



WHOLE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

REVIEWED

April 2015

Milford Haven School
Whole School Attendance Policy

This school policy on attendance has been produced to explain to all concerned, the rights, responsibilities and rules relating to the attendance of students at Milford Haven School. If students do not attend school, they will not achieve their potential. Good attendance and punctuality lead to the best learning outcomes. This school policy follows the guidelines from Pembrokeshire County Council's 'Attendance Strategy 2014'.

Principles

Milford Haven School expects the highest level of attendance from all our students so they may develop their full potential during their time at school. It is our aim to encourage and assist all students to achieve excellence in attendance and punctuality. All members of the school community are expected to actively participate in enabling all young people to strive to reach their full potential – students, parents/carers, all teaching and support staff and external agencies must do all in their power to ensure that excellent attendance and punctuality maintain an integral part of the school's work, thus offering all students an education of the highest quality as an essential preparation for life and to enable each student to develop their talents to the full, both as an individual, and as a member of the wider community.

We are committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience for all students. We believe that, if pupils are to benefit from education, punctuality and good attendance are paramount. As a school, we will organise and do all we can to ensure maximum attendance for all students. Any problems that impede punctuality and regular attendance will be identified and addressed as quickly as possible and we have a focussed approach aimed at returning students to full attendance at all times. We will involve the Inclusion Service when appropriate to ensure a focussed approach to achieve this aim.

The school will actively promote and encourage 100% attendance for all our students. It is the policy of the school to celebrate achievement and to highlight that attendance is a critical factor for a productive and successful school career.

Milford Haven School will:

- Ensure that all staff are aware of the registration procedures and receive suitable in-service training on registration regulations and education law.
- Complete registers accurately and promptly at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session.
- Make full use of 'First day response' to parents/carers.
- Inform parents/carers of their child's attendance throughout the year.
- Inform parents/carers when a student's attendance is below the expected percentage of 95%.
- Reward good and improved attendance by individuals, classes or year groups.
- Promote positive staff attitudes to pupils returning after a period of absence.
- Consult with all members of the school community and the Inclusion Service in developing, implementing and maintaining the Whole School Attendance Policy.

- Ensure that all pupils feel supported and valued. A clear message will be given that if a pupil is absent, she/he will be missed.
- Have procedures in place that allow absentees to catch up on missed work, without disrupting the learning of other class members.

Why is attendance important?

Full attendance maximises learning opportunities and evidence shows that students who attend school regularly make better progress both academically and socially. Failure to attend school increases the risk of leaving school without qualifications and allows greater opportunity for young people to be drawn into crime and antisocial behaviour. It can also leave some young people vulnerable to harm by adults. Learning and wellbeing are core elements in a young person's life and school attendance plays a key role in developing positive outcomes in this respect.

Ensuring student's regular attendance at school is the legal responsibility of parents/carers and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Procedures

Milford Haven School has an electronic system which tracks and monitors attendance throughout the day. Excellent attendance and punctuality are vital for success. It is expected for students to aim for at least 95% attendance therefore support is needed from all parents/carers and students in maintaining excellent attendance figures. It is vital that there are open lines of communication between school and home and therefore parents contact school to inform them of any absenteeism and vice versa, school will contact home if students are absent with no reason. Parents/carers are asked to phone school every day a student is off school to give a valid reason and there is an automated option for parents to either speak to a member of staff or leave a message to report student absence. It is reasonable for the school to ask the nature of the illness, ask the parent the expected length of absence and make arrangements for the parent to call the school again if the situation changes. If a message is left, parents/carers may still receive a phone call to request further information on the absence.

Milford Haven School have the right to consider whether to accept the parent/carers position with regard to medical absence as there are occasions when parents report parentally condoned absence to the school as medical absence. If there are concerns that the illness may not either be genuine or warrant the amount of absence accruing, parents may be asked to substantiate the illness by asking to see additional evidence such as an appointment card or prescriptions. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, or if a pattern of medical absence is developing, parents and students may be asked to attend a meeting in school to investigate problems. Medical evidence may be asked for to be provided for the absence. Referrals to the school nurse or the Pupil Support Officer (PSOs) may be made by the school if they meet the referral criteria. The School Nurse can provide a very useful intervention where schools have high concerns about frequent or recurring patterns of medical absence.

Pupils, who have regular absence for illness, possibly initially for entirely legitimate reasons, will be monitored carefully to ensure that the illness is not an indicator that there are other difficulties which are not encouraging regular attendance. These issues will be raised sensitively with pupils and their parents. Relevant support staff such as the School Nurse or PSO's may be able to help the school with these issues. In cases where there is a concern sufficient for the Pupil Support Officers to be involved, and medical reasons have been given for the absences, the parents may be asked to sign a consent form giving the PSO or school nurse permission to liaise with their GP.

Cases of persistent absences often involve complex medical, psychological and social factors. In these cases it is essential that the GP retains the full confidence and trust of the child and the parents, to facilitate improved school attendance. It is not the GP's role to 'police' absenteeism as this may undermine the doctor-patient relationship and have a negative impact on outcome. When a formal request is made, GPs can provide factual information to schools, with the parents' informed consent.

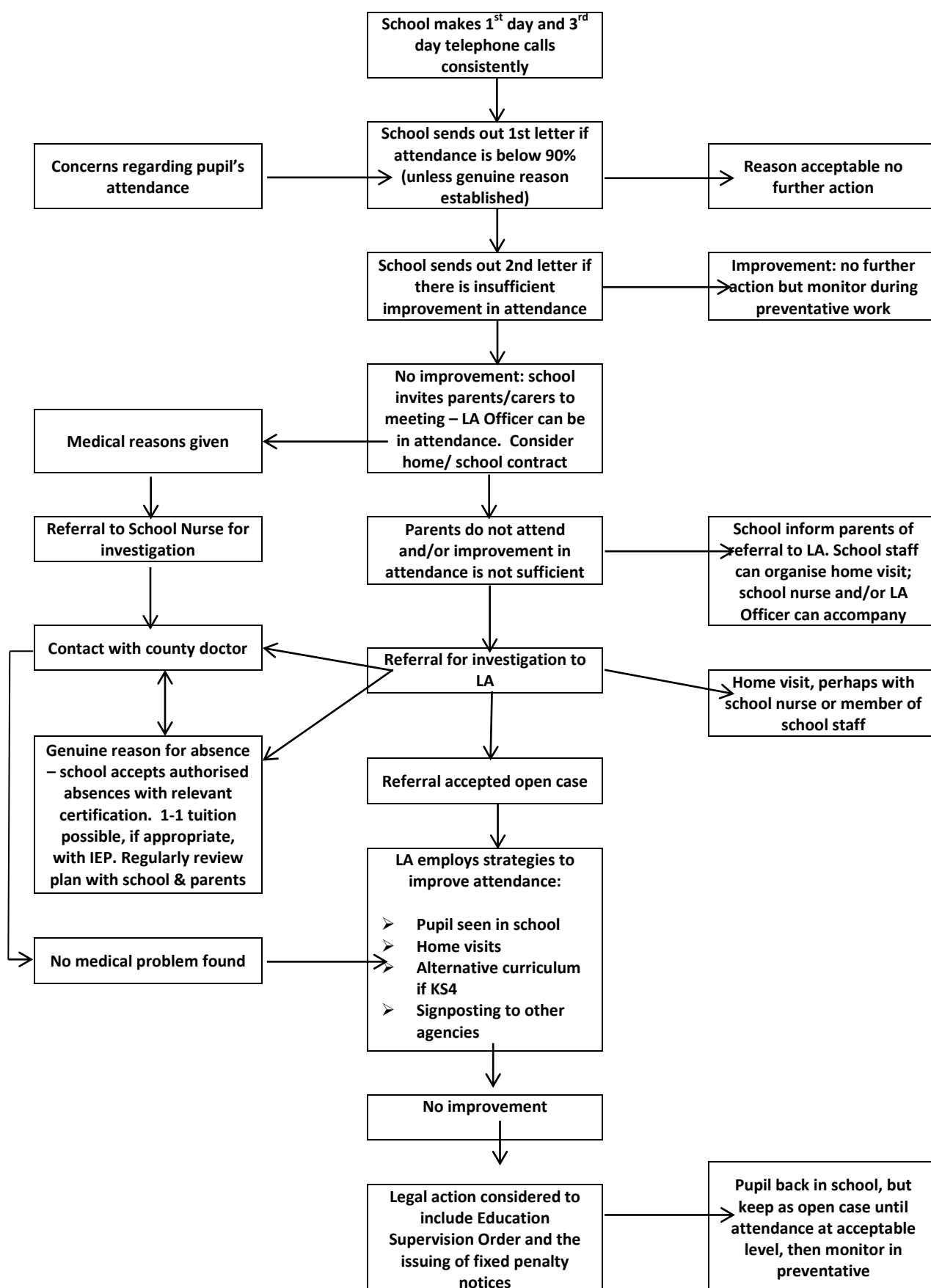
Where ill health is a factor, the PSO will need to confirm the medical problems identified by the child and/or parent/carer (particularly if there have been several referrals and the explanation for absence has been given as ill health). If it is felt that the parents have not sought appropriate medical help and the absence persists a referral should be made to the community medical officer. This could be issues such as mild asthma, migraine or period pains which are often given as reasons for frequent or prolonged absence.

In addition to the guidelines set by ERW, if no contact is received from parents/carers on the first morning of absence, the school will:

- Contact the parents/carers by telephone, text or email.
- Follow up non-reasons for absence with further texts and phone calls on the day of absence.
- If unexplained absence continues, a meeting will be offered to the parent/carer and/or a visit from the School Community Engagement Officer may be undertaken.
- After a maximum of 10 days absence, or if attendance falls below target, a referral will be made to the Pupil Support Officer and the parents will be offered a meeting in school. This meeting will include a senior member of staff, parents and the pupil (if deemed appropriate) and the designated Pupil Support Officer. The aim of this meeting will be to identify and resolve the difficulties that are preventing the pupil from attending school.
- If this meeting does not secure the pupil attending school, the Pupil Support Officer will begin a pupil support process and will work with the school on an Individual reintegration plan (IRP) which will involve ensuring that the parents/ carers are aware of the legal requirements regarding regular school attendance.
- The IRP will be implemented by the school, family and Pupil Support Officer. An individual reintegration plan (IRP) would be adopted and implemented where a pupil is returning after any absence longer than two weeks. The IRP will include members of the school staff and will be designed to be as supportive as possible to the pupil. The Pupil Support Officer can assist in the development of the IRP.

Milford Haven School follow the guidelines set by ERW for procedures for non-attendance:

ERW Procedures for Non-Attendance 2013



Practice

The school day starts at **8.45 am** and we expect every pupil to be on site at 8.40 am at the latest. This allows them to be in class on time and ready to learn. Registers are marked by 8.55am and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At 9.30am the registers will be closed. In accordance with the regulations, if a student arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will count as an unauthorised absence

Period 5 is the afternoon registration and this and the morning tutor period are the marks that count towards the student's late record.

Registers are marked and pupils will receive a mark according to the Attendance Codes (Appendix 1).

The school will recognise the importance of good practice by;

- Keeping and maintaining registers accurately and the systems for recording pupil attendance.
- Using attendance codes consistently.
- Regularly analysing attendance data using PCC and WAG benchmarking data comparison.
- Ensuring prompt follow-up action in cases of non-school attendance.
- Maintaining a school environment where pupils are welcomed and good attendance is acknowledged and encouraged.
- Establishing early links and maintaining good links with families to ensure early intervention through 'open door' availability and personal contact.
- Developing home-school agreements when appropriate.
- Liaising closely with the schools' Pupil Support Officer, and working collaboratively with the LEA and education welfare services in Pembrokeshire.
- Recording information regarding contact with parents and carers for monitoring and analysis.
- Reviewing attendance policies regularly and in a timely manner to reflect innovation and new recommendations.
- Senior manager to lead on attendance with the support of a designated Governor with responsibility for attendance.
- Regular comparison of attendance figures against similar schools and historical data.

Legal Framework

Statutory Responsibilities

Under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, parents/carers are responsible of making sure that their children receive full time education. A pupil is required to attend school regularly at the school where they are registered as a pupil. Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that;

“The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient, full time education, suitable to his/her age, aptitude and ability and to any special educational needs he/she may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.”

Section 444 further states that;

“If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence.”

An offence is **not** committed if it can be demonstrated that;

- The pupil was absent with leave (authorised absence)
- The pupil was medically ill or prevented from attending by an unavoidable cause
- The absence occurred on a day set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil/parents belong
- The catchment school is not within the prescribed walking distance of the child’s home and the Local Authority has made no suitable transport arrangements. The law relating to ‘walking distance’ is effectively defined as two miles for pupils under eight and three miles for all other pupils. Distances will be measured by the nearest available walking route.
- A limited defence is available to the parents of travelling children.

The act also places a legal obligation on;

- The Local Authority - to secure that efficient education is available to meet the needs of its population and to enforce attendance
- Schools – to register attendance and notify the Local Authority of a child’s absence from school (Welsh Assembly circular 47/2006) and the Education (Pupil Registration) Amendment Regulations 1997.

Absence

There are two different types of absence; authorised and unauthorised. Unauthorised absence is perceived as truancy, and may result in the involvement of the Inclusion Service. This could ultimately lead to the prosecution of the parents/carers.

Parents will be reminded that **it is only the school who may decide whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised**. Parents should be reminded that a letter does not in itself authorise an absence; only the school’s acceptance of the explanation offered by the letter authorises the absence.

Absence from school will be authorised by the school if it is for the following reasons;

- Sickness (within reasonable time limits)
- Unavoidable medical/dental appointments
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional family circumstances, such as bereavement

Absence from school will not be authorised for the following reasons;

- Family holidays
- Repeated incidence of illness where there is no evidence, eg. Medical appointment card.

- Shopping
- Haircuts
- Missed bus
- Slept late
- No uniform
- Confusion over term dates , eg Inset days
- Looking after brothers or sisters
- Minding the home
- Birthdays

NB: All non-emergency medical/dental appointments should be made outside of school hours as much as possible.

Authorised Absence

Only a school can authorise an absence. Parents and the Local Authority do not have the power to authorise absences. The key points schools will consider when deciding to authorise absence are:

- It is a legal requirement that registered pupils of compulsory school age attend school regularly and punctually.
- Schools are not obliged to accept a parental explanation for pupil absence where there is doubt as to the validity of that explanation.
- Schools should always expect regular and punctual attendance, even when the school is aware of family difficulties.
- **An explanation is required for every absence.** If one is not forthcoming the absence will be treated as unauthorised.
- Where absence is authorised, schools should remain vigilant to emerging patterns of nonattendance.
- Lateness should be actively discouraged and persistent lateness treated in the same way as irregular attendance.

Holiday Absence

All of the Authorities within ERW (Education Through regional Working) have agreed to strongly advise schools not to authorise holidays during term time. Each holiday application will be considered on an individual basis and any authorised holidays will be given at the discretion of the Headteacher. However, for the majority of cases, it is most likely that Milford Haven School will not authorise holidays during term time.

Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence is absence without approval from an authorised representative of the school and includes **all** unexplained absences. If a child is absent with the approval of the school for whatever reason, no offence is deemed to have been committed, thus, the decision taken by the school to give, or withhold authorisation for an absence, is a critical factor in determining the Local Authority's decision to prosecute parents.

Schools need to exercise caution in the authorisation of absence. If schools are suspicious of the explanation given by parents, the absence should be further investigated and left unauthorised until the matter has been clarified to the satisfaction of the school. The

decision taken by the school to authorise absence or not is of critical importance in determining the level of involvement of the Inclusion and Wellbeing service. If the school has authorised a pupil's absence they have, in effect, given leave and therefore there is no case in law for the parents to answer.

Lateness

A pupil's punctuality for school is a legal requirement (Welsh Assembly circular 47/2006) and the parents/carers of a pupil who is consistently late are guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted.

Once the reasons for lateness have been established, the school, parents/carers and pupils need to work in partnership to resolve the difficulties. Where the home situation makes it difficult for the pupil to arrive on time, the school may offer support from the School Community Engagement Officer (SCEO) in the first instance, who may need to refer the case to the Pupil Support Officer. Parents and pupils should be made aware that arrival after registration has closed will be marked as unauthorised absence.

Parentally condoned absence

If school staff have reason to doubt that the explanation offered about a particular absence is genuine, the absence will be treated as unauthorised. Since all absences are to be treated as unauthorised unless and until schools agree on a satisfactory explanation, it is important that schools have procedures, consistently applied, to pursue explanations and for amending registers (Welsh Assembly Circular 47/2006, p. 73). Such procedures would indicate a request for medical advice from the school nurse via the community medical officer regarding non-school attendance.

Please ensure that your child does not miss school unless absolutely necessary and where possible, avoid taking holidays in school term time. Absence from school is the biggest contributor towards underachievement.

Bullying/Anti-bullying Strategies

Pupils may not attend school because they are afraid of bullying or behaviour which may frighten or alarm them. All too often, pupils do not feel safe on their way to and from school. This emotional impact can increase truancy rates and encourage premature school dropouts.

Children who are bullied often 'absent' themselves from school and may present doctors with a variety of emotional and physical symptoms.

Milford Haven School will consider bullying being a possibility when investigating cases of poor attendance and will promptly address the problem with the individual/s and actively work towards reducing incidences by consistently using whole school strategies and practices such as the whole school Anti-bullying policy and Restorative Practice.

Reintegration after a period of absence

On return to school the pupil needs to feel welcomed and supported. Support will be readily available, and the pupil will be made aware of how to access it. A key supporter in school will be identified, for example the Progress manager, Inclusion Assistant, SCEO or PSO.

An agreement or contract will be set up between the pupil, parents/carers and school containing aims, targets and review dates, with continued home/school contact with the PSO. This may include individualised timetables or school work, which will be negotiated and monitored using a 'Welcome Back to School' booklet, which will also allow parents to support and track the pupil progress on their return. This will be reviewed and adjusted according to pupil progress with the aim to sensitively re-integrate pupils who have been absent through a structured and individually tailored programme.

School will ensure that all staff are aware of the pupils who are re-integrating after an absence and that they are aware of the procedures and practices for sensitively re-integrating pupils back into school.

Attendance Management

Step 1 – School Based Interventions

The Headteacher has assigned a senior member of staff, Assistant Headteacher, to have overall responsibility for attendance matters. Staff are organised and deployed where necessary to support the identification, monitoring, reporting and prevention of attendance problems, especially to pupils with attendance between 80-90%. Further systems and interventions are put in place when deteriorating attendance falls below 80%.

Policies and procedures for monitoring and improving attendance between 80-90% are implemented by the school. School attendance policy and review of attendance data form part of agendas of meetings in school by Progress managers, Heads of Department, Senior Leadership Team and Governors. School attendance initiatives and procedures are shared with all pupils, staff and families in a whole school approach.

Step 2 – School based interventions, seeking advice from LA Pupil Support Officer (PSO)

The school will use interventions to support attendance in conjunction with advice from the PSO. The PSO works with the school in a consultative capacity, assisting in identifying possible alternative strategies.

Schools may consider requesting a 'Penalty Notice' from the LA. No formal referral is made to the PSO at this stage, but they are made aware of deteriorating attendance.

Step 3 – Referral made to LA Pupil Support Officer

When school-based interventions have all been considered, the school will refer to the PSO. The PSO works predominately with pupils below 80% attendance. Referrals could be considered in circumstances such as:

- Block absences of more than 20 sessions without explanation.
- Irregular patterns of attendance with frequent unauthorised or medical absences.
- A prolonged poor attendance pattern.

- Pupils with less than 80% attendance in a school year.
- Children at risk who exhibit poor or irregular attendance.
- Suspicious absences without medical confirmation.
- Known truants.
- School refusers.
- Absences connected with possible child welfare or safeguarding issues.
- Sudden deterioration in attendance without any specific reason and no explanation given.
- Pupil who are persistently late after close of registration.

The LA will consider a 'Penalty Notice' at the school's request and when the school has referred to the LA, letters will be sent to parents and **services** from the PSO.

Step 4 – Case review and Assessment

If there is little or no improvement following Step 3 intervention, the situation will be reviewed in discussion with the System Leader for Behaviour and Attendance and, if appropriate, involve other agencies. Consideration will be given to a number of complementary strategies which may include intensive monitoring of pupil's attendance, a time limited in-depth programme of support working with the family, formulate individual plans, hold Education Planning Meetings and Formal Legal Education Planning Meetings, develop Parenting Contracts, and refer to other agencies/services. Formal warning letters will be sent to families and there will be a consideration of statutory action.

Step 5 – Statutory Action

At this stage, the LA will implement statutory action within the guidelines of the 1996 Education Act. If set criteria are met, the LA Pupil Support Officer will discuss the case with the manager of the Service and the LA's legal department for consideration with regard to prosecution.

Fixed Penalty Notices

The key criteria should be as follows:

- When a pupil has a minimum of 10 sessions (five school days) that have been lost due to unauthorised absences during the current term and this brings the overall pupil's attendance to below 90% in the school year to date (these absences do not have to be consecutive);
- Unauthorised absences of at least 10 sessions (5 school days) due to holidays in term-time if the absences take the overall pupil's attendance to below 90% in the school year to date (these absences do not have to be consecutive);
- Persistent late arrival at school i.e. after the register has closed ('U' code as in the Codes Guidance Document 2010). Persistent for the purpose of this document means at least 10 sessions of late arrival within a term; these do not need to be consecutive but should bring the overall pupil's attendance to under 90% in the school year to date.

It should be noted that penalty notices will only be issued by post and never as an instant action, e.g. during a Truancy Sweep. This will enable officers to ensure that all evidential requirements are in place and will limit the health and safety risks to individuals.

Where a school has identified that a period of unauthorised absence has occurred, a request to the LA for a penalty notice can be submitted.

Procedure for issuing a penalty notice

The LA will respond to all requests to issue penalty notices within ten school days of receipt and where it is satisfied that all relevant information has been supplied and that the initiation of the penalty notice is appropriate. Each LA within ERW has the prime responsibility for developing the protocol within which all partners named in the Education Penalty Notices (Wales) Regulations 2013 will operate and each LA will deliver this LA responsibility. Requests can be generated by a Headteacher, their nominated deputies, the police and neighbouring local authorities. The LA must ensure that issuing a penalty notice would not conflict with another legal intervention strategy contemplated or commenced under the Education Act 444(1) or 444(1A).

The procedure is as follows:

- LA receives a request for a penalty notice and relevant checks will be made.
- LA to send a formal written warning to the parent/carer notifying them that they may receive a penalty notice. Absences that occur due to holidays in term-time will not receive a warning.
- LA set a period of 15 school days to allow the parent/carer to respond. During the fifteen days, parents/carers would have the right to provide any evidence they may wish to present to the school, including medical evidence, to argue that the penalty notice should not be issued.
- It will be for the Headteacher/nominated person to determine whether the evidence is accepted and the register amended. For example, if the absences are supported by medical evidence then the registers may have to be corrected using the appropriate code. In such cases the penalty notice may not be issued by the Local Authority. If evidence is not provided or the Headteacher/nominated person does not accept the absences then a penalty notice can be issued by the LA by first class post.
- If the payment is made there will be no further action.
- If payment is not made then the case will either be withdrawn or result in prosecution under Education Act 1996 section 444.

A penalty notice is £60 if paid within 28 days of receipt of the notice. Please note that:

- This rises to £120 if paid after 28 days but within 42 days of receipt.
- If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 42 days the local authority must either prosecute for the offence or withdraw the notice.
- Arrangements for payment will be detailed on the penalty notice.

The prosecution proceedings will be for the offence of failing to secure the child's regular attendance at school and not for non-payment of the penalty fine. The prosecution will be brought under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. Withdrawal of the notice can only take place in limited circumstances.

The school paperwork should comprise of:

- Confirmation that information was sent to all parents at the start of the academic year which clearly states that parents may receive a penalty notice.
- If referring to a holiday in term-time, then a copy of the holiday request form.
- A copy of the pupil's registration document.
- Completion of the penalty notice request form.

A penalty notice will not be issued in respect of Looked After Children (LAC) who are subject to on-going LA intervention.

Where the penalty notice is requested from a school in response to a parental request for unauthorised absence (holiday related unauthorised absence), the formal warning letter and 15 day improvement period will not apply.

The Role of the Inclusion Service

The Inclusion Service assists the Local Authority to fulfil its statutory responsibilities in promoting and enforcing school attendance, in particular, promoting access to education for all children, including pupils at risk of underachieving. It also intervenes following reports of illegal child employment. The Welsh Assembly states:

“It is of crucial importance to establish an effective working relationship between schools and the Education Welfare Service.” (Welsh Assembly circular 47/2006, Sec.4 p.9)

The Inclusion Service works closely with schools and families to resolve attendance and welfare issues. Pupil Support Officers are designated to every secondary school, responding to the needs as they arise in that school and their feeder Primary Schools. They receive regular on-going developmental training and supervision support from the System Leader for Behaviour and Attendance.

The key functions of the Inclusion Service in relation to attendance

The Inclusion Service uses Social Work methods to:

- Promote and enforce regular school attendance.
- Work in partnership with schools, families and other agencies to improve attendance and in the first instance, reduce unauthorised absence at school.
- Promote and monitor the achievements/attendance of Looked After Children, linking with the advisory teacher for Looked After Children.
- Contribute to interagency decision making in relation to young people who offend and are involved in truancy.
- Assist schools to identify children in need of protection and children in need of support services.
- Assist the schools to address any issues involving bullying which may prevent the pupil accessing their education.

The PSO has a dual role to play as a provider of a service to the school and as a mediator between home and school. However, attendance is the responsibility of the whole school and the pupil's parents/carers.

Support for groups of pupils at particular risk

Certain pupils have the potential to pose a particular risk in terms of attendance and may need additional support from the Inclusion Service to ensure regular attendance.

The Service may be able to provide additional advice and support to schools for these pupils and their families, for example, by making referrals to other agencies such as Team Around the Family (TAF). They can also assist with issues around welfare, safeguarding or child protection including referrals to the Child Care Assessment Team (CCAT).

These vulnerable groups could include:

- Pupils with Additional Learning Needs (ALN).
- Children in the care of the LA.
- Young Carers.
- Children from ethnic and cultural minorities.
- Asylum seeker families.
- Pupils from families experiencing Domestic Abuse.
- Children with health/medical problems.
- Teenage mothers.
- Children from families under stress.
- Children and young people facing emotional and psychological difficulties.
- Pupils identified as being within protected characteristics under the Equality Act (2010).

WAG Attendance Codes

The Welsh assembly 'Inclusion and Pupil Support' document Circular No. 47/2006 issued in November 2006, gives comprehensive guidance on the correct registration practices and use of codes for schools to follow. (Section 4 – Attendance, Annex 4.i – Registration practices and codes).

The document can also be found on the PCC E-portal or by download from the Welsh Assembly on www.wales.gov.uk/inclusionandpupilsupport.

Pupil Support Officers have access to the electronic registers to monitor and investigate any concerning patterns of absence and should have minimum log-on rights for the attendance packages used in schools.

Welsh Assembly codes are used for consistency. The Local Authority have suggested a couple of extra codes as a way of monitoring certain types of absences, i.e. family holidays and have suggested there where a school refuse a holiday but the family take it anyway, the code used would be an G. This will allow the Local Authority to monitor the impact of holidays on school attendance.

Strategies for promoting good attendance

- Milford Haven School's commitment to achieving high levels of attendance is made explicit and clear to the pupils, staff and parents.
- Good attendance is celebrated through rewarding high achieving classes (half termly) and individuals (termly), and by having displays in corridors and classes to remind pupils and staff of their performance.
- Pupils are constantly reminded of the importance and value of good attendance and punctuality. PSO's are invited to speak at assemblies on attendance.

- Form tutors inform pupils of their weekly percentage for pupils to keep a track of own attendance.
- Year group attendance and/or punctuality rewards given in assemblies to pupils and/or forms.
- Some pupils fail to attend because they are unable to keep up with their peers in class and become discouraged. Milford Haven School will endeavour to ensure that children's needs are identified and that action is taken to meet those needs.
- The curriculum will be monitored and developed where possible to meet the needs of pupils.
- Staff at Milford Haven School will work closely with external support e.g. Youth workers, TAF, Youth Engagement and Progression to improve the wellbeing of pupils and to ensure that targeted groups and individuals have the best chance of success.
- Attendance data will be collected and used to inform pastoral and curriculum practices and identify patterns of absence and problem areas.
- Focussed attendance events and activities will be planned and implemented.
- Using data such as PASS survey to raise pupil's levels of academic self-concepts and general self-esteem.
- Work closely with cluster schools to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance before they transfer to Milford Haven School in Year 7 and devise ways of supporting them, through the Youth Service, Inclusion Service and by accessing the Behaviour Support Service when there are behavioural difficulties.
- Parents will be kept regularly and fully informed of all concerns around attendance and punctuality. Eg, via half termly attendance letters, phone calls/text, meetings.
- Regular, structured meetings will be held with identified staff and LA Pupil Support Officer in order to identify and support those pupils whose attendance/punctuality is causing concern.
- Schools to maintain links with the Inclusion Service to report any difficulties implementing the School Attendance Policy.

Key to attendance codes

The recommended codes are grouped under the following 5 statistical categories:

- present;
- approved educational activity (treated as present);
- authorised absence;
- unauthorised absence;
- not required to attend.

Code Meaning Statistical category

∧	Present at registration	present
L	Late but arrived before the register closed	present
B	Educated off-site (not dual registration)	approved educational activity
D	Dual registered (i.e. present at another school or at a PRU)	approved educational activity
P	Approved sporting activity	approved educational activity
V	Educational visit or trip	approved educational activity
J	Interview	approved educational activity
W	Work experience (not work based training)	approved educational activity
C	Other authorised circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	authorised absence
I	Illness	authorised absence
M	Medical or dental appointment	authorised absence
S	Study leave	authorised absence
E	Excluded but no alternative provision made	authorised absence
R	Day set aside exclusively for religious observance	authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	authorised absence
N	No reason for the absence provided yet	unauthorised absence
O	Other unauthorised (not covered by other codes or descriptions)	unauthorised absence
G	Family holiday unauthorised	absence
U	Late and arrived after the register closed	unauthorised absence
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	not required to attend
Y	Partial and forced closure	not required to attend
Z	Pupil not on roll yet	not required to attend
#	School closed to all pupils	not required to attend



Date:

Dear Parent

Re: (Child) DOB:

Attendance over the last term/half term 3rd September – October = %

Attendance Overall from 3rd September = %

As part of our attendance monitoring it has come to our attention that **(child)'s** attendance is becoming low enough to be a concern.

I realise that some children are absent due to illness and appointments, which are sometimes unavoidable. However, good regular attendance is important for your child's learning and wellbeing.

Whilst we appreciate that there may be extenuating circumstances which have caused the absence, it remains our responsibility to inform parents of this information.

If there are any issues you would like to discuss in relation to **(child)'s** absence please do not hesitate in contacting our School Community Engagement Officer (Gemma Baker) /Progress Manager/Assistant Head (Emma Rees) on the above number for any support you may require.

It is our duty to inform you that any attendance below 80% would require a referral to the Pembrokeshire County Council Education Department for investigation and support.

Yours sincerely

Mr R Francis
Headteacher

Headteacher
Prifathro
Mr R Francis

Deputy Headteachers
Dirprwy Prifathrawon
Mr A Miles
Mrs B Davies

Assistant Headteachers
Penaethiaid Cynorthwyol
Ms C Morris
Miss E Rees
Mrs D Brown
Mr J Thomas
Mrs H John
Mr J Letten
Mrs C Zoogah

Business Manager
Rheolwr Fusnes
Mr P Hudson

Tel: **01646 690021**
Fax: 01646 696600

admin@milfordhavenschool.co.uk
www.milfordhavenschool.co.uk



Milford Haven School
Ysgol Gyfun Aberdaugleddau

Steynton Road, Milford Haven SA73 1AE



Heol Steynton, Aberdaugleddau SA73 1AE

Date:

Dear Parent/Carer,

Re: (child) DOB:

Attendance over the last term/half term 2nd September – 24th October = %

Attendance Overall from 2nd September = %

As part of our attendance monitoring we inform parents of their child's attendance rate.

(Child)'s attendance is not a cause for concern at the moment but a slight improvement will support your child's learning even further. The Welsh Assembly Government's attendance target is currently set at 95%.

If there are any issues you would like to discuss in relation to (child) please do not hesitate in contacting our School Community Engagement Officer (Gemma Baker) /Progress Manager /Assistant Head (Emma Rees) on the above number for any support you may require.

Yours sincerely

Mr R Francis
Headteacher

Headteacher

Prifathro

Mr R Francis

Deputy Headteachers

Dirprwy Prifathrawon

Mr A Miles

Mrs B Davies

Assistant Headteachers

Penaethiaid Cynorthwyol

Ms C Morris

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Steynton Road, Milford Haven SA73 1AE



Heol Steynton, Aberdaugleddau SA73 1AE

Date:

Dear Parent/Carer,

Reg: (child) DOB:

Attendance over the last term/half term from 1st June – 20th July = %

Attendance Overall from 2nd September – 20th July = %

As part of our attendance monitoring we inform parents of their child's attendance rate. It is of great pleasure to inform you that (child) has achieved (95 – 100)% this term/year.

(Child)'s commitment to achieving and maintaining excellent attendance is highly valued by all teaching staff. We are confident that (child)'s attendance will continue for the next school term.

Yours sincerely

Mr R Francis
Headteacher

Headteacher
Prifathro
Mr R Francis

Deputy Headteachers
Dirprwy Prifathrawon
Mr A Miles
Mrs B Davies

Assistant Headteachers
Penaethiaid Cynorthwyol
Ms C Morris
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Punctuality

It is a legal requirement that pupils registered at school attend regularly. Pupils are expected to be in their registration room by **8.45 am** for the start of the school day. We would be grateful if you would ensure that your child leaves home in plenty of time to arrive promptly every day. At **9.30am the registers will be closed**. In accordance with the regulations, if a student arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will count as an unauthorised absence. Period 4 is the afternoon registration and this and the morning tutor period are the marks that count towards the student's late record.

Why is punctuality such a good thing?

Being on time:

- Gets your child's day off to a good start and puts your child into a positive frame of mind, so that he/she can make the most of his/her learning;
- Sets positive patterns for the future;
- Leads to good attendance;
- Leads to better achievement;
- Leads to understanding that school is important and education is valuable;
- Helps your child develop a sense of responsibility for him/herself and towards others;
- Helps your child make friends and keep friends;
- Reaps rewards; it leads to success and self-confidence.

Why is lateness such a bad thing?

Being late:

- Gets your child's day off to a bad start;
- Can be embarrassing for your child;
- Will be noticed by other children who might make negative comments;
- May lead to your child losing confidence;
- May lead to your child feeling confused all day! He/she will have missed out on vital instructions, information and bits of news at the start of the day;
- Disrupts the lesson for everyone;
- Can cause your child to fall behind with his/ her work;
- Creates a bad habit that can be hard to break after school in the workplace;
- Can lead to poor attendance- if your child thinks it's okay to be late for school they can soon start to think it is okay to not go at all.

Types of Lateness

- Late before the register closes- when your child is a few minutes late;
- Late after the register closes- this counts as an unauthorised absence.

If you have a problem getting your child to school on time:

- Talk to your child;
- Talk to the school;
- Ask for help.

Remember it's better to get help early to stop little problems becoming big ones!

Here are some more things that can help

- Make sure your child has everything ready for school the night before e.g. PE kit, books, school uniform etc.
- Get to know your child's school timetable.
- Make sure you allow plenty of time for you and/ or your child to travel to school.
- Make sure your child does homework in the evenings, not at the breakfast table!
- Make sure your child gets enough rest and is not prevented from sleeping by distractions- TV, computer, Playstation etc.
- Buy an alarm clock!

If your child is late for school without sufficient reason there will be consequences for your child relevant to their year group; which will include detention either during or after school time.

Attendance

Why is good attendance important?

Good attendance at school is vital for pupils to achieve their full educational potential. Pupils with good attendance records benefit in the following ways:-

- Continuity of learning which makes progress and retention easier,
- Improved performance in coursework tasks
- Enhanced performance in examinations
- Continuity of relationships and friendships
- Good references for further education or employment
- Good habits are formed for later life

What constitutes good attendance?

Attendance percentages are not like examination results. An attendance percentage needs to be 95%+ before it can be considered good.

Consider the following examples over the course of a school year (188 days)

- 10 days absence = 95% attendance; 50 lessons missed
- 20 days absence = 89% attendance; 100 lessons missed
- 29 days absence = 85% attendance; 145 lessons missed
- 38 days absence = 80% attendance; 190 lessons missed
- 47 days absence = 75% attendance; 235 lessons missed

Missing 19 days (90% attendance) every year over 10 years of a school life = 1 whole year of school.

Research states that having 20 (89%) days off school every year means that a pupil will probably obtain a whole grade lower in their exams than they are probably capable of.

Pupils with less than 85% attendance are unlikely to gain 5 A* - C Grade GCSE qualifications.

In order for an attendance record to be good it must be 96% or above;

- 100% = excellent attendance
- 98% = very good attendance
- 96% = good attendance

Each year, a large number of pupils in every year group achieve 100% attendance; showing that this is an achievable target.

In addition a number of pupils have achieved this level of attendance for a number of years. Students with excellent attendance in Milford Haven School are rewarded with certificates and prizes.

Attendance

It is very important that pupils attend school constantly or they will fall behind and lose important knowledge about their course.

If your child is absent for any reason, please observe the following procedures:

1. Phone the school to inform us that your child is absent if only for a day: 01646 690021 option 1
2. Write a note in your child's diary on the day your child returns to school
3. The following reasons are not acceptable
 - a. A dental appointment (other than an emergency or an appointment with the school dentist)
 - b. Assisting at home
 - c. Driving lessons
 - d. Leisure/ entertainment/ shopping/ birthdays
4. Every effort should be made to arrange appointments outside school hours. Permission should be sought beforehand if the reason is known beforehand.
5. Every attempt should be made to arrange family holidays outside of term time since a pupil's absence has a detrimental effect on his/ her progress. Absences due to pupils being taken on holiday during term time will be recorded as unauthorised.
6. Illness. Sometimes pupils are kept from school because they have a cold, sore throat etc. Please do not allow your child to have time off school for minor complaints/ illnesses; if they are well enough to be up and about they are generally well enough to attend school. If your child suffers from a recurring illness take him/ her to the doctor.

If you think that the illness is caused by your child's anxiety of coming to school contact us immediately.

7. If your child is absent without reason or sufficient reason, or if there are constant or long periods of absences, you can expect a visit from the Pupil Support Officer. They will discuss with you how to avoid any unnecessary absences.
8. If the situation does not improve then we will arrange a meeting in school to discuss your child's attendance and agree on an action plan.
9. In a small number of cases it will be necessary to take the parents to court in order to achieve a higher attendance rate.