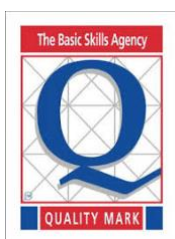




THE SAINTS FEDERATION

Cluster Attendance Policy

2024-25



1. INTRODUCTION AND AIMS

1.1 A child's success at school is likely to be affected negatively if their attendance is poor. Those who do not attend regularly may fall behind in their learning leading to feelings of frustration and unhappiness. As a Church in Wales school, we seek to provide a Christian environment in which all young people can flourish as a member of a happy, caring and safe community. It is our goal that each of our pupils attends school regularly and on time, making the most of the opportunities available to them.

1.2 Non-attendance is an important issue that is treated seriously. However, every case is different and we will always try to support families to improve the situation. The St Teilo's Cluster Attendance Policy is designed to help teachers, parents and pupils understand their rights, responsibilities and roles when it comes to school attendance. By working in partnership, it is our hope that every pupil achieves over 95% attendance.

1.3 The St. Teilo's cluster of schools aims to:

- Give attendance and punctuality a high priority;
- Clearly define roles and responsibilities to ensure consistency and rigour;
- Provide support, advice and guidance to families;
- Use attendance data systematically to evaluate success;
- Use sanctions sensitively and only when necessary to bring about positive improvements in attendance and punctuality;
- Work in partnership with the Education Welfare Service to improve attendance; and
- Support pupils returning to school after significant periods of absence.

2. RIGHTS, RESPONSIBILITIES AND ROLES

2.1 The St Teilo's Cluster Attendance Policy has its basis in Article 28 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). We believe that all young people have the right to education, based on equality of opportunity, and that the school, in partnership with parents and other parties, must take measures to encourage regular school attendance and reduce rates of absenteeism.

2.2 St. Teilo's cluster schools are required under The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010, to take attendance registers twice a day; at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session.

2.3 Parents are required under section 7 of the Education Act 1996, to ensure that their child receives effective full-time education.

2.4 Cardiff Local Authority is required under section 437 of the Education Act 1996, to ensure that a child for whom they are responsible is receiving suitable education by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

2.5 The St Teilo's Cluster Attendance Policy is written to ensure compliance with statutory requirements and in the understanding of life based on the Christian faith as taught by the doctrines of the Church in Wales.

2.6 St. Teilo's cluster schools aim to work in partnership with young people, parents and families so that pupils can benefit from the educational opportunities provided to them at school. Key members of staff include:

- Keyworkers (nominated school staff)
- Cluster Attendance Officer
- Headteachers

2.7 This policy operates in conjunction with the local authority's Education Welfare Service staged approach.

3. PROCEDURES

Registration procedures

3.1 To ensure accuracy and consistency, all pupils are registered electronically via the Capita School Information Management System (SIMS).

3.2 Pupils are registered within the first ten minutes of arrival at school. Pupils' attendance is recorded twice during the school day, the morning and afternoon.

3.3 Teachers and Supply Teachers are each provided with login credentials for SIMS and are required to record present (/) or absent (N) against each pupil's name. No pupil may be left with a 'missing' mark.

3.4 In instances of lateness, members of staff are required to alter the absent (N) mark to the late (L) mark. The degree of lateness may be recorded using the appropriate function within SIMS.

Categorisation of absence

3.5 Teachers, Cover Supervisors and Supply Teachers are permitted to use the following registration codes only: Present (/), absent (N) and late (L).

3.6 The staff listed in 2.6 may, upon investigating incidents of absence, use the following codes as set out by the Welsh Government 2010:

B	Educated off-site
D	Dual-registered
P	Approved sporting activity
V	Educational visit
J	Interview
W	Work experience
C	Other authorised circumstance
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)
H	Family holiday (agreed)
I	Illness
M	Medical appointment
S	Study leave

E	Excluded
R	Religious observance
T	Traveller absence
O	Other unauthorised circumstance
G	Family holiday (not authorised)
U	Late (after registration closed)
[Self-isolation (COVID close contact)
;	Self-isolation (COVID index case)

Where pupils are not required to attend school the additional codes X, Y, Z and # may be used, as directed by the Executive Headteacher.

Schools may use other codes for various internal monitoring purposes. However, these codes must be mapped against the code above.

Procedures for absence and lateness

3.7 Parents are asked to contact the school by telephone on the first day of their child's absence. Nominated staff monitor absence message daily.

3.8 Should a pupil be absent from school without explanation, parents will be contacted by the school office on the first day of absence.

Authorisation of absence (including holidays)

3.9 Absences may only be approved by the Executive Headteacher or authorised representatives of the Executive Headteacher. St. Teilo's cluster schools exercise caution in the authorisation of absence and parents must seek to provide the school with a full picture of the reasons leading to their child's absence.

3.10 The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 give schools discretionary power to grant leave for the purpose of a family holiday during term time. Parents do not have an automatic right to withdraw their child from school for a holiday and, in law, have to apply for permission from the school in advance. St. Teilo's cluster schools will only authorise family holidays where parents are able to demonstrate that unique or exceptional circumstances prevent the holiday from being taken outside of term time. In general, holidays during term time will not be authorised (see 4.14).

3.11 When assessing requests for leave, the Executive Headteacher (or authorised representative) will consider:

- The time of year of the proposed trip;
- The length and purpose of the holiday;
- The duration of the holiday and its impact on continuity of learning;
- The circumstances of the family and wishes of the parents; and
- The overall attendance pattern of the child.

The final decision to authorise leave or otherwise is a discretionary matter for the Executive Headteacher (or authorised representative).

4. Intervention

4.1 St. Teilo's cluster schools recognise the important role that parents play in promoting good school attendance. The school therefore seeks to provide professional, quality information and advice. Information is available on the school website.

4.2 St. Teilo's cluster schools operate a 'same day contact' scheme in an attempt to prevent prolonged absence and encourage pupils to return to school promptly (see 3.8).

4.3 St. Teilo's cluster schools operate a 'late at the gates' scheme in an attempt to discourage lateness and identify pupils who are persistently late for school.

4.4 The Educational Welfare Service may, in conjunction with South Wales Police, conduct 'truancy sweeps' in Cardiff City Centre and throughout the east side of the city.

Graduated response

4.5 Headteachers (or authorised representatives) will review pupil data every half term. Pupils should be considered in four categories, namely: low absence; moderate absence; chronic absence; or severe chronic absence. The individual circumstances of the child should be considered (not just the percentage attendance).

- i. Autumn 1 (<85%, <70%, <50%)
- ii. Autumn 2 (<87%, <75%, <60%)
- iii. Spring 1 (<89%, <80%, <70%)
- iv. Spring 2 (<90%, <80%, <75%)
- v. Summer 1 (<95%, <90%, <85%)
- vi. Summer 2 (<95%, <90%, <85%)

4.6 For pupils with low absence, each school will continue to monitor attendance according to section 3, 'Procedures'.

4.7 For pupils with moderate absence, Headteachers (or authorised representatives) will make contact with the pupil and family to address barriers to good attendance and punctuality.

4.8 For pupils with chronic absence, the Cluster Attendance Officer will monitor absence at least weekly. The Cluster Attendance Officer will conduct a profiling assessment with the child and family and write an action plan.

4.9 For pupils with severe chronic absence, the Cluster Attendance Officer will review the action plan with all stakeholders and arrange with Headteachers referrals to statutory and third sector partners as appropriate. They will monitor absence daily.

4.10 For pupils with severe chronic absence for a consecutive half term, the casework officer will refer to the Education Welfare Service.

4.11 When a pupil has been absent for an extended period, they are welcomed positively on their return. Each school is responsible for ensuring that support is made available to the pupil, helping them to 'catch up'. In some cases, the school may choose to re-examine the pupil's curriculum offer to encourage better attendance.

4.12 Attendance is reported to parents in all written school reports.

Hierarchy of sanctions

4.13 St Teilo's cluster schools are caring schools and always seek to resolve matters of poor attendance through effective partnership with parents. On the rare occasion that the school is unable to elicit in parents the support deemed necessary to encourage pupils to attend school, sanctions may be used. In the first instance, parents may receive letters or telephone calls which:

- Request reasons for their child's absence;
- Request medical evidence for their child's absence;
- Express concern about their child's absence and offer advice and support;
- Advise them about their child's lateness and ask for their help in getting their child to school on time;
- Advise them that the school has taken the decision not to authorise an absence;
- Advise them that the Cluster Attendance Officer intends to visit their home;
- Advise them of their legal responsibilities to ensure their child attends school regularly;
- Advise them that they are at risk of receiving a Fixed Penalty Notice (see 4.14);
- Advise them that a referral has been made to the Educational Welfare Service (see 4.15).

4.14(i) 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. A warning letter will first be sent if:

- There have been 10 unauthorised sessions within one school year (these do not have to be consecutive absences);
- A child has been late (after registration has closed) on 10 occasions within one school year;
- Parents/carers have failed to engage in attempts to improve attendance;
- The police have regularly found a pupil to be absent from school without an acceptable reason.

4.14(ii) A Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued if:

- There is one further unauthorised absence within 15 school days of a warning letter having been issued (this monitoring period may span two school terms);
- An unauthorised holiday is taken during term time (note that no warning letter will be received).

The school adheres to the Cardiff Council Fixed Penalty Notices for Non-Attendance at School Code of Conduct.

4.15 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.

Typically, but not exclusively, this will occur at the severe chronic absence tier of the graduated response. However, each case will be examined on its own merit.

4.16 The Cluster Attendance Officer will liaise with the Education Welfare Service to provide the evidence required to prosecute parents who fail, without reasonable justification, to cause their child to attend school regularly, under sections 444(1) and 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996.

5. Monitoring and evaluation

5.1 The Executive Headteacher (with the support of the Cluster Attendance Officer and other authorised representatives) is responsible for maintaining accurate attendance records for each pupil. Registration data is recorded using SIMS and details of interventions and strategies should be maintained by keyworkers and casework officers at each stage of the graduated response.

5.2 Individual and group attendance data is reviewed by the Executive Headteacher (or authorised representative) of each school in each half term (see 4.5).

5.3 Attendance data is reviewed at the end of the academic year by the Executive Headteacher (or authorised representative) of each school and used to inform self-evaluation and improvement planning processes.

A note on the revised Cardiff Council Code of Conduct for Fixed Penalty Notices for Non-Attendance at School

A new Code of Conduct was published in June 2018 by Cardiff Council for use by schools from September 2018.

The headline changes are:

- A FPN can be requested where there is a minimum of 10 unauthorised sessions (5 school days) in an academic year (these do not need to be consecutive). *This was previously 10 unauthorised sessions (5 school days) in a term.*
- A maximum of three FPNs can be issued to a parent in a 12 month period but only one of these can be issued for 10 unauthorised absences following a warning. *This was previously one FPN but this will cover families taking multiple holidays and having poor attendance.*
- The 15 day monitoring period can now span two terms. *This was previously required to be completed in a single term.*
- There is now an attendance threshold of 92% and below in the previous 12 month period. *This was previously introduced at 90% in the last academic year.*

