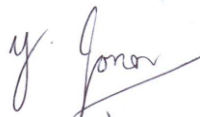# Whole School Attendance Policy

2018-2019

Date Created: May 2019

Review Date: May 2020

Chair of Governors – David Brookes

Signed:
Date: 08.05.2019

Headteacher – Yvonne Jones

Content

Appendices

Mission Statement

Our mission statement **'Aspire Together, Achieve Together'** is fulfilled by us having the highest ambitions and expectations for our pupils' achievement, well-being and behaviour. We are committed to providing outstanding learning and teaching in a caring, safe, nurturing environment. We want your child to enjoy their learning and the wide range of extra-curricular opportunities available whilst being challenged and supported to reach their full potential. We believe that pupils can only benefit from the education in our school through regular attendance. We will, therefore, strive to achieve the maximum possible attendance for all pupils and we will make sure we identify and resolve concerns quickly.

Excellent attendance and punctuality are an essential element of life in school and will prepare your child for the world of work. This policy outlines how we will support our pupils to maintain an excellent attendance record. We hope that, together with your support, we can meet the school's attendance target of 95%. In helping your child achieve this target, you are ensuring that they achieve their full potential.

Aims

- That all pupils achieve excellent attendance; Attendance of 95% or better.

- Create a positive ethos across the school which identifies the importance of regular and punctual attendance;

- Make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school, including pupils, parents, teachers and governors;

- Develop positive communication between home and school concerning attendance and punctuality;

- Recognise and respond to the needs of individual pupils when planning the reintegration following significant periods of absence;

- Set targets to improve individual pupil and whole school attendance levels, using attendance related data;

- Seek clarification from the Local Authority regarding support for parents whose children's attendance levels are causing a concern.

Key terms

- *Authorised Absence* – pupil absence that has been approved by school and coded accordingly as an acceptable reason has been provided (for example, illness, to attend a family funeral or an unavoidable medical appointment during school time).
- *Parent(s)* – where parent(s) is used this relates to the person(s) who have parental responsibility for the child (parent(s), legal guardian(s) / carer(s)).
- *Unauthorised Absence* – pupil absence that has not been approved by school and coded accordingly as the school does not consider the absence to be reasonable (for example, a shopping trip, a family holiday or any form of truancy).

Absence Procedures

Please contact our attendance officer, Ms R Davies as soon as possible if your child is absent. You can contact the school by either telephoning us on 01443 682137Ext 1 or by emailing DaviesR1531@hwbmail.net

Expectations

We expect the following from parents/carers:

- That pupils attend school daily, unless they are ill or have an authorised absence;

- That pupils will arrive on time and be appropriately prepared for the day;

- That parents/carers inform the school of any absence and the reason for absence before 8.40am;

- Medical appointment cards and letters are provided. No medical appointments will be authorised unless these are provided. Providing these retrospectively (after the appointment) is acceptable;

- Discuss with the Attendance Officer any planned absences well in advance (e.g. a family holiday) and make any request for leave of absence on the school's official leave of absence form.

Parents/carers and pupils can expect the following from Porth Community School:

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance;

- Early contact with parent/carer when a pupil fails to attend school without providing good reason;

- Immediate action and support on any problem notified to the school.

Legal 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 need she/she may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise … …"*

Section 444 further states that "… *the parent of a child of compulsory school age registered at school and failing to attend regularly is guilty of an offence punishable in law … …"*

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 unavoidable cause;

- the absence occurred on a day set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil/parents belong;
- the school is not within the prescribed walking distance of the child's home and suitable transport arrangements have not been made by the LEA. The law relating to 'walking distance' effectively is defined as two miles for pupils under eight and three miles for all other pupils.
- Educational activity or sporting event taking place off school premises

Encouraging good attendance and punctuality

It is important to remember that the majority of pupils at Porth Community School arrive on time and are present every day. An important part of our attendance policy is that this good practice is commended and forms part of our whole school reward system. We hope that through regular praise, a vast number of pupils will be recognised and rewarded.

Attendance can be encouraged in the following ways:

- Attendance checks at appropriate times;

- Holidays during term time are actively discouraged;

- Recording of attendance on individual reports;

- Establishing a mechanism for supporting those parents/carers who are concerned that their children may be experiencing difficulty in attending school;

- Sending parents/carers regular absence figures as appropriate;

- The efficient use of the school's Management Information System to provide accurate pupil level attendance data which can assist in speedy analysis and appropriate interventions delivered;

- Working in partnership with the feeder primary schools to identify and support pupils who have attendance concerns as part of transition between KS2 and KS3.

Responding to non-attendance

When a pupil does not attend, **it is the responsibility of the parents/carer to inform the school daily regarding absence**. The school will respond effectively;

- If a note or telephone call is not received from parents/carers, they will be contacted either by text or telephone;

- Absences will be chased by the school. Any absence not notified to the school will be coded 'O – Unauthorised absence', one week after the absence has occurred;

- If considered necessary by the school, staff may carry out either prearranged or unannounced home visits;

- A parental concern letter will be sent when a pupils' attendance falls below 95%; This will inform parents that self-certificated absence for `illness` will no longer be accepted without medical evidence. (extenuating circumstances will be considered)

- Attendance will be monitored by the school and if attendance does not improve within <u>two</u> weeks of receipt of the parental concern letter, the parent/carer will be invited to attend a meeting in school. This meeting will include the appropriate staff, parent/carer and pupil. The aim of this meeting is to identify and solve any concerns that are preventing the pupil from attending school. Parents/carers are obliged to attend; if there are 10 or more unauthorised absences, an FPN could be issued.

- If a pupil's attendance falls below 86% then a referral will be made to the Local Authority Attendance & Wellbeing Service. A letter will be sent to inform parents/carers of this referral.

<u>Holidays during term time</u>

In regards to holidays taken in term time, whilst the legislation under Section 7 (3 and 4) of The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 allows head teachers to "*grant leave of absence from school for the purposes of a family holiday for no more than 10 days in an academic year"*, the school will support the local authority stance which is one that will discourage holiday absence unless the pupil and family are exempt under one of the three "exceptional" circumstance criteria. Those exemptions are:

- Families of serving armed forces personnel;
- Parent or child experiencing a life limiting illness;
- Families that have suffered an acute trauma.

Holidays forms must be received at least four weeks in advance of the holiday, however, the holiday will not be formally authorised until one week before the holiday commences. Holidays will only be authorised where pupil attendance is 96% or above one week prior to the holiday commencing.

<u>Fixed Penalty Notices</u>

Under the Education (Penalty Notices) (Wales) Regulations 2013, Local Authorities have been given powers to issue Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) as an alternative to taking legal action against parents/carers when responding to absenteeism from school.

To comply with The Education (Penalty Notices) (Wales) Regulations 2013, the school will operate in accordance with the local authorities Code of Conduct for fixed penalty notices for regular non-attendance at school. It remains the discretion of the head teacher to authorise absences in line with The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 attendance codes and supplementary guidance provided by the local authority.

When is an FPN used?
- Where there is a minimum of ten unauthorised sessions (5 school days) in the current term (these do not need to be consecutive);

- Pupils persistently arriving after the close of the registration period i.e. more than ten sessions in the current term;
- Where parents / carers have failed to engage with the school and/or the AWS in attempts to improve attendance but where court sanctions have not been instigated;
- For unauthorised family holiday.

Parents will receive a formal warning of the possibility of an FPN being issued and given 15 school days to improve the child's overall school attendance. If the pupil has full attendance in this monitoring period, an FPN will not be issued.

The 15-day warning period does not APPLY to an FPN issued for an unauthorised holiday absence.

There is no limit to the number of times a warning notice may be issued.

<u>**Lateness**</u>

The majority of pupils have excellent punctuality and there are of course occasions where pupils may be late due to unavoidable circumstances. However, punctuality is extremely important as pupils may miss key information given out at the start of the school day.

To this end we are asking for your support in ensuring that your son/daughter understands the importance of being punctual to school. Pupils are required to be in school at 8:40am (Middle/Upper School) and 8.50am (Lower School). Should a pupil persistently fail to be in school for this time then appropriate action will be taken.

<u>**School Organisation**</u>

In order for the Attendance Policy to be successful, every member of the staff must make attendance a high priority and should convey to pupils the importance of attendance and the link between attendance and attainment.

Staff	Responsibility
Governing Body	Approve the policy and any proposed changes; Receive reports from the Headteacher; Review the working of the policy in light of the Headteacher report; Ensure that the policy is promoted and implemented throughout the school, and is known by the parents.
Headteacher	Liaise with the Local Authority to determine attendance targets as part of the development plan and target setting process; Ensure that strategies are in place to promote and implement the policy throughout the school, and monitor progress; Notify parents as appropriate that if a pupil of compulsory school age fails to

	attend regularly his/her parents commit an offence; Provide the governing body with termly and annual reports with attendance statistics.
Leadership Team	To oversee and demonstrate ownership of the whole school Attendance Policy; Oversee and support attendance arrangements; Deal with issues of inadequate registering; Arrange appropriate training for staff; Advise the Head on any strategies that could be initiated or improved; Support the head in creating a positive ethos.
Attendance Lead	To regularly report progress on attendance to governors, pupils and parents/carers; To oversee the efficient operation of the attendance system and the collation and analysis of attendance data; Analyse attendance data for year groups, form groups and other sub groups; To oversee the work of administrative staff in relation to attendance; To organise attendance assemblies; Keep the Headteacher informed of the progress of the policy.
Attendance Officer	To liaise with appropriate staff; To raise the profile of attendance for the whole school; To investigate and clarify reasons for unauthorised absence; To collate attendance data for year groups, form groups and other sub groups; To record all reasons for absence on the School Management Information System (SIMS); To oversee the registration process and ensure that registers are completed accurately and on time; To deliver attendance assemblies; To initiate contact with parents/carers in cases of prolonged unexplained absence; Notify parents by text and/or by phone call on a pupil's first day of absence, where the reason is unknown;

	Check the automated system for any messages regarding pupil absence; Monitor attendance and follow the Graduated Response procedures; Liaise with the RCT Attendance and Wellbeing Officers to improve pupils attendance; Regularly record communication on SIMs and ProvisionMap; Regularly check the system for unauthorised absence and contact parents to ascertain a reason; Meet with parents regarding persistent and/or sporadic absence; Enter note commentaries for absence on SIMs; Liaise with primary feeder schools on Year 6 to Year 7 transition data regarding attendance; Liaise with Wellbeing Managers and Heads of Schools if there is a concern about a child's welfare; Monitor SIMS daily for missing registers.
Heads of School	Ensure that all registers are completed during registration time; Ensure that all suspected truancy is followed up and dealt with; Contact parents over pupil absences where appropriate; Liaise with the Attendance Lead/Attendance Officer on the efficiency of the system and regarding training needs; Ensure that form tutors promote attendance in registration time; Ensure that attendance data is distributed to form tutors, where appropriate.
Wellbeing Managers	To initiate contact with parents/carers in cases of prolonged unexplained absence To plan for the return of long-term absentees in conjunction with any other relevant members of staff e.g. ALNCO, Gate Manager, Head of School. Carry out attendance interventions, where appropriate and monitor impact of these interventions.
Form Tutors	To assist in reducing unexplained absences; Actively promote attendance in registration time using positive praise;

	Participate in activities that raise the awareness of the importance of attendance; To complete registers accurately and on time; Inform the Wellbeing Manager or Head of School of any possible underlying problems which might account for absences; Use RAIS to promote attendance in form time.
Classroom teachers	To pass on concerns to their line manager/appropriate Head of School; To complete registers accurately and on time; Check the attendance of pupils at their lessons and complete registers promptly; Inform the Attendance Officer via ClassCharts if a pupil is present earlier in the day and yet not in the current lesson.
Administration staff	Provide a safe/secure drop-box for absence notes to be placed by pupils, which will then be collected by the Attendance Officers; Communicate any information regarding absence or attendance concerns; Liaise with the Attendance Officers, where appropriate.

Monitoring

The Headteacher or Attendance Lead will report to the governing body, with attendance data and any specific trends or difficulties with individual pupils.

Review

This policy is due for review in XXX. Its success should be judged by answers to the following questions:

1. Have we reached our attendance target of XXX%?
2. Has unauthorised absence been reduced?
3. Are all staff, pupils and parents aware of the procedures to be followed?
4. Has the profile of attendance been raised positively over the period of this policy?
5. Do teachers and pupils have high expectations of themselves and others in terms of attendance?

Appendix 1.1

RCT School Term Times 2018/2019		
Term	**From**	**To**
Autumn 2018	Monday, September 3 2018	Friday, October 26 2018
Half Term	**Monday, October 29 2018**	**Friday, November 2 2018**
Autumn 2018	Monday, November 5 2018	Friday, December 21 2018
Christmas Holidays	**Monday, December 24 2018**	**Friday, January 4 2019**
Spring 2019	Monday, January 7 2019	Friday, February 22 2019
Half Term	**Monday, February 25 2019**	**Friday, March 1 2019**
Spring 2019	Monday, March 4 2019	Friday, April 12, 2019
Easter holidays	**Monday, April 15 2019**	**Friday, April 26 2019**
Summer 2019	Monday, April 29 2019	Friday, May 24 2019
Half term	**Monday, May 27 2019**	**Friday, May 31 2019**
Summer 2019	Monday, June 3 2019	Monday, July 22, 2019

All schools will be closed on **<u>Monday 6 May 2019</u>** for the May Day Bank Holiday.

Significant dates:

- Christmas - Tuesday 25 December 2018
- Easter – Good Friday 19 April 2019 and Easter Monday 22 April 2019
- May Bank Holidays - Monday 6 May 2019 and Monday 27 May 2019

Appendix 1.1

All schools will be closed on **Monday 4 May 2020** for the May Day Bank Holiday.

RCT School Term Times 2019/2020		
Term	**From**	**To**
Autumn 2019	Monday, September 2nd 2019	Friday, October 25th 2019
Half Term	**Monday, October 28th 2019**	**Friday, November 1st 2019**
Autumn 2019	Monday, November 4th 2019	Friday, December 20th 2019
Christmas Holidays	**Monday, December 23rd 2019**	**Friday, January 3rd 2020**
Spring 2020	Monday, January 6th 2020	Friday, February 14th 2020
Half Term	**Monday, February 17th 2020**	**Friday, February 21st 2020**
Spring 2020	Monday, February 24th 2020	Friday, April 3rd 2020
Easter holidays	**Monday, April 6th 2020**	**Friday, April 17th 2020**
Summer 2020	Monday, April 20th 2020	Friday, May 22nd 2020
Half term	**Monday, May 25th 2020**	**Friday, May 29th 2020**
Summer 2020	Monday, June 1st 2020	Monday, 20 July 20th 2020

Significant dates:

- Christmas - Wednesday 25 December 2019
- Easter - Good Friday 10 April 2020 and Easter Monday 13 April 2020
- May Bank Holidays - Monday 4 May 2020 and Monday 25 May 2020

Appendix 1.2

Attendance Graduated Response

Student Attendance Tracked by School
Shared with Parents on Reports and on Progress Checks

Punctuality Letter sent home
(5 or more late marks recorded)

Unauthorised absence letter sent home

Attendance above 95%

Attendance falls below 95%

Punctuality does not improve over a four week period

Reason for absence not provided.

Reason for absence provided.

Telephone call to ascertain reason for absence.

Attendance Cause for Concern Letter
Letter sent to Parent/Carer
School to monitor attendance for two weeks (maximum four weeks)

Punctuality improves
Monitor punctuality over a four week period

No further action

No Further absences
School to continue to monitor attendance (maximum of four weeks) to support the pupil.

Further absences- Parental Meeting Letter
Meeting arranged with Parents/Carers inviting them to discuss their child's attendance in school.

Parental Meeting
Address any concerns over punctuality

Punctuality improves

Punctuality does not improve
Possible FPN issued for persistently arriving after the close of the registration period.

Parent/Carer attends meeting in school.

Parent/Carer does attend meeting in school and does not contact the school.

Copies of Attendance Action Plan to be sent to the Parent/Carer.

School to monitor attendance for a maximum of four weeks, any further absences will be unauthorised (unless medical evidence is provided).

No Further Absences

Further Absences –Letter sent explaining that they are being referred to Attendance and Wellbeing Service.

School to monitor attendance

AWS Referral made

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Appendix 1.3

Guidance for Parents/Carers

Our mission statement **'Aspire Together, Achieve Together'** is fulfilled by us having the highest ambitions and expectations for our pupils' achievement, well-being and behaviour. We are committed to providing outstanding learning and teaching in a caring, safe, nurturing environment. We want your child to enjoy their learning and the wide range of extra-curricular opportunities available whilst being challenged and supported to reach their full potential. We believe that pupils can only benefit from the education in our school through regular attendance. We will, therefore, strive to achieve the maximum possible attendance for all pupils and we will make sure we identify and resolve concerns quickly. We will make contact with parents/carers when a pupil is absent from school without a reason.

How can parents/carers help?

1. Ensure that your child attends school regularly and that they arrive on time;

2. Provide up to date contact information. Notifying the school of any changes.

3. Provide up to date medical information to enable the school to adequately support pupils who have health issues affecting their attendance. No absences for medical appointments will be authorised without appointment cards, letters or texts from the GP/Dentist. This information can be provided retrospectively.

4. Contact the school whenever your child is absent, giving details of the reason for absence and the length of time your child will be off school.

5. Help your child prepare for the school day by ensuring they have everything they need for the day ahead.

6. Attend Parents' Evening to discuss your child's progress and talk to the staff about any issues/changes in family circumstances which may affect your child's attendance.

7. Contact the school if any problems arise which may keep your child from attending school, so that we can help.

Appendix 1.5

Porth Community School

<u>Holiday Notification Form</u>

*This form is to be completed by the parent/carer and forwarded to the School Office **not less than four weeks** prior to the period of absence required. The local authority and school strongly advises parents that pupils should not take holidays in term time. Approval of absence is entirely at the discretion of the school.*
Please do not assume that your holiday request will be authorised – each request will be considered on its own merits and may be unauthorised.

I would like to request that:

	Full Name	Date of Birth	Class
Child 1			
Child 2			
Child 3			
Child 4			
Home Address			

be granted leave of absence from …………………………
to………………………………….. to participate in a family holiday at
…………………………………………………………..destination).

Number of school days to be taken
…………………………………………………………………………….

<u>Children in Another School</u> - I will also be requesting this holiday for my other child(ren) who attend (please state child's **AND** school name):

…………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………

Please consider the following circumstances when considering my child(ren)'s request:

Name of Parent/Carer:

_____

Signature of Parent/Carer:

_____

Date:

_____

For School Use Only:

Authorised Days:

_____

Unauthorised Days:

_____

Signature of Headteacher:

_____

Signature of Chair of Governors/Link Governor for Attendance:

_____

Date:

_____