

**Ysgol Maes Hyfryd
Flintshire
Attendance and Punctuality Policy**



Rationale

1. This policy sets out to ensure that the statutory requirements relating to recording and monitoring school attendance and lateness are adhered to and that the data is analysed at whole school, class and key stage.
2. Under **Section 7 of the Education Act 1996**, the parent is responsible for making sure that their child of compulsory school age (5-16) 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 2001 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 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.

Section 444(ZA) of the Education Act 1996 (as inserted by section 116 of the Education Act 2005) will extend the circumstances in which a parent can be prosecuted for failing to ensure that a child for whom he is responsible attends regularly to include alternative provision that has been made for the child.

An LEA must consider applying for an **Education Supervision Order (ESO)** before prosecuting a parent (Children Act 1989, Section 36). An LEA may apply for an ESO instead of or as well as prosecuting the parent.

3. School attendance registers will be completed in accordance with government regulations. These are clearly set out at the back of the registers.
4. It is the responsibility of individual teachers to ensure that registers are marked at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to monitor these percentages, to set targets for improvement and to inform parents of their responsibilities with regard to attendance and punctuality.

5. Objectives

- To ensure that the legal requirements relating to attendance are adhered to
- To ensure that a high standard of attendance is maintained throughout the school
- To ensure that correct records of attendance are kept within the school
- To establish the correct partnership with Flintshire LEA, families and other agencies to enforce regular school attendance

6. Principles

- The school will keep two registers:-
 - a. an admission register which records the school roll
 - b. an attendance register which:
 - 1. is called twice a day, once in the morning and once during the afternoon
 - 2. shows whether pupil of compulsory school age is present engaged in an approved educational activity off site or absent
 - 3. indicates whether the absentee was authorised or unauthorised

N.B. Authorised absence means either the school have given approval in advance, or that a satisfactory explanation has been given afterwards.

7. Monitoring Attendance

Parents will be regularly reminded of the importance of working with the school to ensure the highest possible levels of attendance and of their duty to inform the school in accordance with this policy whenever their child is unable to attend school for any reason. Parents should inform the school as soon as possible whenever their children are unable to attend or if they are likely to be late. They can do this by telephone, through the escort or note as the child returns to school. Staff must log the reason for absence in the back of the register. Letters together with holiday forms should be retained for the whole school year. At the discretion of the Headteacher, holidays of up to ten days duration can be granted during term time. Holiday Forms **MUST** be completed by parents prior to any holidays being taken. Holidays in excess of ten days will only be granted in very exceptional circumstances, again at the discretion of the Headteacher.

Only absences supported by telephone calls, messages from escorts, notes or Holiday Forms can be registered as authorised absences. Any absences not accounted for, or in excess of ten days in the case of holiday entitlement are recorded on individual pupil reports. Details of numbers of unauthorised absences are by law required to be reported in the School's Prospectus and in the Annual Governor's Report to Parents. All late arrivals are noted in the register by means of a 'late' mark.

8. Monitoring Punctuality

As the vast majority of pupils arrive at school on the school transport the Headteacher in conjunction with the LEA Transport Officer will monitor the punctuality and reliability of the service.

Taxi drivers will be regularly reminded of the importance of arriving in time for the start of the school day and of the duty to inform school and parents if they are running late.

Taxis who pick up at lunchtime to transfer pupils to link schools will be reminded regularly by the Headteacher of the importance of ensuring the pupils arrive before the school bell and they do not disturb the start of the lesson in their link school.

9. Absences

Any staff members concerned about absences and/or lateness by particular children will speak to the Headteacher at an early stage. The Headteacher will then discuss this with parents.

Cause for concern could include:

- Patterns of days absent from school e.g. Mondays or Fridays.

- Absences when particular subjects are prevalent i.e. swimming or dance.

- Particular weeks during term

- Where no reason for absence is given by parents.

- Where holidays in excess of ten days are taken.

- Any situation that forms a repeat pattern.

- Instances where a child consistently has odd days off school.

- Only the school can authorise an attendance.

It is appreciated that pupils with complex medical needs may have erratic attendance and also spend time at Respite provision.

10. Procedures

In the event of persistent absence or lateness or unauthorised absence the following procedures will be put into force:

- In the case of unauthorised absences a copy of the school's standard letter will be sent to parents. This enables parents to account for a recent absence for which no notification has been received. If this letter is not returned within a week, the absence will remain unauthorised.

- The Headteacher will arrange to discuss the persistent absence, lateness or unauthorised absence with parents as soon as possible.

- If there is no improvement the Headteacher will write to parents setting out concerns in terms of facts and figures and inviting further discussion.

- If there is no immediate improvement the matter will be brought to the attention of the Inclusion Welfare Offices.

The Inclusion Welfare Officer will work with parents and the Headteacher to monitor attendance/punctuality and to offer assistance where appropriate. Other agencies may be involved at this stage if no improvement is evident.

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to analyse attendance data and to report to parents. Attendance figures will provide the basis for target setting for future improvement. The Headteacher will write regularly to parents to remind them of the importance of regular attendance and progress towards meeting targets.