



Attendance Policy
Written in Consultation
with Staff and Governors

Autumn 2023

Review
Autumn 2025

Introduction and Background

At Radnor Primary School we recognise that punctuality and good attendance are central to pupil wellbeing, to raising standards and pupil achievement. The vast majority of our pupils attend school regularly and on time. The aim of this policy is to promote high levels of attendance, punctuality and therefore wellbeing and achievement for all.

The desired level of attendance for any child at Radnor Primary School is 100% because we know that good attendance is a key to success. Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

We do not expect pupils to be in school when they are unwell but in order to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that pupils attend school regularly and punctually.

Any absence will affect learning. Any pupils arriving late disrupt teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others and this can be an unsettling start to the day for all concerned. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is the responsibility of all parents and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution through a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN).

Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility, parents, pupils and all school staff. We work closely with our school Attendance Officer (AO) and our Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to promote excellent attendance and address issues of low attendance

To help us all to focus on this we: -

- Give parents and carers details on whole school attendance
- Report to parents and carers on their child's attendance at the end of each year
- Meet with the school AO regularly
- Text parents when pupils are not in school if no reason has been given
- Contact parents and carers if their child's attendance falls below 90% and it is a cause for concern
- Work with the pupils to promote the importance of attendance
- Celebrate good class attendance
- Include pupils in our drive to maintain high levels of attendance
- Work with parents to support them in ensuring that attendance is as good as it can be

Understanding Types of Absence

Every half day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by parents and carers) as either *Authorised* or *Unauthorised*. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. In the case of persistent absenteeism medical evidence may be requested.

Authorised Absences

These are unavoidable mornings or afternoons away from school for reasons such as illness or medical/dental appointments which cannot be arranged outside school hours or for emergencies or special circumstances such as family funerals.

Unauthorised Absences

These are absences which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority (LA) using sanctions and/or legal proceedings when parents/carers keep pupils off school unnecessarily and can include: -

- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Birthdays
- Looking after siblings
- Day trips and holidays in term time
- Minor medical problems
- Pupils not in school when they are fit and well enough to be in school

Whilst any child may, indeed should, be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school for other reasons. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between school, the parents and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school then we will work with that family to understand the root problem. We can use outside agencies to help with this such as the school nurse, the AO or the EWO.

Persistent Absenteeism

Our school target for attendance is 96% and we monitor attendance on a regular basis. A pupil's attendance will be reviewed when it falls below 90%. At this point, a letter may be sent to let parents know what the level of attendance is. If attendance remains below 90% a meeting will be held with parents, AO and the school, support may be offered and the child's absence is then monitored closely. If attendance remains below 90% a formal referral to the AO will be made. Long term absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's education and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

If attendance falls to 90% that means a child is absent for the equivalent of one day every fortnight, which can have a significant effect of learning.

In some cases, for example hospitalization or recurrent illness where proof of doctor's appointments has been provided, discretion will be exercised in asking parents to meet the school.

We monitor all absence and the reasons given thoroughly. In cases where attendance is giving a cause for concern parents will be contacted. Whenever possible our aim will be to work with and support parents so that issues can be resolved. The school nurse, AO, EWO and other outside bodies may be called upon for their support also.

Absence Procedures

If a child is absent the parent/carer must follow the following procedures:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence
- Let us know what the reasons for the absence are
- Let us know when the expected return date is
- Contact us again if that date is exceeded

If a child is absent we will:

- Telephone or text parents on the first day of absence if we have not heard from them
- Invite them in to discuss the situation with the school if necessary
- If absences persist refer the matter to the AO if attendance moves below 90%.

The Education Welfare Officer

Parents are expected to work with the school and AO if any problems occur. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the EWO. The EWO will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, an EWO can use sanctions such as FPNs or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the LA:

<https://www.cardiff.gov.uk/ENG/resident/Schools-and-learning/Schools/School-Attendance/Pages/default.aspx>



Alternatively, parents or pupils may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial

advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the LA.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child arrives late after the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt the other pupils and it can be embarrassing for the child which in turn can also encourage absence. A child who is 10 minutes late each day misses almost an hour of school each week. Good time keeping is a vital life skill which will help our pupils as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

How we manage lateness:

- The school day starts at **8.55am** and we expect our pupils to be in the playground at this time ready to line up when the bell goes. Supervision of the yard by staff begins at 8.45, pupils arriving before this time are expected to be supervised by a parent or carer unless they are in Breakfast Club.
- If children arrive after 8.55am they will be marked in the reister as arriving late.
- At **9.30am** the registers are officially closed and if a child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This will mean that you could face the possibility of a FPN.
- If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the school to discuss the matter. You can of course, approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time. We encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our pupils and celebrating good class punctuality.

Holidays in Term Time

There is **no** entitlement in law to time off from school time to go on holiday and the LA do not allow us to authorise any holidays in term time. Indeed holidays in term time are actively discouraged.

However, if holidays are to be taken in term time, an absence notification form must be filled in so that the school is aware of the reason for absence, and parents may be asked to attend a meeting with the school.

Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs)

1 Where parents/carers take children out of school without authorisation, the school's governing body has approved the use of FPNs and one can be requested where the trigger of a total of 10 sessions (one session is half a day) in a year is met. These sessions do not need to run consecutively.

2 A FPN can be requested when a child arrives in school after the register is closed for a total of 10 sessions in a year.

3 A FPN can be requested when a child takes holidays for a total of 10 sessions or more in a year.

4 If a child has a combination of holidays, unauthorized absences and/or lates after the register is closed totaling 10 sessions or more in a year a FPN can be requested.

5 If a child takes a holiday of more than 20 days in a term they will be removed from the roll.

6 More than one FPN can be issued to parent/carer in a year.

7 If a child is absent during a school year at the end of one term and still absent at the start of the next the total days absent from school will be accumulated and treated as one holiday taken in the same term.

Late pick up from schools – information for parents/carers

Arriving late to collect your child from school can be extremely distressing for them.

You are expected to collect your child promptly at the end of the school day. We realise there may be occasions when you may be late arriving due to traffic etc. In these circumstances, please contact the school office immediately so we can let your child know and make appropriate arrangements.

If you are regularly late for school pick up then school will have to address this issue with you. In the first instance we will discuss this with you and endeavour to support you if you are experiencing any difficulties. If this continues we will issue you with a warning letter outlining that regular late picks up will have a negative impact upon your child's emotional wellbeing and if it continues then we will have to follow Local Authority Child Protection Procedures.

People Responsible for this Policy and its Implementation

Headteacher, deputy headteacher, school administrator, AO and EWO, along with the governing body.