



Ysgol Estyn

Policy for Attendance and Truancy

POLICY FOR ATTENDANCE AND TRUANCY

We believe that children can reach their full potential only by receiving full-time education, through regular and structured attendance. Ysgol Estyn expects all pupils to arrive and leave school punctually and we emphasise this to parents.

All staff are concerned for the children's welfare and happiness and everyone plays a part in promoting regular attendance among the pupils. However, children should not attend school if they are unwell.

Aims

- ◆ To foster a climate where regular attendance and punctuality are valued by the school community – teachers, parents and pupils.
- ◆ To provide a framework, with agreed roles and responsibilities.
- ◆ To provide support and guidance for parents and pupils.
- ◆ To develop positive and consistent communication between home and school, including set procedures for attendance information.
- ◆ To develop a systematic approach for gathering and analysing data.
- ◆ To improve the overall attendance of pupils at school and reduce unauthorised absence.
- ◆ To implement a system for rewards and sanctions.
- ◆ To promote effective partnership with the Education Welfare Service and other agencies.

Communication

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

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

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

At this Induction Meeting, parents are requested to arrange their family holidays within the school holidays, rather than in term time. At Ysgol Estyn, we prefer that family holidays should be taken during school holidays, so that a child's education is not disrupted. Parents

are reminded in Newsletters that they should not take their children out of school unnecessarily for holidays or visits. The Head Teacher contacts those parents who frequently take the family holiday in term-time and reminds them of the disruption to their child's education.

At Ysgol Estyn, parents are asked to complete a Request for Leave of Absence form, if they wish to take their child out of school for an appointment, visit or holiday, this is then assessed using a points system by the Head Teacher. If the request is for a holiday, the Head Teacher will consider the impact on the child's education, previous absences from school and the time of year etc. If the request exceeds the maximum 8 points then the Head Teacher does not sanction the absence, any absence by the pupil will be treated as unauthorised. Pupils are allowed 10 sessions maximum of authorised absence per school year for family holidays.

Authorised and unauthorised absences are explained to parents. All parents should contact Ysgol Estyn if their child will be absent or late. A telephone call is acceptable; a record is kept in the office to record telephone messages under the headings: Date, Child, Class, and Reason for Absence. Alternatively, when their child returns, parents should send a letter to school explaining the absence. Parents may call at the school to see the class teacher to notify their child's non-attendance. The class teacher keeps these records. All information is used for Class Registers. If no notification is received about a child's absence a letter is sent to request reasons for absence. If following this there is still no reason then the absence is marked as unauthorised.

Registration

Ysgol Estyn uses a computerised registration system and the Register is completed in the morning and afternoon at 8.55 a.m. and 12.55 p.m. A pupil will receive a late mark after 9.05pm / 1.05pm. All pupils who are late must report to the office.

The Head Teacher analyses the attendance of all pupils on a monthly basis and notifies parents if there is any reason for concern. Class teachers also have an obligation to inform the Head teacher if any concerning patterns in absenteeism have been noticed. At the end of the year, each child's attendance is analysed and a copy is given to parents with their child's School Report.

The Governors' Report to Parents records the school attendance figures for authorised and unauthorised absence. These figures can also be found in the Estyn Report and the School Prospectus.

Concerns

The computerised Attendance Records (held in office) are examined monthly by the Head teacher. Letters are sent to parents whose child's attendance has dropped below 90% unless there is a valid reason for this. If there are concerns about a child's non-attendance or unpunctuality, the class teacher consults the Head Teacher immediately. Details of attendance or late percentage are extracted from the computer database. The Head Teacher communicates this to the parent(s) within the letter. If absences or unpunctuality persist, the Head Teacher contacts the Inclusion Welfare Officer.

If a child has had 20 sessions of unauthorised absences in one term then the Head teacher will request that the LA send a fixed penalty warning letter to the parents.

The Inclusion Welfare Officer meets the Head Teacher when required to discuss attendance issues offering action, advice and support.

Absence Through Illness

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

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

Educational support, including the provision of work and materials is provided for those pupils who are absent from school, with medical conditions for more than 7 days. ICT is used if practicable. The teaching staff liaise with Medical Advisers and/or Home Tuition Providers, so that, during prolonged absence, pupils receive suitable work for their age and ability group.

The reintegration of children into school after a long absence through ill health is considered a high priority. The school consults parents about general concerns, medical issues and the timing and pace of return. Staff, including the class teacher, Teaching Assistants, and Home or Hospital Tutor will meet to discuss the return to school. Friends and other pupils are encouraged to help the child settle back in school. Extra support is provided (subject to available resources) after an analysis of the child's needs.

Truancy

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

If truancy is suspected, the Head Teacher and the Inclusion Welfare Officer are notified. Parents are contacted, either by telephone or a home visit. We encourage parents to bring their child to school, so that the reasons for truancy can be discussed and, we hope, resolved. If the Head Teacher is unable to talk to the parent(s), he or she talks to the child to find out if there are any worries or problems in school that might make that child not want to attend. If problems are identified, these are discussed and resolved with the class teacher/member of staff/other pupils.

At Ysgol Estyn, we endeavour to discover, through discussion with the individual pupils, what the children like and dislike about school. The staff consider the children's opinions and, if possible, adjustments are made to teaching and learning procedures and the school environment.

Promoting Good Attendance and Punctuality

Assemblies

Individual Assemblies on everyday matters relate to attendance, such as, time-keeping, excuses, illness, what Ysgol Estyn can and cannot change.

Class Organisation/Lessons

- ◆ Worksheets on attendance; time-keeping monitoring sheets.
- ◆ Lessons on telling the time.
- ◆ Word searches; attendance quiz.
- ◆ Writing letters.
- ◆ Class/School Council discussions on feelings, likes and dislikes about school.
- ◆ Peer group support – contacting friends who are absent.
- ◆ Positive support for those pupils who have been absent for a significant period – planned reintegration.

Rewards

- ◆ Certificates are presented to those children with full attendance during each term and the year as a whole.
- ◆ Each week the class with the highest average attendance is rewarded with a star on the merit board. These are then counted at the end of each term and £50 is awarded to each class in both departments.

Further Information

Useful Documents and Resources

DfES Consultation on the Education of Sick Children 2001

DfES LEA Behaviour Support Plans (Circular 1/98)

DfES/Home Office Social Inclusion: Pupil Support (Circular 10/99)

DfES Tackling Truancy Together

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