



Hawthorn Primary School

Attendance Policy



**'Where Every
Child Matters'**

Introduction and aims

1.1 All young people have the right to education, based on equality of opportunity, and Hawthorn Primary school, in partnership with parents and other parties, must take measures to encourage regular school attendance and reduce rates of absenteeism.

1.2 A child's success at school is likely to be affected negatively if their attendance is poor. Those who do not attend regularly may fall behind in their learning, leading to underachievement, both academically and socially.

1.3 Hawthorn Primary School recognises the crucial role that parents play in promoting good school attendance. The school therefore seeks to work in close partnership with parents /carers and will provide professional, quality information and advice, communicated frequently by telephone, email, leaflets, children's planners, parents' evenings, school reports and the school website's attendance section.

1.4 Hawthorn Primary School aims to:

- Give attendance and punctuality a high priority.
- Clearly define roles and responsibilities to ensure consistency and accuracy.
- Provide support, advice, and guidance to families.
- Use attendance data systematically to evaluate success and to prioritise appropriate follow-up procedures.
- Use rewards to celebrate good attendance.
- Use sanctions sensitively and only when necessary.
- Work in partnership with the School Attendance officers and Education Welfare Service to improve attendance; and
- Support children returning to school after significant periods of absence, providing strategies for catching up on missed work or attainment.

2. Rights, responsibilities, and roles

2.1 Hawthorn Primary School is required under The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010, to take attendance registers twice a day, at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session.

2.2 Parents/carers are required under section 7 of the Education Act 1996, to ensure that their child receives effective full-time education.

2.3 The City of Cardiff Local Authority is required under section 437 of the Education Act 1996, to ensure that a child for whom they are responsible is receiving suitable education by regular attendance at school.

2.4 The school operates in conjunction with the City of Cardiff Local Authority's System of Attendance Management.

2.5 Hawthorn Primary School aims to work in partnership with our children, their parents/carers and families, so that each child can benefit from the educational opportunities provided to them at school. Key members of staff include:

- Headteacher – Mr Gareth Davies
- Deputy Head Teacher – Mrs Jill Thomas
- ALNCo – Mrs Ghazi Torbati
- Cluster Attendance officer – Mrs Claire Jefferis

3. Procedures

Class Teacher procedures

- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance, looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, improvement in attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/or unusual explanations for absence offered by children and their parents/guardians.
- Informing the Head Teacher or Assistant Head and School Attendance Officer where there are concerns and acting upon them.
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness.
- Discussing attendance at consultation/parents' evenings/days.
- Setting an example by arriving promptly to lessons.

Registration procedures

3.1 To ensure accuracy and consistency, all children are registered electronically via the Capita School Information Management System (SIMS).

3.2 The law requires regular attendance. Schools are required to take an attendance register twice a day; Once at 8.50am and commencement of the afternoon school session at 1pm (years 3-6) or 1.20pm (Reception Class to Year 2). Nursery registers are marked at 9am. Children in Nursery are not of statutory school age, though the school will work to promote the important of good attendance in all children

3.3 Teachers, Cover Supervisors and Supply Teachers are each provided with login credentials for SIMS and are required to record present or absent against each child's name. No child may be left with a 'missing' mark.

3.4 In instances of lateness, members of staff are required to alter the absent mark to the late mark. The degree of lateness may be recorded as necessary, using the appropriate function within SIMS.

Procedures for absence and lateness

3.5 Parents are asked to contact the Main Office by telephone every day of their child's absence. These telephone calls are monitored by the main office administration staff throughout the day.

3.6 Should a child be absent from school without explanation, they will be marked as unauthorised, parents will be contacted via the first response system to parents/carers available to them to seek an appropriate authorisation for a child's absence.

3.7 Should the school be unable to ascertain the reason for absence, a letter will be sent by the Administration staff member of the main office, to parents seeking explanation.

Authorisation of absence

3.8 Absences may only be approved by authorised representatives of the school.

3.9 The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 give schools discretionary power to grant leave for the purpose of a family holiday during term time. Parents do not have an automatic right to withdraw their child from school for a holiday and, in law, must apply for permission from the school in advance.

4.0 Hawthorn Primary School will only authorise family holidays where parents are able to demonstrate that unique or exceptional circumstances prevent the holiday from being taken outside of term time. In general, holidays during term time will not be authorised (see 4.3).

Intervention

4.1 Periodic 'late gate' punctuality checks will be undertaken to challenge patterns of lateness. Those highlighted will be referred to the School Attendance Officer and communication made with parents where necessary.

4.2 In cases of concern where the attendance level is falling or consistently low, the School Attendance Officer will engage with the child and family by use of appropriate means. This may include telephone conversations, letters, home visits and meetings in school which may involve other senior members of staff. The School Attendance Officer will provide information and advice and seek to support the child in returning to school.

4.3 In some circumstances following the Education (Penalty Notices) (Wales) Regulations 2013 and Welsh Assembly Government guidelines, it may be appropriate that Educational Welfare Service in consultation with Hawthorn Primary School, issue parents/carers with a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN). Circumstances when they could be used as follows:

- When a student has a minimum of ten unauthorised sessions recorded during the current academic year (these do not need to be consecutive and please note that a school day is divided into two sessions, am and pm).
- In response to persistent late arrival at school i.e., after the registration period. Again, this will be when there are at least ten recorded late marks in the current term.
- For unauthorised holiday absence of five or more school days. Parents are advised that taking a family holiday during term time may result in an FPN payment.
- If a parent(s)/carer(s) does not attempt to engage with the school or Local Authority regarding their child's absence.
- If a pupil regularly comes to the attention of the police during school hours without an acceptable reason, the police authority may request the Local Authority issue a FPN.

- Before a FPN is issued parents/carers will receive a written warning outlining the extent of the absence and the possibility of receiving a Penalty Notice.

4.4 In addition to any issuing of a Fixed Penalty Notice; when the school feels that, despite its best efforts to support the family, attendance is not improving, a further referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service. A referral might be made when, for example:

- A pattern of irregular attendance has developed.
- Parents/carers have failed to engage in attempts to improve attendance
- A period of entrenched non-attendance has become established.
- There is a lack of parental cooperation in ensuring a child's regular attendance; or
- A pattern of truancy is persisting.

Long terms absence

4.5 There may be occasions where children and young people require education outside school because of longer-term illnesses, injuries, or clinically defined mental health problems. Their situations will vary, but all run the risk of a reduction in self-confidence and educational achievement. It is important that all agencies involved work collaboratively to reduce the impact of this long-term absence. Education can be provided in a variety of ways, for example through the provision of a hospital school or hospital tuition service; home tuition; integrated hospital/home education service or other designated provision.

In the event of an extended absence, the following procedures should be put in place.

- Individual cases to be discussed in a monthly meeting with actions agreed
- Contact to be made with family and other relevant agencies during every fortnightly cycle to obtain updates
- Fair Access Panel referral to be considered where appropriate, accompanied by the requisite medical support letter
- Family to be signposted to any other relevant agencies able to support the needs of the child and the family
- Multi agency review meeting to take place every half term to review progress and agree action required
- In consultation with all agencies, work towards an agreed phased return to school, outlined in a formal Support Plan

4.6 The Attendance Officers work closely with the Hawthorn Primary School to ensure that good school attendance is maintained

4.7 Children who achieve attendance of 100% will be recognised in termly celebration assemblies and presented with certificates to highlight the achievement.

4.8 Hawthorn Primary School will liaise with the Education Welfare Service to provide the evidence required to prosecute parents who fail, without reasonable justification, to cause their child to attend school regularly, under sections 444(1) and 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996.

5. Monitoring and evaluation

5.1 The Attendance Officers, administration officers are responsible for maintaining accurate attendance records for each child.

5.2 Children with attendance lower than 92% will be monitored

5.3 Where appropriate the School Attendance officer/Education Welfare will visit homes of families where concerns are raised

5.4 Consideration is given to work being done to quantify the effects of irregular attendance and punctuality on school performance, and to inform parents/carers about the need for good attendance and punctuality

5.5 Attendance Officers are required by the school to produce detailed reports pertaining to the attendance of children upon request for the relevant Headteacher.

Parental/Carer Responsibility

6.1 We wish to maintain and build on the current attendance at Hawthorn Primary and ask that parents/carers to let us know on the first day of absence if possible either by telephone or sending a message, rather than waiting for the child to return to school.

6.2 Upon the child's return to school a written note, signed by the parent/carers is needed for the records to explain the absence. This must be done before each child (brothers and sisters) and for each period of absence

6.3 The School Attendance Officers is available to link between parents/carers and school in any case of difficulty in attendance or any other welfare or social concern.

6.4 Prolonged absence or irregular attendance may result in prosecution. However, the school would prefer parents/carers to work in partnership to resolve any problems.

Fixed Penalty Notices

In some circumstances following the Education (Penalty Notices) (Wales) Regulations 2013 and Welsh Assembly Government guidelines, it may be appropriate that the Education Welfare Service in consultation with Hawthorn Primary School, issue parents/carers with a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Circumstances when they could be used as follows

- When a child has a minimum of ten unauthorised sessions recording during the current term (these do not need to be consecutive and please note that a school day is divided into two sessions, am and pm)
- In response to persistent late arrival at school i.e. after the registration period. Again this will be when there are at least ten recorded late marks in the current term;
- For unauthorised holiday absence (after 5 days). Parents are advised that taking a family holiday during term time may result in an FPN payment

- If a parent(s)/carer(s) does not attempt to engage with the school or Local Authority regarding their child's absence

Before a Penalty Noticed is issued, the parent will receive a written warning outlining the extent of their child's absence and the possibility of them receiving a Penalty Notice. A period of 15 days is offered to improve the attendance and if there are no unauthorized absences recorded during this timescale then the FPN will not be issued

The 15 day timescale does not apply to a FPN issued for an unauthorised holiday absence. There is no limit to the number of times a warning notice may be issued.

The Role of the LEA

If casework or other intervention strategies prove unsuccessful and/or the School Attendance Officer/Education Welfare Service considers that prosecution may bring an improvement in a child's attendance then LEA may choose to prosecute. The parents of a child who is of compulsory school age and fails to attend the school at which he/she is registered can be prosecuted under section 444(1) of the education act 1996, whilst for serious cases; prosecution under Section 444 (1A) can lead to a custodial sentence.

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis