



**Riverbank School**

## **Attendance Policy**

Executive Headteacher - Mr. Wayne Murphy  
Head of School - Mrs. Deborah Herald  
Deputy Head of School - Mr. Aaron Ellis

## **Rationale**

Pupils need to attend school regularly in order to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered to them. Irregular attendance undermines the educational process and leads to educational disadvantage.

As a school, we actively pursue the goal of regular attendance. The maximising of attendance is one of our key tasks, both in relation to individual pupils and for the student body as a whole. We must adopt and consistently apply practices and procedures that will allow us to establish and maintain an effective system for monitoring and encouraging school attendance. By so doing, we can maximise the means of advancement for all of our young people.

## **Aims**

To encourage and foster a positive attitude towards attendance by pupils, parents/carers, staff and governors in order to generate and maintain the highest possible level of attendance.

We achieve our aim through:

- **Partnership between parents and school**

Section 36 of the Education Act 1944 requires parents/guardians of children of compulsory school age to ensure that their children receive efficient full-time education, either by regular school attendance or otherwise. We should work with parents/carers in an effort to maximise attendance.

### **Parent/Carer Responsibility**

Parents/carers are primarily responsible for ensuring that children attend school each day.

Parents/carers should ensure that their children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and in a condition to learn. This may mean by preparing them properly for the school transport. This is written into the home-school agreement.

### **School Responsibility**

The school has a responsibility to support attendance.

The school must take seriously any problem that may lead to non-attendance.

- **Reporting of Absences**

We must ensure that all absences are reported and accurately recorded. It is essential to foster efficient practices with parents/carers.

### **Parent/Carer Responsibility**

Parents/Carers have responsibility for informing school of the reason for a child's absence, either by letter, note in the home/school communication book, Parentmail or telephone.

Parents/Carers should inform school on the first day of absence and on every subsequent day of absence.

Parents/Carers should provide further information if it is required. When a child is ill, it is the responsibility of the parents/carers to notify the school of the nature of the illness, and when possible, predict the date of the child's expected return.

### **School Responsibility**

To ensure that parent/carer obligations are stated in the home school agreement and that expectations regarding attendance are clearly outlined in the prospectus. The school will contact parents/carers who fail to meet their obligations. Parents/carers can expect a phone call from the school office as soon as is practically possible on the first day of absence. The school will maintain a register of contact numbers for parents. The role and contribution of the School Attendance Officer will be made known to parents/carers and the school will refer any pupils who are persistently absent.

### **Registration**

Under regulation 3 of the Pupils Registration Regulations 1956, all schools must keep an attendance register at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. All pupils must be marked either present or absent.

The Education Regulations, 1991, introduced the requirement that attendance registers must show whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.

We, as a school meet these requirements, and the amendment introduced by the Welsh Assembly Government.

### **Staff Responsibility**

Staff should be aware that taking registers is an integral part of the school day and an obligation by law.

Registers should always be marked electronically on SIMS by 9.30am for the morning session and 1.30pm for the afternoon session.

### **Lateness**

A pupil arriving late may not only disrupt the continuity of his/her learning but also that of others. Pupils who fail to arrive at registration and cannot provide an adequate explanation should be marked as an unauthorised absence. All late arrivals must report to the school office. A pupil who is persistently late may be referred to the School Attendance Officer in the same way as a pupil who is persistently absent.

### **Special Occasions**

The Head of School has the discretion to authorise absence for the following:

- Family bereavement
- Family holidays during term time (up to 10 days per academic year)
- Public performances by students
- Other exceptional circumstances

Requests for authorised absence will be responded to sensitively. Parents/Carers should not expect, or be led to expect, that as a right, we will agree to holidays in term time. Parents/Carers must request authorisation, from the head of school, in writing in advance of the holiday. If the holiday is agreed, the head will respond in writing to the request. The Local Authority has asked all schools in Cardiff not to authorise holidays in term time, however the Head of School will consider all written applications for a holiday during term time.

### **Days of Religious Observance**

Section 199 of the Education Act 1993 allows for authorised absence for participation in a day set aside exclusively for religious observance. We will honour this obligation.

### **Excluded Pupils**

Where a pupil has been temporarily excluded from school, the absence should be recorded as authorised.

### **The Education Welfare Service**

Local Authorities (L.A.s) are charged in law with enforcing school attendance. The L.A. can in cases of irregular attendance, apply to the courts for an education supervision order or where necessary, the L.A. can prosecute parents. Education Welfare Officers are employed by L.A.'s to help them carry out their statutory responsibilities. The school liaises with the EWO service when a pupil's attendance and reasons for absence causes concern. We have a School Attendance Officer who will work with school and families to try to prevent a referral to the Education Welfare Service for non-attendance or poor punctuality.

### **Fixed Penalty Notices**

The LA has asked all Cardiff Schools to consider the use of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) as a means of improving attendance. As a school, we will consider requesting a FPN if the circumstances are appropriate and necessary. The council's Code of Conduct for FPNs can be found at:  
[www.cardiff.gov.uk/eng/resident/schools-and-learning/schools/school-attendance/fixed-penalty-notices-for-non-attendance-at-school/](http://www.cardiff.gov.uk/eng/resident/schools-and-learning/schools/school-attendance/fixed-penalty-notices-for-non-attendance-at-school/)

### **Recognition of Excellent Attendance**

In an effort to maximise attendance we will encourage pupils by giving an award to the class with the best overall attendance each week. This message will be communicated to parents/carers via the weekly newsletter.

Ratified by: Policies Committee

Date: 24<sup>th</sup> October 2019