**Knighton Church in Wales Primary School**

# Attendance Policy

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To be reviewed – Autumn Term 2022

Date passed by Governing Body - December 2021

Chair of Governors:- Eirlys Spawton

Acting Headteacher:- Charlotte Rimmer

Designated Governor for school attendance:- Vanessa Scott

**DESIGNATED STAFF MEMBER WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR MONITORING ATTENDANCE**

NAME: Charlotte Rimmer (Acting Head)

CONTACT NUMBER: 01547 528691

**DEPUTY STAFF MEMBER WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR MONITORING ATTENDANCE AT THE SCHOOL**

NAME: Tara Jones / Jess Fielding

CONTACT NUMBER: 01547 528691

**NOMINATED MEMBER OF THE GOVERNING BODY FOR MONITORING ATTENDANCE**

NAME: Vanessa Scott

**Contacts within the Local Authority**

**The named officer within Powys LA is Geraint Thomas**

**CONTACT NUMBER:**

**E-MAIL:** geraint.thomas@powys.gov.uk

# RATIONALE

* The school bases its attendance policy on the guidelines as set out by the ERW Consortium.
* Whilst the legal responsibility for regular school attendance rests with parents, the school shares with them, and the local authority (LA), responsibility for encouraging good attendance and improving poor attendance.
* The school is required by law to maintain specific records and to produce specified information on the attendance of pupils.
* Statutory obligation apart, the school is committed to improvements in attendance standards as a direct stimulus to raising pupil achievement.
* Poor attendance is destructive of educational achievement, undermines the well-being of each pupil and demoralises staff.
* The LA has a statutory duty to ensure that a child for whom they are responsible is receiving suitable education and, if a registered pupil at school, this means attending school regularly and on time.

# OBJECTIVES

* To promote good attendance as this is vital to educational achievement.
* To convey clearly to parents and pupils that:
  + regular attendance is essential;
  + unauthorised absence and persistent lateness is not acceptable;
  + only the headteacher in the context of the law can approve absence;
  + parental condoned, unjustifiable absence will be investigated and will be recorded as unauthorised absence.
* To keep records of attendance which:
  + clearly distinguish between authorised and unauthorised absence by pupils;
  + provide accurate information on actual attendance to enable monitoring and evaluation of school attendance rates through centrally held statistics.
* To build on existing good practice that fosters a positive attitude to good attendance by:
  + responding rapidly to pupil absence;
  + recognising pupils who maintain ‘excellent’, ‘good’ and ‘improving’ attendance records.
* To be sensitive to situations where regular attendance patterns are disrupted by external factors such as family bereavement.

**STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES**

The legal framework governing attendance is set by the Education Acts and their associated regulations (which relate to schools and Pupil Referral Units).

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that “…the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/ her to receive full time education suitable to his/ her age, aptitude and ability and to any special education needs he/she may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise…”

Section 444 further states “the parent of a child of compulsory school age registered at school and failing to attend regularly is guilty of an offence punishable by law…”.

Compulsory school age means that children and young people should attend school from the start of the first term commencing after their fifth birthday and are of compulsory school age until after the last Friday in June of the school year in which they have their 16th birthday

An offence is not committed if it can be demonstrated that:

* the pupil was absent with leave (authorised absence);
* the pupil was ill or prevented from attending by an unavoidable cause;
* the absence occurred on a day set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil/ parent belongs;
* the school is not within the prescribed walking distance of the child’s home and suitable transport arrangements have not been made by the LA;. The law relating to walking distance effectively is defined as two miles for pupils under eight and three miles for all other pupils. Distance will be measured by nearest available walking route;

Absence from the centres will be authorised if it is for the following reasons:

* sickness;
* unavoidable medical or dental appointments;
* days of religious observance;
* exceptional family circumstances,

Absence from school will not be authorised for:

* shopping;
* haircuts;
* missed bus;
* overslept;
* no uniform;
* looking after brothers, sisters or unwell parents;
* minding the house;
* birthdays;

Parents are asked to make all medical and dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible.

Schools are required under the Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 to take an attendance register twice a day: at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. The accuracy of the register is important to support any statutory interventions that may be required. It should be noted that it is an offence not to maintain accurate registers.

The Welsh Government (WG) Education (Penalty Notice)(Wales) Regulations 2013 states that Local Authorities (LAs) are required by law to adhere to the Education Act 1996 section 444 to include Penalty Charge Notices as one of the interventions to promote better school attendance.

Sections 444A and 444B of the Education Act 1996 provide that certain cases of unauthorised absence can be dealt with by way of a Penalty Charge Notice. A Penalty Charge Notice is a financial penalty of up to £120 and may be issued to a parent / carer as a result of a child’s regular non-attendance at school / education provision.

**PRACTICE AND PROCEDURES**

Clear systems and procedures will govern response to all pupil absence. The school will follow the ‘Procedures for Non Attendance’ flowchart as agreed by the ERW Consortium.

The school adheres to the descriptors received from ERW.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 95-100%  attendance | Best chance of success | Your child is taking full advantage of every learning opportunity. |
| 90-95%  attendance | At least 2 weeks of learning missed | Satisfactory. Your child may have to spend time catching up with work. |
| 85-90%  attendance | At least 4 weeks of learning missed | Your child may be at risk of underachieving and may need extra support from you to catch up with work. |
| 80-85%  attendance | At least 5 ½ weeks of learning missed | Your child’s poor attendance has a significant impact on learning. |
| Below 80%  attendance | At least 7½ weeks  of learning missed | Your child is missing out on a broad and balanced education. You are at risk of prosecution. |

The school encourages good attendance and punctuality by;

* creating a caring and nurturing environment whereby pupils’ feels safe and appreciated as young adults;
* ensuring that attendance and punctuality are recognised within the whole school reward system
* developing positive relationships with parents / carers and external agencies working with the family/ pupil;
* monitoring and evaluating the early intervention strategies adopted by the school;
* working closely with multi agency colleagues and the Education Inclusion Service to improve attendance and punctuality;
* monitoring attendance data and trends and reporting this information termly to the Governing Body.

## Specific Actions

## The school will make its policy on attendance clear to parents and pupils through the initial information pack on entry to school

## The school will also communicate the importance of attendance to parents and pupils through assemblies, the school prospectus, newsletters and the school website.

* If no contact is received by the parent/ carer of an absent pupil on the first morning of the absence, a telephone call is made by the school’s administration staff to investigate the reason for the absence. If the school is not able to contact the family then this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (N no reason yet provided for absence).
* Details of the absence are recorded, if later received, and discussed with the headteacher and a decision will be made with regards to authorisation as soon as possible. The headteacher may ask the Education Inclusion Service for advice with regards to this but the decision to authorise any absence remains with the school.
* If the pupil is registered as a Child in Need or on the Child Protection register and absent from school without reason, then the school should contact Social Services as soon as possible.
* if an absence remains unexplained for 3 consecutive days then arrangements should be made to visit the home.
* When a pupil returns to school from an absence, but no explanation is offered, a letter will be sent to the parent.
* A letter will also be sent out if a pupil is persistently late to school.
* Ultimately, if an attendance matter cannot be resolved by the school and the appropriate steps have been followed (as outlined in the ‘Procedures for Non Attendance document), then a referral will be made to the LA Service for further investigation.
* A request to the Local Authority for a Penalty Charge Notice can be made by the school, police or from within the local authority itself in relation to poor attendance at school.

The school will also:

* ensure that all staff are aware of the registration procedures, registration regulations and education law relating to school attendance;
* complete school registers at the start of the morning session and afternoon session;
* stress to parents and carers the importance of contacting the school as early as possible on the first day of absence;
* promote positive staff attitudes to pupils returning after absence;
* consult with all members of the school’s community and LA Service in developing and maintaining the whole school attendance policy;
* ensure regular evaluation of attendance by the Governing Body;
* work towards ensuring all pupils are supported and valued and so want to attend school.

**The Designated Member of Staff**

Attendance is the responsibility of all staff. There is, however, a designated member of staff for attendance matters and all staff are able to discuss individual pupil attendance with this person. The Designated Member of Staff for Attendance:

* monitors the school’s registers;
* liaises with teaching staff, in particular Heads of Year;
* meets with the LA Officer on a regular pre-arranged basis;
* refers to other agencies if appropriate;
* refers to the school nurse if there are doubts about the validity of an illness;
* oversees the use of standardised letters to parents addressing specific aspects of attendance and requiring parental response,
* arranges for an attendance meeting in the case of repeated, unexplained absences (school will consider inviting the named governor for attendance to such a meeting);
* ensures that the LA Officer’s role is known and understood in school.

**RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS**

Parents are responsible in law for ensuring that their children attend the school at which they are registered, regularly, on time, properly dressed and in a fit condition to learn (parents are also responsible for ensuring that their children stay at school once they have registered).

Parents can do a great deal to support the regular and punctual attendance of their children. Parents should:

1. take an active interest in their child’s school life and work;
2. attend parents’ evenings and other school events, if possible;
3. ensure that their child completes his/her homework and goes to bed at an appropriate time;
4. be aware of letters from school which their child brings home;
5. ensure that their child arrives at school on time each day;
6. ensure that their child only misses school for reasons which are unavoidable or justified, such as illness or days of religious observance;
7. always notify the school as soon as possible - preferably on the first morning - of any absence;
8. avoid booking family holidays during term-time where possible;
9. talk to the school if they are concerned that their child may be reluctant to attend.

**PENALTY CHARGE NOTICES**

Regular and punctual attendance of pupils at school and alternative provisions is both a legal requirement and essential for pupils to maximise the educational opportunities available to them. In law, an offence occurs if a parent / carer fails to secure their child’s regular attendance at school / alternative provision and that absence is not authorised by the school.

The LAs within ERW are committed to the continual raising of achievement of all their pupils. There is an expectation that all its pupils, regardless of their individual circumstances or needs, are able to secure their entitlement to high quality teaching and learning. Regular attendance is therefore critical if all our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them. Regular attendance and punctuality are essential to allow children to achieve their full potential during term time at school. Regular attendance also ensures that children are safe and lessens the opportunities to become involved in truanting and associated anti-social activities.

Parents / carers and pupils are supported at a school / alternative education provision level to overcome barriers to regular attendance and through a wide range of assessment and intervention strategies. Sanctions of any nature are for use only where parental cooperation in this process is either absent or deemed insufficient to resolve the presenting problem. This additional sanction is a means of enforcing attendance where there is a reasonable expectation that its use will secure an improvement.

The key criteria for issuing Penalty Charge Notices are as follows:

* when a pupil has a minimum of 10 sessions (five school days) that have been lost due to unauthorised absences during the current term and this brings the overall pupil’s attendance to below 90% in the school year (these absences do not have to be consecutive);
* unauthorised absences of at least 10 sessions (5 school days) due to holidays in term-time if the absences take the overall pupil’s attendance to below 90% in the school year to date (these absences do not have to be consecutive);
* persistent late arrival at school i.e. after the register has closed ( ‘U’ code as in the Codes Guidance Document 2010). Persistent for the purpose of this document means at least 10 sessions of late arrival within a term; these do not need to be consecutive but should bring the overall pupil’s attendance to under 90% in the school year to date;

It should be noted that Penalty Charge Notices will only be issued by post and never as an instant action, e.g. during a Truancy Sweep.

**Penalty Notices – for Inclusion in all school attendance policies from academic year 2014/5**

It is only schools who can decide whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised. The code ‘H’ is for where a school has agreed to the absence for a child within term time due to a holiday, a ‘G’ code for when a school decides they are not prepared to authorise a holiday in term time or it is in excess of the agreed time away from school, and ‘F’ for an agreed Extended family holiday. The All Wales Attendance Framework (2011) with regard to exceptional circumstances where a period of absence is requested over two weeks in a year that each request should be considered individually and the criteria for consideration are listed on p.74.

Advice from the Local Authority and from ERW is to continue to advise schools not to authorise absences during term time due to holidays, but that each application will be judged on an individual basis.

Penalty Charge Notices are an early intervention tool and contribute drive towards improving school attendance and related outcomes for our children and young people in terms of attainment.

For further information on Penalty Charge Notices please refer to the Code of Conduct which can be found on:

<http://www.powys.gov.uk/en/schools-students/school-attendance-welfare/>

<http://www.powys.gov.uk/cy/ysgolion-a-myfyrwyr/school-attendance-welfare/>

**REGISTRATION**

**Keeping the registers**

The register is a legal document and must be kept accurately. The register may be requested in a court of law as evidence in a prosecution for non- attendance. It will also be used for end of term reports, records of achievement and reference requests, and information for other schools, LAs and external agencies.

* No pupil should be marked present unless actually in attendance at school or other agreed educational activity.
* The register should not have missing marks.
* When a pupil arrives late but the register is still open, the pupils should be marked as late but counted as present for the session.
* When a pupil misses registration, they should be marked as an unauthorised absence, unless a medical letter/ phone call by parent is received and deemed to be genuine.
* Pupils should not have access to the register.
* The headteacher is the only person who can authorise that a pupil be removed from the register – this can only be done with the agreement of the LA.

**Lateness**

A pupil’s punctuality is a legal requirement and the parent of a pupil who is persistently late is guilty of an offence, The law treats persistent lateness in the same way as irregular attendance and parents can be prosecuted if persistent late arrival is not resolved.

**Holidays**

**Headteachers do have the discretionary power to grant leave for the purpose of a family holiday or trips**. However, the ERW Consortium is strongly advising that any holidays or day trips in term time should be unauthorised.

**Registration Codes**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| / | Present (AM) |
| \ | Present (PM) |
| ; | Illness due to Covid 19 |
| [ | Remote learning due to Covid 19 |
| B | Off Site Education |
| C | Other Authorised Circumstances |
| D | Dual Registered i.e. Present at another school or PRU |
| E | Excluded (No alternative provision made) |
| G | Family holiday (Not agreed) |
| I | Illness |
| J | Interview |
| L | Late (Before the registers closed) |
| M | Medical / Dental Appointment |
| N | No reason yet provided for absence |
| O | Unauthorised Absence (Not covered by other code) |
| P | Approved Sporting Activity |
| R | Religious Observance |
| S | Study Leave |
| T | Traveller Absence |
| U | Late (after registers closed) |
| V | Educational Visit or Trip |
| W | Work experience |
| Y | Partial or Enforced closure |

**Holidays / Absence during term time.**

Under the Education Act (1996), it is the responsibility of the parent or carer to ensure that their son/daughter attend school. Regular school attendance is vital and missing school can have a significant impact on achievement over a one year period as illustrated below:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 95-100%  attendance | Best chance of success | Your child is taking full advantage of every learning opportunity. |
| 90-95%  attendance | At least 2 weeks of learning missed | Satisfactory. Your child may have to spend time catching up with work. |
| 85-90%  attendance | At least 4 weeks of learning missed | Your child may be at risk of underachieving and may need extra support from you to catch up with work. |
| 80-85%  attendance | At least 5 ½ weeks of learning missed | Your child’s poor attendance has a significant impact on learning. |
| Below 80%  attendance | At least 7½ weeks  of learning missed | Your child is missing out on a broad and balanced education. You are at risk of prosecution. |

We hope that you can support this policy and arrange your holidays around the existing 175 days the schools are closed through weekends and school holidays and help us support your child in achieving success in school.

If, however, there are circumstances that mean you have to take a holiday during term time, we ask that you fill in the form on the reverse of this letter and return to school for the attention of the head teacher.

If you wish to take your child/ren on a holiday during term time, the form below must be completed at least 28 days before, but not more than 56 days, before the absence is required to be considered for authorisation.

All the factors noted below will be taken into consideration before a decision is made as to whether to authorise any periods of holiday requested during term time**.**

* **Attendance figures for the last year. (We would expect attendance to be above 95%.)**
* **That the holiday does not impact on any key periods of learning identified and highlighted by the school (such as the end of year pupil assessments carried out during the month of May each year).**
* **That this form has been completed correctly and the request has been made 28 days, but not more than 56 days, before the holiday.**

Please remember that holidays can only be authorised at the Head Teacher’s discretion. It should also be noted that an application for a ‘Fixed Penalty Notice’ will be considered if there are 5 or more days (10 sessions) of ‘unauthorised absence’ recorded, in addition to the attendance level being below 90% for the school year to date.

An authorised / unauthorised slip will be sent back to you within 7 days of submitting this request.

Yours sincerely,

Charlotte Rimmer, Acting Head Teacher, Knighton Church in Wales Primary School

**To be completed by parent/carer:**

Date form was submitted to the school office:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

I request a holiday absence for my child/ren:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

on the following dates: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

I would like the following information to be taken into consideration:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Yours sincerely,

✂ ---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**To be completed by school:**

Thank you for submitting your holiday request form for the following child/ren:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

on the following dates: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Your holiday has been AUTHORISED / UNAUTHORISED for the following reasons:**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Please keep this slip in a safe place for future reference. A copy of your request and the response slip will be kept in your child/ren’s personal records.

Yours sincerely,

Acting Head Teacher, Knighton Church in Wales Primary School