



YSGOL CYNWYD SANT

Attendance Policy

2025-26

Chair of Governors	
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School Attendance

Our school is committed to ensuring regular attendance at school is a priority, providing pupils with the best possible chances in life to succeed and achieve their goals.

Regular school attendance is essential for all pupils.

Our school will work with parents / guardians, pupils and the local authority to ensure that all pupils receive appropriate education and attend school regularly.

Legal Framework

The law outlining attendance is:

The Education Act 1996 which places a legal obligation on:

- the local authority to provide and enforce attendance;
- school to register attendance and notify the local authority of a child's absence.

Section 7 of the above act states that:

'The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient, full time education suitable to his/her age, aptitude and ability and to any special educational needs he/she may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'.

Section 444 further states that:

'The parent of a child of compulsory school age registered at school and failing to attend regularly is guilty of an offence punishable in law'.

School Attendance Orders (SAO)

A School Attendance Order (SAO) applies in cases when a parent of a child of compulsory school age fails to prove that the child is receiving suitable education and where the authority believes the child should attend school. A SAO may be used to direct a parent to send their child to a specified school, and should be used when a pupil is not on roll at any school. They are not intended for pupils who attend irregularly.

A SAO continues to be in force for as long as the child is of compulsory school age. If there is a continued failure to register the child, the LA has the option of referring the case to Social Services for consideration of care proceedings.

The Education (Fixed Penalty Notice) Wales Regulations 2013

This legislation came into force in September 2014 and has given local authorities the ability to issue fixed penalty notices. (FPN). The school may request the local authority to issue a FPN where a parent / carer has failed to secure their child's regular attendance at school. A penalty notice may be requested against one of the following criteria:

- Minimum of 10 unauthorised absences in the current term which do not have to be consecutive.
- Minimum of 10 sessions of lateness after the close of registration.
- Parents/carers who chose to take their children out of school on holiday during term time without authorisation from the Headteacher, which exceeds the permitted 10 days
- Parents/carers failing to engage with school/EWS in the interest of improving their child's attendance

The Headteacher will inform the parent by letter that a request for a fixed penalty notice will be completed and sent to the Lead Education Welfare Officer (Lead EWO) for the local authority.

The Lead EWO will consider the request, taking into account levels of absence, level of parental engagement, equality implications, history of attendance, and any statement of special educational needs.

A fixed penalty notice warning may be issued, and a period of 15 days will be monitored for immediate improvement.

A penalty notice is £60 if paid within 28 days in receipt of the notice, increasing to £120 if not paid within 28 days. If not received by 42 days, the local authority can prosecute parents/carers for the child's absence.

Roles and Responsibilities

Attendance is everybody's concern, and the school will expect all stakeholders to play a part in improving attendance. This will contain all having clear expectations and roles which include:

Role of Headteacher

- To be responsible for overall management and implementation of this policy.
- Work closely with the school's governing body.
- To use discretion when receiving applications for holiday requests and to provide reasons to parents / guardians.
- Regular attendance reports shared and provided to governors.
- Work closely with the local authority's Lead EWO and nominated school EWO, and other support services.
- Ensure policy is readily available for stakeholders including at the school, and the website.

Governing Body

- Approve the policy and amend if necessary.
- Receive reports from the headteacher on a regular basis.
- Attend meetings as and when required.
- Ensure policy is shared with all relevant stakeholders.
- Lead governor for attendance is appointed.

Class Teacher

- To carry out the statutory role of completing attendance registers twice a day, once in the morning and once in the afternoon.
- Ensure absences are accounted, liaising with the school Admin staff
- To continue to raise the profile of attendance to all pupils.

Pupils

- Attend regularly and on time unless unwell or received an authorised absence.

Parents / Guardians

- To ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually.
- To notify the school if their child is unable to attend, on the first day of absence and every day thereafter.
- To keep the school updated on parents / guardians contact details, including mobile numbers and new addresses.
- To work with school and partner agencies to address any issues of irregular attendance of their children.

School Administrative Team

- To ensure that all absences are recorded accurately on the school system
- To ensure that all reasons for absences are recorded
- To liaise with parents / guardians of absences
- To operate the first-day response/calling protocol
- To ensure that the relevant file is sent or received promptly for pupils moving school

Types of absences

It is important for parents / guardians to understand the definition of the different types of absences. They are classed as **unauthorised absence** and **authorised absence**.

Absences may be **authorised** for the following reasons:

- Illness
- Religious observance
- Medical/Dental appointments during school hours
- Fixed term exclusions
- Holiday authorised by the headteacher

Absences may be **unauthorised** for the following reasons. However, they are not limited to this list:

- Missing school for no reason
- Late after the close of registration (09:30 onwards)
- Staying at home for no reason
- Going shopping
- Birthdays
- Holiday not authorised by the headteacher

In addition, there are several codes classed as a present mark which include the following:

- Late before the close of register (between 09.10 and 09:30)
- Educated off site, pupils attending alternative provision agreed by school
- Sporting activity – representing the school, County or Wales
- An authorised cultural / performing arts activity
- Educational visit
- Traveller absence
- Where pupils are on roll at school and also at another education establishment

Punctuality

Punctuality is a legal requirement and pupils must attend on time. Persistent lateness has a detrimental effect on a pupil's learning and disrupts other pupils within the class and throughout the school.

Those parents of pupils who are persistently late will receive a 'Letter 1' following a number of 'L' codes used over a half term and cumulating across the year. If lateness continues, parents / guardians will be invited to meet with a member of staff to discuss the concerns.

All pupils who are late must be signed in by a parent / guardian at Reception.

Medical absences

Where a pupil is continually absent from school on the grounds of medical reasons, it may be necessary for the parent/carer to provide medical evidence.

There may be times when a reintegration plan may be necessary, which will be a partnership agreement between the family, pupil, EWO and school.

It is preferable that pupils are only withdrawn to attend the time of the appointment and no additional time.

Holidays During Term Time

Under the Education (pupil registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010, headteachers have discretion to authorise a holiday of up to 10 days during term time. Over 10 days can only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

All requests for holidays must be completed on the school's holiday request form and completed by the parents/carers.

The headteacher will make the decision and will consider the following:

- Reason for request
- Any previous holidays taken in term time
- Overall percentage of attendance (95% or below)
- Service Pupils

Role of the Local Authority Education Welfare Service

The Education Welfare service is a statutory service which supports schools in ensuring all pupils attend school regularly. We have a designated EWO who meets with the school monthly, and whenever requested / depending on need. The EWO will meet with a senior member of staff within school and discusses those pupils who have attendance of below 90%.

The school, in a joint discussion will then refer the pupil to the EWO if necessary. Individual circumstances of each pupil will be considered. The EWO will then either send a letter home informing parents of your child's attendance, make a telephone call home, invite you into school or/and will conduct a home visit.

Parents/carers have a legal duty to ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually, or otherwise, under the Education Act 1996. Where parents fail to ensure the regular attendance of their child or otherwise are committing an offence and the EWO will need to be informed.

It is unfortunate on occasions, but a punitive approach may be needed which may result in prosecution of parents. (Please see BCBC Non-school Attendance Enforcement Policy)

However, the EWS does not take this lightly and will endeavour to work and support parents, schools, and pupils to improve attendance levels.

Late on the Gate

Periodically, the EWO for the school will arrive early and monitor the punctuality of pupils. They will engage with parents / guardians to find out why their child is late and look at supportive measures to ensure that the pupil attends school on time.

Door-to-Door / Home Visits

For pupils who are not attending school regularly, the EWO may need to make visits to the child's home. This is to check on their welfare, reminding parents / guardians of their legal duty and for other reasons.

Early Help

The EWS sits within the Early Help team which comprises of a multi-disciplinary team which are based in areas across the county of Bridgend.

The early help team consists of a variety of support services including family support workers, family engagement officers, counsellors, and youth workers. The early help team is designed to support families and pupils where a need has been identified.

All officers are professionally trained and work with families, schools, and agencies to ensure all parents and pupils receive the best possible support to enable them to have better opportunities in life.

Parents can also self - refer into the service directly via:

Email: earlyhelp@bridgend.gov.uk

Telephone: 01656 815420

School procedures

Parents / guardians are expected to contact the school on the first day of absence and to provide reasons for their child's absence.

As a school, we have a duty to safeguard all our pupils. We have a protocol in place to establish the location of pupils and reasons for absences.

If parents / guardians fail to notify the school, the school will contact the parents / guardians and other persons listed as a point of contact as part of the school's protocol.

The absence will be recorded as unauthorised if no contact is made. Failure to receive any contact may result in the involvement of the EWO.

Graduated Response

We operate a graduated response to improve attendance for all of our pupils.

Graduated Response
Step 1 – Text message / Phone call - Contact with Parents / Guardians
Step 2 – Letter 1 – informing parents / guardians of the need to improve attendance/punctuality and that school will monitor
Step 3 – Letter 2 – inviting parents / guardians to meet with school staff to discuss need to improve attendance/punctuality (Inform and Support Meeting)
Step 4 – EW1a referral to the Education Welfare Service (EWS)

Letter 1

Once a pupil's attendance/punctuality causes concern, the school will issue a letter 1 to the parents / guardians. It will outline the concern and the need to improve their child's attendance/punctuality.

Letter 2 – Inform and Support

If a pupil's attendance/punctuality continues to cause concern, the child's parent / guardian will be invited into school to meet with a member of staff – inform and support meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to raise the concern regarding their child's attendance/punctuality and consider ways in which it can be improved. At this meeting, parents / guardians will be informed that should there be no improvement, a referral to the EWS will be made.

EW1a - Referral to the EWS

If there is no improvement in a pupil's attendance/punctuality, the school will complete an EW1a form and refer the pupil's case to the EWS and the school's link Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

Please see our Attendance Procedures for further information.