

Deuparth Ffordd Ei Gwybod



Attendance Policy

The Governing Body has adopted this Policy .

Agreed:

Signed:

Ms Julie Barton

Chair of the Governing Body

YSGOL GARTH OLWG

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Ysgol Garth Olwg is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child 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 you make sure that your child attends regularly and promptly. This Policy sets out how, together, we will achieve this.

Why regular attendance is so important

Learning

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason, creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Safeguarding

Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interest of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses:

- Attendance;
- Behaviour Management;
- Health and Safety;
- Access to the Curriculum;
- Anti-bullying.

Failing to attend Ysgol Garth Olwg on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter. (*Appendix (ii)*)

Promoting regular attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents, pupils and all members of school staff. (*Appendix (i)*)

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements;
- reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates and outings/events.

Understanding types of absence

The school day is divided into two registered sessions. The register is taken at the following times;

	Morning Session	Afternoon Session
Lower School	8.50	1.15
Yr.5 a 6	8.45	1.15
Yr.7 - 13	8.30	2.00

Every half day absence from school 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, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes. We do ask that any medical appointments are supported with evidence.

Only the school can authorise an absence. Parents/Carers do not have this authority.

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 Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily;
- truancy for the whole or part of the school day;
- absences which have never been properly explained;
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark;
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays;
- day trips and holidays in term time.

Family Holidays

The school feels strongly that family holidays should not be taken during term time. Missing school has a serious and detrimental effect on our pupils’ education, progress and achievement.

There is **no automatic entitlement** for pupils to take time off during school term time to go on holiday.

Rhondda Cynon Taf local authority advise schools NOT to authorise holidays during term time apart from these circumstances:

- Families of serving armed forces personnel;

- Parent or child experiencing a life limiting illness;
- Families that have suffered an acute trauma.

Ysgol Garth Olwg use a holiday criteria when processing requests in order to maintain fairness:

- In every case, a *Holiday Notification Form* **must** be completed at least 4 weeks prior to the holiday.
- Attendance should be above 97% in order for requests to be authorised.
- No holiday's will be authorised in September due to pupils settling in.
- A maximum of 10 days can be authorised and only one holiday per academic year may be granted.
- Holiday's will not be authorised during exam or National test periods.

The school also follows these guidelines closely.

It remains the discretion of the head teacher to authorise absences in line with The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 attendance codes and supplementary guidance provided by the local authority.

It is advised that you contact the school's Attendance Officer before making any arrangements and to submit a holiday request form at your earliest convenience.

Absence procedures

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence before 9.30am. If your child continues to be absent, please keep the school informed of this. You may report this by telephoning 01443 570050 and leaving an answerphone message, or by emailing the school at gweinyddol.gartholwg@gartholwg.cymru
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence addressed to the Attendance Officer.
- Or, you can call into school and report to reception.

If your child is absent we will:

- telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- invite you in to discuss the situation with Mrs Thomas-Thorne, the Attendance Officer and/or Year Leaders, Assistant Headteacher if absence persists;
- refer the matter to the Attendance and Wellbeing Service if the need arises.

The School Attendance Officer

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be assorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the LEA. They will also try

to resolve the situation by agreements but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these officers can use sanctions such as Fixed Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or Education Department.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

How we manage lateness

The school day starts at 8:30am for year 7-13 and from 8.50am for pupils in Nursery-year 6 and we expect your child to be in class at that time.

Your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

The registers will be closed for the morning session after the first 20 minutes? 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.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Year Leader or Attendance 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.

Fixed Penalty Notices

Under the Education (Penalty Notices) (Wales) Regulations 2013 Local Authorities have been given powers to issue Fixed Penalty Notice's (FPNs) as an alternative to taking legal action against parents/carers when responding to absenteeism from school.

To comply with The Education (Penalty Notices) (Wales) Regulations 2013, the school will operate in accordance with the local authority's Code of Conduct for fixed penalty notices for regular non-attendance at school. It remains the discretion of the head teacher to authorise absences in line with The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 attendance codes and supplementary guidance provided by the local authority.

When are FPNs used?

- When a pupil has a minimum of ten unauthorised sessions recorded during the current term (these do not to be consecutive and please note that a school day is divided into two sessions, am an pm);
- In response to persistent late arrival at school i.e. after the registration period. Again, this will be when there are at least ten recorded late marks in the current term;

- For unauthorised holiday absence. Parents are advised that taking a family holiday during term time may result in an FPN payment,
- If a parent(s)/carer(s) does not attempt to engage with the school or Local Authority regarding their child's absence.
- If a pupil regularly comes to the attention of the police during school hours and is absent from school without an acceptable reason, the police authority may request the Local Authority to issue an FPN.

Before a Penalty Notice is issued, you will receive a written warning from the Local Authority, outlining the extent of your child's absence and the possibility of you receiving a Penalty Notice. A Period of 15 school days is offered to improve the attendance and if there are **NO** unauthorised absences recorded during this 15 day timescale then the FPN will not be issued.

The 15 day warning period does NOT apply to an FPN issued for an unauthorised holiday absence.

There is no limit to the number of times a warning notice may be issued.

Summary

The school has a legal duty to share its attendance data with parents and to promote excellent attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend school every day.

Our school staff are totally committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible, because ultimately we believe that excellent attendance maximises children's opportunities to succeed in school.

Appendices

(i) The Law relating to attendance

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that *'the parents of every child of compulsory age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full time education suitable:-*

- (a) to age, ability and aptitude and*
- (b) To any special educational needs he/she may have;*
either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'.

(ii) The Law relating to safeguarding

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.