



Attendance Policy

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Role	Headteacher
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Welcome

Ysgol Y Rhos is an independent day school. It is part of the Unique Care Limited company, which has five pupils' homes locally. The school is registered with the Welsh Assembly Government for pupils with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties. Many of our pupils have a range of complex needs and benefit from a small environment with a bespoke curriculum. We are registered for 24 pupils, aged between 8 and 16 years.

Contact details for the school are;

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Headteacher – Sam Thomas	headteacher@we-are-unique.care	01352 770100

Introduction

At Ysgol Y Rhos we are committed to meet our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence.
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Acting early to address patterns of absence and supporting pupils who in previous placements have either not attended school or have had persistent absence and were low attenders.
- We work closely with parents and carers to support pupils back into education and to attain attendance figures above the National AP statistics.
- Ensure that every child can exercise their right to access education in link with Article 28 of the UNCRC by promoting good attendance.

We will also support parents/carers to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

We will provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcomed and are committed to the fundamental principle that early intervention and partnership working is crucial in ensuring the attendance, protection and wellbeing of all children.

The school will follow the All Wales Child Safeguarding procedures and local protocols in relation to specific and identifiable wellbeing issues that prevent a child from accessing education, or where there are safeguarding concerns.

For a pupil to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all pupils. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

Legislation and Guidance

This Attendance Policy draws from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Education (Student Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010
- Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024

United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

Our Attendance Policy also been written with due regard for the UNCRC demonstrating our commitment to the promotion and protection of children's rights ensuring that the voice, welfare and dignity of all our pupils is paramount to the work that we do. Our Attendance Policy encompasses the UNCRC in the following ways.

Article	Theme	Links
Article 2	Non-discrimination	Support to maintain good attendance at Ysgol Y Rhos is equitable and tailored to individual needs.
Article 3	Best interests of the child	Decision made around a pupils attendance will always prioritise the child's welfare, their safety and this emotional and mental well-being.
Article 6	Right to life, survival and development	Regular and safe attendance is important because it supports at child's education, social development and their emotional well-being.
Article 12	Right to be heard and taken seriously	The voice of pupils at Ysgol Y Rhos is important and every pupils will be given the opportunity to express why they do not feel able to attend, their barriers to attendance, what support could be put in place to make this easier.
Article 13	Freedom of expression	Pupils at Ysgol Y Rhos will be encourage to express any concerns they have that may be presenting as a barrier towards good attendance such as the school environment, bullying or mental health.
Article 19	Protection from all forms of harm	Poor attendance can be linked to a variety of safeguarding factors. Staff at Ysgol Y Rhos are aware of this within their practice.
Article 23	Rights of children with disabilities	Pupils with ALN or disabilities may face additional barriers to attendance.
Article 24	Right to health and health services	Our attendance policy will no punish pupils experiencing health difficulties and will support pupils to be able to access the health support they need.
Article 28	Right to education	Regular attendance will support every child's right to an education.
Article 29	Aims of education	Good attendance at Ysgol Y Rhos will help every pupils to develop their personality, talents and abilities, mental and emotional wellbeing and their respect for others.
Article 30	Minority culture, language and identity	Attendance support offered at Ysgol Y Rhos is culturally sensitive and recognises, Welsh language rights, cultural obligations, identity considerations and barriers affecting ethnic minority families or newcomers.
Article 31	Right to rest, leisure and play	The attendance policy at Ysgol Y Rhos is both balanced and proportionate. The policy avoids punitive measures which would overlooks a pupils anxiety, trauma, social needs and well-being factors.

Article 32	Protection for Child labour	Our attendance policy will not allow children to be kept off school to work or provide care and will challenge families wherever this takes place.
Article 34, 35, 36	Protection from sexual exploitation, abduction and all exploitation.	Our attendance policy recognises that unexplained or persistent non-attendance can be a warning sign of exploitation. Our attendance procedures are directly links to our Safeguarding procedures.
Article 39	Recovery from trauma	Our attendance policy recognises the children who have experienced trauma or instability often struggle with their attendance. At Ysgol Y Rhos we aim to support pupils around this by deploying trauma-informed approaches, nurture provisions and step-by-step reintegration.
Article 42	Awareness of rights	All pupils at Ysgol Y Rhos will understand their right to access education and support. At the school we aim to teach pupils, why attendance matters, how they can seek help and their rights to be safe, heard and supported.

Attendance

Attendance In order to enable each of our pupils to reach their full potential, we consistently stress the importance to pupils and their parents/carers of the need for strong and sustained attendance and punctuality. There is a clear link between poor attendance at school and lower academic achievement, 73% of students who have over 95% attendance achieve five or more GCSEs.

Many of our students have already had significant gaps in their education and achievements. One of the most effective ways that schools can improve achievement is by improving attendance. Our teachers cannot begin to raise the standards of young people who are not in school regularly.

Recognises the disrupted schooling histories that many of our pupils face and their prior negative experiences of school the benchmark for attendance at Ysgol Y Rhos is 90%. This figure is the minimum goal for each pupils average attendance by the end of their first year at the school.

School Attendance Pledge

- We expect students to attend school regularly and to arrive in a fit condition to learn.
- We will encourage good attendance and will investigate all absenteeism.
- School staff will set a good example in matters of attendance and punctuality and will promptly investigate all absenteeism and lateness.
- We will work closely with carers/care managers should attendance/punctuality give cause for concern.
- We will provide an individualised broad and balanced curriculum in order to meet the needs of each students.
- We will celebrate good attendance with pupils.

Pupil Attendance Pledge

- Pupils will ensure that they attend regularly and on time.
- Pupils will ensure that they attend school with the right equipment and in the right uniform for the day.

- If pupils are struggling with their attendance then they will speak with a trusted adult to allow school staff to support them to address this.
- When in school pupils will try their best to remain in the classroom and stay in school for the duration of the school day.

Parents/Carers Attendance Pledge

- Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly, punctually and are properly dressed and in a fit condition to learn.
- Parents/Carers are responsible for informing the school as early as possible of the reason for any absence (by email, phone call or personal visit).
- Parents/Carers are required to email the school to request an Authorised Absence for any reason for a planned absent, i.e. hospital appointments, social worker visits, family contacts etc. Authorisation of absence within term time are the exception and not the rule. Where possible please arrange all appointments at the end of the school day, or within the school holidays.
- Parents/Carers can expect the school to keep them fully informed of their young person's attendance, and ask them to take measures to improve it should it fall to a worrying level.

Roles and Responsibilities

Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis
- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting this at a board level to the Senior Management Team.
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reporting concerns about attendance to the Home Manager and Social Worker.
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents/carers to discuss attendance issues.

Class Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to Local Authorities.

Senior School Administrator

The senior school administrator is responsible for following up any cases of absenteeism with parents/carers and ensuring that attendance codes remain accurate and a narrative towards non-attendance is provided.

Recording Attendance

Attendance Register

We will keep an electronic attendance register on SLEUTH and record all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the afternoon session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made.
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment.

See appendix 1 for the Absence and attendance codes.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive at school by 09.15 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 09.15 and will be kept open until 09:30 the register for the second session will be taken at 13:00 and will be kept open until 13:30.

Unplanned Absence

The pupil's parent/carers must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 09:45 or as soon as practically possible.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carers to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied with the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

Planned Absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carers notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

Lateness and Punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.
- If there are ongoing punctuality issues then this will be addressed via the Multi-Disciplinary Team, daily with the home manager and social worker informed.

Following up Absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by sending an attendance letter to arrange a meeting with the home manager and social worker.
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not.
- Identify the correct attendance code to use.

Reporting to Parents/carers

The pupil's attendance will be recorded in the end of term reports to parents/carers & social workers. Pupils with 100% attendance will also be given an attendance certificate at the end of each week to take home.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Approval of Term-time Absence

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider it to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' are events or problems which you did not expect, and which stop you being able to perform to the best of your abilities in your studies. For example, bereavement, unexpected personal or family problems or illness might be considered as an exceptional circumstance.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances, and relevant context behind the request. The school also

recognises that many of our pupils are children who are looked after so there may be additional acceptable reasons for an authorised absence such as a pre-arranged family contact.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments.
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents/carers' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- Wellbeing or emotional support and intervention.
- Study leave.

Reducing Persistent Absence

To reduce persistent absences, the headteacher will arrange meetings with the home manager and social worker. Attendance letters may be issued stating that the pupils' attendance will be closely monitored.

Legal Sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent/carer must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by the Headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may consider:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

Strategies for Promoting Attendance

- Apply rewards and sanctions consistently.
- Follow up on absence and lateness with pupils to identify barriers and reasons for absence.
- Contact parents and carers regarding absence and punctuality.
- Review form or tutor group attendance weekly to share data, identify issues, intervene early and help set targets.
- Create reintegration and attendance plans to support increased attendance.

Attendance Monitoring

The Headteacher at our Ysgol Y Rhos monitors pupil absences on a daily, weekly, and half termly basis.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health.

If a pupil's absence goes above 6 unauthorised (3 days)/ or drops below 90% the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this.

If a pupil's absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/carer and it triggers 10 unauthorised absences, we will have the option to submit a penalty notice referral to the local authority. The local authority will then send a letter to the parent/carer that their child will be monitored for 15 school days and if they are any further unauthorised days within this period a penalty notice fine can be issued to the parent/carer.

The school collects and stores attendance data for the following purposes:

- Track the attendance of individual pupils.
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern.
- Monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support.

This policy is reviewed every 3 years as a minimum. However, where there are changes to legislation/guidance or in response to recommendation from any significant incident, review of the policy will take place immediately.

Policy Created By	Sam Thomas	19/11/2025
Policy Approved By	Catrin Jones	24/11/2025

Appendix 1

Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the gov.wales guidance on school absence and attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made

H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma, and Traveler absence	Pupil from a Traveler community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day