

Ysgol Gynradd Herbert Thompson Herbert Thompson Primary School



Attendance Policy

2022 - 2025

INTRODUCTION

At Herbert Thompson Primary School we believe that every child is entitled to the highest possible quality of education. Therefore, the school is committed to providing a full, rich, effective and appropriate education for all its pupils. Attendance is crucial to the continuity of learning experiences and hence, effective learning. As with all aspects of our work at Herbert Thompson Primary School, attendance is considered a partnership between parents and the school. The 1944 Education Act states that parents are required to ensure that their children receive efficient full time education, whether by regular school attendance or otherwise. It is therefore the responsibility of everyone at Herbert Thompson to monitor and support attendance and to investigate problems which lead to non-attendance.

Covid 19

Prior to Covid 19, a great deal of work had been undertaken in relation to attendance and the whole school attendance rate had improved well over time. Attendance rates have dropped as a result of Covid due to self-isolations etc and at the time of this policy being updated, there is a strong focus on raising attendance across the school to the rate it was prior to Covid 19.

Alongside attendance, we recognise that punctuality is also vitally important in order for children to arrive at school ready to learn and to ensure opportunities for learning are maximised. In our experience, children do not enjoy walking into class late and take a while to overcome this feeling of anxiety and focus on their learning. Parents should ensure that their children arrive to school on time to minimise disruptions and feelings of anxiety.



Our school mission statement reflects these beliefs:

Our vision for the future is based around the unwavering belief that our community will live with positive values and behaviours and have the aspirations and skills to live happy and successful futures.

We have six core values that drive us and underpin all that we do:

Diversity - we respect each other's differences and celebrate our uniqueness.

Respect - we listen to each other and treat everyone the way we would like to be treated; keeping hands, feet and unkind words to ourselves.

Determination - we try our best and never give up, even when things get tough.

Care - we are helpful and considerate, showing kindness to others and looking after our surroundings.

Achievement - we challenge ourselves every day and work hard to achieve our goals.

Security - we look after each other and keep ourselves and others safe.

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Everyday we recite our values mantra and the children know our values well we always finish our mantra by reminding everyone of their own personal value:

“I am loved. I am strong. I am important. I am special”.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES & RACE EQUALITY

Equal Opportunities and Race Equality The school is committed to working towards equality, promoting positive approaches to difference, and fostering respect for people of all cultural and social backgrounds whatever their age, race, sexual orientation, faith, ethnicity, gender, appearance, language, disability or additional learning need. Developing positive relationships between pupils of all backgrounds is an essential aspect of the work of the school. Staff are committed to ensuring that all pupils achieve the highest possible standards in an inclusive environment. We are pro-active in tackling and eliminating discrimination and providing positive, non-stereotyped role models for all pupils. Through monitoring and evaluating our provision within the school improvement planning cycle, we aim to minimise the potential for discrimination and ensure that equality is at the centre of our attendance policy and practice

AIMS

We are a UNCRC Silver Award School and are committed to Children’s Rights.

Article 28 - Your right to learn and go to school.

Article 29 - Your right to become the best that you can be.

As a school, we aim to raise and maintain levels of attendance and punctuality by:

- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued.
- Providing an inspiring and experiential curriculum.
- Promoting opportunities to celebrate and reward pupil’s successes and achievements.
- Continuing to build very strong relationships with parents/carers and the community.
- Raising awareness of the importance of good attendance.
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.
- Work in partnership with the Education Welfare Service to improve attendance; and Support pupils returning to school after significant periods of absence.
- Using attendance data to provide an effective monitoring system, to inform practice and target resources.
- Identifying pupils and groups of pupils whose absence is giving cause for concern and to target resources to work towards the resolution of any difficulties being experienced.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

During the initial interview when a child is admitted to our school, the member of staff will explain to parents their responsibilities with regard to regular and punctual attendance. The organisation of the school day and the importance of punctuality are fully explained. The importance of laying down good foundations for learning in the future by regular attendance at school during the Early Years will also be emphasised. A commitment to regular and punctual attendance is contained in the Home-School Agreement, which is offered to all new parents to sign when their child is admitted to school.

The responsibility of parents to report children's absence from school is also explained at the initial interview and is also stated in the school prospectus.

The categories of authorised and unauthorised absences are discussed with parents, i.e. absence can be authorised for illness, medical or dental appointments, or religious festivals, but not for days off to celebrate birthdays, trips to the hairdresser, or shopping.

Parents are asked to inform the school on the first morning of an absence. If we do not receive a phone call we will endeavour to make contact through a phone call, text or on certain occasions via a home visit from the School Attendance Officer. Visits are agreed on a case by case basis.

Children who are Looked After (CLA)

The school operates a first day response to all looked after children and a phone call will be made if the guardian has not notified the school of their absence and if necessary a social worker assigned to the family.

Expectations of Parents

- Understand the legal responsibility you have as a parent to ensure your child attends school.
- Encourage your children to attend school regularly.
- Contact the school whenever your child is unable to attend school – on the first day of absence.
- Ensure that your children arrive on time and are well-prepared for the school day.
- Keep in contact with school with confidence and inform the appropriate member of staff if any problem occurs which may hinder your child's regular attendance, wellbeing or behaviour in school.
- Seek to attend meetings in school to discuss your child's attendance and progress.

FIXED PENALTY NOTICES

Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) In September 2014, The Education (Penalty Notices) (Wales) Regulations 2013 came into force, giving local authorities powers to issue Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) to parents/guardians who fail to secure their child's regular attendance at school. It is expected that Cardiff Council will actively employ the regulations from January 2015. Parents/guardians are legally responsible for ensuring their children have good school attendance and punctuality. If a school finds this is persistently unsatisfactory, it is possible an FPN will be issued by the Education Welfare Service (EWS). An FPN can be issued for:

- Unauthorised absences – minimum of 10 sessions (5 days) in a term. No need to be consecutive
- Punctuality – minimum of 10 sessions with a U code within each term
- Unauthorised term time holidays
- Failure of parent/guardian to engage with school to improve attendance
- Pupil has come to the attention of the police during school hours and is absent without an acceptable reason

Up to three FPNs can be issued per academic year. There are no restrictions on the number of times a parent/guardian may receive a formal warning of an FPN. However, once a warning is issued, it will remain in place for the next 3 school weeks (15 days). No unauthorised absence must occur during this 15 day period. School will carry out stringent monitoring and not authorise absences without

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appropriate evidence from parents/guardians. Parents/guardians may use this period to challenge the decision. No warning will be issued by the EWO.

PROMOTING GOOD ATTENDANCE

- All children are encouraged to have good attendance. Herbert Thompson Primary places great importance on creating an environment that welcomes pupils and encourages them to attend.
- 100% attendance certificates will be awarded at the end of each term and the school year as well as most improved attendance.
- Award winners will be celebrated on the school's half termly celebrations. The school will also make every effort to enlist the support of the community members to help in improving its attendance record and in reporting incidents of misbehaviour when children are on their way to and from school. In this way the school is emphasising the importance of good attendance
- The Cluster of Caerau and Ely is funded by the LA for School Attendance Officers, with Cardiff West Community High School managing this. The Attendance Officer visits the school at regular intervals to inspect class registers, observe punctuality at the gate and to discuss any problems regarding attendance or lateness. If a pupil's attendance falls below 90% or is causing concern, the parents will be contacted by the class teacher or Headteacher either at the parents' consultation evening, at the school door or by letter. On some occasions the family will be asked to meet with the headteacher to undertake a parent support planning meeting. If the situation does not improve, the Attendance Officer may contact the parents by letter or at home.

TRUANCY

- All staff at Herbert Thompson are concerned with each child's safety, welfare and happiness.
- Although to date truancy has been a very rare occurrence, action must be taken at once if there is any concern that a child might be truanting.
- If truancy is suspected the Head teacher must be informed immediately. The Head teacher will then contact the parents by telephone or make a home visit and also inform the Attendance Officer. Parents will also be asked to bring their child to school for discussion to ascertain the reasons for truanting with a view to resolving the problem.

EDUCATION WELFARE SERVICE

- When the school feels that, despite its best efforts to support the family, attendance is not improving, a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service.
- A referral might be made when, for example:
 - a pattern of irregular attendance has developed;
 - 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. In some circumstances, the school may request that the Educational Welfare Service issue parents/carers with a Fixed Penalty Notice under The Education (Penalty Notices) (Wales) Regulations 2013.
 - Parents will always have received letters of concern regarding attendance and lateness before this point is reached.

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| Date | Review Date | Person Responsible |
|-----------|-------------|--------------------|
| June 2022 | June 2025 | Mrs Marsh |

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| Headteacher: | <i>M. Marsh</i> | Date: | 13.06.22 |
| Chair of Governors: | | Date: | |