



# VENERABLE EDWARD MORGAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

This Document is a statement of intent within Venerable Edward Morgan. It was developed through a process of consultation with Key stakeholders and in correspondence with the School's planning and review schedule.

This sets out a framework by which to work.

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| <b>Approved On:</b> |  |
| <b>Next Review:</b> |  |
| <b>Signed:</b>      |  |

**“LOVE AND SUPPORT IN ALL WE ARE TAUGHT.”**  
**“CARIAD A CHEFNOGAETH YM MHOPETH RHYDAN NI’N**  
**DDYSGU.”**



## **INTRODUCTION**

At Venerable Edward Morgan we are committed to providing an outstanding educational experience for all pupils. We believe that for pupils to benefit from education, outstanding attendance is essential for pupils to establish a positive working ethos early in life. 100% attendance is certainly possible. When a child attends school on a regular basis, they take an important step towards reaching their full potential, and are given the greatest opportunity to learn new things and develop their skills. Children who miss school frequently can fall behind with their work and do less well in exams.

In the event of your child being away from school it is essential that you, the parents inform the school of the reasons for absence.

## **WHY?**

- The Education Act 1996 requires parents and carers to ensure their child receives efficient fulltime education, suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Under current government legislation, all absence figures, together with the reasons for absence have to be reported to the Schools' Governing Body, Local Authority (LA), and the Department for Education (DfE). See Appendix One 'Fixed Penalty Notice for unauthorised absence'.
- Parents, guardians and carers must ensure that they are fully aware of the school's attendance policy as any absence will have a huge impact on your child's learning. Regular school attendance is essential and parents, guardians and carers, together with our school staff all have a part to play in ensuring full potential is achieved.
- Pupils are expected to attend school for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence. There are two main categories of absences:  
Authorised Absence: is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence, or given approval in advance for such an absence.  
Unauthorised Absence: is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's absence from school after a parent's request.

Please be aware that when a parent telephones the school with information that their child is unable to attend due to illness, or other circumstances, this may not be automatically authorised.

- Your child's current and previous school attendance will be taken into consideration and as a result the absence may not be authorised.
- Keeping your child off school with minor ailments such as a headache or slight cold is not acceptable. Repeated absences will require us to request that you obtain medical evidence from your doctor's surgery. This may be in the form of a date stamped compliment slip confirming your visit, or prescription or medicine bottle. Any of the above is to be shown to a member of the school office. (Please note: that the school is not asking any parent to incur a charge for such information and will not be liable for the cost.)
- There is a clear connection between regular attendance and achievement. As attendance deteriorates, so does performance, achievement, friendship circles and self-esteem.
- The achievement and maintenance of high levels of attendance is the shared responsibility of parents, guardians or carers, the school with its Governing Body and the Local Authority.

## **AIMS OF THE POLICY**

To promote regular attendance thus offering all pupils equal access to learning.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY**

- Meet the Government attendance targets set for us.
- Create a clearly understood attendance procedure that is effectively communicated to and understood by parents/carers.
- Ensure pupils are in school for the maximum number of days.
- This Policy is designed to help all concerned adults to enable children to attend school regularly and thus be offered the most consistent access to learning as is possible.

## **SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES**

- To communicate clearly the attendance procedure and expectations of the school.
- Maintain appropriate attendance data.
- Have appropriate registration processes in place.
- To follow up absences and lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school: initially with a first-day absence telephone call.
- Inform parents/carers of what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absences.
- To have systematic and consistent daily records which chart absence and lateness.
- To report to the EWO (Educational Welfare Officer) and support their work with pupils as necessary.
- To consistently administer the attendance procedure.
- To ensure that registers are taken twice daily: at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions
- To promote good attendance

## **PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

- To have children on the yard ready to line up before 8.55 am.
- To inform school on **every** day of any absence.
- To request leave as far in advance as possible.
- To make applications for leave in writing on the school's '**Leave Of Absence Form**' (Appendix Two), giving the reason for the request.
- To work with the school and EWO to improve lateness and attendance.
- To avoid medical and dental appointments during the school day.
- If parents, guardians or carers are worried about their child's attendance at school they should:

Talk to your child's class teacher in the first instance.

If still not happy arrange meeting with Headteacher.

## **THE PROCESS FOR MONITORING ATTENDANCE**

The school will log instances of absence and lateness and weekly discussions between staff and Headteacher will take place. Where issues persist the following will be initiated:

Stage 1: Where there are concerns about attendance and punctuality the school will make verbal contact with home.

Stage 2: If the concerns persist the school will write to the parents/carers.

Stage 3: If the concerns persist the school will arrange a meeting between the parent/carer, school representative and the EWO.

Stage 4: If the concerns persist the school will make a formal referral to the Local Authority Educational Welfare Service to deal with the on-going issues.

Should concerns persist the EWO will agree action (as above) and where necessary meet with the parents/carers. Please note that ultimately the Local Authority can take legal action.

### **ABSENCES DURING TERM TIME**

Application for term-time leave of absence must be made in advance by the parent with whom the child normally resides on the form headed 'Application for leave of absence during term time'.

These may be obtained from the school office.

Leave of absence will only be granted where the Headteacher considers it is due to 'exceptional circumstances'. Parent will be informed within 7 school days as to whether the request has been authorised or unauthorised.

There are approximately 195 school days (390 sessions) a year which your child is expected to attend. There are also approximately 71 days (142 sessions) of school holidays. This is over 13 school weeks. Please ensure that your holidays are taken during this period.

### **LATENESS**

**Punctuality is an important life skill. It is also polite.**

Children must be in lined up on the yard by 8.55am each day. Registers will be taken as soon as possible after that time. Children will be marked late if they arrive at school after the registers have been taken.

Children who arrive after that time must come into the building via the main office, where they will be entered into the late book.

Lateness will be monitored and the EWO (Education Welfare Officer) will follow this up.

If the arrival at school is before the registers have closed the pupil will receive a 'L' mark and the time of arrival will be noted. After the registers have closed at 9.20am, the pupil will receive a 'U' mark and the time of arrival will be noted. This equates to an absence although we are aware that the pupil is on the school premises in accordance with health and safety.

If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence coded 'M'. Please be advised that where possible doctors and dentists appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays.

***Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other pupils. Lateness is considered to be an equally serious absence. Parents, guardians or carers of pupils who seem to be developing patterns of lateness will be reminded by letter of the importance of good time keeping. If lateness persists parents, guardians or carers will be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem with the Attendance Officer. Please see Appendix One.***

### **SICKNESS**

- Please notify the school on each day of the absence.
- We reserve the right to request a doctor's/consultant's letter regarding recurring and frequent illness.

### **PROMOTING GOOD ATTENDANCE**

We celebrate good attendance throughout our School by

- Awarding the Attendance Cup to the class with the highest weekly attendance for the previous week.
- By awarding individual certificates to individual children who have 100% for each term.
- By awarding individual certificates to individual children who have 100% for whole academic year (Sept – July).

**At the end of each half term all pupils will receive an attendance certificate that will highlight their attendance for the half term. These certificates will be colour coded to make it easy for pupils and parents to identify good or poor attendance.**

**Green – 100% - 97%**

**Amber – 96% - 93%**

**Red – anything below 92%**

### **THE ROLE OF THE EDUCATION WELFARE OFFICER**

The Education Welfare Officer strives to support schools, parents and pupils with the aim of ensuring and promoting good attendance and punctuality. However, the Education Welfare Service also has a statutory responsibility under the Education Act 1996 to pursue non-school attendance and persistent lateness.

Section 444 of the Education Act states that “if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school, the parents are guilty of an offence.”

### **GOVERNORS**

It is the Governors legal responsibility to monitor and evaluate the attendance in their schools. The schools attendance figures are presented to the Governing Body on a termly basis.

### Fixed Penalty Notice for unauthorised absence

Regular and punctual attendance of pupils at school is both a legal requirement and essential for pupils to maximise the educational opportunities available to them. In law, an offence occurs if a parent/carer fails to secure their child's attendance at school and that absence is not authorised by the school. The definition of the parent/carer is set out in section 576 of the Education Act 1996.

Sections 444A and 444B of the Education Act 1996 provide that certain cases of unauthorised absence can be dealt with by way of a penalty notice.

This may lead to the school referring “**unauthorised school absences**” to the Local Authority requesting a Fixed Penalty Notice to be issued.

#### **Penalties for unauthorised absence**

| <b>Timeline</b>                  | <b>One child</b>   | <b>Two Children</b>   |
|----------------------------------|--|---|
| Paid within 28 days              | £60 per Fixed Penalty Notice   | £60 per child = £120  |
| After 28 days and within 42 days | £120 per Fixed Penalty Notice  | £120 per child = £240   |
| After 42 days                    | Non-payment of a penalty notice will trigger prosecution procedures brought under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.<br>“Failing to secure attendance at school” | Non-payment of a penalty notice will trigger prosecution procedures brought under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. “Failing to secure attendance at school” |

The penalty notice measures will support Local Authorities and schools in ensuring parents/carers fulfil their responsibilities by ensuring their children regularly attend school. These measures are severe but we believe that regular and high attendance is in every pupil's best interests and helps to maximise their achievements and enjoyment of school.

This Policy reflects accurately the current legislation and as a school, we have a duty to point this out to parents/carers/guardians.

- Further details and background information can be found at the Flintshire County Council website
- Welsh Government

<http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/publications/130925-guidance-regular-non-attendance-en.pdf>

**APPENDIX TWO: COPY OF LEAVE OF ABSENCE FORM – SEE BELOW**



## VENERABLE EDWARD MORGAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

### APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME

|  |  |                           |  |
|--|--|---------------------------|--|
| Pupil Name                                 |  |                           |  |
| Date of Birth                              |  | Class/Form/Year           |  |
| Home Address                               |  |                           |  |
|  |  |                           |  |
|  |  |                           |  |
| First Date of Absence                      |  |                           |  |
| Date of Return                             |  | No. of School Days Absent |  |
| Exceptional Reason for Absence             |  |                           |  |
|  |  |                           |  |
|  |  |                           |  |
| Name of Parent<br>(who child resides with) |  |                           |  |
| Home Telephone No.                         |  | Mobile Telephone No.      |  |
| E-Mail Address                             |  |                           |  |
| Parents Signature                          |  |                           |  |

#### FOR HEADTEACHER'S PURPOSES ONLY

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| Date Received   |          |
| Current Attendance  | %        |
| Last Year's Attendance                                      | %        |
| Exceptional Reason Accepted                                 | YES / NO |
| Name, Signature & Date Parent Informed                      |          |
| This absence has been<br>Authorised/Unauthorised            |          |
| We therefore expect your child to be in School<br>on (Date) |          |

Please read carefully the notes overleaf before submitting this request for leave of absence.

## **Application for Leave of Absence during term time**

At Venerable Edward Morgan Primary School, the Governors, Headteacher and staff believe that absence during term time should be avoided as they can have a damaging effect on pupils' education and overall achievement. However, it is recognised that there may be exceptional reasons that may justify authorisation of the exceptional leave of absence by the Headteacher.

Venerable Edward Morgan Primary School has revised the attendance policy, which from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2014 will include the following:

Application is to be made in advance by the parent with whom the child normally resides on the form headed 'Application for leave of absence during term time'. These may be obtained from the school office. Application for leave of absence must be received by the school 28 days before the date of leave. Leave of absence will only be granted where the Headteacher considers it is due to 'exceptional circumstances'. Parent will be informed within 7 school days as to whether the request has been authorised or unauthorised. (This will take place should the application be made in reasonable time).

Leave of absence taken without authorisation may be referred to the Education Welfare Service. This may result in prosecution proceedings, or a Fixed Penalty Notice. If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued, a separate Notice would be issued to each parent for each child.