Gorwelion Newydd

 Stiwdio Pen – y – Cae Haulfan Stiwdio Hafod

**Gorwelion Newydd**

**Attendance Policy**

**December 2018**



Introduction

At Gorwelion Newydd we are committed to supporting all of our students to achieve their full potential. Regular attendance is essential for students to gain the greatest benefit from the education provided.

Aims of the attendance policy:

Demonstrate a strong attendance ethos that improves the overall attendance of pupils and reduces the number of persistently absent pupils.

Develop a framework that identifies roles and responsibilities of the whole school community.

Highlight a clear structure for promoting good attendance and tackling absence.

Promote effective, non-bureaucratic systems for monitoring attendance.

Encourage the use of attendance data and other information to improve school and pupil performance.

Promote the general importance and legal requirements of good attendance to pupils, their parents/carers.

Enable early intervention when an individual pupil’s absence gives cause for concern.

Install clear support systems for vulnerable pupils.

Reward and celebrate good and improved attendance.

Promote collaborative working with other external professional and voluntary agencies involved in a pupil’s care.

Work in partnership with the Education Social Work Service.

Why is regular attendance important?

Safeguarding

Schools have a duty to promote the safety and well-being of all students; however, this becomes difficult when students do not attend school. There is the potential that absent students may be at risk of harm. School, parents and carers should work in partnership to ensure that absent students are safe. Frequent or unauthorised absences may be considered a safeguarding or welfare concern and will be dealt with in accordance with the relevant policies and procedures:

Gorwelion Newydd Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy 2017

Gorwelion Newydd Attendance Procedures

Learning

Regular attendance is essential to learning because absent students miss important information and learning opportunities. There is also the potential that students who have missed school, and subsequently fallen behind their peers, may become anxious, frustrated or disruptive.

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Promoting regular attendance:

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody’s responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

* Give you details about your child’s attendance on a regular basis.
* Report to you at least termly (Pupil progress report and PSP meeting) on how your child is performing at school, their attendance and how this relates to their attainments.
* Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements.

The law relating to attendance:

Both the UK Government and the Welsh Government promote excellent school attendance.

The Education Act 1996 states the following:

Section 7: Duty of parents to secure education of children of compulsory school age.

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable:

a) To his [or her] age, ability and aptitude, and

b) To any special education needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

[Education Act 1996, c.56, Part I, Chapter I, Compulsory education, Section 7]

When students are registered with a school, parents and carers have a duty to ensure that their child attends the school on a regular basis:

Section 444: Offence: failure to secure regular attendance at school of registered pupil.

If a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school, his [or her] parent is guilty of an offence.

[Education Act 1996, c.56, Part VI, Chapter II, School attendance: offences and education supervision orders, Section 444]

Children whose attendance is low or erratic will also experience difficulties in fulfilling their educational potential; again it is important parents ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually. If all attempts fail to improve school attendance, legal proceedings may be taken by the Local Authority.’

The Education (Penalty Notices) (Wales) Regulations 2013 gives Local Authorities the power to issue Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) to the parents of children and young people who are persistently absent from school without authorisation.

Circumstances for issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice:

Fixed Penalty Notices are issued by Wrexham Local Authority, but applied for by the Head Teacher. The school has a duty to request a Fixed Penalty Notice if a student exceeds 10 sessions (5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a term; however the decision to issue a warning or penalty is at the discretion of the Local Authority.

The Local Code of Conduct: Fixed Penalty Notices for Non-Attendance at School [Wrexham County Council – November 2014] provides full details on the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices.

Wrexham County Council protocols and procedures in relation to Fixed Penalty Notices (See Appendix A)

Issue of a Penalty Notice:

• A Fixed Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence;

• Use of Fixed Penalty Notice will be restricted to one notice per parent of a pupil per academic year;

• In cases where there is more than one poorly-attending pupil in a family, Notices may be issued for more than one child;

• There will be no restriction on the number of times a parent may receive a formal warning of a possible Fixed Penalty Notice.

Penalty Notices may be considered appropriate when:

• At least 10 sessions (5 school days) are lost due to unauthorised absence during the current term. These do not need to be consecutive;

• Persistent late arrival at school, i.e. after the register has closed, in the current term. “Persistent” means at least 10 sessions of late arrival;

• Truancy; defined as the action of staying away from school without good reason (Oxford dictionary)

• A Penalty Notice will not be issued in respect of children in LA care with whom other interventions will be used.

Understanding types of absence:

The school day is made up of two sessions. Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not the parents or carers) as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing or by leaving a message on the school answer phone.

The school will usually authorise absences where a student is:

* Unable to attend school due to a serious illness (an explanation must be provided).
* Required to attend an emergency medical appointment. Wherever possible routine dental/medical appointments should be made after school or during school holidays.
* Absent due to other exceptional circumstances (at the discretion of the Head Teacher).

Circumstances would only be authorised as exceptional (register code C) if the school has reason to believe that the absence is necessary, appropriate and unavoidable.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider necessary, or those for which no explanation has been provided. These types of absence can lead to the Local Authority taking further action, which may include the issuing of a Fixed Penalty Notice and/or legal proceedings.

Holidays:

Absence due to term-time holidays is detrimental to your child’s education. Gorwelion Newydd expects parents and carers to support their child’s education by avoiding term-time holidays.

There is no entitlement in law to time off school to go on holiday.

The school reserves the right to refuse to authorise term time holidays. The decision whether or not to authorise a holiday will be made by the Head Teacher on a case-by-case basis and holidays will only be authorised in the most exceptional circumstances. Arranging holidays during term time because of lower costs is unlikely to be a sufficient reason for the leave to be authorised.

Reluctance to attend school:

Some students may occasionally be reluctant to attend school, this can occur for a variety of reasons. If this happens it is important that parents and carers communicate promptly and honestly with the school and that school staff and parents/carers work in partnership to identify and resolve any issues faced by the student. It becomes very difficult for the school to resolve issues or offer support to students who are absent; parents and carers should therefore ensure that their children come into school to discuss the situation. If the school has not been given the opportunity to rectify an issue, but the student does not attend school, then the absence may be considered unauthorised.

Regular Absenteeism:

A student is considered a regular absentee when attendance falls below 85% for any reason. Absence at this frequency is of significant detriment to children’s learning and Gorwelion Newydd expect parents’ and carers’ full support to improve attendance and limit absences. We monitor all absence thoroughly and regular absentees will be tracked by the Pastoral Managers; where appropriate interventions will be implemented to support students to improve their attendance. When attendance becomes a cause for concern the school will invite parents or carers to discuss this; it is a cause for concern if parents or carers fail to engage with this process, such concerns will be shared with the Local Authority.

Education Social Work Service:

Gorwelion Newydd may refer students to the Local Authority’s Education Social Work Service if:

There are concerns about a student whose attendance has fallen below 85%;

The Education Social Work Service will support parents and carers to improve their child’s attendance, however where there is unsatisfactory progress, it may be necessary for the Local Authority to initiate legal proceedings.

Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent you must:

Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence to provide an explanation. When students are absent for consecutive days, parents and carers should phone every day unless a clear and definite date of return can be provided. Explanations for absence must be provided by a parent or carer; it is not sufficient for the student to explain their own absence.

If your child is absent we will:

Telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you.

Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Deputy Headteacher and/or Pastoral Manager to set attendance targets (when below 85%).

Refer the matter to an Education Social Welfare Service if attendance continues to falls below 85% after being on an Action Plan for a month.

Registers:

The school has a duty to keep accurate registers. A register is taken every morning between 08:50 – 09:15am.

Any member of staff responsible for supervising students during the school day must ensure the prompt and accurate completion of the relevant register. Accurate registers are essential for safeguarding and health & safety.

Gorwelion Newydd Targets:

School expects your child to achieve 100% attendance.

The minimum level of attendance for this school is 85**%** and we will keep you updated regularly about their attendance should it drop below this.

Through the school year we monitor absences to show us where improvements need to be made.

Gorwelion Newydd will run regular School Pastoral Support Planning (PSP) meetings to support parents in improving their child’s attendance and/or punctuality.

Outstanding and good attendance is celebrated through the use of displays, our rewards system and meetings with parent/careers

Those people responsible for attendance matters at Gorwelion Newydd believe that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, management committee, parents, pupils and the wider school community.

As such Gorwelion Newydd Management Committee will:

* Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to pupils and their parent/carers
* Annually review the school’s Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy
* Identify a member of the Management Committee to lead on attendance matters
* Ensure attendance related legislation is complied with
* Monitor the school’s attendance and related issues through termly reporting at Management Committee meetings
* Ensure that attendance data is reported to the Local Authority or Department for Education as required and on time
* Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance
* Ensure that the school has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all, including those who are educated off-site
* Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
* Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions

The Leadership Team will:

* Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parent/carers
* Form positive relationships with pupils and parent/carers
* Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve
* Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed annually
* Ensure that all staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and adequately trained to address attendance issues
* Ensure attendance related legislation is complied with
* Ensure that the named Pastoral Managers are allocated sufficient time and resource
* Return school attendance data to the Local Authority and the Department for Education as required and on time
* Report the school’s attendance and related issues through termly reporting to the Management Committee and on a half termly basis
* Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site are implemented
* Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
* Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions
* Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support pupils and their families
* Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority, should legal proceedings be instigated

The Pastoral Managers will:

* Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parent/carers
* Form positive relationships with pupils and parents
* Contribute to a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance
* Comply with the attendance related legislation
* Implement systems to support attendance for all pupils including those in off-site provision
* Daily attendance monitoring
* Follow up any absences on day one; record on SIMS
* Analyse attendance data to identify causes and patterns of absence
* Arrange PSP meetings and write/agree an Attendance Action Plan with pupils/parent/carers who persistently fall below 85%
* Contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and interventions
* Work with other agencies to improve attendance and support pupils and their families (e.g ESW)
* Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority, should legal proceedings be instigated ( It should show a trail of how we as a Service have monitored and attempted to address attendance issues which also enables us to do a chronology between our paper work and SIMMs)
* Provide reports half termly attendance reports SLT and Management Committee

Request that Parent/Carers will:

* Talk to their child about school and daily experiences. Take a positive interest in their child’s work and educational progress
* Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment
* Encourage their child to look to the future and have aspirations
* On the first day of absence contact the school to let them know the reason why, and the expected date of return. Follow this up with a note
* Try to avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make appointments for the Doctors, Dentists etc. before 8:45am or after 3pm
* Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties
* Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child’s attendance
* Support the school; take every opportunity to get involved in their child’s education, form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home
* Not keep their child off school to go shopping, to help at home or to look after other members of the family
* Avoid taking their child out of school during term-time, where this is unavoidable, and only in exceptional circumstances send a written leave request to the Head Teacher.

Summary

The school has a legal responsibility to maintain accurate records of attendance and share relevant attendance statistics and information with Welsh Government and the Wrexham Local Authority.

The school has an attendance target and is expected to promote excellent attendance and take action to discourage unnecessary absence.

Parents and carers have a duty to ensure that their child/children attend school every day possible and to work with the school to improve attendance if there are concerns.

The Local Authority has a duty to support the school and parents/carers to improve attendance.

**Declaration**

**Review Date:**

**Management Committee:**

**Head Teacher:**