

Attendance Policy

January 2018 (Review date January 2019)

The law requires that **parent(s)** ensure that:

- All children of compulsory school age receive “an efficient education, suitable to his or her age, ability and aptitude”.
- All children of compulsory school age receive a full-time education.
- All children of compulsory school age attend regularly.

If parent(s) do not ensure that this takes place they are liable to prosecution.

The law requires that the **school**:

- Takes an attendance register twice a day: at the start of the morning and at the start of the afternoon session. The register shows whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, or absent.
- Provides a broad and balanced curriculum.

At Nant-y-Cwm we:

- Regard any unnecessary absence as educationally detrimental. Our teaching methods make it almost impossible to catch up with work or for it to be done at home.
- Regard punctuality and attendance as necessary and essential to the running of the school life and consider avoidable lateness as hampering the pupil's development.
- Report attendance figures in reports to parents.

1. Registration

It is a legal requirement for the School to maintain an accurate daily register of attendance. Class teachers and Kindergarten teachers and Afternoon care staff are responsible for the register of attendance at the beginning of each school day and at the start of afternoon lessons or care sessions. The School register is a legal document.

In accordance with legislation the teacher taking the first lesson of the morning and the first lesson of the afternoon marks the attendance register using the marks as indicated inside the register. The register will show whether any absence was authorised or unauthorised. The attendance register will be taken to the office after registration in the morning and afternoon by a designated pupil to be checked. In Kindergarten, the registers stay in the building and an assistant will call the office with any absences. Attendance records are checked by the WGSC (Welsh Government School Census).

Pupils not present at registration are marked as either authorised absence or unauthorised absence.

2. Absence

Parents are required to telephone or email the school daily before registration time if their child will be late or absent, giving reasons which will be noted as authorised or unauthorised absences.

If a pupil is absent without prior notice the office staff will telephone the parent(s) to ensure

- a) that the pupil is safe and
- b) to establish the reason for their absence and then complete the register accordingly. The class teacher will then be informed of the situation.

The admin staff will report the reason for absence to the Teacher, making a note in the register for the teacher to mark as authorised or unauthorised absence. Kindergarten will be left a telephone message.

2.1 Authorised Absence

Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for absence.

Parent(s) may not authorise absences, **only** class teachers can do this on behalf of the school.

Authorised absences include:

- School closed to all pupils
- Illness (call or letter received from parent(s)/carer(s))
- Absence for medical appointments etc.
- Educational visit or trip
- Interview for a new school
- Religious observance
- Excluded (advance notice given by school)
- Exceptional circumstances

In no case do regular private activities (i.e. music or drama lessons) fall into these categories.

In cases of sickness arising during the day, the School will contact parents to arrange the most suitable care possible for the child. This will include a parent(s) collecting the child whenever possible. In this case the afternoon register will be marked as an authorised absence.

Requests for absence must be made to the class teacher in writing.

The authorising of a request takes into account the pupil's attendance record. Permission may be granted for the following:

- Medical reasons
- Family bereavement
- Educational activity elsewhere
- Experiences that may be considered as significantly contributing to the education of the pupil (this can include exchanges or visits to other schools)
- Exceptional circumstances

Where an absence of more than 10 days has been authorised, it is the parent(s) responsibility to make arrangements for their child's education during absence. Parent(s) will be expected to get guidance from the class teacher, with an understanding that it is never possible to replace the learning and experience of the education in the class.

Parent(s) should not arrange holidays in term time. This disrupts the benefits for the child of continuity of integrated learning that is a key feature of the Steiner curriculum. The School will not authorise holidays in term time.

2.2 Unauthorised Absence

All other absences must be regarded as unauthorised.

Unauthorised absences include:

- Family holiday
- No adequate reason given by parent.

Schools, including independent schools, must notify the LEA if a pupil attends irregularly or is absent continuously without authorisation for ten or more school days.

3. Punctuality

Punctuality is essential for the rhythm of the school day and parents are required to ensure that their children arrive on time. The doors open at 8.30 am and pupils are expected to register with the staff on gate duty at the front door and proceed to the classroom at the front of the school if they have arrived at 8:30am. At 8:35am the class teachers are in their classrooms and children can go immediately to their classrooms, any children in the front classroom must notify the staff on gate duty that they are going to their classroom. School's responsibility starts the moment the child enters the school, before that the child is his/her parent's responsibility. Children must be ready to begin the school day at **8.50am** for a prompt start of lesson at 9.00am.

If children arrive late, the parent(s) must explain to the office staff the reason for lateness. The child will be taken to their classroom by the office staff. In the **Kindergarten** teachers are available from 8:50am before the start of the school day. Parent(s) are responsible for their children until then unless **prior** arrangements have been made.

If a child is persistently late the class teacher will arrange a meeting with parent(s).

4. Action

If a pupil's attendance or punctuality becomes irregular (less than 89%), Nant-y-Cwm Steiner School will initially contact the parent(s) by letter to bring the situation to their attention prior to reporting it to the relevant authority. If the problem persists the class teacher will arrange a meeting with the parent(s).

5. Truancy

If a child is suspected of being absent due to truancy the following procedures will be followed:

- Administration will contact the parent(s) to confirm whether they know the whereabouts of the pupil. It is the parents' duty to ensure that the pupil is brought to school once located.
- If the parent does not know the whereabouts of the child, the School will advise the parent(s) to contact West Wales Police. In the interests of safeguarding, the School reserves the right to report any case of truancy to the police.
- If the School is aware of the potential whereabouts of the child (e.g. child reported as seen walking in the woods) a member of staff may be mandated to collect the child on the parent(s) behalf and bring him/her in to School.

Following any confirmed case of truancy

- The class teacher and a colleague will meet with the child to discuss their absence - this will usually take place on the day of return to school. The child will also be required to be available for the follow-up meeting with their parent(s).
- The parent(s) will be required to attend a meeting with their Class/Kindergarten Teacher and/or member of the Safeguarding Team to discuss the circumstances of the truancy. (within one week of the absence).
- The child's attendance will be closely monitored, including attendance in lessons throughout the day.
- Other safeguarding measures may be implemented as appropriate to the individual child.
- Any further truancy will lead to action and further meetings with the parent(s) and child to discuss and implement an Individual Behaviour Plan (IBP) with specific attendance targets. The Safeguarding Team will also be consulted.
- The School reserves the right to permanently exclude repeat truants. The School will consider referral to external agencies before any decision on permanent exclusion is taken. The Education Welfare Service (EWS) exists to support all schools and children with attendance problems. In some cases, for example where the parent fails to cooperate in ensuring their child's regular school attendance the EWS may decide on legal action in court. As a school we have obligations to fulfil under the Education Act of 1996. Parent(s) are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full-time education under section 7 of the Education Act. This can be affected by poor attendance at a full time educational provision.

Other relevant policies:

Safeguarding

Positive Behaviour Policy

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