



# Attendance Policy

Gaer Primary School

Published: January 2017

## Gaer Primary School

### Policy for Attendance

#### Introduction

This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for attendance at Gaer Primary School. Our school is committed to ensure regular attendance at school is a priority which will in turn provide pupils with the best possible chances in life to succeed and to achieve their goals.

Our school will endeavour to work with parents, pupils, the local authority and the Education Achievement Service (EAS) to ensure that all pupils receive an appropriate education and to attend school regularly.

This attendance policy reflects the local authority's Attendance Strategy.

#### Equalities

We believe that children, regardless of ethnic group, age, disability, additional educational needs and gender, can reach their full potential only by receiving full-time education, through regular and structured attendance. Gaer Primary School expects all pupils to arrive and leave school punctually and we emphasise this to parents.

All staff are concerned for the children's welfare and happiness and everyone plays a part in promoting regular attendance among the pupils. However, children should not attend school if they are unwell. Exceptions will be made for children observing religious festival days e.g. Eid.

#### Aims

This policy aims to ensure that attendance and punctuality remains a key focus for all, including governors, teachers, parents, pupils and partner agencies. We will strive to:

- offer a safe and friendly environment which welcomes children regardless of race, gender or ability.
- raise standards and ensure all pupils reach their full potential, through a high level of school attendance and punctuality.
- ensure all stakeholders receive communication about information on the importance of regular school attendance.
- identify those pupils with irregular attendance at an early stage and work with partner agencies to try and address any barriers that stop pupils from attending school regularly.
- keep accurate and up to date attendance data.
- ensure all pupils are safe, and for schools to follow the local authority's 'Children Missing Education' guidance.
- reward those pupils who have made significant progress in raising attendance levels.

This document is supported by the All Wales Attendance Framework.

<http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/pupilsupport/framework/?lang=en>

## **Legal Framework**

The law outlining attendance is:

### **The Education Act 1996 which places a legal obligation on:**

- the local authority to provide and enforce attendance;
- school to register attendance and notify the local authority of a child's absence.

### **Section 7 of the above act states that:**

'The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient, full time education suitable to his/her age, aptitude and ability and to any special educational needs he/she may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'.

### **Section 444 further states that:**

'The parent of a child of compulsory school age registered at school and failing to attend regularly is guilty of an offence punishable in law'.

### **School Attendance Orders (SAO):**

Under the Education Act 1996 section 437- 443 a School Attendance Order applies when a parent of compulsory school age fails to prove that the child is receiving a suitable education and where the authority believes the child should attend school. A School Attendance Order may be used to direct a parent to send their child to a specified school, and should be used when a pupil is not on roll at any school.

### **The Education (Penalty Notice) Wales Regulations 2013:**

This legislation came into force in September 2014 and has given Local Authorities powers to issue fixed penalty notices (FPN). A code of conduct has been agreed by Newport City Council on the issuing of the FPN which includes the following criteria:

- Minimum of 10 unauthorised absences in a twelve week rolling term which do not have to be consecutive.
- Minimum of 10 sessions of lateness after the close of registration.
- Parents/carers who chose to take their children out of school on holiday during term time without authorisation from the Head teacher for a minimum of 10 unauthorised sessions.

The Head teacher will inform the parent by letter that the school may request a fixed penalty notice for unauthorised absence. If a FPN is requested, the Senior Education Welfare Officer (Senior EWO) for the Local Authority will review the case with the school, taking into account levels of absence, level of parental engagement, any equality implications, history of attendance and also any statement of special educational needs.

A fixed penalty notice warning may be issued and a period of 15 days will be monitored for an immediate improvement. A warning may not be issued in respect of an unauthorised holiday in term time.

A penalty notice is £60 if paid within 28 days in receipt of the notice, increasing to £120 if not paid within 28 days. If not received by 42 days then the local authority can prosecute parents for the child's absence.

## **Definitions**

Compulsory school age – under section 8 of the Education Act 1996, children and young people should attend school from the start of the first term commencing after their fifth birthday. The ends of the term dates are 31<sup>st</sup> March, 31<sup>st</sup> August and 31<sup>st</sup> December. A young person ceases to be compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they have their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday.

'Parents' section 576 of the Education Act 1996 includes:

- All natural parents whether married or not.

- Any person who although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a young person or child, and any person, who although not a natural parent has care of a child or young person.

Meanings:

*'EWS' – Education Welfare Service*

*'EWO' – Education Welfare Officer*

*'CME' – Children missing education'*

Attendance is everybody's concern and the school will expect all stakeholders to play a part in improving attendance. This will contain all having clear expectations and roles which include:

#### **Role of Head teacher:**

- To be responsible for overall management and implementation of this policy.
- To work closely with the school's governing body.
- To set attendance targets with the Local Authority, EAS challenge advisors and governors.
- To use discretion when receiving applications for holiday requests and to provide reasons to parents when a holiday in term time is not authorised.
- To produce regular attendance reports and share with governors.
- To work closely with the local authority's Lead EWO and nominated school EWO, and other support services.
- To notify the local authority when a 'child is missing education' and follow the local authority's Children Missing from Education procedures.
- Ensure this policy is readily available for stakeholders including on the school website.

#### **Governing Body:**

- Approve the policy.
- Receive and discuss attendance reports from the head teacher on a regular basis.
- Ensure policy is shared with all relevant stakeholders.
- Ensure a lead governor for attendance is appointed.

#### **Senior Management Team:**

- Work with all staff responsible for attendance and punctuality.
- To look at attendance data on a weekly basis, linking in with the school EWO.
- Regularly check attendance registers.
- Ensure all absences are recorded in line with the Welsh Government attendance codes guidance document.
- Attend/Provide regular update training on attendance for all relevant staff
- Raise issues of those staff not compliant with the completion of registers.
- Discuss any initiatives with all staff.

### **Class Teacher:**

- To carry out the statutory role of completing attendance registers twice a day, once in the morning and once in the afternoon.
- Ensure absences are accounted for by ways of a note provided by parents.
- Follow up unaccounted reasons for absence and raise concerns to the Head of Year.
- To continue to raise the profile of attendance to all pupils.
- Contact the school attendance clerk with any queries.

### **Pupils:**

- Attend regularly and on time unless unwell or have an agreed authorised absence.
- Bring to school a note explaining reasons for absence and give to class/form teacher.
- Inform teacher of planned absences.

### **Parents:**

- Ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually.
- Notify the school if their child is unable to attend, on the first day of absence and every day thereafter.
- Keep the school updated on parents/guardians contact details, including mobile numbers and new addresses.
- Work with school and partner agencies to address any issues of irregular attendance of their children.
- Work with their child in relation to homework, not completing homework is not a reason for missing school.

### **Role of Attendance Clerk:**

- To speak with parents on a daily basis to establish reasons for pupil's absence.
- To record absences daily, registers as and when required.
- To 'mop up' missing marks, providing reasons and inputting reasons on the red flag system on SIMS.
- To send text messages to those parents who haven't contacted school, or by telephoning parents individually in order to establish reasons.
- To work closely with EWO and support staff in school.
- To work with SMT and Head teacher closely.
- To ensure transfer of the Common Transfer File (CTF) of pupils is completed in a timely manner and pupils are not removed from roll unnecessarily.
- To check messages, if necessary, either on the schools answerphone or text messaging system.

### **Keeping school registers**

The school's register is a legal document and under The Education (pupil registration) (Wales) regulations 2010 the school is required to keep an accurate record of attendance. Registers need to be marked twice a day, once in the morning and once in the afternoon. Registers may be needed in a court of law if deemed appropriate. Schools Information Management System (SIMS) is used in most schools across Newport to record all pupils' attendance. By the end of the school week the schools overall attendance registers will be completed and an overall attendance figure will be calculated by the school.

### **Types of absences**

It is important for parents and teachers to understand the definition of the different types of absences. They are classed as unauthorised absence and authorised absence.

The head teacher can only decide on whether an absence should be classed in either one of these categories, parents cannot.

Absences may be authorised for the following reasons:

- Illness.
- Religious observance.
- Medical/Dental appointments during school hours.
- Fixed term and permanent exclusions.
- Holiday agreed by the head teacher.

Examples of what are classified as unauthorised absence are the following, however they are not limited: Absences may be unauthorised for the following reasons:

- Truancy.
- Late after the close of registration.
- Staying at home for no reason – condoned absence.
- Going shopping.
- Birthdays.
- Holiday not agreed by the head teacher.

In addition there are several codes classed as a present mark which include the following:

- Late before the close of register.
- Educated off site, pupils attending vocational courses at college/pupils attending alternative provision agreed by school.
- Sporting activity.
- Educational visit.
- Traveller absence.
- Interview.
- Work experience.
- Where pupils are on roll at school and also at another education establishment.

Please see appendix 1 which includes a breakdown of codes set by Welsh Government.

### Communication

Information on punctuality, unauthorised absence and illness is set out in the School Prospectus. This emphasises the importance of being at school and notifying the school if a child is absent for any reason.

The importance of regular attendance is discussed and explained at the Pre-school Induction Meetings held each year for children about to enter Reception class. This reiterates that parents and children should arrive at school on time, so that each child can be given the best possible start to the school day. It is also stressed that young children particularly should be collected promptly, as they can become upset if left behind on their own. Parents are asked to share any worries that their child might have in school. Parents need to be aware that even little things can upset children, which means that they might become unhappy and might not want to come to school.

Children are also admitted to school at various times during the school year, and into various Year Groups. All parents requesting a place are asked to make an appointment with the Head Teacher. At this meeting, the importance of regular attendance is always highlighted, together with other school routines.

At this Induction Meeting, parents are requested to arrange their family holidays within the school holidays rather than in term time. At Gaer Primary School, we actively encourage that family holidays should be taken during school holidays, so that a child's education is not disrupted. Parents are reminded in the half-termly newsletter, that they should not take their children out of school unnecessarily for holidays or visits. The Head teacher contacts those parents who frequently take the family holiday in term-time and reminds them of the disruption to their child's education.

At Gaer Primary School, parents are asked to complete a 'Request for Leave of Absence' form (appendix 2), if they wish to take their child out of school for a holiday. If the request is for a holiday, the Head teacher will consider the impact on the child's education, previous absences from school etc. If the Head teacher does not sanction the absence, any absence by the pupil will be treated as unauthorised.

Exceptions will be made to the 5 day authorised holiday allowance, where requests are made in writing, for 'Extended Leave' e.g. visits to country of origin. The additional days will be classed as unauthorised absences.

Authorised and unauthorised absences are explained to parents. All parents should contact the school if their child will be absent or late on the first morning of absence by 9.30am. Failure to do this will result in an enquiry call being made by the attendance clerk. An email is the preferred means of correspondence but a telephone call is acceptable and the message is recorded in writing under the headings: Date, Child, Class and Reason for Absence. All information is used for electronic registration.

Attendance is monitored half-termly, by the Head teacher and the Education Welfare Officer. Pupils falling below 95% attendance are scrutinised and parents contacted as appropriate.

### **Schools Strategies to improve attendance**

The school share attendance with each family in January and July. Attendance is coding in-line with the 'Callio' model, adopted by Newport City Council.

We aim that all pupils achieve 100% attendance, however there may be instances where pupils unfortunately are unwell or have other legitimate reasons for school absence.

The school operates a 'Callio' process which provides parents with information of the links between attendance and attainment. This shows which category the child's attendance falls into when attendance is as follows:

100% - Gold
95-99% Green
92-95% Amber
Below 92% Red

NB: Where a child falls in between these categories they will be rounded up to the nearest whole figure.

Each parent will receive a 'Callio letter' on a twice yearly basis (January and July) informing them of which category they are currently in. This ensures that early intervention is received to pupils and families who are in need. (see appendix 3).

In addition, information is communicated to specific parents whereby their children's attendance is below 95%, in accordance with Welsh Government target. The school will support parents to achieve improved attendance for learners. This can be through a meeting to discuss strategies to improve attendance and punctuality.

Whole school attendance data <95% run from SIMS (fortnightly report by the attendance officer). Additionally, a monthly meeting between attendance officer and EWO is held to review individual pupil attendance trends.

Analysis of the report:

<95% attendance - receive a letter of updated attendance (letter 1).

Further to receipt of letter 1, with no improvement in attendance, family receive letter 2. This includes impact on attendance information.

Further to receipt of letter 2, if no further improvement, family receive letter 3 to meet with the headteacher and EWO to discuss strategies to improve attendance and punctuality. An outline of further possible actions, including FPN is discussed.

### Registration

Gaer Primary School uses a computerised registration system and the Register is completed on the morning at 9am and afternoon at 12.55pm Foundation Phase and 1.30pm KS2. A pupil will receive a late mark if they arrive between 9.00am and 9.30am. This will be recorded in the 'Late Book' on arrival at Reception using the appropriate code. Arrival after 9.30am will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

If there are concerns about a child's non-attendance or unpunctuality, the class teacher consults the head teacher immediately. Details of attendance or late percentage are extracted from the computer database. The head teacher shows this to the parents during an informal discussion. If absences or unpunctuality persist, the head teacher contacts the Education Welfare Officer. If the situation needs discussing before a home visit, the head teacher should telephone or fill in EWS 1 form, which indicates the pattern.



The attendance clerk is responsible for collating Attendance Records in school and notifies the head teacher if there is any reason for concern. At the end of the year, each child's attendance is analysed and a copy given to parents with their child's School Report.

The Governors' Annual Report to Parents and regular newsletters record the school attendance figures for authorised and unauthorised absence.

#### Absence through illness

Gaer Primary School continues to provide as much education as the child's medical condition allows to keep up the momentum of their learning.

Gaer Primary School monitors the attendance of those pupils who are absent from school because of short-term or chronic illness, and close links are maintained with parents.

At parental request, educational support, including the provision of work and materials is provided for those pupils who are absent from school but recuperating. The teaching staff liaise with medical advisers and/or home tuition providers so that, during prolonged absence, pupils receive suitable work for their age and ability group.

The reintegration of children into school after a long absence through ill health is considered a high priority. A phased return to school may be appropriate after prolonged illness. Staff, including the class teacher, teaching assistants and home tutors meet to discuss the return to school. Friends and other pupils are encouraged to help the child settle back into school. Extra support is provided, subject to available resources, after an analysis of the child's needs.

#### Truancy

All staff at Gaer Primary School believe in the importance of continuity in every child's learning. Staff are also concerned about each child's safety, welfare and happiness. Although truancy is very rare at Gaer Primary School, if staff are suspicious that a child might be playing truant, action is taken immediately.

If truancy is suspected, the head teacher and the Education Welfare Officer are notified. Parents are contacted, either by telephone or home visit. We encourage parents to bring their child to school, so that the reasons for truancy can be discussed and resolved.

At Gaer Primary School we endeavour to discover, through discussion with the individual pupils, classes and the School Council, what the children like and dislike about school. The staff consider the children's options and if possible, adjustments are made to teaching and learning procedures and the school environment.

#### Promoting and rewarding good attendance and punctuality

'Excellent Attendance' lessons take place at the beginning of every school year. Children are asked to reflect on what makes an 'Excellent Attender' and how this can be achieved. This is revisited across the school year by the class teacher.

Each week pupils are rewarded with two raffle tickets for full attendance. The raffle tickets are placed in the 'Excellent Attenders' box on the way into our 'Celebration Assembly' on a Friday. Each half term, 5 raffle ticket winners are rewarded with a £10 voucher prize.

Certificates are presented to those children with full attendance at the end of each term during Celebration Assembly. Also annual full attendance certificates are presented in July.

An attendance display board is used to promote excellent attendance (100%) from learners each term. The school also displays an external notice to promote attendance, using the RAG rating applied by Newport City Council.

Attendance is high priority at governors meetings and in newsletter communications to parents.

Mr. A. Smith

January 2017

#### **Administration Information**

This policy was created on **24<sup>th</sup> January 2017** by **Miss C McCarthy**

This policy was presented and accepted by the Governing Body, Spring 2017

This staff were made aware of this policy , Spring 2017

This policy will be reviewed in **January 2019.**

#### **Signatures**



*Headteacher*



*Staff Member*



*Governor*

**Appendix 1**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Statistical meaning</b>
/\	<b>Present at registration</b>	<b>Present</b>
L	<b>Late but arrived before register closed</b>	<b>Present</b>
B	<b>Educated off-site</b>	<b>Approved educational activity</b>
D	<b>Dual registered</b>	<b>Approved educational activity</b>
P	<b>Approved sporting activity</b>	<b>Approved educational activity</b>
V	<b>Educational trip or visit</b>	<b>Approved educational activity</b>
J	<b>Interview</b>	<b>Approved educational activity</b>
W	<b>Work experience ( not work based learning )</b>	<b>Approved educational activity</b>
C	<b>Other authorised circumstances( not covered by another code)</b>	<b>Authorised absence</b>
F	<b>Agreed extended family holiday</b>	<b>Authorised absence</b>
H	<b>Agreed family holiday</b>	<b>Authorised absence</b>
I	<b>Illness</b>	<b>Authorised absence</b>
M	<b>Medical/dental appointment</b>	<b>Authorised absence</b>
S	<b>Study leave</b>	<b>Authorised absence</b>
E	<b>Exclusion</b>	<b>Authorised absence</b>
R	<b>Religious observance</b>	<b>Authorised absence</b>
T	<b>Traveller Absence</b>	<b>Authorised absence</b>

<b>N</b>	<b>No reason provided for absence</b>	<b>Unauthorised absence</b>
<b>O</b>	<b>Other unauthorised absence( no explanation provided)</b>	<b>Unauthorised absence</b>
<b>G</b>	<b>Family Holiday ( not agreed )</b>	<b>Unauthorised absence</b>
<b>U</b>	<b>Late arrival after the close of registration</b>	<b>Unauthorised absence</b>
<b>X</b>	<b>Un-timetabled sessions for non-compulsory school age</b>	<b>Not required to attend</b>
<b>Y</b>	<b>Partial and forced closure</b>	<b>Not required to attend</b>
<b>Z</b>	<b>Pupil not yet on roll</b>	<b>Not required to attend</b>
<b>#</b>	<b>School closed to all pupils</b>	<b>Not required to attend</b>

**Appendix 2**

**GAER PRIMARY SCHOOL**  
**HOLIDAY REQUEST FORM**

Child's name:

Class:

I wish to take my child out of school for \_\_\_\_\_ days.  
(NB a maximum of 5 days can be authorised in any academic year)

From:

To:

This is due to (please state reason):

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*Signed* \_\_\_\_\_ *(parent/guardian)*

*Date:* \_\_\_\_\_

.....

.....

For office use.

**Current Data as of:** \_\_\_\_\_

<u>Attendance%</u>	<u>Authorised Abs</u>	<u>Unauthorised Abs</u>		<u>Total L</u>	<u>Total U</u>
<u>Holidays This Academic Year</u>	<u>Balance</u>	<u>No. of Days Authorised</u>		<u>Date:</u>	<u>Signature:</u>
		<u>No. of Days Unauthorised</u>			

**Comments/Recommendations**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Entered on to SIMS by:**

**Date:**

Copy for school office



Copy for parent



Appendix 3

«addressee»  
«address\_block»

«date\_of\_printing»

**Attendance Information**

Dear «salutation»

Pupil: «forename» «surname»  
Class: «reg»

Your child's attendance is currently «percentage\_attendance» %

We wish to congratulate your child on their excellent attendance of 100% so far this year. This is an excellent achievement and what we would consider to be the **GOLD** standard.

Colour Code	Autumn Term Attendance	Result
Gold	100%	No lessons missed
Green	99%	Missing around 10 lessons
	98%	Missing around 20 lessons
	96%-97%	Missing around 30-40 lessons
Amber	95%	Missing around 2 weeks of school
	92%	Missing three weeks of school. A significant amount of education lost.
Red	Below 92%	Missing more than three weeks of education. A serious loss of learning which is likely to have a detrimental effect on achievement and prospects.

As a school we believe that good attendance is where success starts.

Thank you for your continued support in our drive to ensure good attendance.

Best wishes,

Head teacher