

# Attendance and Punctuality Policy

## 1. Introduction

This policy is to enable Cardiff Steiner School to work positively and clearly with parents in matters relating to attendance and punctuality. The School believes that good and punctual attendance at school is important to support the children's education and fulfil the legal responsibilities lying with parents and the School. National guidelines suggest that every child of compulsory school age should have a minimum attendance of 97%, including leeway for absence due to illness; attendance of 85% is considered persistent absence. **Sections 1 to 9 of this policy apply to children of compulsory school age in the Classes. Sections 1 to 10 apply to children of compulsory school age in Kindergarten. Section 11 applies to attendance in Kindergarten under compulsory school age.**

Compulsory school age is defined as from the term after a child's fifth birthday.

Cardiff Steiner School consider full-time schooling to be:

- five mornings a week in Kindergarten
- five mornings and two afternoons, rising to five full days during Class 1
- five full days from Class 2 up.

Although we expect some variation in attendance norms in the two phases of the School-Kindergarten and Classes - and acknowledge illness as part of the healthy experience of childhood, we seek to promote a culture of well-being and robust health that supports excellent attendance and learning.

The aim of the attendance policy is to ensure that:

- Absence for reasons other than illness or other authorised circumstances is minimised.
- Cardiff Steiner School's attendance profile is in line with schools considered to be good.
- Pupils, parents/ carers, and staff know what is expected and what their responsibilities are in relation to attendance.
- Attendance of all pupils is accurately monitored.
- Teachers know where all pupils are at all times during school hours.
- Parents know where the children are when they should be in school.

- A pupil's education is not interrupted by unnecessarily missing school.
- There is clear guidance on dealing with truancy.
- Pupils who are persistently absent or are reluctant to go to school are supported to overcome the barriers to good attendance.

The School recognises the clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding children. The school will notify Children's Services if a student on the Child Protection register has an unexplained absence of more than two days' duration from school (or more than 1 day following a weekend).

There are clearly identified roles and responsibilities in working to achieve the above aims. The sections below cover the responsibilities of:

- Staff
- Pupils
- Parent(s)/carer(s)
- Teachers
- School Administration

## **2. Staff Responsibilities (General)**

The safety of the pupils at school depends on good supervision and communication, and staff must know where pupils are at all times. A suspected case of a missing child (non-appearance at a lesson or non-return from an out of classroom activity /trip) should be reported to the School Administrator immediately so that suitable action can be taken for the child's safety and welfare.

## **3. Pupils Responsibilities Classes 1 to 10**

**(Start time for Kindergarten children of compulsory School age is 9.00)**

Pupils are expected to:

- Arrive at School on time at 8.50 ready and suitably equipped for the start of the School day.
- If arriving between 8.50 and 9.00 use the Visitors Entrance (by the Office).
- If arriving after 9.00 sign the Late Book in the School Office. Parents of children in Classes 1 to 5 should sign the Late Book for their child. Children in Classes 6 up can sign the Late Book themselves.
- Sign out at the School Office on leaving if authorised to leave before the end of the School day. Parents of children in Classes 1 to 5 should sign out for their child. Children in Classes 6 up can sign out themselves. This must be with a member of Administration.
- Arrive in the classroom on time and suitably equipped for each lesson.

#### **4. Parent(s) /Carer(s) Responsibilities of children of compulsory school age in Kindergarten to Class 10**

Parent(s)/carer(s) have a legal obligation to ensure that their children attend school.

Parent(s)/carer(s) are asked to understand the disruption caused to the Class and other children's learning when children arrive late.

Parent(s)/carer(s) are expected to:

- Ensure that their child arrives on time at school. This is by 9.00am for Kindergarten children and 8.50am for Class children. Class children arriving after 8.50 but before 9.00 can come in through the Visitors Entrance (by the Office). If Class 1 to 5 children arrive after 9.00am parents should accompany their child to the School Office where they will be asked to state the reason for lateness and sign the Late Book. For children in Class 6 and above they will sign the Late Book and state the reason for lateness.
- Inform the School of any absence and the reason for absence and to update the School on further absence for the same reason. This should be in the form of an e mail to [ask@cardiffsteiner.org.uk](mailto:ask@cardiffsteiner.org.uk) or a text to 07969 140 390 by 9.00am on the first morning of absence. Failing this, a phone call to the School Office before 9.30am. This should be supported by a letter/signed note from parent(s)/carer(s) on the child's return to school.
- Make sure the School always has their up to date emergency contact details.
- Ask for permission for an absence, in advance where possible, by writing to the Kindergarten or Class Teacher (see below).
- Sign the pupil out in the Office if their child must leave before the end of the School day. This must be with a member of Administration.
- Discuss with the Class Teacher as soon as possible if a child becomes unwilling to attend School.

Requests for absence must be made to the Class Teacher in writing. The authorising of a request takes into account the pupil's attendance record. Permission may be granted for the following:

- Medical and family bereavement
- Educational activity elsewhere
- Experiences that may be considered as significantly contributing to the education of the pupil (this can include exchanges or visits to foreign schools)
- Exceptional circumstances

Where an absence of more than 10 days has been authorised, it is the parent's responsibility to make arrangements for their child's education during absence. Parents will be expected to get

guidance from the Class Teacher, with an understanding that it is never possible to replace the learning and experience of the education in the class, nor to give parents a learning pack.

Parents should not arrange holidays in term time. This disrupts the benefits for the child of continuity of integrated learning that is a key feature of the Steiner curriculum. The School will only authorise holidays in term time in very rare circumstances, and these will normally be considered as unauthorised absences.

## 5. The Responsibility of Teachers

The responsibility of teachers is to **record attendance** with reference to the new attendance codes for schools in Wales (see Appendix 3). **It is a legal requirement for the School to maintain an accurate daily register of attendance.** Class teachers and Kindergarten teachers and After School care staff are responsible for the register of attendance at the beginning of each school day and at the start of afternoon lessons and After School care sessions.

### The register

The School register is a legal document. Pupils not present at registration are marked as either authorised absence or unauthorised absence – see below.

#### Authorised absences include:

- School closed to all pupils
- Illness (call or letter received from parent(s)/carer(s))
- Absence for medical appointments etc.
- Educational visit or trip
- Work experience
- Interview
- Approved sporting activity
- Study leave
- Religious observance
- Excluded (advance notice given by school)
- Exceptional circumstances

#### Unauthorised absences include:

- Late - after Registration closes (9.30am)
- Family holiday - not agreed
- Reason for absence unknown at time of registration OR no adequate reason given by parent

In cases of sickness arising during the day, the School will contact parents to arrange the most suitable care possible for the child. This will include the parent collecting the child whenever possible. In this case the afternoon register will be marked as an authorised absence.

**The Class Teacher or designated teacher taking the register is responsible for:**

- Ensuring that the register is completed by 9.30am for morning registration and by 2.10pm for afternoon registration so that suitable action can be taken in case of a child's whereabouts being unclear. The pupil's parent(s)/carer(s) will be contacted by the School Administrator concerning any unauthorised / unexplained absence as soon as possible after 9.30 am on the first day of absence.
- Collecting the notes/letters from parents concerning illness and other absence (from their pigeonholes), and keeping with the register all 'notes' from parent(s)/carer(s) re absence.
- Making sure the register is up-to-date and properly filled in.
- Reporting poor attendance or persistent absence to the Administrator.
- Ensuring that registers are taken to the designated point during emergency evacuation of the School, when they are in the possession of the teachers (generally 9.00 to 9.30am and 2.00 to 2.10pm)

## **6. School Administrator's Responsibility**

The responsibility of the School Administrator:

- Provide attendance reports for the School Management Team to assist in the monitoring and analysis of attendance data.
- Note any information received from parent(s)/carer(s) about absences (as well as put a note of such messages in the appropriate teacher's pigeonhole).
- Ring parent(s)/carer(s) of absent pupils who have not already provided information by 9.30am (this includes using 'emergency only' phone numbers if necessary). This applies also to the afternoon register if there is an unexplained absence.
- Implement a 'lost child' procedure if necessary (see Lost Child Policy).

## **7. Procedure for follow-up of an absence (Classes 1- 10)**

- Attendance is a regular feature in reports to parents.
- Class Teachers must make every effort to engage in positive and regular communication with the parent(s)/carer(s) of any pupil where there are concerns about attendance (e.g. attendance drops below 92%).

- Class Teachers must alert the School Administrator where there is a serious concern about attendance (e.g. pupils approaching 85% attendance).
- A persistent absence due to illnesses, such as measles, chicken pox, flu etc., and long absences due to genuine sickness, will be noted in the end of year report, as the education of the child will still be affected. If there are persistent health problems the teacher will call a meeting with the parent(s)/carer(s) to see how to meet/support the child's educational needs in spite of their poor health/disability.
- The pupil's parent(s)/carer(s) will be notified of falling (and insufficient) attendance and may be asked to attend a meeting with the Class Teacher and/or member of the School Management Team.
- The parent(s)/carer(s) will be reminded of their legal obligation to ensure that their child attends school and informed that poor attendance means that the School may be unable to meet the pupil's needs adequately or to provide effective education.
- If there is no satisfactory improvement in attendance after this process, the parent(s)/carer(s) will be informed that further absences will only be authorised if accompanied by a doctor's note. Unauthorised absences will then be monitored.
- If the child is persistently absent as a result of medical problems, the School will offer support to look at how best to help the pupil and minimise the disruptive effect on his/her education. If appropriate, and in consultation with the family, the support of suitable professionals /professional services for the family may be called upon.
- If parent(s)/carer(s) find that their child is reluctant to attend School, reasons will be investigated and the Class Teacher (with appropriate colleague) should attempt to meet with the family to discuss possible reasons and solutions and what support can be given to the child to access a suitably effective education. The Class Teacher will continue to monitor attendance, and if there is no improvement the Class Teacher will consider and take further action, including working with external agencies.
- Where attendance is below **85%** the School Administrator will write to the parent(s)/carer(s) making it clear that it cannot provide the pupil with effective education under these conditions.

Please see attached flowchart in Appendices

## **8. Unauthorised Absences**

If the child has been absent (non-medical) with the parent(s)/carer(s)'s knowledge, a letter to explain the absence should be sent to the School Administrator, or will be requested. The School will judge, according to the circumstance when they receive the note/letter, whether this should be registered as authorised or not.

If a child is absent for any part of the School day without any information from their parent(s)/carer(s), this will be registered as an 'unexplained absence' and the parent(s)/carer(s) of the child will be contacted as soon as the School becomes aware of this. Unexplained absences will be recorded as 'unauthorised' if no satisfactory explanation is subsequently received.

## **9. Truancy**

If a pupil is suspected of being absent due to truancy the following procedures will be followed:

- Administration will contact the parent(s)/carer(s) to confirm whether they know the whereabouts of the pupil. It is the parents' duty to ensure that the pupil is brought to school once located.
- If the pupil fails to attend or arrives in School after registration is closed the absence will be recorded as an 'unauthorised absence'.
- If the parent does not know the whereabouts of the child, the School will advise the parent(s)/carer(s) to contact South Wales Police. In the interests of safeguarding, the School reserves the right to report any case of truancy to the police.
- If the School is aware of the potential whereabouts of the child (e.g. child reported as seen walking in the park) a member of staff may be mandated by the School Management Team to collect the child on the parents' behalf and bring him/her in to School.
- Following any confirmed case of truancy
  - The parent(s)/carer(s) will be required to attend a meeting with their Class/Kindergarten Teacher and/or member of School Management Team to discuss the circumstances of the truancy. This meeting will be convened as soon as possible (within one week of the absence).
  - The Class Teacher and a colleague will meet with the pupil to discuss their absence - this will usually take place on the day of return to school. The pupil will also be required to be available for the follow-up meeting with their parents.
  - The pupil's attendance will be closely monitored, including attendance in lessons throughout the day.
  - Other sanctions and /or safeguarding measures may be implemented as appropriate to the individual child.
  - Any further truancy will lead to disciplinary action (as per the Behaviour Policy), and the pupil and parents will be re-interviewed to discuss and implement an Individual Behaviour Plan (IBP) with specific attendance targets.

Pupils who truant will be referred to the relevant teacher department for consideration (including Child Study) of how best to address the pupil's needs. Actions may include disciplinary and pastoral care measures, drawn up in consultation with relevant members of staff (SENCO, Class Teachers etc.)

The School reserves the right to permanently exclude repeat truants.

The School Management Team will consider referral (especially of vulnerable pupils) to external agencies before any decision on permanent exclusion is taken.

**The Education Welfare Service (EWS)** exists to support all schools and children with attendance problems. In some cases, for example where the parent fails to cooperate in ensuring their child's regular school attendance the EWS may decide on legal action in court. As a school we have obligations to fulfill under the Education Act of 1996. Parent(s)/carer(s) are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full-time education under section 7 of the Education Act. This can be affected by poor attendance at a full time educational provision.

## **10. Attendance in Kindergarten at compulsory school age (5 and 6)**

The law requires that all children of compulsory school age (the term after their 5th birthday) receive "an effective education, suitable to his or her age, ability and aptitude" and that all children of compulsory school age receive full-time education over 5 days per week during term time as well as that all children attend regularly. We consider full-time schooling at this age as 5 Kindergarten mornings a week. Therefore all above sections of this policy, including processes for notification for absence etc., apply to Kindergarten children of this age. Parents might also like to text their child's Kindergarten teacher to inform them of absence out of courtesy for the preparation the teacher will be undertaking for the day.

Most UK Steiner Schools require 5 and 6 year olds to attend 5 days a week. There are good reasons for this. Full time Kindergarten is a five day programme with each day of the week identified by a particular 'doing' activity such as baking, drawing, painting, a seasonal handicraft and cleaning. 5 and 6 year olds also do basic woodworking. Steiner education places a great emphasis on the experience and benefits of doing and making. Imagination and creativity are nurtured as children paint, draw, sew, felt, model, make dolls, simple toys and decorations and learn basic woodworking. Each of these activities develops specific skills that prepare them well for their future learning in Class 1. As they reach 5 and 6 children naturally start to become more involved in the 'doing' work of Kindergarten. This manifests itself in an

increasing mood of self-reliance and calm industriousness when the children are engaged. We can find that older children who attend 3 or 4 days are less drawn to this 'doing' work, keen as they understandably are, to use this time for play with their friends.

**For these reasons, we strongly recommend that 5 and 6 year olds in their last year of Kindergarten attend all 5 mornings a week.**

Some of our parents of 5 and 6 year olds are not able to attend 5 mornings, or choose not to. We are still able to consider a part-time Kindergarten option for this age group. However, as your child is of compulsory school age, it will require you to enter into a 'Flexi-schooling' arrangement with the School. Please see Appendix 4 for how to arrange this.

### **11. Attendance in Kindergarten under compulsory school age (3, 4 and younger 5 year olds)**

As a Steiner School we organise our Kindergarten days so that the very young child experiences a gradual transition from home to school. This allows the child to build resilience towards their later ability to learn in the formal settings and requirements of their Class years. To support this we recommend that children attend three mornings from age 3, four mornings from age 4 and five mornings from age 5.

From age 4 children are particularly imaginative and socially versatile. This is important for language (and, later, literacy) development. Their increased attendance is of great benefit to the whole group as they bring a beautiful balance and harmony, linking the older and younger children in play, caring for the little ones, and looking up to and imitating the older ones. This enables the children to further develop their co-operative and creative play.

Children's absences in Kindergarten impact on the individual child's learning and on the whole group. Kindergarten works most harmoniously and is of greatest benefit to all of the children when there is a good attendance and mixture of ages. As they play together each day the children get to know each other well and the group takes on a lovely, sociable, family feeling. There is a clear daily and weekly rhythm in Kindergarten with routines that build a firm footing for a child's Kindergarten education, as good habits are reinforced and independence and self-confidence grows more quickly.

However, we also support the healthy development of the child, and the very young child's right to rest and recuperate from physical and emotional strain. Therefore, in practice, the School does expect that the incidence of absence will be higher for children under compulsory school age than for older children.

Parents of children this age are asked to inform the School of any absence and reason for absence. This should be in the form of an e mail to [ask@cardiffsteiner.org.uk](mailto:ask@cardiffsteiner.org.uk) or a text to 07969 140 390 by 9.00am on the first morning of absence. Failing this, a phone call to the office before 9.30am. Parents must also update the School on continued absence for the same reason indicating when they might return to School. This should be supported by a letter/signed note on the child's return to School.

Parents might also like to text their child's Kindergarten teacher to inform them of absence out of courtesy for the preparation the teacher will be undertaking for the day.

## **Related Policies**

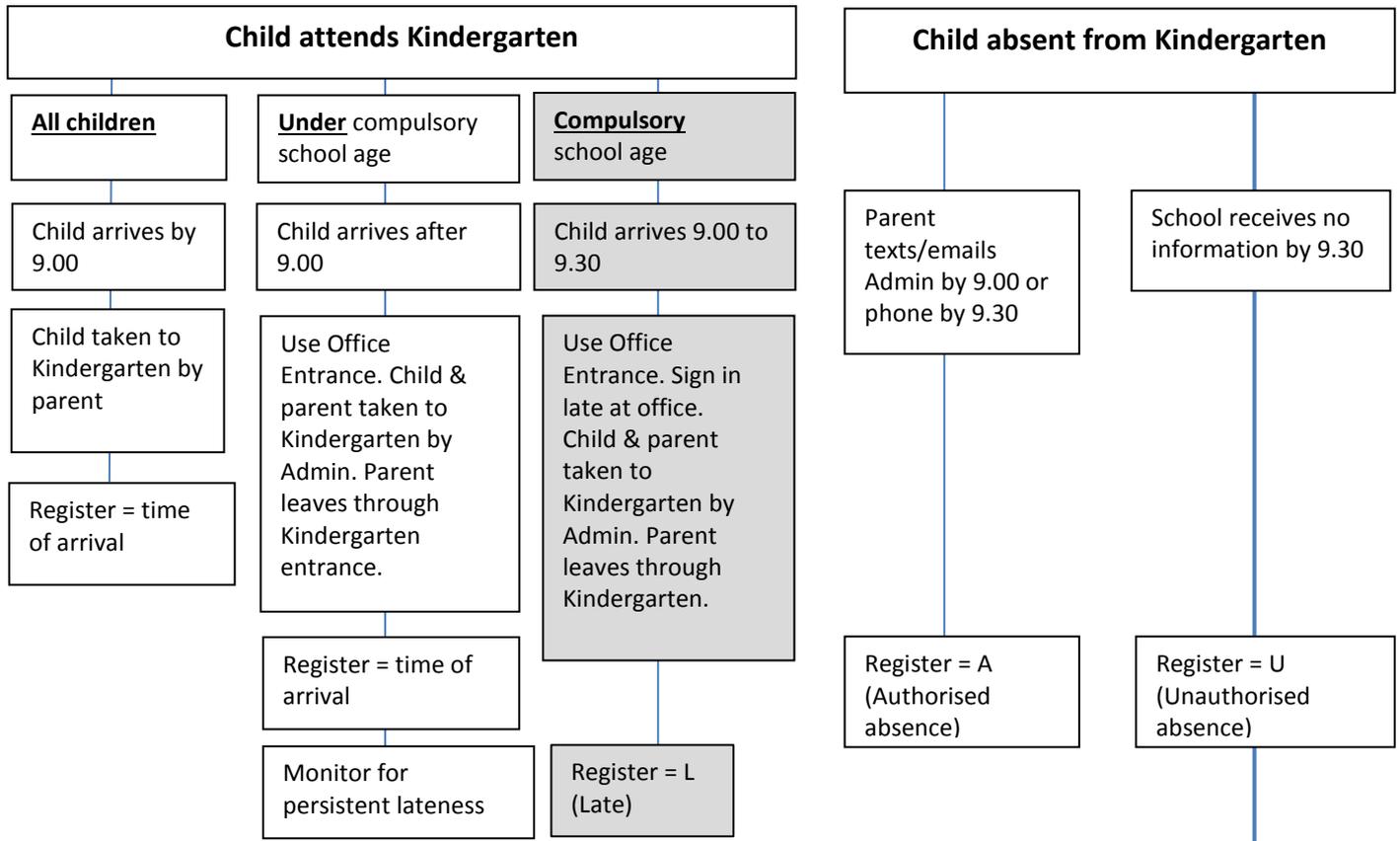
This Attendance and Punctuality Policy should be cross-referenced to related School policies including:

- Lost Child Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Home / School Agreement

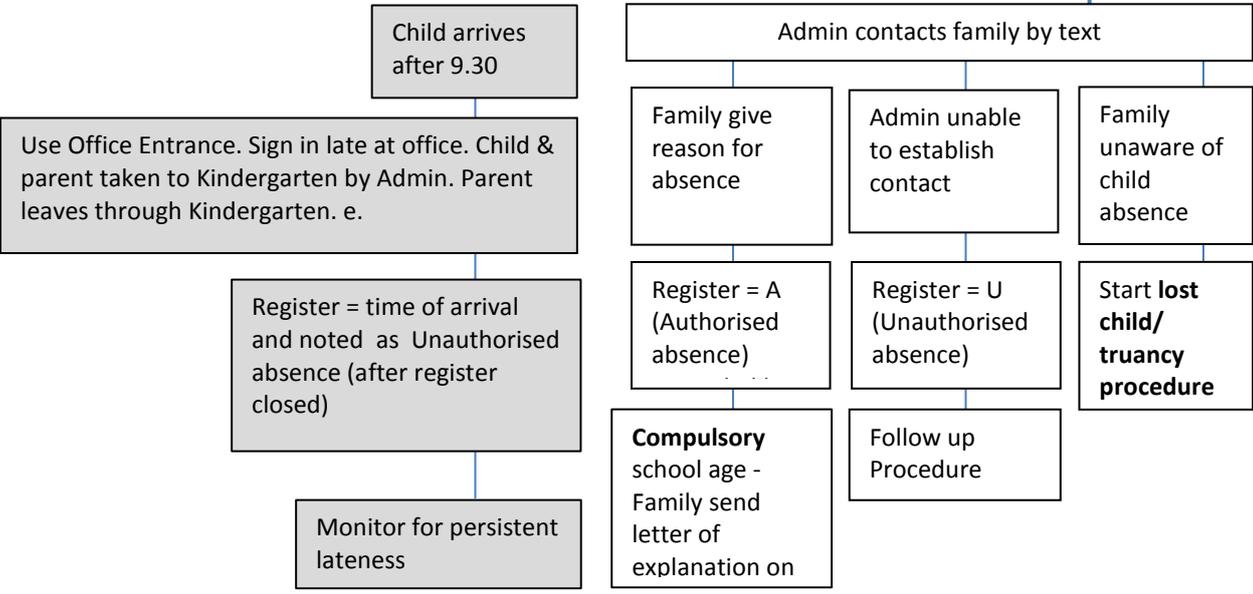
Policy first adopted December 2015  
To be reviewed December 2016

# Appendix 1

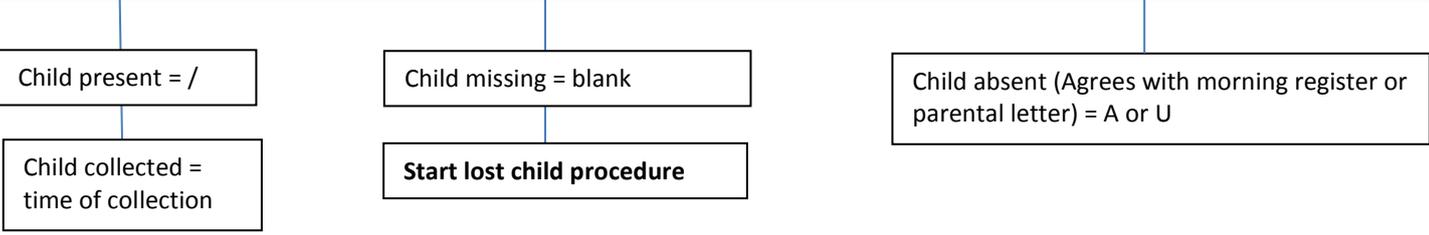
## Child attendance registration procedures Kindergarten)



**Registers held in Kindergarten rooms. KG Assistant collects a list of authorised absences from Office.**

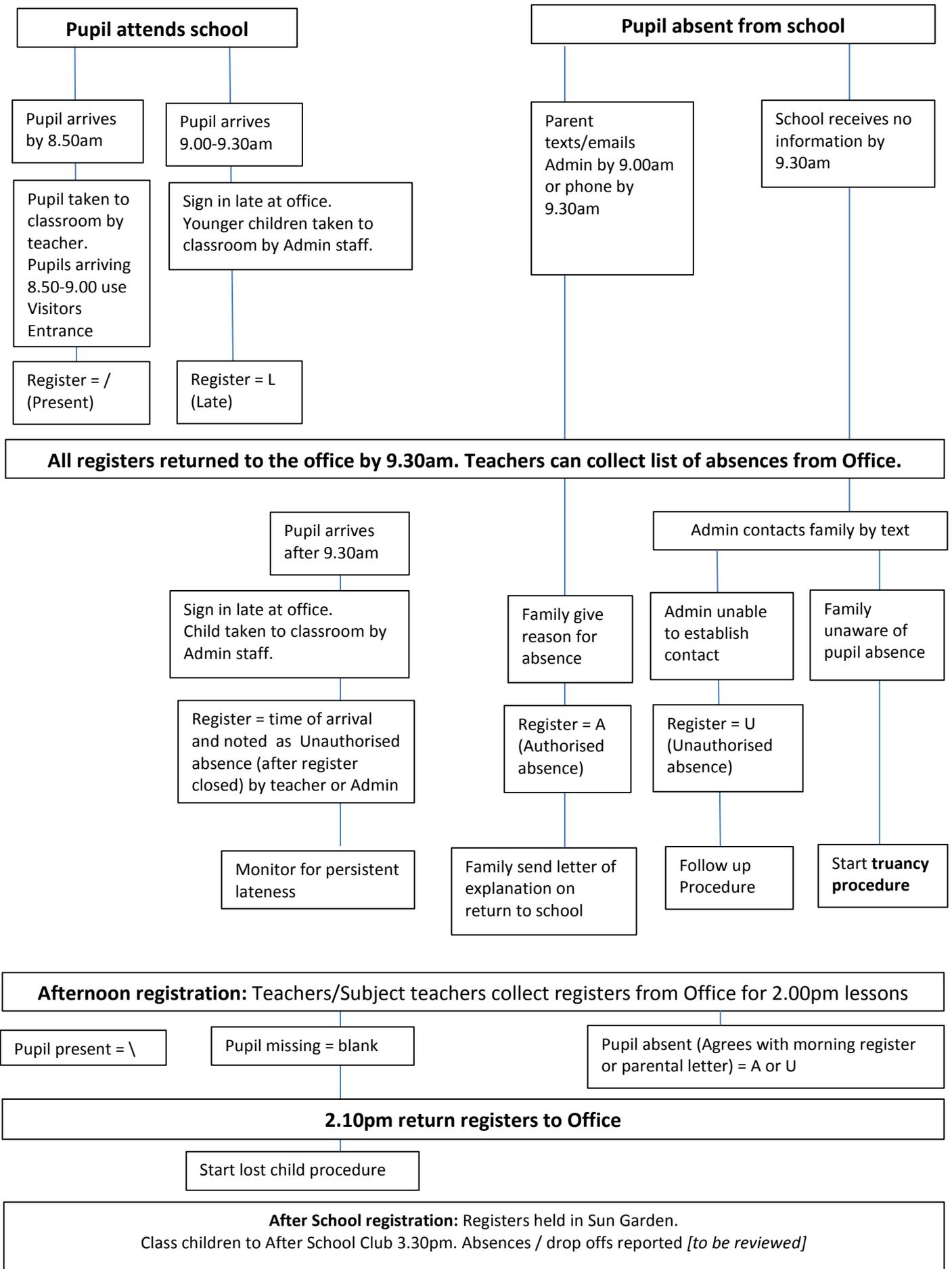


**Afternoon registration:** Afternoon Care and After School care registers held in Sun Garden. It is responsibility of the Kindergarten teachers to inform afternoon staff of any absences/drop ins.



## Appendix 2

### Pupil attendance registration procedures (Classes)



## Appendix 3

### Welsh Government Key to New Attendance Codes

^	Present at registration
L	Late but arrived before the register closed
B	Educated off-site (not dual registration)
D	Dual registered (i.e. present at another school or at a PRU)
P	Approved sporting activity
V	Educational visit or trip
J	Interview
W	Work experience (not work based training)
C	Other authorised circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)
F	Agreed extended family holiday
H	Agreed family holiday
I	Illness
M	Medical or dental appointment
S	Study leave
E	Excluded but no alternative provision made
R	Day set aside exclusively for religious observance
T	Traveller absence
N	No reason for the absence provided yet

#### **Other unauthorised (not covered by other codes or descriptions)**

G	Family holiday (not agreed or in excess of agreement)
U	Late and arrived after the register closed
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school - age pupils
Y	Partial and forced closure
Z	Pupil not on roll yet
#	School closed to all pupils

## Appendix 4

### **Policy for Flexi Schooling for children of compulsory school age in Kindergarten and Class 1**

'Flexi-schooling' or 'flexible school attendance' is an arrangement between the parent and a school where the child is registered at school and attends the school only part time; the rest of the time the child is home educated (on authorised absence from the school). This can be a long-term arrangement or a short-term measure for a particular reason.

It is an offence for a parent to fail to ensure that a child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school at which s/he is registered. Compulsory school age is the term after a child's fifth birthday. However Flexi schooling is legal providing the parent/s are able to obtain the agreement of 'any person authorised to do so by the governing body or proprietor of the school'. In considering this schools must consider whether the arrangement is in the best interests of the child's welfare with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are pupils at the school.

Cardiff Steiner School will consider proposals for children of compulsory school age in Kindergarten to attend on a Flexi-schooling basis. It may also consider Flexi schooling as a short-term arrangement for children moving from Kindergarten to Class 1. Flexi schooling is not an option besides this due to the requirements and learning approach of the Steiner curriculum. Cardiff Steiner School full-time schooling is:

- five mornings a week in Kindergarten
- five mornings and two afternoons, rising to five full days during Class 1
- five full days from Class 2 up.

To arrange Flexi schooling you should complete the proposal form below and set up a meeting with your Kindergarten or Class 1 Teacher. Whether or not it is allowed is at the teacher's discretion. The teacher will probably want to discuss the proposal with the teaching team and possibly the School Trustees.

## **Proposal for Flexi Schooling a child of compulsory school age in Kindergarten and Class 1**

**Please outline the days your child will be schooled at home, and the days he or she will formally attend School.**

**Please state why you consider Flexi schooling to be in the best interests of your child** (e.g. for a short period while a child recovers from an illness or from temporary difficulties; or an intention to home educate for more extended periods.)

**Who will oversee the non-school part of the education?**

**How will the arrangement work in practice** and specifically how you intend to ensure that your child will not miss out both educationally and socially.

**If your child has a statement of additional learning needs** please outline how you will ensure that your child's additional learning needs are fulfilled.

**What provisions will be made if their Flexi-school hours fall during assembly/ festivals/ school trip or school performance times?**

**Teachers Comments including whether permission is given for the proposed arrangement**

# Agreement for Provision of Education on a Flexi schooling basis

## For the teacher to complete:

Cardiff Steiner School is responsible for the education of..... on the days and times below:

.....  
.....

Length of time Flexi- schooling is agreed for.....

The educational provision will be suitable to .....’s age and ability.

Whilst ..... is on School premises, or the School is acting in loco parentis, the School will maintain primary responsibility for their safety and welfare.

The School and parent(s)/carer (s) will meet on .....for a review meeting to discuss the child’s progress and review the attendance agreement.

Name & signature of Teacher:

Date:

## For the parent(s)/ carer(s) to complete:

I/we are responsible for the education of the above named child on the days and times below:

.....  
.....

The educational provision will be suitable to .....’s age and ability.

During school hours timetabled for .....’s home-based education I/we confirm that I/we will maintain primary responsibility for safety and welfare. I/we understand that the School will maintain primary responsibility for their safety and welfare while they are on School premises or the School is acting in loco parentis.

I/we understand that the School can withdraw from this agreement at any time by giving reasonable notice in writing.

I/we understand that full fees are payable when my child is attending on a Flexi-schooling basis.\*

Name(s) & signature of parent(s)/carer(s)

Date:

-\*As the child is occupying a full School place, full fees are still applicable for children attending by Flexi-schooling agreement. As Kindergarten fees are based on the numbers of mornings attended children attending by Flexi-schooling agreement can pay only for the number of mornings the child attends the School.

-The School retains the right to withdraw this Flexi-schooling agreement at any time by giving reasonable notice in writing. For example if the School feels that any of the required conditions that under-pin the agreement are not being met at home.

-Attendance levels of children will be monitored and should attendance fall below 93% the Flexi schooling agreement will be reviewed.

-The School will monitor progress, attendance, behaviour and the effectiveness of education in line with the existing procedures for full time equivalent pupils.