



Policy Area:	Attendance		
Date:	September 2016	Policy code:	A7
Last reviewed:	January 2023	Reviewed by:	Abigail Eynon
Next review:	January 2024	<i>(For all review dates see end of document)</i>	

Mission statement

Cardiff Montessori School is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all. This policy applies to children who are compulsory school age. However, its principles guide our view on attendance for children aged 2-4 years.

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

The school will follow the All Wales Child Protection procedures and local protocols in relation to specific and identifiable welfare issues that prevent a child or young pupil 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 therefore 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.

School attendance is subject to education law and guidance and this school attendance policy is written to reflect this legislation and the guidance produced by the Welsh Government (WG).

The legislation makes provision for a school day which is to be divided into two sessions with a lunch break in the middle and to be available for at least 190 days in any school year.

The school will review its systems for improving attendance on an annual basis to ensure that it is achieving its set goals and targets as identified by the Welsh Assembly Government All Wales Attendance Framework.

This policy will contain the procedures that the school will use to work towards meeting its attendance targets.

Promoting attendance

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents/carers and pupils.

We will ensure that our pupils are made aware of the importance of good attendance and how this will benefit them; we will use a variety of strategies to intervene at an early stage to encourage improved attendance of individual learners.

The parent code of conduct agreement will contain details of how we will work with parents and carers and our expectations of what they will need to do to ensure pupils' achieve good attendance.

Leave of absence/ holidays in term time

Leave of absence during term time is discouraged. Parents and carers do not have the automatic right and should not expect that the school will allow them to withdraw their child for holiday purposes during term times. Only in exceptional circumstances may the amount of leave granted exceed (in total) more than ten school days in any twelve-month period.

Parents will be reminded of the effect that absence can have on a pupil's potential achievement.

As a Montessori School, we also recognise the value of flexibility for families and that events and occasions sometimes occur during school time where attendance can be of great educational benefit.

The school will consider an application for leave of absence when parents and carers have applied in writing, in advance, for permission. Permission can only be authorised by the Headteacher, Esma Izzidien, Deputy head or the Head of Departments or such persons that the Headteacher delegates to.

Welsh Assembly Government guidance clearly states that the reference to **exceptional circumstances** means that the parent must make a strong case for taking the child away for more than two weeks a year.

The following factors will be considered when assessing requests for time off in term time – and no one factor should be regarded as conclusive:

- Time of year of proposed trip;
- Length and purpose of holiday;
- Duration of the holiday and its impact on continuity of learning;
- Circumstances of the family and the wishes of the parents;
- The overall attendance pattern of the child, including any sickness absence;
- Leave of absence for more than two weeks will be seen as exceptional. We will carefully explore with the parents why such leave of absence is necessary.

Where holiday absences are sanctioned, they will be counted as **authorised absence**.

Where parents and carers fail to abide by the agreement reached with the school and keep a child away from school, in excess of the period agreed or where parents fail to apply for permission, the extra time taken will be treated as an **unauthorised absence**.

School procedures

Any pupil who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period will have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity (attendance out of school). Permission can only be authorised by the Headteacher, Esma Izzidien, Deputy head or the Head of Departments or such persons that the Headteacher delegates to.

If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence will be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised and unexplained (code N) and promptly followed up by the school, as part of its early intervention and safeguarding strategies. The coding for any absences will be in accordance with the

guidance provided in Appendix 1.

Lateness

Morning registration will take place at the start of school at

8:30 am in the Toddler Community

8:45 am in the Children's House

9:00 am in the Elementary

The registers will remain open for a maximum of 30 minutes, in accordance with Welsh Government guidance. Any pupil **arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence** (code 'UA' on main register and code 'U; on the absence register) unless there is an acceptable explanation. In cases for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered on the registers. Pupils **arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be coded as present late (PL)**

Afternoon registration will be at 1:30pm and any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence (code UA on main register and then U on absence register) unless there is an acceptable explanation.

Pupils arriving after the start of afternoon registration period will be coded as present late.

Absence for trivial medical reasons

Pupils are not expected to attend school when they are not well enough to do so, whether as a result of short term, long term or recurring illnesses.

Cardiff Montessori have the right to consider whether to accept the parent / carers position with regard to medical absence. If the school has concerns that the illness may not either be genuine or warrant the amount of absence accruing, the school may ask the parent to substantiate the illness by asking to see additional evidence such as an appointment card. Where possible, routine medical appointments such as doctor, dentist, optician appointments, should take place outside of school hours. Although the school recognises that this may not always be possible

Recurring incidences of absences where illness is given as a reason may need to be investigated further.

ATTENDANCE ACTION PLAN

First day absence

School will endeavour to ascertain the specific reason for non-attendance as soon as possible on the first day of absence, after both morning and afternoon registration. This may include a telephone call or texting service. Once the specific information is received, the register will be amended to reflect the appropriate absence code (Appendix 1).

Priority will be given to children who are deemed to be particularly vulnerable, eg. those known to child protection/safeguarding services or are looked after (LAC).

The locality children services team will be notified of unexplained absences of more than two days of a pupil on the child protection register, or one day following the week-end.

Third day absence

On the third day of absence and if school has not received an adequate explanation, a letter will be sent to the parent or carer requesting this information. The absences will remain unauthorised, until an adequate explanation is received.

Absence notes

Notes received from parents explaining absence will be kept for an academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil, that may require further investigation, then the notes should be retained in line with education retention schedule. Parents and carers are aware that only the Headteacher or their representative (usually the Deputy head or Head of Department) can authorise an absence and that further information such as a letter from a GP or Consultant may be required to support reasons given for absence.

Continuing and frequent absence

Within the school it is the responsibility of the class teacher to be aware of and bring attention to the Attendance Officer, any emerging attendance concerns.

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem as soon as possible, before seeking advice from Education Welfare Service (EWS) and making referral to social services with safeguarding concerns. This may involve inviting the parents or carers and the pupil into school for a meeting.

For unauthorised absences of 10 sessions or more in a school term (there are two sessions in a day, morning and afternoon), the school will investigate further and considers this a serious break in the parent / school partnership and a potential safeguarding issue.

Persistent absence

Welsh Government defines persistent absence as pupils whose absence level is more than 20% (80% attendance). These pupils will be subject to an action plan to support their return to full attendance.

The action plan will include engagement with relevant agencies that can support the pupil's attendance. This may incur additional costs.

Absence related to discrimination

A pupil's absence from school may be due to bullying, which can take many forms and can be direct (either physical or verbal) or indirect, for example, ignoring a pupil or not talking to them. Some of this bullying may be discriminatory.

As a school, we are required to monitor and report on discriminatory incidents each term and if the reason for a pupil's absence is related to any of the above issues, must take action to deal with the situation.

A welcome back

The school will welcome back all pupils on return from an absence. This will include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other pupils.

Categorisation of absence

All pupils who are on role but not present in the school must be recorded within one of these categories. They will be Marked on the main register as one of these codes if not Present (P) or Present Late (PL). Further sub-categorization of absence is documented in the absence and lateness register (see appendix 1)

- Authorised Absence (AA)
- Unauthorised Absence (UA)
- Approved Educational Activity (EA)
- Exceptional circumstance (EC) - such as school closure due to snow.

Unauthorised absence

This is for those pupils where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason and where the school has not be informed.

Authorised absence

This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid such as illness.

Approved educational activity

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off the school site but with the approval of the school. (You must seek approval from the school in writing to withdraw your child for an educational activity. You must give 2 weeks notice whenever possible). This would include:

- Field trips and educational visits
- Sporting activities
- Link courses or approved education at another venue
- Education arranged by the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)

The school or provision where the child is expected to attend is responsible for accurately recording the pupil's attendance and chasing up non-attendance.

School will liaise with the other education provider on a daily basis in order to identify pupils who are absent for the session and mark the register accordingly.

Retention of records

Hard copies of registers will be kept as back up to any electronic systems.

Attendance regulations stipulate that attendance **records should be retained for at least three years**; however, it is good practice to extend this period in line with the education record retention schedule.

Register checks

Registers may be formally checked by Welsh Government to ensure there is compliance with legislation. It should be noted that registers are legal documents and it is an offence not to maintain accurate records.

Attendance targets

Each year the school director and SLT, will set attendance targets.

A system for analysing performance towards the targets will be established and the Director along with the Head of Departments and Administrator will be responsible for overseeing this work.

Our school targets are:

2016/2017: 95%

2017/2018: 95%

2018/2019: 95%

2019/2020: 95%

2020/2021- No applicable due to pandemic

2021/2022- 90% with awareness this may remain affected due to the pandemic.

2022/2023: 90% with awareness this may remain affected due to the pandemic.

Review of policy dates:

Date of review	Reviewed by	Notes
09/2017	Esma Izzidien	
09/2018	Esma Izzidien	
12/2018	Esma Izzidien	
01/2019	Esma Izzidien	
02/2020	Esma Izzidien	
01/2021	Esma Izzidien	
01/2022	Esma Izzidien	
January 2023	Abigail Eynon	

Appendix 1

The registration system

CMS Codes all children on the register as P (present), AA (Authorised absence, UA (Unauthorised absence), EA (Educational activity), EC (Exceptional circumstances) or PL (Present Late). CMS then holds an absence & lateness register where the following national codes will be used to record attendance information in greater details:

CODE	Meaning
/	Present am before 9:15
\	Present pm before 12:15
L	Arrived Late (after 9:15am but before 9:30 or after 12:15pm but before 12:30)
U	Arrived in school after registration closed- this is an absence code
B	Off site education
D	Dual registered
J	Interview at another educational establishment
P	Authorised sporting activity
V	Educational visit or trip
C	Authorised absence
E	Excluded and no alternative provision
H	Holiday authorised by school
I	Illness (note it covid its I01 is not covid and I02 if it is covid)
M	Medical or dental appointments
R	Religious observance
T	Gypsy / traveller
G	Holiday not authorised
N	Reason for absence not yet provided
O	Absent from school with authorisation
X	Non-compulsory school age so not in school
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstance- eg snow closure
X01	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to be in school
X02	Pupil self-isolating with covid symptoms (no test result yet)
X05	Pupil required to self isolate as part of travel quarantine
X06	Pupil who is clinically extremely vulnerableif shielding advised
X07	Pupil advised not to attend school as advised by government
X08	Pupil not attending school in line with public health outbreak management
X09	Pupil or student required to self-isolate as a close contact of confirmed case
I01	Absent due to Non-covid related illness
I02	Absent due to confirmed Covid19

Further expansion of codes:

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorized absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Un-timetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

Legislation and guidance

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable:

- (a) to his age, ability and aptitude and
- (b) to any special needs he may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent means natural parents and includes any person who has parental responsibility or has day to day care of the child.

Section 444 1, 1(a) and (ZA) contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

The Equalities Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011

Registers and admission.

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010
- The Education (School Day and School Year) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2006

Attendance targets

- The Education (School Performance and Unauthorised Absence Targets) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2006.

Guidance documents relating to attendance

- All Wales Child Protection Procedures
- Keeping Learners safe
- The All Wales Attendance Framework
- The National Assembly for Wales Circular 47/2006 Inclusion and Pupil Support.
- South East Wales Consortium's Attendance Strategy
- Local Code of Conduct relating to the Fixed Penalty Notice scheme
- Welsh Government Guidance on penalty notices for regular non-attendance at school
- Welsh Government Guidance on attendance codes