Education Inclusion Officer to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time. Parents may also be fined for regular lateness. Warning letters will be issued and if no improvement, fixed penalty notices are issued.

#### Good attendance

Pupils with 100% attendance for any half term will receive a certificate in recognition of good attendance, this is to encourage pupils who may not have 100% attendance overall, but have made improvements that half term. Certificates are also awarded for improved attendance.

In weekly Celebration assemblies, pupils with 98% attendance for the week will be placed into a draw. Three names picked from the draw will be given a golden coin for the vending machine.

Early intervention is crucial. Parents / carers and pupils need to know from day one the importance of regular and punctual attendance and proper behaviour- the message must be reinforced regularly in order to develop the right attitudes in children.

Details of activities to promote regular attendance at Caedraw Primary School can be found in Annex C

#### Monitoring attendance/punctuality

If your child is becoming regularly late or their attendance is not improving, we will contact you to discuss the matter with you, and to see what can be done to improve the situation.

If attendance/punctuality still does not improve the Headteacher and Attendance Lead Officer will request a parent interview.

### **Fixed penalty notices**

Under the Education (Penalty notices) (Wales) regulations 2013 Local Authorities have been given power to issue Fixed penalty notices as an alternative to taking legal action against parents when responding to absenteeism. A FPN may be issued when: a pupil has a minimum of ten unauthorised sessions recorded during a term the school; is absent from school without an acceptable reason regularly; for unauthorised holiday absence or is persistently late to school.

Prior to the FPN being issued parents will be issued with a written warning ; if there is an improvement in attendance and no unauthorised absences during a 15 day period, the FPN will not be issued. This 15 day warning does not apply to a FPN issued for an authorised holiday absence.

Absences that are persistent through illness will require a medical certificate from the family doctor and/or may be referred to the senior clinical medical officer for the local authority. If the penalty is not paid in 42 days of issue, the Local Authority will be obliged to start legal proceedings under section 444 (1) Education Act 1996.

### **The Attendance Lead Officer**

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

As a school we will make a referral to the LA EIO 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.
- Parents request excessive authorised absence
- 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 EIO 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 Local Education Authority.

### **Attendance Targets**

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

Our attendance target is 95%.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made. We will send out information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas and we ask for your full support.

The people responsible for attendance matters at Caedraw Primary School are:

Miss D Williams, Head teacher

Miss M Williams Deputy Head Teacher

Miss Chelsie Harris, LA Education Inclusion Officer

Mrs B Morgan, Governor with responsibility for attendance

Additional information: LA Pupil Attendance at School Handbook 2017-2020 or contact Education Inclusion Officer on 01685 724607

### **Evaluation and Review**

This policy is monitored by the head teacher and is reviewed annually following consultation with staff, parents and Governing Body.

#### **ANNEX A - The legal background**

In compliance with National Assembly for Wales Guidance Circular 47/2006 'Inclusion and Pupil Support'

#### **Regular School Attendance**

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, the parent is responsible for making sure that their child of compulsory school age (5- 6) receives efficient full-time education that is suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs the child may have. This can be by regular attendance at school or by education otherwise (the parent can choose to educate their child at home).

If it appears to the LEA that a child of compulsory school age is not receiving a suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise, they must begin procedures for issuing a School Attendance Order under Section 437 of the Education Act 1996.

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

Since March 2000 there has been a further offence where a parent, knowing that their child is failing to attend regularly at school, fails without reasonable justification to cause him to attend (Education Act 1996, Section 444(1A) as amended by the Criminal Justice and Court Service Act 2000). This offence requires proof that the parent knew of their child's non-attendance and failed to act. Under this aggravated offence a warrant can be issued compelling a parent to attend court and conviction can lead to a custodial sentence.

The special position of Traveller families is also recognised in law (section 444(6), Education Act 1996). Traveller parents are protected from conviction if the parent can demonstrate that:

- he or she is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as requires travel from place to place;
- the child has attended at a school as a registered pupil as regularly as the nature of that trade or business permits;
- the child, where aged six or over, has attended school for at least 200 sessions (half days) during the preceding twelve months.

#### **Registration Practices**

The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 (as amended by the 1997 regulations) set out the requirements on schools to maintain admission and attendance registers.

Schools must keep two registers: an admission register, which serves as the school roll, and an attendance register. The admission register should include details of pupils from the date they have been admitted to the school.

Attendance registers must be called twice a day: at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session.

The register must show whether each pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, or absent. In addition, where a pupil of compulsory school age is absent, the register must also show whether the absence was authorised by the school or unauthorised.

Authorised absence means either the school has given approval in advance; or that a satisfactory explanation has been given afterwards (the absence should be classified as unauthorised until that time).

Any absence that is not authorised by the school should be recorded as an unauthorised absence. Under the Education Act 1996 prosecutions for unauthorised absences can only be pursued on the basis of unauthorised absences.

### **Target setting**

New regulations came into force in Wales on 1st February 2006 setting out the requirements on schools to set targets on school attendance.

The Education (School Performance and Unauthorised Absence Targets)

(Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 were introduced under Section 53 of the Education Act 2002, which amended Section 63 of the SSFA 1998.

Under these regulations governing bodies of every maintained school (other than a special school established in a hospital) will be required to set targets for the reduction of all absences of the day pupils at the school. They require the following targets for total absences to be set and submitted to the LEA by no later than the 31st December in each school year:

- A final target for the next school year;
- A reviewed target for the school year next but one (to be reviewed in light of actual outcomes in the previous school year); and
- A provisional target for the school year next but two.

Regulations also place a duty on schools to publish within the annual report for every school year the following information:

- Actual absence rate in the relevant school year;
- All absence targets (as outlined above); and
- A statement setting out the extent to which the actual absence rate met the final target set for the same school year.

### **ANNEX B – Attendance Process at Caedraw Primary School**

Some main principles and school guidelines are outlined below:

- Registers are to be marked using the SIMS system
- Registers must be completed at the beginning of each session.
- Pupils attendance should be recorded using the appropriate code
- Lateness- Registers will be closed within ten minutes after the beginning of each session. Pupils arriving late during this period will be registered as late L but included in the present total on the register. Pupils arriving after 10 minutes have elapsed should be recorded as unauthorised absence
- An annual record of attendance will be made and percentages of unauthorised absences and total number of pupils recorded as being absent without authority for each year group retained.
- Parents are expected to inform the school verbally or in writing on the first day of absence and a record kept by the class teacher. Telephone messages are to be passed on to the class teacher and retained. To promote good attendance, Attendance Awards are to be presented both termly and at the end of the school year. Full attendance if a pupil is present all year (the only exceptions being medical appointments). Full annual attendance is celebrated with a small presentation gift along with certificate.

- Should the parents still fail to provide a reason for absence then a referral should be made to the Head teacher who will then follow up the issue with the EIO who will visit the child's home.
- Where the child has been absent for some time and the school has not been informed the teacher should notify the Head teacher who will then refer to the EIO.
- Any concerns felt by the class teacher should be expressed to the Head teacher prior to the scheduled EIO visit (fortnightly).
- Governors are informed of attendance rates in termly meetings and are involved in setting school targets for attendance in line with regulations and LEA guidance.

#### ANNEX C – Good Practice Initiative Analysis

##### FORMAL ACTIVITIES

- In school incentives
- Celebration certificates
- Punctuality checks (head teacher or EIO)
- Texts/ Phone calls/ visits to absent pupils' homes
- EIO visits homes

##### INFORMAL ACTIVITIES

- Assembly talks
- Class chats
- PSE lessons – creating pride in our school/fun activities and interesting lessons
- Staff support attendance policy
- Talk to parents

##### SCHOOL LITERATURE

- Newsletters
- Website
- Parent letters
- School brochure
- Parents meetings
- New parents meetings

##### STATUTORY SUPPORT

- EIO (early involvement)
- Legal system, possibility of prosecution as last resort