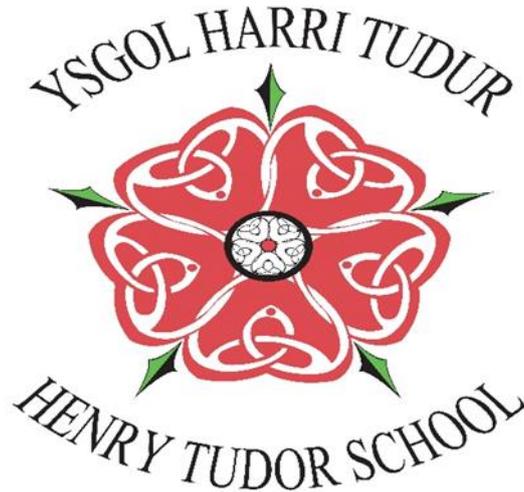


# Ysgol Harri Tudur



## Henry Tudor School

### Attendance Policy

New LA policy February 2015  
Reviewed by Governor Resources Committee on: Autumn 2018  
Ratified by the Governing Body: 14 November 2018  
Review Annually  
Next Review: Autumn 2019

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

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### **Governing body overview of the attendance policy**

The school policy on pupil/student attendance will comply with guidelines given by the local authority and by the ERW consortium.

Ysgol Harri Tudur / Henry Tudor School will comply with all statutory regulations relating to absence monitoring and reporting, coding of absences and authorisation of absences.

The school is committed to improving attendance and punctuality in order to sustain and improve standards of achievement.

Information from the electronic registration system should be used to notify parents/carers of their child's absence from school and to gather information about the reasons for such absence.

Children's absence rates will be monitored through multi agency meetings within the pastoral team.

Although the Headteacher has discretionary power to authorise absence for family holidays and trips, this will only happen in exceptional circumstances. Unapproved absence family holidays and trips could result in the issue of a penalty notice if the child's overall attendance or punctuality is unsatisfactory. Penalty notices may also be issued for persistent lateness.

## **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/carers, 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 pupil/students.
- Statutory obligation apart, the school is committed to improvements in attendance standards as a direct stimulus to raising pupil/student achievement.
- Poor attendance is destructive of educational achievement, undermines the well-being of each pupil/student 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/student 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/carers and pupil/students 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/student 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/carer 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/carer 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 16<sup>th</sup> 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/carer 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/carers;
- minding the house;
- birthdays;
- Holidays / day trips taken in term time.

Parents/carers 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 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 notice. A penalty notice is a fine 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/student 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, eg fortnightly prize draws, non-uniform days, attendance levels considered before a pupil is eligible for reward trips and trips abroad;
- 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/carers and pupils through: the initial transition meeting prior to admission and also in Year 9 option choice meetings.
- The school will also communicate the importance of attendance to parents/carers and pupils through assemblies, the school prospectus, newsletters and the school website / Facebook page.
- If no contact is received by the parent/ carer of an absent pupil/student on the first morning of the absence, a telephone call is made 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/student 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/carers.
- A letter will also be sent out if a pupil is persistently late to school.
- If a pupil's attendance falls below 90% the school will request medical evidence.
- 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 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 – pupils are expected to be in their tutor bases at 8:45am;
- registers close at 9:30am
- If pupils arrive late the details will be recorded and followed up;
- 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 Members of Staff**

Attendance is the responsibility of all staff. There are, however, two Welfare and Attendance Officers who monitor attendance and liaise with teaching staff, in particular Vertical Mentors and Heads of Year. The Welfare Officer for years 7, 8 and 9 and the Welfare Officer for 10, 11, 12 and 13

- meet with the LA Officer on a regular pre-arranged basis;
- refer to other agencies if appropriate;
- refer to the school nurse if there are doubts about the validity of an illness;
- oversee the use of standardised letters to parents/carers addressing specific aspects of attendance and requiring parental response,
- arrange for an attendance meeting in the case of repeated, unexplained absences (school will consider inviting the named governor for attendance to such a meeting);
- ensure that the LA Officer’s role is known and understood in school.

In addition, there is a member of Leadership team who oversees all aspects of attendance.

## **COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS/CARERS**

Today information about pupil attendance is provided to parents/carers through the issue of login details for the ClassCharts system and the SchoolComms mobile phone app. Welfare and Attendance Officers are available on a full-time basis for parents/carers to contact to discuss any queries regarding information provided.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS/CARERS**

Parents/carers 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/carers are also responsible for ensuring that their children stay at school once they have registered).

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

- a) take an active interest in their child's school life and work;
- b) attend parents/carers' evenings and other school events, if possible;
- c) ensure that their child completes his/her homework and goes to bed at an appropriate time;
- d) be aware of letters from school which their child brings home;
- e) ensure that their child arrives at school on time each day;
- f) ensure that their child only misses school for reasons which are unavoidable or justified, such as illness or days of religious observance;
- g) always notify the school as soon as possible - preferably on the first morning - of any absence;
- h) confirm this in writing when the child returns to school;
- i) avoid booking family holidays during term-time;
- j) talk to the school if they are concerned that their child may be reluctant to attend.

## PENALTY 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 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;

- where parents/carers have failed to engage with the school/and or LA in attempts to improve attendance.

It should be noted that penalty 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 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 Notices please refer to the Code of Conduct which can be found on the E Portal and also at:

[www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/schoolattendance](http://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/schoolattendance)

[http://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/content.asp?nav=647,736&parent\\_directory\\_id=646](http://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/content.asp?nav=647,736&parent_directory_id=646)

For enquiries please email; [educationpn@pembrokeshire.gov.uk](mailto:educationpn@pembrokeshire.gov.uk)

ERW will be reviewing the policy (Code) in 12 months.

## **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/student 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/student 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/student misses registration, she/ he should be marked as an unauthorised absence, unless a medical letter/ phone call by parent/carer 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/student be removed from the register – this can only be done with the agreement of the LA..
- In addition to twice daily registration in form groups, a class register is taken for every lesson throughout the day. These are checked by the Head of Year to identify possible truancy and any pupil/student found to have missed a lesson.

### **Lateness**

A pupil's punctuality is a legal requirement and the parent/carer 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/carers 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. 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.

## Registration Codes

/	Present (AM)
\	Present (PM)
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
X	Non-compulsory school age absence
#	School closed to all pupils
Z	Pupils not on roll yet

## **MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF POLICY**

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Date passed by Governing Body discussed at Full Governors meeting February -  
passed on to Resources committee: 27 September 2018

Chairman: Paul Culyer

Designated Governor for school attendance: Paul Culyer