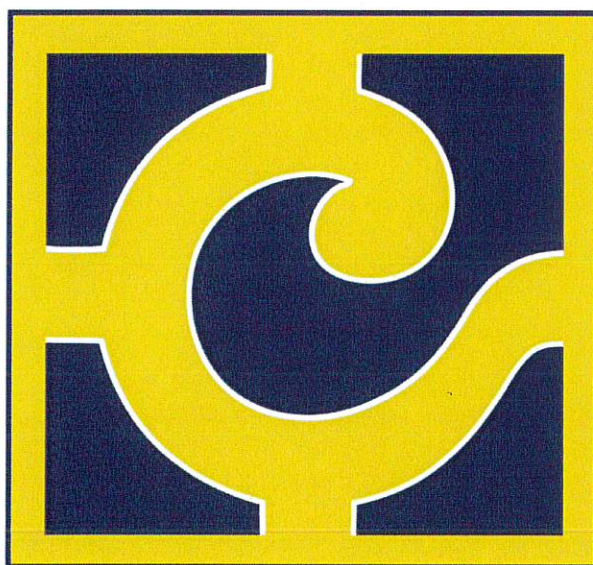


THE COURT SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

Academic Year 2023/24



THE COURT SCHOOL

J. W. S. 12.23

Approved by Governing Body – November '23

Review – Autumn term '25

Our Unique Context

The Court School is a specialist provision for pupils with Behavioral, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD) and other complex barriers to their learning. Many of the pupils who attend the school have additional diagnoses, e.g. ADHD and ASD and/or mental health issues. Therefore, we adopt a flexible approach to encouraging pupils to attend school because the vulnerable pupils require personalised approaches (i.e. what works for one pupil invariably doesn't work for another). Our values underpin our daily practice and prioritise the wellbeing of pupils and staff. See below:

- Keep everyone **safe**
- Stay **positive**
- **Communicate** effectively
- **Respect** our differences
- Be **flexible**
- Maintain **high expectations**

Nearly all of our pupils want to come to school most of the time. Where there are occasions where pupils do not want to attend school, staff work collaboratively and adopt strategies they think will work for the particular pupil. Occasionally, parents/carers do not send their child to school for a particular reason. In these instances, senior leaders adopt solution focused approaches to resolving concerns, e.g. phone call, 1:1 meeting, multi-disciplinary meeting, referral to Education Welfare Service/Children's Services.

It is worth emphasising that for pupils what constitutes good attendance very much depends on the individual. Often pupils start at the school and may have had very poor attendance in the past or may have been on an extended reduced timetable (Pastoral Support Plan - PSP). It is our aim to make pupils and their families feel comfortable and establish trust.

Introduction

Where pupils are of compulsory school age and registered at a school the law says they should attend regularly (Section 444 of the Education Act 1996) - see 'Our Unique Context'.

Staff at The Court School regard regular school attendance as a matter of prime importance in ensuring all pupils achieve their full potential. We aim to develop a partnership between home and school to fulfil this aim. When pupils are in school regularly they are able to take full advantage of all the opportunities offered to them.

At the Court School we aim to:

- Create a happy, secure, attractive environment where everyone has a feeling of self-worth and the opportunity to fulfil his/her potential in all areas of school life.
- Provide a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum.
- Promote regular attendance and punctuality.

To achieve these aims:

- We have a comprehensive Attendance, Anti-Bullying and Relationship Policies.
- We have well established procedures for monitoring attendance and improving attendance where necessary.

The Involvement of Parents and Carers

The Court School is a school which prioritises the wellbeing of the school's community and always seek to resolve matters of poor attendance through effective partnership working with parents/carers. 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/carers may receive letters 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 that the school has taken the decision not to authorise an absence;
- 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 (this is a last resort).

During the initial interview when a child is admitted to The Court School, the school's transition teacher/member of SLT will explain to parents their responsibilities with regard to regular attendance. The organisation of the school day and the importance of punctuality are fully explained. The importance of laying down good foundations for learning in the future by regular attendance at school will also be emphasised. A commitment to regular attendance is contained in the Home-School Agreement, which all new parents have to sign when their child is admitted to school.

J.W. S.12.23

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

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

Parents/carers are asked to inform the school on the first morning of an absence. In addition to this expectation that parents should contact the school, we have implemented a policy of the school phoning the home with regard to first day absence.

Fixed Penalty Notices

As a very last resort the school may consider requesting 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 term;
- 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.

A Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued if:

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

Pupils

School staff frequently talk with pupils about how important it is to come to school regularly. We are sensitive to the fact that most pupils at the school rely on school transport and, therefore, rely on adults for regular attendance and time keeping.

J. Wt 5.12.23

Recording Attendance

The keeping of accurate attendance registers is an important part of school routine, as the registers are legal documents. The school complies with the regulations set out in The Education (Pupils Registrations) 1995 and with the guidance provided by the LA on the completion of registers. In September 2011 Welsh Government introduced new school attendance registration codes in all maintained schools in Wales.

Two members of staff take the register for the entire school as pupils arrive at school from 09:10. The parents/carers of pupils who are not in school are contacted by the Admin Support Officer (first day response). A record of these absences/first day response phone calls are kept in the 2nd school diary (kept in the school office). If the Admin Support Officer cannot contact parents/carers a member of the SLT may contact the parents/carers via text message.

Attendance figures are recorded electronically on a weekly basis. Governors receive regular updates on attendance throughout the year in the termly Headteacher's report.

The Headteacher meets with the school's attendance officer on a monthly basis and passes any attendance related concerns on to her. Where there are ongoing concerns the Attendance Officer either calls the parents/carers via telephone or visits the family home. If the Headteacher has an urgent attendance related concern he contacts the Attendance Officer immediately to request advice/support.

Education Welfare Service

When the school feels that, despite its best efforts to support the family, attendance is not improving, a referral may 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.

Staff from The Court School will liaise with the Education Welfare Service to provide the evidence required to prosecute parents who fail, without reasonable justification, to ensure their child attends school regularly, under sections 444(1) and 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996.

J. Wt S.12.23

Contact Details for School Attendance Officer...

Name – Sarah Kirk

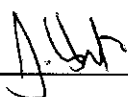
Work number - 02920873619

Email address – sarah.kirk3@cardiff.gov.uk

Room 422, County Hall, Atlantic Wharf, Cardiff, CF10 4UW

J. Kirk
S.12.23

Signature of Chair of Governing Body:



Date: 29/11/23

Policy to be updated every two years or sooner if required...