

This Policy has been established through discussions with, and ratification by, learners, staff and the Governing Body of Caradog Primary School.

### Introduction

Integral to our vision at Caradog Primary School, is ensuring consistent high standards of learning and teaching, fostering high aspirations, and encouraging all learners to shine.

In addition, our core values of:

- Be ready
- Be respectful
- Be honest
- Be safe
- Be you

underpin all our provision and practice.

Our Attendance Policy supports our vision and values by:

- Encouraging pupils to be ready to learn by attending school regularly.
- Supporting our parents/carers, and learners, in their understanding of the importance of good attendance, as well as the impact of lower attendance.

At Caradog, we believe that in order for pupils to learn effectively and reach their potential, it is vital that they attend school on time, everyday. Good punctuality and regular attendance will provide a solid foundation for pupils to establish good habits that will support them throughout their lives.

Staff and Governors are committed to working in partnership with parents/ carers to ensure the highest level of attendance possible, so that as a school, we achieve at a minimum, our annual attendance target.

Our annual attendance target is communicated to parents/carers at the start of each academic year and again at regular intervals throughout the year.

At present, our annual target is 93%.

### Aims

The aims of this Attendance Policy are to:

- Promote a nurturing and inclusive ethos in which pupils feel safe, secure, and supported.
- Create an ethos in which regular attendance and punctuality is recognised and valued.
- Establish a consistent system for the monitoring of attendance.
- Ensure all school staff and governors are clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.
- Recognise the key role of all staff, especially class teachers, in promoting regular attendance.
- Improve the likelihood of pupil progress by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.

- Achieve, at a minimum, our school attendance target for all learners (with the exception of those with chronic health issues).
- Express to parents/carers the importance of uninterrupted attendance and excellent punctuality at every stage of a child's educational journey.
- Include our Nursery and Reception-aged learners so that we promote good life habits at an early age.

## **Objectives**

At Caradog, in order to fulfil our attendance aims, we:

- Regularly raise awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among staff, parents/carers and pupils.
- Ensure that parents/carers have a clear understanding of the responsibility they have in making sure their child attends school regularly and punctually, and are aware of the procedures to follow if reporting an absence.
- Maintain effective means of communication with parents/carers, pupils, staff and governors on all school attendance matters.
- Ensure that our learners have a clear understanding of the importance of regular school attendance and encourage them in taking responsibility for their own attendance and punctuality (appropriate to pupil age and development).
- Develop and implement procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of attendance concerns and persistent lateness.
- Develop and implement procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.
- Support pupils who are currently experiencing difficulty at home (or at school) that prevents regular attendance.
- Appoint a team of staff with overall responsibility for managing whole-school attendance. The attendance team currently consists of: Mrs R Derrick (Headteacher/ Attendance Lead), Miss Ffion Jones (Deputy Headteacher) and Mrs Joy Barnes (School Clerk).
- Celebrate and praise good attendance in weekly Celebration Assemblies.

## **Practice and Procedures**

At Caradog Primary School, attendance has a very high profile and this is regularly communicated to our learners, parents/carers and governors.

Parents are regularly reminded of the importance of good attendance and its links to pupil progress.

The school's attendance figure is regularly updated on the school website for parents/carers to view, and parents/carers are informed of their child's attendance on a half-termly basis.

We follow the procedures detailed below as a means of monitoring and supporting attendance:

- Clearly communicate to staff, governors, parents/carers and pupils, the procedures and expectations related to attendance.
- Maintain appropriate registration processes.
- Maintain appropriate attendance data.
- Maintain consistent and systematic daily records which will provide detail of any absence and lateness.
- Follow up any absences and/or persistent lateness, if parents/carers have not communicated with the school.

- Refer to the Local Authority Attendance and Wellbeing Service any pupil whose attendance causes concern, and where parents/carers have failed to respond to school initiatives to support improvement.
- Report attendance data and statistics to Rhondda Cynon Taf LA, when requested.
- Raise any attendance and/or punctuality concerns (noted by staff) to Mrs E. Hook (Deputy Headteacher) who has responsibility for monitoring attendance.
- Strongly discourage unnecessary absences during term time, i.e. family holidays.
- Inform parents/carers of what constitutes 'authorised' and 'unauthorised' absence.
- Work with, and support parents/carers, in improving individual pupil attendance and punctuality.
- Celebrate and praise good attendance in weekly Celebration Assemblies.

### **Responsibilities**

All members of staff at Caradog have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

The following provides a list of more specific responsibilities which individual staff may have.

### **The Attendance Lead**

The Attendance Lead is responsible for:

- Regularly monitoring school attendance through the use of official attendance registers and identifying pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern.
- Identifying trends in authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Identify pupils achieving Green/Amber/Red attendance on a half-termly basis, and provide details of this to the School Clerk who will subsequently inform parents/carers of this in writing.
- Monitoring attendance of all pupils identified as 'red', on a weekly basis.
- Contacting and/or arranging meetings with parents/carers of pupils with 'red' attendance, to discuss current attendance concerns and to determine a way forward, to secure future improvement.
- Keep staff informed of any updates with regard to the attendance of individual pupils.
- Make referrals to the LA Attendance and Wellbeing Service. Referrals to the service are made where:
  - A pattern of irregular attendance is either continuing or worsening (sporadic days or blocks of absence).
  - Parents/carers fail to send their child to school regularly and have refused any offer to discuss ways of improving attendance with the school.
  - Condoned and unjustified absence is increasingly a problem.
  - Parents request excessive authorised absences.
  - There are concerns involving the welfare of a child.
  - Parents/carers have been asked to provide medical evidence, but fail to do so.
- Liaise with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.
- Keep governors up to date of attendance reports.
- Liaises with the Headteacher to determine a whole-school target for attendance.

### **School Clerk**

The School Clerk is responsible for:

- Supporting the Attendance Lead in collating and recording registration and attendance information.

- Taking and recording messages from parents/carers regarding absence.
- Recording daily, the details of pupils who arrive late, and uploading relevant details to SIMs.
- Recording details of pupils who leave school early.
- Contacting parents of absent pupils who have not informed the school of a reason for absence.
- Monitoring individual attendance, looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by parents/carers (and pupils), and reporting such concerns to the Attendance Lead (and Headteacher).
- Submitting referral forms to the LA Attendance and Wellbeing Service (on behalf of the Attendance Lead).
- Communicate with the LA Attendance and Wellbeing Service (where appropriate).
- Writing and sending individual pupil attendance letters on a half-termly basis (in collaboration with the Attendance Lead).

### **Class Teachers/Staff**

Class Teachers/Staff are responsible for:

- Completing SIMs registers twice daily.
- Identifying particularly poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/or unusual explanations for attendance offered by pupils (on return to school).
- Informing the Attendance Lead (and the Headteacher) of attendance concerns.
- Providing background information to the Attendance Lead to support referrals to the LA Attendance and Wellbeing Service (where appropriate)
- Liaising with the Attendance Lead following any actions taken to correct attendance concerns.
- Providing opportunities to share the importance of good attendance and punctuality with their class.
- Discussing attendance issues at parent consultation meetings, where necessary.

### **Parents/Carers**

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring their child attends school regularly and punctually (unless prevented from doing so due to illness, required attendance at medical appointments etc.).
- Contacting the school office on the first morning of absences (either by speaking to the clerk or by leaving a message on the school's answering system).
- Informing the school of any upcoming medical appointments that need to be taken in school time. N.B. In order for an absence to be recorded as 'medical', we require relevant evidence, i.e. an appointment card/letter.
- Submitting requests for any term time absences (however, this should only be done if absolutely necessary). N.B. Such requests do not ensure automatic authorisation.
- Informing the school immediately of a child's reluctance to attend, so that such issues can be promptly dealt with and resolved.

### **Learners**

Learners are responsible for:

- Knowing and understanding the importance of regular school attendance.
- Speaking to a member of staff if they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school regularly (if age and developmentally able).
- Attending school on time and being ready to learn.

## **Attendance and Wellbeing Service**

The Attendance and Wellbeing Service (AWS) has an important role in liaising between home and school. They regularly communicate with school and offer assistance in a supportive capacity.

Officers of the LA Attendance and Wellbeing Service are responsible for:

- Monitor whole school attendance through regular register checks.
- Communicate findings from register checks with the School clerk and/or Attendance Lead and discuss ways forward.
- Supporting schools to achieve attendance targets and addressing possible barriers to this.
- Supporting families to achieve regular attendance for their child.
- Contacting parents/carers by phone, letter or by visiting the home, to discuss the school's attendance concerns and suggesting ways in which attendance and punctuality can be improved.

## **Registration**

- School gates/doors open at 8.50am and remain open until 9.05am. (For pupils who attend breakfast club, school doors open at 8.00am. These pupils remain in the lower hall (canteen) before being dismissed to their respective classrooms at 8.50am).
- The school is required to complete attendance registers twice daily (once at the start of the school day and again at the start of the afternoon session). Registers are marked promptly at 9.05 a.m. and 1.15 p.m respectively.
- Classroom teachers are responsible for completing the attendance registers and the school clerk adds prescribed codes for absence.
- All attendance records are documented using SIMs software, which is supported by Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Authority.

## **Lateness**

Any pupils who arrive in school after 9:05am (after the school gates are locked) need to enter school through the main entrance (located at the front of the building).

Any pupil who arrives after 9:05 (and before 9:20am) is marked as 'late' and this is documented on the electronic register as an 'L' code. Pupils arriving in school after 9:20am are marked with a 'U' code (Late - after registers close).

Pupils who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning.

Pupils who arrive late due to a medical appointment (where relevant evidence has been provided) will have their absence recorded as a medical absence (code M).

Where there are persistent incidents of lateness, parents/carers will be invited to meet with the Attendance Lead/Headteacher. The purpose of such meetings is to discuss the issue of persistent lateness, and to offer support to parents/carers, if necessary.

If, following such meetings, there is no improvement, a referral to the Attendance and Wellbeing Service will be made.

## **Absences**

Parents/carers should contact the school on the first day of their child's absence.

When parents/carers notify school of their child's absence, it is important that they provide accurate details of the reason for absence. This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. Decisions regarding authorised or unauthorised absences rest with the Headteacher (the Attendance Lead and School Clerk are also involved in discussions, due to their understanding of trends in poor attendance etc.).

All absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised.

However, notifying the school and providing a reason for a child's non-attendance, does not automatically ensure an absence becomes authorised. This is at the discretion of the Headteacher and a number of factors are considered when making a decision.

Where school has not received reasons for a child's absence, a message is sent out via the schools Teacher2Parent texting service, requesting that the parent/carer contact school at the earliest opportunity to discuss the absence.

If no response is provided following the text, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised (attendance code 'O')

### **Authorised Absences**

Absence will be authorised in the following circumstances:

- Where school is satisfied that a pupil is too unwell to attend. Where, over the course of an academic year, a child has repeated periods of illness (over 30 sessions), the school will request that parents/carers provide medical evidence for any future period of illness-related absence. This evidence could be a Doctor's note, appointment card or copy of a prescription etc.
- Where pupils need to attend a medical appointment (parents/carers should endeavour to make all appointments outside of school hours, however. Where this is not possible, we encourage parents to send pupils to school before an appointment and return their child to school immediately afterwards).
- Where there is an unavoidable cause for absence which is beyond the family's control.
- Where pupils are following a religious observance by the religious body to which parents belong.
- In other exceptional circumstances, e.g. a family bereavement.

### **Unauthorised Absences**

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable, and for which no 'leave' has been given. For example:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily.
- Absences which are not properly explained.
- Pupils who arrive after the close of registers and are therefore, too late to receive a 'mark'.
- Taking day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed by the Headteacher.
- Frequent sickness absence without any medical evidence provided.

### **School Targets**

The LA and school set yearly targets of attendance. At present, our overall whole-school target is 93%.

Parents/carers are kept up to date with the current whole-school attendance figures through ClassDojo, our Teachers2Parents text messaging service and through the school website.

### **Letters**

Parents/carers are also informed (in writing) of their child's attendance on a half-termly basis through a RAG-rated (Red, Amber, Green) system. Red, Amber, Green letters are currently reflective of the following attendance percentages:

| <b>Green</b>                                    | <b>Amber</b>                                   | <b>Red</b>                                     |
|---|--|--|
| Pupils currently with attendance 95% and above. | Pupils currently with attendance 90% - 94.99%. | Pupils currently with attendance 90% or lower. |

### **Green Letter**

For pupils identified with attendance 95% and above, a letter is sent to parents/carers acknowledging the excellent support they have given school in working towards our whole-school attendance target of 93% and congratulating them on their child's excellent attendance.

### **Amber Letter**

For pupils identified with attendance 90% - 94.99%, a letter is sent to parents/carers acknowledging that their child's attendance is currently satisfactory, but attendance could still be improved. It further requests that going forward, they take all possible steps to improve attendance.

### **Red Letter (First)**

For pupils identified with attendance below 90%, a letter is sent to parents/carers informing them that their child's attendance needs to improve, and that going forward, attendance will be monitored weekly.

They are further advised in the letter, that if no improvement in attendance is noted during this monitoring time, a referral will be made to the LA Attendance and Wellbeing Service.

A note to accompany this letter is also sent, inviting parents/carers to attend an individual meeting with the Attendance Lead to discuss current concerns, identify any support that may be required and consider ways forward to secure future improvement.

If no improvement is seen at the end of the monitoring period, a referral is made to the LA Attendance and Wellbeing Service.

***If, during this monitoring period, there are periods of sporadic attendance/incidents of unauthorised attendance etc. school will request home visits from the Attendance and Wellbeing Service. These are different to attendance referrals.***

### **Red Letter (Second)**

If no improvement in attendance is noted from weekly monitoring, parents/carers are sent a second letter informing them that a referral has been made to the Attendance and Wellbeing Service.

### **Fixed-Penalty Notices**

A school attendance fixed penalty notice (FPN) is offered as an alternative to prosecuting parents/carers who do not ensure their child attends school regularly.

From May 2025, Caradog Primary School will be issuing Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) for the following reasons:

- Where a pupil has accrued 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absences in the current term.
- Where a pupil has been persistently late on 10 or more occasions in the current term (arriving more than 30 minutes after the registration period).
- Where parents/carers refuse to engage with a school in the interest of improving their child's school attendance levels.
- Where a holiday in term-time has been requested, but has not been authorised.

Requests for the issuing of FPNs are submitted to the LA Attendance and Wellbeing Service who will review the information provided. Consequently, they will only issue the FPN if they feel it is appropriate to do so.

Prior to the Fixed Penalty Notice being issued, parents/carers will be sent a written warning. If there is an improvement in attendance and no unauthorised absences are recorded during a 15 day period, the Fixed Penalty Notice will not be issued. However, if an unauthorised absence is recorded by the school in that 15 day period, a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued. This 15 day warning, however, does not apply to a Fixed Penalty Notice issued for an authorised holiday absence.

If the Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and is not paid within 42 days of issue, the Local Authority will be obliged to start legal proceedings under section 444 (1) Education Act 1996.

### **Term-Time Holidays**

At Caradog Primary School, we will only authorise term-time holidays for **5 days (10 sessions)** to pupils whose attendance is 95% or above. All requests will be reviewed on an individual basis at the discretion of the Attendance Lead and Headteacher.

### **Monitoring Attendance**

Our school clerk has the responsibility for ensuring that all of the attendance data is accurately recorded on the SIMs attendance software, and the Attendance Lead, in conjunction with the Attendance Wellbeing Service, is responsible for overall monitoring of attendance.

Regular meetings are held between the School Clerk, Attendance Lead and Headteacher to discuss all attendance concerns, and relevant action is taken following these meetings.

### **Advocating Good Attendance**

At Caradog Primary School, we understand the impact good attendance and punctuality has on our pupils' learning, and believe in rewarding good attendance and punctuality to engage and motivate our pupils.

As a result, we have many initiatives to support and celebrate attendance and punctuality, so that it remains a high profile in school and with our families.

We promote and celebrate good attendance and punctuality by:

- Sharing class attendance figures for the previous week in our weekly Celebration Assembly, and awarding certificates to the class in each Progression Step with the best attendance. The class with the highest attendance overall that week wins a letter on their washing line. When classes spell "Caradog", they win a whole class treat. (The figures for each class, as well as the certificates, are subsequently displayed on the school's Attendance Matters board).
- Holding a whole-school attendance assembly at the end of each term to present certificates to pupils who have had either 100% attendance or improved attendance for that term. Pupils who receive a 100% attendance certificate earn a raffle ticket that is entered for a prize draw. 2 raffle tickets are 'drawn', and the winners choose a prize (from a selection provided).
- At the end of the year, the class with the best overall attendance, wins a prize. The winning class can choose their prize from a selection provided).

- At the end of the year, every pupil who has achieved 100% attendance is awarded with an attendance medal. Again, they earn a raffle ticket which is entered for a prize draw. One raffle ticket is 'drawn', and the winner is awarded with a prize.
- Individual class attendance is shared on the school website on a weekly basis and on the monthly school newsletter.

### **Equality Statement**

The school is committed to promoting equality and fostering respect for people irrespective of protected characteristics.

The school values, and encourages, involvement of people from all sections of the local community. The school is opposed to all forms of prejudice and discrimination.

Language, or behaviour, that is LGBTphobic, sexist, racist, or offensive to the disabled, and prejudicial language that is potentially damaging to any person or group, will not be tolerated and will be challenged.

The school recognises that British and Welsh society, and the school itself, is made up of people from many different backgrounds. It is important that all pupils, staff and visitors to the school can enjoy life in such a diverse society.

- This policy was reviewed in May 2025.
- This policy was presented and accepted by the Governing Body on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2025.
- All staff were made aware of this policy in May 2025.
- This policy will be reviewed in May 2027.

**Headteacher:**



**Chair of Governors:**

