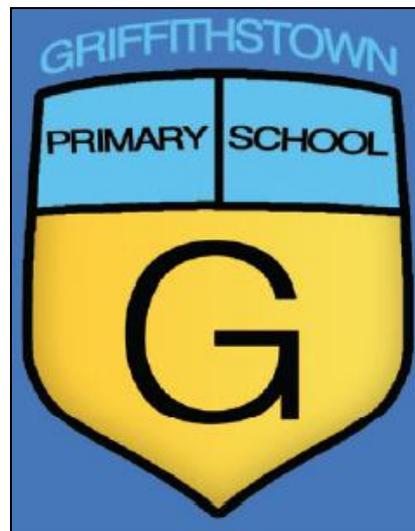


GRIFFITHSTOWN PRIMARY SCHOOL



Title	Attendance Policy
Date	Summer 2015
Author	N Blackburn



INSPIRE CHALLENGE ACHIEVE

GRIFFITHSTOWN PRIMARY SCHOOL
Attendance Policy 2015

Introduction

Purpose

To promote excellent attendance and consistent procedures to promote and encourage improved attendance.

Aim(s)

- To improve attendance to at least 95% for all pupils
- To reduce the difference between attendance of pupils affected by poverty and those that are not
- To develop a consistent rewards system to promote good attendance
- To develop a consistent approach to pupils and families who do not demonstrated positive attendance patterns.

Wider school aims/ethos

Excellent attendance is an aspiration of the whole school community. It is underpinned by the schools vision, values and aims. Improving attendance is also part of the wide local and national improvement agenda.

Consultation

This policy has been created from guidance from the LA and will be shared with pupils, parents, staff and governors.

Principles/values

Children and Young People must attend school full time to benefit from their education. Schools have a special responsibility to encourage full attendance – pupils who are not in school are not being educated and will not achieve their potential. This is both unsafe for the child or young person and is not acceptable legally and morally.

The head teacher is responsible for the implementation of this policy

Procedures and practice

The law

The law defines compulsory school age as between 5 and 16 years old.

Parents

Parents¹ must secure full-time education for children of compulsory school age. The education must be suited to the child's age, aptitude and ability, and to any special needs the child has. Parents can secure education for their child by registering the child with a school or in some other way. A child who is registered with a school must attend regularly and punctually.

The Local Authority

As a local authority (LA), Torfaen County Borough Council must ensure that:

- There are enough school places for the children in its area
- Parents secure full-time education for their children

Schools

Schools must:

- Record attendance at the start of the school day and during the afternoon on a paper or computer register
- Record in the register whether absence is authorised or unauthorised
- Publish the percentage and number of authorised and unauthorised absences in the governor's report to parents
- Comment on any unauthorised absence in pupils' annual reports
- Liaise with the Local Authority / Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to monitor pupil attendance.

¹ In this guide, we use 'parents' to mean 'parents, parent, carers or carer'

Legislation

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 LA 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.

For further details please see the following documents:

- Education Act 1996
- Education Act 2002
- Education Act 2005
- Children Act 1989
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998

Registers

The register is a legal document and may be used as evidence in court. Teachers must complete the register, accurately and consistently for every school session. All attendance codes must be used accurately – improper use of codes can mask attendance and potential safeguarding issues while also potentially impeding prosecutions.

At Griffithstown Primary we use an electronic register within SIMs. Each staff member has their own log on and it is the teacher's responsibility to ensure the register is marked.

Completing the electronic register

Teachers must:

- Complete the register immediately at the start of each session.
- Not mark a pupil present unless the pupil is in the room when they call the register
- Not leave any spaces in the register
- Make any changes to the register clearly, **distinguishing between the original entry and the correction**. Both the original entry and any correction **must be preserved by ensuring the register is saved within SIMS.**
- Not allow pupils to mark the register
- Mark pupils who are present / (*am*) and \ (*pm*)

Attendance Policy 2015

- Mark pupils who are absent **O** if in school's view no satisfactory explanation is provided.
- Mark pupils who arrive late but before the register is closed **L**
- Mark pupils who arrive after the register is closed **U** (see Section 3 for more information).

Authorised and unauthorised absence

This section covers the different types of absence. The Education Welfare Service (EWS) can provide further advice.

Authorised absence

Only the head teacher can authorise an absence. **Teachers should not automatically class an absence as authorised because it is covered by a note from the parent. All notes once dealt with by the teacher should be filed and sent to the school office for safe keeping.**

(CODE CATEGORISATION ADVICE FOR THE NEW STATUTORY CODES)

CODE	DESCRIPTION	STATISTICAL MEANING	PHYSICAL MEANING
Λ	Present at registration	Present	This code should be used for pupils who were present in school during registration
L	Late but arrived before the register closed	Present	This code should be used for pupils that arrive late but before registration has closed. Schools should actively discourage late arrival and be alert to patterns of late arrival.
B	Educated off-site (not dual registration)	Approved educational activity	This code should be used where a registered pupil on roll is currently being educated off-site at a supervised activity approved by the school. Examples such as attending taster day at other school, pupils attending alternative provision arranged and or agreed by the school, pupils undertaking work experience as part of an alternative curriculum. Schools should not use this code if a pupil has an agreed part-time timetable as part of reintegration or transition. These pupils should

Attendance Policy 2015

			be marked as code C for those sessions.
D	Dual registered (i.e. present at another school or at a PRU)	Approved educational activity	The law allows for dual registration of pupils at more than one school and they are not required to attend your school. The school where the child is expected to attend is responsible for accurately recording the pupil's attendance and chasing up non-attendance.
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved educational activity	This code should be used when a pupil is participating in or attending an approved sporting activity.
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved educational activity	This code should be used for school organised trips or visits, including residential trips. Can also be used for other trips of a strictly educational nature, which are arranged by other organisations, provided they are supervised.
J	Interview	Approved educational activity	This code should be used for pupils undertaking interviews with prospective employers, or another educational establishment.
W	Work experience (not work based training)	Approved educational activity	This code should be used for work experience under section 560 of the Education Act 1996. Work experience undertaken as part of an alternative curriculum should not be recorded using this code.
C	Other authorised circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code / description)	Authorised absence	This code should only be used in exceptional circumstances. Schools should consider the nature of the event, its frequency and the overall attendance pattern of the pupil. Examples might include special occasions such as weddings, family bereavement, young carer, maternity leave, public performance.
F	Agreed extended family	Authorised absence	Parents are not entitled to

Attendance Policy 2015

	holiday (agreed)		<p>withdraw pupils for holidays during term time.</p> <p>School should only agree to absence for family holiday if they believe there are special circumstances which warrant it. School can only agreed to absence of more than 10 days in a school year in exceptional circumstances.</p>
H	Agreed family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence	<p>Parents are not entitled to withdraw pupils for holidays during term time.</p> <p>School should only agree to absence for family holiday if they believe there are special circumstances which warrant it. School can only agree to absence of more than 10 days in a school year in exceptional circumstances.</p>
I	Illness	Authorised absence	<p>This code should be used when a child is absent for a whole session due to illness, medical or treatment.</p> <p>If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools can record the absence as unauthorised absence (code O) but should advise parents of the school's intention. Schools can request parents to provide medical evidence to support absence on the ground of illness.</p>
M	Medical or dental appointments	Authorised absence	<p>For health and safety reasons a system must be in place to record that pupil has either arrived at school or left the premises during a session for medical (GP), hospital or dental appointments</p>
E	Excluded but no alternative provision made	Authorised absence	<p>A pupil who is excluded for a fixed period remains on the school roll but cannot attend the school. A pupil who is permanently excluded remains on roll until the appeal process has been completed.</p>

Attendance Policy 2015

R	Day set aside exclusively for religious observance	Authorised absence	Absence to take part in a day set aside exclusively for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Parents should be encouraged to give advance notice.
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence	Traveller child when the family is travelling. If the pupil's family are known to be travelling but it is not known whether the pupil is attending education provision, the absence should be authorised and recorded using this code. A school cannot remove a Traveller child from the school roll while they are travelling.

The main changes in the new codes and the associated WAG guidance are:

- A new 5th statistical category of 'not required to attend' to be used for a small number of specific infrequent circumstances. This category will cover absence due to the partial closure of a school e.g. where some of the pupils cannot attend due to bad weather. They would no longer be recorded as an authorised absence.
- Where Traveller children are registered at more than one school and are present at one of those schools, the other school (s) at which they are registered can record them as receiving approved educational activity. They would no longer be recorded as an authorised absence.
- A young offender may now only be deleted from the register where his or her period of custody is for at least four months and where the school has reasonable grounds for believing that the pupil will not be returning to school at the end of that period. He or she will be recorded as an authorised absence until his or her name is deleted from the register. If an alternative approved educational activity is provided during the period of custody, the school may record the pupil as receiving approved educational activity. Previously, a pupil's name could be deleted from the register if he or she had been absent for 4 weeks and had been detained by court order.

Unauthorised absences (truancy)

N	No reason for the absence provided yet	Unauthorised absence	This code should be used when a pupil is absent from school and no reason has yet been provided for this absence. If no explanation is forthcoming after a reasonable amount of time the N code to be changed to O.
O	Unauthorised circumstances	Unauthorised absence	This code is used for all absences that the school considers to be unauthorised. A parent /carer may offer an explanation to the school. Examples such as shopping, 'couldn't get up', having hair cut, transfer to another school.
G	Family holiday (not agreed or sessions in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence	Each request for holiday absence should be considered individually, taking into account the age of the child, the overall attendance of the child, the child's stage of education and progress, its nature and parental wishes. Schools should invite parents in to school to discuss any proposed holiday in term time.
U	Late and arrived after the register closed	Unauthorised absence	Schools should (a) actively discourage late arrival and be alert to patterns of late arrival and (b) have a policy on how long registers should be kept open. The WAG advises that schools should close the register to pupils 30 minutes after the start of the session.

Unauthorised absences can be defined as absence from school for any period as a result of a premeditated or spontaneous act by the pupil or parent or both. This includes parentally condoned absence.

Parentally condoned absences include absences when:

- a parent is ill
- a parent is using the child as a child-minder
- a pupil is supporting other members of the family

- work patterns, for example shift work, make it difficult for the family to ensure the child can attend school
- a parent wants company
- a parent gives in to the pupil who wants to stay at home
- it is the pupil's birthday
- a parent does not care whether the pupil attends school
- a parent has taken the pupil shopping
- a parent cannot control the pupil
- a parent has taken the pupil to the hairdresser
- a pupil is in paid work
- a parent is hostile towards the school or towards education in general
- a parent distrusts authority
- a parent is using the pupil as an interpreter

Not required to attend codes

X	Non-timetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	Not required to attend	This code should be used for pupils who have not attained the age of 5 years at the start of the term in which the session takes place or were 16 years before the start of the school year in which it takes place. Under the new regulations, schools cannot delete Year 11 pupils who intend to remain at the school and enter sixth form from the school registers.
Y	Partial and forced closure	Not required to attend	This code should be used where the school site, or part of it, is closed due to unavoidable causes such as no water or heating or flooding or the transport provided by the school or LA for pupils is not available.
Z	Pupil not on roll yet	Not required to attend	This code should be used for administration purposed for pupils expected to join the school roll. Under new regulations, schools must now put pupils on the admissions register on the first day that the school expects them to attend not, as previously, when they first attend. Schools should also remember that all pupils on the admissions register must also be entered on the attendance register and their attendance recorded.
#		Not required to attend	This code should be used for planned closures for the whole school.

Lateness

You must set a point at which you close the class register. The Welsh Assembly Government and Torfaen recommend this is set at **30 minutes after the start of school**. Griffithstown Primary adopt this recommendation. If any child arrives after this point, you must count it as an unauthorised absence. If a child is frequently late, the parent may be failing to ensure that the child is receiving full-time education. We will liaise with the EWO and parent and ultimately prosecute the parent under the Education Act 1996, section 444 if no improvement is made.

Vulnerable groups

Gypsies and travellers

Use the code T only when the child's family is travelling.

A number of different groups are covered by the generic term Traveller - Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (Fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers.

To help ensure continuity of learning for Traveller children, dual registration is allowed. A school cannot remove a Traveller child from the school roll while they are travelling if it is the base school. If the pupil's family are known to be travelling but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision (at a school or other provider), the absence should be authorised and recorded using code T.

If the pupil is known to be dual registered and present at another school during the session in question, the attendance should be recorded using code D. If the pupil is known to be present (during the session in question) at other educational activity which meet the requirements of the regulation on approved educational activity, the attendance should be marked using codes B, J, P, V or W as appropriate.

If the pupil is known to be absent from other provision for reasons other than travelling (e.g. illness, unexplained absence) the appropriate code should be used. Children from "traveller" families are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of requirements to attend school. However, there is a defence available to traveller families if prosecuted for non attendance provided that the child has attended a school for at least 200 sessions in the 12 months ending when legal proceedings are started.

Looked After Children:

Each school has a designated teacher for children in public care. At Griffithstown Primary this is the Headteacher. The LA intervenes where the student has 10 days (20 sessions) absence in one academic year. Schools may wish to intervene well before this point. The LA will monitor all LAC's attendance.

N Blackburn

INSPIRE CHALLENGE ACHIEVE

Children on the child protection register:

The Headteacher and Education Welfare Service will review each child's attendance that Griffithstown Primary School and recommend appropriate action. The Headteacher (and where the EWS has involvement they) will attend Child Protection Case Conferences and contribute to the core group and care plan where necessary.

Children and young people with medical needs:

Children and young people who are absent from school because of physical or mental health issues need to be reviewed regularly and sensitively. They are entitled to educational provision and the school and EWS can give advice on dealing with medical absence as can the school nurse.

Missing children

Where pupils do not return to school and neither the school nor the EWS have been able to trace the whereabouts of the pupil, and no requests for the school file have been received, the pupil should be treated as a "missing child". The school must notify the EWO and School Admissions who will place the pupil's name on the national missing children database. This would also involve contact with and a referral made to Torfaen Social Care and Housing department.

Changes of address

If you suspect that a pupil's family has moved away from the area without giving you its new address, you must tell the EWS. The school and the EWS must make a reasonable attempt to find out where the pupil has gone. If you are unable to find out where the pupil has gone, you must take the pupil off the school roll after four weeks. You can then record the time since the pupil last attended school as authorised absence.

Family holidays and extended holidays during term time

The Headteachers will not be able to authorise absences for family holidays during term time, based on advice by the Local Authority. Parents have no right to demand that absences are authorised.

If the parent takes their child, regardless of permission not being granted, then the pupil's attendance will be recorded as unauthorised.

Recording, monitoring and setting targets

Recording attendance

Recording information about attendance accurately and effectively as a school will allow us to: report to parents; report to governors; provide the LA with the information it needs to monitor your performance; provide the information required by WG; find out how you can improve attendance; set targets for individual pupils, teaching groups, year groups and the school as a whole.

Setting targets

Targets are reviewed annually by the governors and head teacher

The Education (School Performance and Unauthorised Absence Targets) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 require the governing bodies of every maintained school to set targets no later than the 31 December in every school year, and must submit to the local education authority. These targets refer to the level to which the absence rate of the pupils at the school is to be reduced.

Where a governing body has previously set absence targets under these regulations the following will apply:

- A final target for the following school year, being the reviewed target set in the previous school year but revised if the governing body deem it necessary to do so.
- A reviewed target for the school year next but one, being the provisional target set in the previous school year but revised if the governing body deem it necessary to do so.
- A provisional target for the school year next but two.

Where the LA is not satisfied with any target submitted by a governing body as stated above, it must give notice to the governing body of that fact, and the governing body must submit a revised target within 21 days of receipt of such a notice.

Where the LA is not satisfied with the revised target submitted by the governing body it must set the target.

A final absence target set by a governing body must not be modified by the governing body without the agreement of the LA.

First Day Response

School will contact parents if parents do not call school to explain an absence. First Day Response is both critical for ensuring effective attendance; it also helps ensure that children are kept safe and that the school has discharged its duty of care.

Procedures and guideline for staff supporting and implementing FDR

- Registration begins at 9.10 (10 minute registration) in the Junior department and 9.15 (5 minute registration) in the Infant department. Registers close at 9.40 and 9.45 respectively. Any pupils arriving after 9.10 / 9.15 should be recorded as late before closure of the register, or absent after registration closes 9.40 / 9.45.
- Lateness procedures – all children who arrive late enter the school via the main door. The parents must sign in the late book.
- First Day Response should begin at approximately 9.40 / 9.45.
- Should any concerns arise from First Day Response this information must to be passed onto the designated person(s) - Headteacher or Deputy Head.
- If significantly (approx. 1/3 of class) large numbers of children are absent from a class the Headteacher should be informed. For example, a widespread sickness bug, in case advice needs to be sought from the LA Health & Safety department.
- Where there is no contact with a vulnerable child, the school should always send a text or letter home that day. **If there has been no contact before the end of the second school day the EWO should be informed and asked to visit the household.**
- The reason the parent gives for the absence should be recorded. However it is for the school to decide whether or not the absence is authorised and the following guidance should be referred to in all cases:
 - If a pupil has had more than 10 days off in any term due to medical reasons, the parent must attend a meeting in school to discuss their child's absence or provide a letter from a medical professional that offers some explanation. This could be a letter from the child's consultant paediatrician for example. Where there has been more than 10 days absence in a term and no evidence is available from the parent then the child's absences should be recorded as an unauthorised absence. School should also bring this child to the EWO's attention.

Threatening or Aggressive responses to First Day Response

- Remain calm, never respond in the same way; explain the nature of the call if you can, ask politely for reason of absence. If the caller is escalating

behaviour, e.g. shouting and swearing, politely thank them for their time and end the call.

- Immediately record nature of the call in writing and report it directly to the Headteacher.

Incentives for good attendance

We believe pupils should be rewarded for good attendance. We have the following incentives for good attendance:

- Termly certificates
- Class awards (Alan and Archie Attendance Gnomes)
- £10 Challenge for 100%

The Education Welfare Service (EWS)

The main role of the Council's EWS is to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend school regularly. The EWS does so in partnership with school and parents.

The EWS can help you if you cannot find out why a pupil is absent, or if you cannot ensure that a pupil attends regularly. An educational welfare officer (EWO) can contact the child's family and can offer advice if a child is absent without good reason.

Initially, schools are responsible for identifying and dealing with absence. School must tell the EWS if a pupil is frequently absent (for example for more than one day a week) or if a pupil is absent for 10 or more school days in a row.

It is important that school works in partnership with the EWS. School staff and the EWO should understand each other's roles and responsibilities.

As well as advising staff on individual cases, the EWO may:

- Help to explain the importance of attendance to staff, pupils, parents and governors
- Take part in joint initiatives with the school, including personal and social education, group work with poor attenders and liaison between primary and secondary schools.

Referrals to the Education Welfare Service

All schools should follow the same procedures for involving the EWS. This section explains:

- When school should involve the EWS

- How the EWS deals with persistent absence.

Referral to the Education Welfare Service

Before making a referral to the EWS, you must try to contact the parent to resolve the problem.

Typically these actions might be:

- Unexplained absence should be followed up by the school using the system they have in place for 'first day response'.
- Where the pupil's home cannot be contacted by telephone, after 3 days of unexplained absence a letter should be sent requesting an explanation.
- If the first letter elicits no response from the parents/carers, further contact should be made within a further 3 days, either by telephone, letter or home visit.
- Where specific problems are encountered (e.g. language), the school should consider involving appropriate services to assist.
- At this stage, the appropriate in-school person should address the attendance pattern of the pupil. Plans for dealing with the problem should be devised with the involvement of parents/carers and any support agencies available to the school.
- When successful contact has been made it is often possible to agree strategies which resolve the attendance pattern without recourse to the EWS. Parents/carers should be encouraged to be involved actively in dealing with attendance problems. They should be kept informed about the use of report systems, curriculum or timetable changes, pastoral counselling, and assessment of learning difficulties or other interventions.

On receiving a referral, an EWO will try to contact the pupil's parents within five working days. On contacting the parents, the EWO will normally arrange a meeting with the family and head teacher to try to agree a way forward.

Internal Review of Attendance/First Warning

Once the meeting has taken place the EWO will monitor the pupil's attendance for an agreed period of time

If the pupil's attendance has improved over this period then the EWO will pass the monitoring of that pupil's attendance back to school.

If, at the end of the monitoring period attendance has not improved, the EWO will send a warning letter to the parent/carer giving a warning that legal action may be taken against them unless there is a significant and immediate improvement in their child's attendance.

The EWO will call a review meeting with the parents and school staff to happen four weeks later i.e. giving the pupil and parent/carer a further four weeks in which to work with school and the EWO to achieve improvement in attendance.

Second Warning

If there is no improvement in attendance, a second warning will be issued to the parent/ carer.

At the review meeting, the plan will be reviewed and adjusted as necessary, and a new review date set. The EWO will clarify for the meeting that, if a significant improvement in attendance is not seen over this period, then the Final Warning Notice will be issued.

Final Warning and Prosecution

This planning meeting will normally involve the pupil, the pupil's family, the school and any other agencies involved. The meeting normally takes place at the pupil's school but it will be arranged and chaired by the EWO. At the meeting, the EWS will consider the case, and decide whether to take legal action.

Roles and Responsibilities

- **Governors:** are responsible for ratification of policy, setting targets and developing patterns of good attendance as a school.
- **Headteacher:** is responsible for developing the policy based on LA guidance and will monitor and review its implementation.
- **Teachers:** are responsible for implementing the policy.
- **Pupils:** to attend school regularly, on time and tell school if there are barriers to developing excellent attendance patterns.
- **Parents:** to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually. Support the school policy for attendance; inform the school about absence of their child. Ensure they keep contact details up to date with school so we are

Attendance Policy 2015

able to contact them about pupil absence. Try to avoid taking their child out of school for holidays.

- **Equal Opportunities:** see strategic equality plan.
- **Monitoring and evaluation:** The policy will be monitored and evaluated by the Head teacher, EWO and Office Staff

Governor approval date: April 2015
Next review date: April 2016
Author: N Blackburn