Penygaer Primary School

Attendance Policy

September 2026

DESIGNATED STAFF MEMBER WITH REPSOBSIBILITY FOR MONITORING ATTENDANCE

HEADTEACHER: Mrs Helen Conway

CONTACT: 01554 750900

DEPUTY STAFF MEMBER WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR MONITORING ATTENDANCE AT THE SCHOOL

ADMIN: Miss Charlotte De Slegte

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NOMINATED MEMBER OF THE GOVERNING BODY FOR MONITORING ATTENDANCE

GOVENER: Ms Joanna Isaac

Penygaer Primary School aims to create a learning community which benefits from the positive behaviour, regular attendance and well-being of its pupils and staff.

All children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for absence is unavoidable. Equally, parents have a duty and responsibility to ensure that their children attend school on a regular basis. The Local Authority (LA) has a duty to promote and enforce attendance.

Schools are required under the Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 to take an attendance register twice a day: at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. The accuracy of the register is important to support any statutory interventions that may be required. It should be noted that it is an offence not to maintain accurate registers.

It is acknowledged that all children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems which arise with attendance are initially best resolved in discussions between the school, the parents/carers and the child.

RATIONALE

- The school bases its attendance policy on the guidelines as set out by the All Wales Attendance Framework (2011).
- Whilst the legal responsibility for regular school attendance rests with parents, the school shares with them, and the LA, responsibility for encouraging good attendance and improving poor attendance.
- The school is required by law to maintain specific records and to produce specified information on the attendance of pupils.

- The impact of poor attendance is profound. Absence and exclusion from school are associated with a higher risk of poor educational achievement and attainment and can also impact on pupil wellbeing.
- The LA has a statutory duty to ensure that a child for whom they are responsible is receiving suitable education and, if a registered pupil at school, this means attending school regularly and on time.

OBJECTIVES

- To promote good attendance as this is vital to educational achievement.
- To convey clearly to parents and pupils that: o regular attendance is essential;
    - unauthorised absence and persistent lateness are not acceptable;
    - only the headteacher in the context of the law can approve absence;
    - parental condoned, unjustifiable absence will be investigated and will be recorded as unauthorised absence.
- To keep records of attendance which:
    - clearly distinguish between authorised and unauthorised absence by pupils;
    - provide accurate information on actual attendance to enable monitoring and evaluation of school attendance rates through centrally held statistics.
- To build on existing good practice that fosters a positive attitude to good attendance by:
    - responding rapidly to pupil absence;
    - recognising pupils who maintain 'excellent', 'good' and 'improving' attendance records.
- To be sensitive to situations where regular attendance patterns are disrupted by external factors such as family bereavement.

STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES

The legal framework governing attendance is set by the Education Acts and their associated regulations (which relate to schools and Pupil Referral Units).

> *Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that "…the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/ her to receive full time education suitable to his/ her age, aptitude and ability and to any special education needs he/she may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise…" Section 444 further states "…the parent of a child of compulsory school age registered at school and failing to attend regularly is guilty of an offence punishable by law…".*

Compulsory school age means that children and young people should attend school from the start of the first term commencing after their fifth birthday and are of compulsory school age until after the last Friday in June of the school year in which they have their 16th birthday.

PRACTICE AND PROCEDURES

The school encourages good attendance and punctuality by:

- Creating a caring and nurturing environment whereby pupils' feels safe and appreciated as young people;
- Ensuring that attendance and punctuality are recognised within the whole school reward system;
- developing positive relationships with parents / carers and external agencies working with the family/ pupil;
- monitoring and evaluating the early intervention strategies adopted by the school;
- working closely with multi agency colleagues and the School Safeguarding and Attendance Team to improve attendance and punctuality;
- monitoring attendance data and trends and reporting this information termly to the Governing Body.

Specific actions

- The school will make its policy on attendance available to parents and pupils.
- The school will also communicate the importance of attendance to parents and pupils through assemblies, the school prospectus, newsletters and the school website / Facebook page.
- If no contact is received by the parent/ carer of an absent pupil on the first morning of the absence, a telephone call is made by the school's administration staff to investigate the reason for the absence. If the school is not able to contact the family, then this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (N no reason yet provided for absence).
- Details of the absence are recorded, if later received, and discussed with the headteacher and a decision will be made with regards to authorisation as soon as possible. The headteacher may ask the School Safeguarding and Attendance Team for advice with regards to this but the decision to authorise any absence remains with the school.
- If the pupil is registered as a Looked After Child or on the Child Protection register and absent from school without reason, then the school should contact Children's Services as soon as possible.
- When a pupil returns to school from an absence, but no explanation is offered, a letter will be sent to the parent.

- A letter will also be sent out where there are concerns about attendance or if a pupil is persistently late to school.
- It is essential that, when school staff feel that a worrying pattern of non-attendance is emerging that they endeavour to meet with families and work closely with them to ensure that the appropriate level of intervention and support can be offered to the parent/carer and child to improve attendance.
- Where school-based interventions do not improve attendance, advice will be sought from the School Safeguarding and Attendance Team. Where overall attendance is less than 80% and the main cause of absence is unauthorised, a formal referral to the Team will be considered. Alternatively, where there are concerns around unauthorised absence, school can consider requesting that a Penalty Notice is issued.
- Where a pupil is missing for 10 school days (due to unauthorised absence), Schools have a duty to refer to the LA (School Safeguarding and Attendance Team) on the tenth day of absence where they have been unable to make contact with the parent/carer or child or have child welfare concerns (Statutory Guidance to prevent children and young people from missing education, Welsh Government circular no: 002/2017).
- The Welsh Government (WG) Education (Penalty Notice) (Wales) Regulations 2013 states that Local Authorities (LAs) are required by law to adhere to the Education Act 1996 section 444 to include penalty notices as one of the interventions to promote better school attendance.
    - Sections 444A and 444B of the Education Act 1996 provide that certain cases of unauthorised absence can be dealt with by way of a penalty notice. A penalty notice is a fine of up to £120 and may be issued to a parent / carer as a result of a child's unauthorised absence from school / education provision which brings their overall attendance to below 90%.
    - The school adheres to the Code of Conduct for Penalty Notices as agreed and adopted by the LA, and therefore may request the LA to issue a penalty notice in certain cases.
- Only Headteachers can authorise the absence of children and young people.
- Information regarding the cause of the absence will always be required from parents/ carers.

The school will also:

- ensure that all staff are aware of the registration procedures, registration regulations and education law relating to school attendance;
- complete school registers at the start of the morning session and afternoon session – the register is open for 15 minutes and closes at 9:20 am;
- stress to parents and carers the importance of contacting the school as early as possible on the first day of absence;
- promote positive staff attitudes to pupils returning after absence;
- consult with all members of the school's community and School Safeguarding and Attendance Team in developing and maintaining the whole school attendance policy;
- ensure regular evaluation of attendance by the Governing Body;
- work towards ensuring all pupils are supported and valued and so want to attend school.

The Designated Member of Staff

Attendance is the responsibility of all staff. There is, however, a designated member of staff for attendance matters and all staff are able to discuss individual pupil attendance with this person. The Designated Member of Staff for Attendance:

- monitors the school's registers;
- liaises with teaching staff, in particular Heads of Year;
- meets with the LA Officer on a regular pre-arranged basis;
- refers to other agencies if appropriate;
- oversees the use of standardised letters to parents addressing specific aspects of attendance and requiring parental response;
- arranges for an attendance meeting/education planning meeting where appropriate;
- ensures that the LA Officer's role is known and that the referral process to the School Safeguarding and Attendance Team is understood in school.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS

Parents are responsible in law for ensuring that their children attend the school at which they are registered, regularly and on time.

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

a) take an active interest in their child's school life and work;

b) attend parents' evenings and other school events, if possible;

c) ensure that their child completes his/her homework and goes to bed at an appropriate time;

d) be aware of letters from school which their child brings home;

e) ensure that their child arrives at school on time each day;

f) ensure that their child only misses school for reasons which are unavoidable or justified, such as illness or days of religious observance;

g) always notify the school as soon as possible - preferably on the first morning - of any absence;

h) confirm this in writing when the child returns to school;

i) avoid booking family holidays during term-time;

j) talk to the school if they are concerned that their child may be reluctant to attend.

REGISTRATION

Keeping the registers

The register is a legal document and must be kept accurately. The register may be requested in a court of law as evidence in a prosecution for non- attendance. It will also be used for end of term reports, records of achievement and reference requests, and information for other schools, LAs and external agencies.

• No pupil should be marked present unless actually in attendance at school or other agreed educational activity.

• The register should not have missing marks.

• When a pupil arrives late but the register is still open, the pupils should be marked as late but counted as present for the session.

• When a pupil misses registration, she/he should be marked as an unauthorised absence, unless a medical letter/phone call by parent is received and deemed to be genuine.

• Pupils should not have access to the register.

• The headteacher is the only person who can authorise that a pupil be removed from the register – this can only be done with the agreement of the LA.

Lateness

A pupil's punctuality is a legal requirement and the parent of a pupil who is persistently late is guilty of an offence. The law treats persistent lateness in the same way as

irregular attendance and parents can be prosecuted if persistent late arrival is not resolved.

Holidays

The headteacher has the discretionary power to grant leave for the purpose of a family holiday and will consider every case on an individual basis. Parents do not have an automatic right to withdraw pupils from school for a holiday during term time. However, there may be circumstances that warrant a pupil taking time off in term time and this is why head teachers are best placed to make the decision. The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 state that head teachers have a discretionary power to authorise leave for a family holiday during term time where parents seek permission. Parents can access a holiday request form from school for this purpose. Except for exceptional circumstances, no more than 10 days' leave should be granted for this purpose.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF POLICY

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Date passed by Governing Body	15/09/2026
Chairperson	Richard Samuel
Designated Governor for school attendance	Joanna Isaac
Headteacher	Helen Conway
Signed: Mrs Helen Conway (Headteacher)	
Signed: Mr Richard Samuel (Chair of Governors)	

School attendance codes changes

We have updated the school attendance codes and accompanying guidance to support accurate and consistent recording of attendance across Wales. Consistent attendance enables pupils to develop key skills, build and maintain positive relationships, and remain connected to their school community.

The use of clear and consistent attendance codes helps identify patterns of absence more effectively and to take action if necessary. There are 5 categories for recording attendance. The table below shows the categories with new codes or a changed category highlighted in green.

	Category	Codes												
	**Present** – the pupil is in school or is attending on time.	/ \	L											
	**Approved educational activity** – the pupil is learning off-site, for example placements or activities approved by school.	B	B1	B2	J	P1	P2	V	W					
	**Authorised absence** – the pupil is absent with school approval, for example illness or agreed leave.	C1	C2	C3	C4	F	H	I1	I2	M	S	E	R	T
	**Unauthorised absence** – the pupil is absent without an accepted reason.	N	O	G	U									
	**Not required to attend** – the pupil is not expected to be in school, for example closure or dual registration days.	D1	X	Y1	Y2	Z	#							

More information can be found in the 'School attendance codes: guidance' on the Welsh Government website:



www.gov.wales/school-attendance-codes-guidance