

Pembroke Primary School



Attendance and Truancy Policy

POLICY FOR ATTENDANCE AND TRUANCY

At Pembroke Primary School we believe that children can only learn effectively if they attend school regularly. It is important too, that children arrive and leave school on time. It is equally important that children should not be at school if they are unwell.

1. Why is good attendance important?

Establishing good attendance patterns from an early age can help children later on in life. Evidence suggests that children who attend school more regularly achieve better educational outcomes than those with poor attendance.

In addition to missing academic work, children with poor attendance will also miss the social side of school life. This, especially in the first few years of education, can affect their ability to make and maintain friendships.

If regular attendance patterns are not established, research has indicated that some young people who regularly miss school for no good reason may be drawn into anti-social behaviour or crime.

By law, all children of compulsory school age (between 5 and 16) must receive a suitable, full-time education, at school or otherwise. As a parent you are responsible for making sure this happens.

Parents are responsible for making sure that if registered their children attend school regularly. As attendance is crucial to effective learning and the continuity of learning experiences, the school places great emphasis on this in its communication with parents.

There are 2 types of absence from school:-

Authorised absence:

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from schools for illness or unavoidable causes e.g. bereavement. When children are too ill to attend school, **parents are to contact the school on the first morning of absence and keep the school informed if the absence continues for more than a day.**

Children may also have to attend medical or dental appointments in school time. However we would expect parents to make every attempt to make routine appointments, such as dental check-ups after school or during the school holidays.

The Local Authority advise that birthdays and shopping trips are not acceptable reasons for absence and should not be authorised.

Where an absence is authorised, schools will use the appropriate and recognised codes to record the absence.

Unauthorised absence

These can include:-

- Absences which have never been properly explained to the school
- Parents keeping their child off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Holidays during term time (schools will decide on the circumstances of each case)

Communication

Information on lateness, illness and absence is given to parents in the School Prospectus and attendance features regularly in Newsletters and via SeeSaw. This highlights the importance of being at school on time and notifying school if their child is absent for any reason.

At the pre-school induction meetings held each year for children about to enter the reception class the importance of regular attendance is discussed and explained. This talk also includes parents and children arriving at school on time so that each child can be given the best possible start to each school day. Being picked up on time is also stressed, especially for young children who can be very upset if they are the only ones left in class.

Parents are asked to share any worries their child might have in school. Sometimes little things upset children which mean they become unhappy, and may not want to come to school. Parents need to be aware of this.

Again at this initial meeting parents are asked to try to arrange their family holidays within the school holidays, term dates can be found on our school website. The Pupil Registration (Wales) Regulations 2010 gives Headteachers *discretionary* power to grant up to ten days leave for the purpose of an annual family holiday during term time. However the Headteacher will take into consideration pupils' previous attendance records when considering parental requests for holidays in term time and the impact of the holiday request upon their attendance for the current academic year.

We urge families to consider the following before booking a holiday during term time;

- Do they really need to take a holiday in term time or can they take the holiday during school holidays?
- Have they considered the disruption to their child's education?

If they families feel that they must take the holiday during school term, they will need to complete a request form which is available from the office. As with any request for absence, please make the application as far in advance as possible.

No holiday, unless in extenuating circumstances, will be authorised by the school. In any case where a pupil exceeds 10 unauthorised absences for whatever reason this will be referred to the LA for consideration of receiving a fixed penalty notice. A request form for Head teacher's permission to take holidays during term time is available from the school office.

Pembroke Primary School - Attendance and Truancy Policy – Reviewed September 2019 by J.Wakley
Authorised and unauthorised absences are explained to parents. All parents are asked to contact school if their child is absent. This can be done by telephoning. A book is kept by the telephone to record any messages. Parents can also send a letter to school when their child returns explaining the absence. Parents can also call into school to see the class teacher to explain an absence. (These records are kept by the class teacher.) All information is used to inform teachers when filling in their registers. The school operates a first day response if no notification is received after the close of the register in the morning.

Concerns

If a child is regularly late for school or is often absent then the class teacher contacts the parent concerned to have an informal discussion about this. If there is an urgent concern then the class teacher talks to the Headteacher immediately. Letters are also sent home if a child's attendance begins to fall below 90%.

Class Registers are looked at regularly, patterns of absence worked out and the Educational Welfare Officer for the school is contacted and a referral made.

The Educational Welfare Officer meets with the Headteacher on a regular basis each term to discuss attendance issues, and offers advice and support.

Truancy

All the staff at Pembroke Primary School are concerned about children's regular attendance, and the importance of continuity in each child's learning. They are also concerned about each child's safety, welfare and happiness. Although it is a very rare occurrence for a child to truant, if there is a concern that a child might be truanting then action is taken straight away. Our first day response system alleviates this problem to some degree.

Any truancy is recorded as an unauthorised absence. In the event of truancy the Headteacher is notified and a meeting with parents and the Educational Welfare Officer is set up. Parents are encouraged to bring their child to school so that reasons for the child not wanting to attend can be discussed and hopefully resolved. In the event of not being able to talk to the parent then the Headteacher talks to the child concerned to find out if there are any worries or problems in school that might make that child not want to attend. If there are, then these are discussed with the class teacher and appropriate action is taken.

NB: Where this policy states parents this refers to parents, carers or guardians