

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Revised August 2025

Prepared in reference to:

- Welsh Government Guidance: Keeping Learners Safe and Belonging, engaging, participating (Attendance Guidance)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010
- The Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003
- Education Acts 1996 & 2002 (Pupil registration, attendance, and safeguarding duties)
- UKVI Student Sponsor Guidance (Sponsor Management System duties)

1. Introduction & Scope

Cardiff Steiner School believes that good and punctual attendance is essential to safeguard pupils and enable effective learning. We expect all pupils to maintain at least 95% attendance over the academic year, while aiming for 97% wherever possible. Attendance below 80% is considered a critical concern and will be referred to the Education Welfare Service (EWS) in line with Welsh Government expectations.

This policy applies to pupils of compulsory school age in Classes 1–13 and to Kindergarten pupils of compulsory school age (5 and 6). Section 11 outlines arrangements for attendance in Kindergarten under compulsory school age.

2. Legal & Policy Framework

- Education Act 2002 – duties on governing bodies and local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 – overarching safeguarding duties (Working Together to Safeguard People).
- Welsh Government statutory guidance: Keeping learners safe (current version, 2022).
- Wales Safeguarding Procedures (2019, living digital procedures maintained by Social Care Wales).

Links and references.

- Welsh Government – Keeping learners safe (statutory guidance, 2022):
<https://www.gov.wales/keeping-learners-safe>
- Wales Safeguarding Procedures (Social Care Wales, living digital procedures):
<https://safeguarding.wales/>
- Welsh Government – Safeguarding guidance collection (updated 2025):
<https://www.gov.wales/safeguarding-guidance>

3. Definitions & School Day

Compulsory school age: from the term after a child's fifth birthday.

Full-time schooling in Cardiff Steiner School is considered to be:

- Kindergarten: five mornings a week 9.00-1.00
- Lower School: Class 1 five mornings and two afternoons, rising to five full days by Class 4/5

4. Roles & Responsibilities

4.1 Pupils (Classes 1-13 and Kindergarten at compulsory school age)

- Arrive on time ready for learning: 8:50 for Classes; 9:00 for Kindergarten.
- If late after 9:00, sign the Late Book at the Office (Classes 1–5 with parent; 6+ may sign themselves).
- Sign out for authorised early departures via the Office (Classes 1–5 with parent; 6+ may sign themselves).

4.2 Parents / Carers

- Ensure arrival by 8:50 (Classes) / 9:00 (Kindergarten).
- Notify the School of absence by 9:00 by email to [parents@school.tld] (failing that, call by 9:30).
- Provide the full reason for absence and update daily for continued absence.
- Request exceptional absence in advance using the 'Request for Exceptional Absence' form (Appendix E).
- Sign pupils out at the Office for early departures.
- Speak to the Class Teacher promptly if your child is reluctant to attend or barriers arise.

4.3 Teachers

- Complete registers promptly at 9:00 and 14:00 (or session start) and return to Office immediately.
- Leave absent pupils blank in the register; Admin will code once reasons are confirmed.
- Communicate with parents as appropriate to your role in response to circumstances that call for this.

4.4 School Administrative Officer

- Contact parents by 9:30 where no absence information has been received.
- Issue the standardised daily absence email including the pupil's current attendance % (Appendix A).
- Update the attendance tracker daily.

4.5 School Administrative Manager

- Facilitate meetings with parents/teachers where attendance weakens (see Section 8).
- Prepare reports and analyse data for School Management Team and Trustees meetings.
- Review this policy at least biennially.

5. Recording Attendance & Registers

- Registers are legal documents and must be completed accurately.
- Morning registration: 9:00 (Kindergarten & Classes). Afternoon registration: 14:00.
- Late before register closes: code 'L'. Arrival after register closes: mark time of arrival (in late book) and record 'U' (unauthorised late) unless otherwise authorised by Admin.
- Admin will apply Welsh Government attendance codes once reasons are confirmed (Appendix C).

6. Notifying Absence

- Parents/carers must email [parents@cardiffsteiner.org.uk] by 9:00 on the first morning of absence (or call the Office by 9:30).
- Provide the explicit reason (e.g., nature of illness) and the expected date of return.
- Update the School daily during continued absence for the same reason.

- Medical, dental and other appointments should be arranged outside school hours where possible; provide evidence where requested.

7. Authorised vs Unauthorised Absence & Exceptional Circumstances

- Authorised: illness, medical/dental appointments, family bereavement, significant educational activity/visit, other exceptional circumstances approved by the Educational Coordinator.
- Unauthorised: holidays in term time (except in very rare circumstances), unexplained absences, late arrival after registers close without acceptable reason.
- Parents should not arrange holidays during term time; continuity of integrated learning is essential in the Steiner curriculum.

8. Monitoring, Thresholds & Support

The School monitors attendance continuously and responds proportionately. Improving attendance is always acknowledged and appreciated.

Attendance %	Status	School Response
99.5–98.5	Excellent	Acknowledge and appreciate continued commitment.
98–96.5	Good	Encouragement to maintain strong habits.
96–95.5	Good but weakening	Flagged for monitoring.
95	Borderline (minimum target)	Conversation with Class Teacher and ALNCO/DSP to identify barriers and offer support if absence continues.
94.5–93	Weakening	Monitoring continues; further absences may trigger a meeting to explore formal support.
92.5–91 by 8 school weeks in to the year	Of concern	Mandatory meeting to create an attendance plan with clear targets and timelines.
90–88	Persistent concern	Written communication; meeting may be arranged if attendance continues to fall.
87–85	Serious concern	Reminder of duty to consider referral to Education Welfare Service (EWS).
Below 85	Critical concern	Referral to EWS will be initiated if attendance does

		not improve. Below 80%: referral required.
Sponsored Student	Mandatory - If a sponsored student accumulates 10 consecutive working days of unauthorised (unexplained) absence without contact, the school will initiate safeguard contact procedures and escalate the matter to report the non-engagement to UKVI via the Sponsor Management System (SMS) within 10 working days. If a sponsored student is formally deregistered/withdrawn from the school roll ,the school will report the cessation of studies to UKVI via the Sponsor Management System (SMS) within 10 working days	

9. Truancy / Missing Child

- If a pupil's whereabouts are unknown at registration or during the day, initiate the missing child procedure and contact parents immediately.
- If parents are unaware of the absence and the child fails to attend, record as unauthorised and continue safeguarding checks.
- If parents cannot locate their child, advise contacting South Wales Police; the School may contact police where appropriate.
- Staff may be mandated by Management to collect a pupil where their location is known and it is safe to do so.
- Further truancy may lead to disciplinary measures and an Individual Behaviour Plan; repeat truancy may lead to permanent exclusion.
- Consider referral to external agencies before permanent exclusion, especially for vulnerable pupils.

10. Health-related Absence & ALN

- Where health (including anxiety-based school avoidance) affects attendance, the Class Teacher will consult the ALNCO and may involve the EWO and external services (e.g., CAMHS) with family consent.
- Jointly identify barriers (bullying, curriculum fit, relationships, domestic issues, financial hardship, etc.) and agree a support plan.

11. Kindergarten Attendance

Children of compulsory school age (the term after their 5th birthday) must attend five Kindergarten mornings per week. For under compulsory school age, the School requires a minimum of three mornings from age 3, and a minimum of four from age 4, to support healthy rhythm and group cohesion. We recognise the very young child's need for rest and recuperation; absence is expected to be higher than in Classes, but parents should still notify the School by 9:00 with reasons and updates.

12. Flexi-schooling (Kindergarten compulsory age and Class 1 only)

Flexi-schooling is a discretionary arrangement where a child on the School roll attends part-time and is home-educated for the remainder. It may be considered for children of compulsory school age in Kindergarten and, short-term, for Class 1 in cases of significant medical or social/emotional need. It is not generally available beyond this except in cases of significant medical or social/emotional need and where parents are actively working towards full attendance. Parents must submit a proposal (Appendix E) and meet with the Teacher. The School may withdraw the agreement with reasonable notice. Full fees normally apply as the place is held.

13. Data Protection & Record-keeping

- Attendance information is processed in line with data protection legislation and the School's privacy notices.
- Records of absence reasons, interventions and communications are retained in accordance with retention schedules.

Related Policies

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

- Positive Learning Policy
 - Child Protection Policy and Procedures
 - Parent Protocol
 - Admissions Policy
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Revision Date

This policy was last revised in August 2025.

Review date

This policy will be reviewed by August 2027 or earlier if guidance changes (e.g., updates to Wales Safeguarding Procedures / Keeping Learners Safe).

Endorsement

Full endorsement to this policy is given by:

Name: Kate Attfield

Position: Trustee for Safeguarding, Cardiff Steiner School

Signed:



Date: 23/08/2025

Appendix A – Standardised Daily Absence Email (Parent Communication)

(Child's name) is absent from school today this takes their current attendance to (current attendance figure). Please reply with the reason for the absence and when you expect them to return. If unwell, please describe the nature of the illness as best you can.

OR

Thank you for informing us that (Child's name) is absent from school today. This takes their current attendance to (current attendance figure).

Please remember you must notify the School by 9:30am for each day of absence (email parents@cardiffsteiner.org.uk) or call 02920 567986.

The current attendance category for your child is: (cut and paste as appropriate)

- 99.5–98.5%: Excellent – we appreciate your commitment to healthy attendance.
- 98–96.5%: Good – please maintain these strong habits.
- 96–95.5%: Good but weakening – attendance is now flagged for monitoring.
- 95%: Borderline – minimum target; we may contact you to discuss support if absences continue.
- 94.5–93%: Weakening – further absences will trigger a meeting to explore support.
- 92.5–91%: Of concern – please make an appointment to explore support and create an attendance plan.
- 90–88%: Persistent concern – we will write to clarify expectations; a meeting will be called to review attendance plan.

- 87–85%: Serious concern – conversations and support will continue but we would like to remind you of the School's duty to consider EWS referral if attendance falls below 80%.
- Below 85%: Critical concern – EWS referral will be initiated if we can't support you to improvement; below 80% requires statutory referral.

Appendix B – Welsh Government Attendance Codes (Summary)

Code	Meaning
/	Present at registration
L	Late (before register closed)
B	Educated off-site (not dual registration)
D	Dual registered (present at another school/PRU)
P	Approved sporting activity
V	Educational visit or trip
J	Interview
W	Work experience
C	Other authorised circumstances
F	Agreed extended family holiday
H	Agreed family holiday
I	Illness
M	Medical or dental appointment
S	Study leave
E	Excluded – no alternative provision
R	Religious observance
T	Traveller absence
N	Reason not yet provided
G	Family holiday (not agreed / excess) – unauthorised
U	Late after register closed – unauthorised
X	Non-compulsory school-age sessions
Y	Partial/forced closure
Z	Pupil not on roll yet
#	School closed to all pupils

Appendix C – Parent Attendance Policy Introduction Letter (September 2025)

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are writing to inform you of updates to our school's attendance policy. These revisions aim to support every child's education and wellbeing by being clear about the expectations for consistent attendance.

We expect all pupils to achieve a minimum attendance rate of 95%. This supports academic progress and helps build resilience, perseverance, and a sense of personal agency. This equates to about 10 days absence during the year for illness or other unavoidable circumstances.

Daily attendance fosters habits that shape resilience and confidence. When children attend regularly, they learn to overcome challenges and commit to long-term goals. We understand that some absences are unavoidable. If you are facing challenges, we encourage you to speak with your Class Teacher in the first instance so we can work together to support your child.

Following each absence notification, we will inform you of your child's current attendance rate. This allows us to work together to support their learning.

We will monitor attendance closely and respond according to the following thresholds:

- 98.5–100%: Excellent – Appreciation shared
- 96–98%: Good – Encouragement to maintain habits
- 95–96%: Borderline – Closer monitoring begins
- 91–95%: Weakening – Conversation initiated
- 85-90%: Of concern – Mandatory meeting and attendance plan
- 85-80%: Serious concern – Written communication and reminder of duty to refer
- Below 80%: Critical concern – Referral to Education Welfare Service

Improving attendance will always be acknowledged and appreciated.

As part of our responsibilities under Welsh Government regulations, we must report any student whose annual attendance falls below 80% to the Education Welfare Service.

Thank you for your continued support.