



Global Learning Programme Wales
Lead School



Ysgol Arweiniol
Rhaglen Dysgu Byd-Eang Cymru



Johnstown Primary School Ysgol Gynradd Tre Ioan



Attendance Policy



Johnstown Primary School

Attendance Policy

Rationale

In order for children to gain the greatest benefit from their education, it is vital that they attend school regularly; a child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Regular school attendance for all children is important to ensure continuity and progression in their education. The Welsh Government's recommendation is for pupils to attend for at least 95% of the school year. Our school target is 96%.

At Johnstown Primary School, we expect all our pupils to want to attend school. They should want to attend because:

- they will find a welcoming environment which is bright and stimulating;
- the curriculum is relevant and interesting;
- good behaviour is praised;
- everyone feels valued and secure.

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote good attendance. It is a school's responsibility to monitor and actively pursue the goal of regular attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Promoting regular attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility, parents, pupils and all members of school staff. To help us to focus on this we will:

- keep parents informed of how well their children are doing in relation to attendance targets through our half termly updates – attendance certificate print out from Teacher's Centre;
- send a detailed attendance report at least annually to parents in their child's report at the end of the academic year;
- celebrate good attendance by class achievement with best attendance each week;
- reward good attendance by verbal praise,
- alert parents to attendance falling below 90% by letter;
- ensure communication is regular regarding attendance that falls below 90%.

Parents' Obligation

Pupils should come to school every day - pupils should only be absent if the reason is "unavoidable". Allowing a child to be absent without good reason is against the law and parents can be fined via a penalty notice. 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 each absence is always required, preferably to the Attendance Team, via the answerphone, email or in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason.

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 – e.g. when a parent, carer or sibling is ill - or for
- trivial reasons
- truancy before or during 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 which have not been agreed.

Providing a note may not be sufficient if the reason given is not "unavoidable". Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems about attendance are best sorted out between the school, parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never good to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from school. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse. When there are difficulties parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff to resolve problems together. This is nearly always successful.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil becomes a "persistent absentee" when they miss 20% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and cooperation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any child that is seen to have reached the PA mark, or is at risk of moving towards that mark, is given priority and parents will be informed of this immediately.

All PA pupils are also automatically made known to the Education Welfare Officer who may contact the family. Parents will be notified if this happens.

All PA pupils are expected to provide medical evidence in the form of a doctor's note or certificate, prescription slip or medicine bottle if they are absent from school because of illness. If no evidence is forthcoming, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Absence Procedures

If a child is absent from school, parents must:

- contact school as soon as possible on the first day of absence, by leaving a brief message on the answerphone, speaking to a member of the Attendance Team or member of staff or sending an email to:
admin2@johnstown.ysgolccc.cymru
- Maintain regular contact with school after the first day of absence.

If a child is absent, we will:

- telephone parents on the first day of absence **if we have not received a message.**
- invite parents to school to discuss the situation with the Head Teacher if absence persists; this will follow receipt of a letter from the Head Teacher.
- refer the matter to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) if attendance moves to 80% or below.
- Refer the matter to the EWO who will visit the pupil's home in the event of frequent or long, unexplained absences from school.

Registration

The school at present uses a computerised registration system. Data is retrieved remotely by the Local Authority office.

- Registers are marked by the class teacher at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions.
- Staff should ensure there is a present mark in the box for each child present for each session otherwise the box should be marked with an N.
- The Attendance Team update absence data daily following first day calling and by checking late book entries, letters, emails, verbal and phone messages.
- Codes for absences are applied using up to date LA guidance. Only the Attendance Team or the Head Teacher input absence codes, not the class teacher.

- If a child arrives after the close of registration then he/she would have initially been thought to be absent and the register left blank for the Attendance Team to update. The class teacher must ensure the child goes to the office, if they have not already done so, and inform the office staff who will amend the register. This is very important especially in the case of an evacuation of the building. **REGISTERS MUST BE ACCURATE AT ALL TIMES.**
- The school office has a LATE book to record reasons for lateness – this is for ease of monitoring. The Attendance Team are responsible for maintaining this record.
- Authorised Absence: Once the absence has been authorised, the appropriate coding should be entered on the Teacher Centre system.
- Unauthorised Absence: Where no explanation is given to a child's absence, or if the school does not accept the explanation given, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised. The Attendance Team, Class Teacher and Head Teacher have a duty to monitor each child's unauthorised absences.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. We actively discourage lateness by a pupil. If your child misses the start of the day, they can miss work and vital information for the rest of the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be an emotional drain for the child and can also encourage further absence.

How we manage lateness:

- The school day and lessons start at **8.55 am** and we expect all pupils to be in class at that time ready to start their day.
- Registers are marked by **9.05 am** and a child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.
- Any child's lateness should be recorded in the school's LATE monitoring book by the school Attendance Team.
- If lateness persists parents will receive a letter asking to meet with the Head Teacher and/or Education Welfare Officer. Parents are encouraged to approach staff at any time if they are having problems getting their child/ren to school on time.

Monitoring Attendance

It is important that the Attendance Team, Class Teachers, and the Head Teacher monitor attendance and where necessary, involve the school's Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

The following monitoring arrangements will be used to ensure attendance is 95% or more:

- Any member of staff concerned about a pupil's attendance should report their concerns to the Head Teacher.
- The Attendance Team will print off an overview of every class attendance weekly (usually on a Friday) and give it to the Deputy Head Teacher for monitoring and assemblies.
- Parents of children whose attendance falls below 90% will be sent a letter informing them of their child's attendance. An attendance certificate printout will be attached so that parents can see directly which sessions have been recorded as absences or lates. The Head Teacher will monitor these children and continue communication with the families.
- Parents of children whose attendance falls below 80% (whose attendance has not improved since previous monitoring) will either be contacted by phone or invited by letter to discuss any problems and look at strategies for improvement either in school, with the school's EWO in school, or a visit made to the home.
- Any pupils whose attendance falls to 80% or less will automatically trigger the involvement of the Educational Welfare Service.

Holidays

Holidays are strongly discouraged due to the negative impact on a pupil's learning. **These absences will not be authorised.**

Should the parents take a pupil out of school in excess of 20 consecutive days the child will be removed from the school register and the parent will have to reapply for a school space with no guarantee of an admission. A letter of notification will be provided to the parents to inform them of the process.

EWO/Other Agencies

The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will work closely with the school in monitoring attendance and lateness.

The EWO's main responsibility is to promote regular attendance at school. They give support and advice on regulations regarding:

- School non-attendance
- Child Employment
- Child Performance
- Fixed Penalty Notices

To secure regular school attendance, the EWO work in partnership with pupils and their families, schools, community support services and other professionals, e.g. Social Workers, Youth Services, Educational Psychologist, etc.

The school may refer a family to the EWO if a child's school attendance is of concern. The EWO may have to resort to legal proceedings to help solve the problem. This could result in:

- Parental prosecution
- An application for an Education Supervision Order on the child
- A School Attendance Order
- Fixed Penalty Notices

The EWO will:

- Treat each case individually
- Listen to parents' views
- Respect confidences (except when someone is being hurt)
- Consult parents at every stage
- Keep appointments

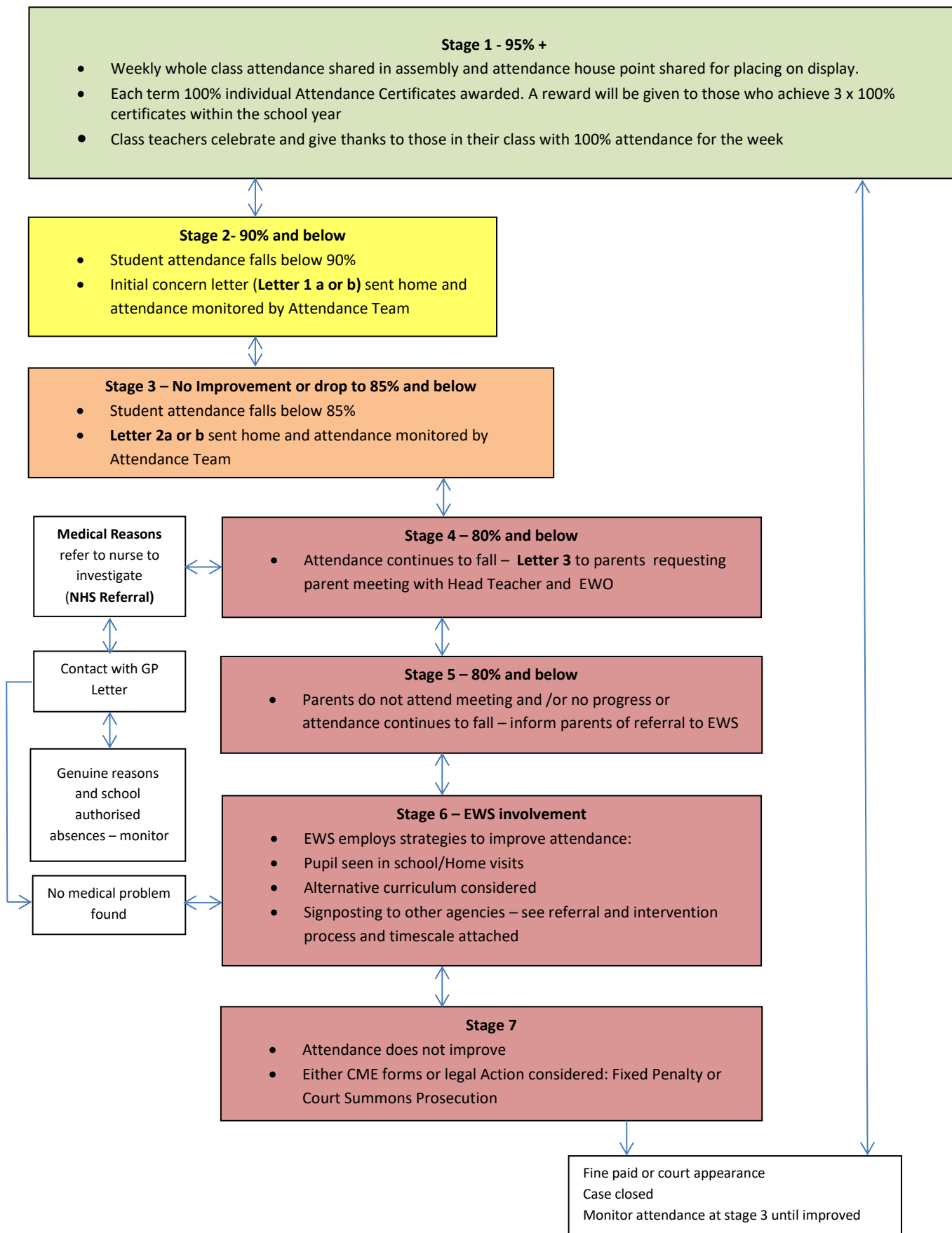
Conclusion

Parents should feel supported and not threatened by the school's attendance policy.

Parents should be aware that the attendance monitoring procedures are there to keep them informed so that appropriate action can be taken. Parents are welcome to discuss attendance concerns with the class teacher, Head Teacher or the EWO (contact details from the school office) whenever they feel it is appropriate.

Attendance Monitoring

In line with All Wales Attendance Framework



Appendices

Forms/Letter Templates