



ATTENDANCE POLICY

(September 2022)

General Introduction

This policy takes into account the following guidance and legislation and should be read in conjunction with all other school policies relating to social inclusion:

- WAG Circular 10/99 Social Inclusion: Pupil Support
- WAG10-10733: Strategies to improve attendance and manage lateness
- The Education Act 1996 (s434)
- RA 1 Pupil Registration: Points of Law
- WAG Guidance on School Attendance Codes (Updated as required)
- WAG – All Wales Attendance Analysis Framework (2012)

Note: Throughout this policy, the term ‘parent’ refers to one parent, both parents or the child’s carer.

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, the parent is responsible for making sure that their child of compulsory school age receives efficient full-time education that is suitable to the child’s age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs the child may have. This can be by regular attendance at school or by education otherwise.

While the parent is primarily responsible for ensuring their child attends school regularly, where school attendance problems occur, we recognise that the key to successfully resolving these problems is engaging the child through collaborative working between the parent, the school and the LEA. This collaborative approach underpins this policy and associated intervention strategies, which are the result of the close cooperation between the school and the local authority ESW team (especially the school’s EWO and ASA)

While procedures and protocols for registration and attendance are comprehensive and consistent, individual cases can be markedly different. While these differences are taken into account, in the interests of consistency, equity and fairness, we apply a stepped approach to attendance with support at one end of the continuum and more punitive corrective action at the other end.

Aim

Ysgol Bryn Elian is committed to a positive policy of encouraging pupils to attend school regularly. The school will work with parents and pupils to secure this aim.

The other purpose of this attendance policy is to ensure that there is an efficient system, known to all, for ensuring that pupils who should be attending the school have registered twice daily, or a reason for non-attendance is known to the school.

Taking the Register

Using the school's electronic SIMs system, all pupils are registered twice each day.

Morning registration is between 08.30am and 08.45am. Afternoon registration is at 1.45pm. Pupils arriving after the start of the registration session are marked late.

Registers close in the morning 30 minutes after the end of the morning registration period i.e. 09.15am and in the afternoon, 10 minutes after the end of the registration period i.e. 1:55pm. Pupils arriving after this time are recorded as an unauthorised absence.

In addition to the above, all teaching staff are required to take registers (using the electronic system) for each lesson they teach.

For a.m. and p.m. registration, the register must record whether the pupil is present, absent, or attending an approved educational activity.

Form tutors are required to insert the appropriate code for absence.

(See Appendix 1 for a full list of codes and under what circumstances they should be used.)

Unless prior notification of an absence has been received, this code will be 'N' i.e. not present in the room. The learning mentor will change this code as soon as possible after receiving confirmation that the absence was either authorised or unauthorised. Authorised absences have different codes, depending on the reason provided and accepted for the absence. All unauthorised absences should be marked as 'O'. ***While the parent may provide a reason for absence, only the school can decide whether to accept this reason as being valid and therefore authorised.***

An 'approved educational activity' is defined as:

- One taking place off the school premises
- Approved by a person authorised by the governing body or the Head
- Supervised by a person approved by the governing body or Head
- Of an educational nature, including work experience, field trips and educational visits, interviews with prospective employers, or for a place in higher or further education
- Link Courses where pupils attend an FE college for part of their time, or franchised pupils receiving part of their education off-site at another location while remaining on roll and under school supervision (e.g. sick children being taught at home), or attending approved sporting activity

Responsibilities

The Governing Body will:

- Approve the policy and any proposed changes
- Receive reports from the Head
- Review the working of the policy in the light of the Head's report
- Ensure that the policy is promoted and implemented throughout the school, and is known by the parents

The Head will:

- Set attendance targets (*in collaboration with the Assistant Head responsible for attendance and the LA ESW service*) as part of the development plan and target-setting process
- Monitor progress and ensure that strategies are in place to promote and implement the policy throughout the school
- Determine (in collaboration with the Assistant Head responsible for attendance and the learning manager/mentor) whether to authorise any proposed absences requested on the school's official form, or absences which have taken place for which no request was made
- Ensure that procedures are in place to notify parents as appropriate that if a pupil of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly his/her parents commit an offence
- Initiate, with appropriate staff, strategies to improve attendance
- Liaise with the LA over persistent absentees
- Liaise with the LA and police when they wish to exercise their powers to enforce truants to return to school
- Make an annual report with statistics to the Governing Body.

The Assistant Head responsible for attendance will:

- Oversee the attendance arrangements
- Make regular reports with statistics to the Head
- Work with Learning Managers and Mentors to ensure the efficient running of the system
- Ensure that regular checks of the registers are made by Learning Managers/Mentors to monitor pupil absence
- Work with Learning Managers and Mentors to ensure that unaccounted-for absences are followed up by getting in touch with parents/carers (if there is reasonable concern about a child's welfare, the assistant Head will immediately inform the Head, the school's child protection officer and the EWO who will decide what action to take including informing Social Services)
- Deal with issues of inadequate registering
- Arrange appropriate training for staff
- Develop a policy to reflect best practice and keep the Head informed of the progress of the policy
- Develop and advise the Head on any strategies that are initiated to improve attendance.
- Convene 'Attendance Panels' as necessary
- Provide attendance statistics by e mail, on all pupils, to form tutors, learning managers/mentors and the Head Teacher, showing levels of concern, at agreed intervals throughout the school year

The Education Social Work Service will:

- The school's Education Social Workers/Education Welfare Officers (ESW/EWO) Ffion Hughes works closely with the school and families to resolve attendance issues.
- Legal action to enforce school attendance can only be taken by the ESWS.

- The ESW/EWO has a dual role to play as a provider of a service to the school and as a mediator between home and school.

The School attendance officer will:

- The school employs its own attendance Officer, to work closely with the ESW, Assistant Head and pastoral team to monitor, analyse and support in the process of improving outcomes for our learners.

Learning Managers/Mentors will:

- Ensure that all pupil absences are noted and absence notes received from parents
- Ensure that all registers are completed for all a.m. and p.m. registration sessions
- Make regular checks on the efficiency of the registering
- Make regular checks on absence notes
- Ensure that all suspected truancy is followed up and dealt with
- Contact all parents of pupils who are absent on any given day and for whom no explanation for the absence has been received
- Use the stepped 'Attendance Support Programme' proforma (Appendix 2) to record meetings with parents convened to discuss attendance (including Attendance Panel' meetings
- Make reports to the Assistant Head responsible for attendance on the efficiency of the system
- Liaise with the Assistant Head over training needs
- Meet with the school's EWO on a fortnightly basis to discuss the attendance of all pupils below 85% and develop strategies to raise the attendance levels of these pupils
- Provide a summary of this discussion and strategies to be employed with individual pupils to the Assistant Head responsible for attendance

Form Tutors will:

- Ensure that pupils are registered accurately
- Take effective action, as required by school policy, to address and correct late arrival to registration sessions (usually, the pupil will be detained during lunchtime for a period of 20 minutes if they are late.)
- Ensure that pupils bring absence notes
- Follow up cases of unaccounted for absence or unacceptable notes
- Keep the Learning Manager/Mentor informed of any signs of suspected truancy
- Inform the Learning Manager/Mentor of any possible underlying problems which might account for absences
- Discuss attendance with the tutor group and individuals within the tutor group
- Use information provided through SIMs to set targets for the tutor group as a whole and individuals within the group at agreed intervals

Classroom teachers will:

- Register every class that they teach
- Take effective action to address late arrival at lessons
- Check the attendance of pupils at their lessons
- Inform the Learning Manager/Mentor of the names of pupils who are absent without notification

Parents are required to:

- Ensure that their child/children attend regularly unless they are ill or have an authorised absence ('Attending regularly' means registering before the attendance register is closed for the session)
- Ensure that their child/children arrive in school on time every day
- Inform the school of their absence on the first day of non-attendance
- Provide the school with an explanatory note on the day that their child returns to school following absence if contact has not already been made
- Discuss with the school any planned absences well in advance (e.g. a family holiday)
- Make any request for leave of absence to the Head Teacher on the school's official leave of absence form

(For further information about attendance and parental responsibility, please see Appendix 3, which can be used to discuss attendance issues with parents)

Inspection

The Head Teacher will ensure that the School Admission and Attendance Registers are available for inspection by relevant inspectors.

LATENESS

A pupil's punctuality for school is a legal requirement (Inclusion & Pupil Support Welsh Government Circular 47/2006) and the parents/carers of a pupil who is persistently late after registration closes are guilty of an offence under the Education Act 1996 and could be prosecuted in the Magistrates Court, or issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice for the unauthorised absences.

A careful balance needs to be struck between being too punitive and too accepting of a pupil's lateness. Once the reasons for lateness have been established, the school, parents and pupils work in partnership to resolve difficulties. Where the home situation makes it difficult for the pupil to arrive on time, the school may need to refer the case to the Education Social Work Service or Social Services. Lates are monitored on a daily basis by the Attendance Team.

Holiday leave

Parents can be given leave by the school to take a child on a holiday.

Formal requests must be made to the Head, on the school's official form, and must be accompanied by an explanatory letter.

The application must be made by the parent (or person with parental responsibility) with whom the child normally resides, but the form can be brought to the school by the pupil.

The Head will not give leave automatically but will take into account:

- The age of the child
- The time of the year proposed
- The views of the Learning Manager/Mentor and the ESW
- Parents of a child experiencing a life limiting illness
- Family that has suffered acute trauma
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family
- Any other circumstance that is viewed as exceptional (if an event can reasonably be scheduled outside of term time then it would not be normal to authorise absence)

Local Authority issues leaflets on taking holidays during term time are very clear regarding these requests, and this information will be relayed to parents regularly.

The following list shows how taking time off during term time can impact on attainment and could be given to parents as an example (this would depend on how your school day is structured):

- 1 day missed = 5 lessons lost
- 1 week missed = 25 lessons lost
- 2 weeks holiday during term time = 50 lessons lost
- 90% = 20 days off school per year/100 lessons
- 85% = 30 days/150 lessons
- 80% = 35 days/175 lessons

Also a reminder to parents in Secondary schools that G.C.S.E. grades as well as other school tests and exam results can be seriously affected by unnecessary absence. The difference between success and failure in a school career depends on attendance.

If the pupil still goes on a holiday, which has not been approved by the school it is recorded as an unauthorised absence. (G)

The school will only agree to absences of **up to** 10 school days in any school year and only then in circumstances deemed legitimate by the Head.

Adverse weather

In accordance with *RA1Pupil Registration: Points of Law* the school will endeavour to remain open unless the safety of pupils and/or staff is compromised. When the school does have to close, local radio will be informed and the information will be broadcast. Group texts and social media may also be used if deemed appropriate.

Short-term leave

The school can legally grant short-term leave for family reasons. It is for the Head to determine the reasonableness.

Where a pupil becomes pregnant, leave will be given of no more than 18 weeks after which the absence would be unauthorised. The school will do all it can to support the pupil remaining in school as long as possible.

(See Circular 10/99 and Annex A Reasons for Absence)

Dental and medical appointments are valid reasons for missing registration and constitute authorised absence. However, every effort should be made by parents/carers to make appointments for their child outside of school hours.

If the pupil leaves for an appointment after registering no absence needs to be recorded except by subject teachers whose lessons are missed.

The school may, exceptionally, sanction limited absence for young carers until other arrangements can be made. The Head Teacher will set a time limit for such absences in consultation with the Assistant Head responsible for attendance and the relevant Learning Manager. The Head Teacher may also seek advice from the LA or appropriate agency before coming to a decision.

Religious observance

Since there is no legislation or regulation or DCSF guidance on this matter the Head Teacher will review each application reasonably, and in consultation with the Learning Manager and the parents.

The school expects advance notice, since religious festivals are likely to be fixed well ahead.

Distance from school

A pupil will not have failed to attend regularly if the parent can prove that the school is not within walking distance (defined as three miles for children over 8), in each case measured by the nearest available route, and where the LA has not made suitable arrangements for:

- Transport;
- Changing to another school nearer to the home.

Where there are such occurrences the Head will consult with the LA, and the Chair of Governors as appropriate.

Taking a pupil off the register

The Head will authorise the taking of a pupil's name off the register in accordance with the current Regulations. (See ***RA1 Pupil Registration: Points of Law.***)

Monitoring and review

The Head will review the working of the policy with the leadership group and make at least annual reports to the Governing Body.

Signed: Chair of Governors	Date:
Head Teacher:	Date:

Appendix 1

Attendance Codes

/\	Present at registration
L	Late but arrived before the register closed
B	Educated off-site (not dual registration)
D	Dual registered (ie 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
O	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
Q	Present in referral
;	Illness due to Covid 19
[Remote learning due to Covid 19

Appendix 2

Ysgol Bryn Elan Attendance Support Programme

Pupil Name:	Tutor Group:
DoB:	Date:
Present:	

In line with WAG Circular 47/06 Inclusion and Pupil Support (Annexe 3iii) and WAG10-10733: Strategies to improve attendance and manage lateness we have:	Strategies Relating to the Targets: including teaching approaches and other supportive/corrective measures	Outcome (please complete for each section)
1. Reviewed any learning difficulties, particularly literacy skills that may affect attendance and punctuality. We have considered additional support from relevant professionals.		
2. Considered any social difficulties or alleged bullying that the pupil may be experiencing.		
3. Considered changing class, sets or groups and giving direction on where and with whom to sit. We have considered the use of a Buddy or mentor with whom this pupil can walk to school and/or receive support from during the school day		
4. Considered, or reconsidered, having the pupil register in the school's Pupil Support Centre rather than in the form base.		
5. Considered referral to the ESW Service including associated professionals. Other specialist		

support from outside agencies has been considered including e.g. bereavement, alcohol or drug dependency, Conwy and Denbighshire YJS		
6. Considered the use of an attendance panel to secure full and punctual attendance		
7. Considered legal action, either an Education Supervision Order or Parental prosecution to secure full and punctual attendance.		
8. Other		

Name:			
Signature:			
Status			

Please see above for names of all present at the ASP

Appendix 3:

Parental Responsibility

Your responsibilities as a parent

By law, all children of compulsory school age (5 to 16) must receive a suitable full-time education. As a parent, you have a legal responsibility to make sure this happens - either by registering your child at a school or by making other arrangements to give them a suitable, full-time education. Once your child is registered at a school, you are legally responsible for making sure they attend regularly.

If they do not, you will be contacted by your child's school or the local authority. Local authorities have a duty to step in if they believe a child is not getting the education required by law, either at home or at school.

If your child is missing school, you may be visited by a member of the Education Welfare Service. They will talk to you about your child's attendance problems.

A child becomes of compulsory school age when they reach the age of five and, where a parent has elected to register their child at school they must start school in the term following their fifth birthday. A child continues to be of compulsory school age until the last Friday in June in the school year that they reach the age of 16.

Support on school attendance

If you're having trouble getting your child to go to school the school and local authority can support you in several ways. One option they may suggest is a parenting contract.

Parenting contracts are a form of support and not a punishment - they are intended to help you and the school or local authority to work together to improve your child's attendance.

Parenting contracts are voluntary. You should be aware, however, that if your child is missing school regularly and you refuse to agree to a contract - or do not keep to its terms - this can be used as evidence if the local authority decides to prosecute you.

To find out more about the forms of support available - including parenting contracts - see 'School attendance, absence and your child'.

Action on school attendance

A child registered at a school can legally miss school only in very limited circumstances. These include:

- When the child is too ill to attend
- When the school has authorised the absence beforehand

If a child is missing school without good reason, schools and local authorities have a number of legal powers that they can use.

School Attendance Order (SAO)

A School Attendance Order is issued if your child is not on roll at any school and the local authority is worried that you have not made arrangements to provide an alternative, suitable, full-time education. SAOs are used to direct you to send your child to a specified school.

Before serving an SAO, Children's Services Officers should make every effort to discuss the situation with you. If it is not possible to persuade you to make suitable arrangements for your child's education, then you will be served with a notice stating that you are failing in your duty to provide your child with an education.

The notice must inform you that you need to satisfy the local authority that you are providing an education at school or otherwise within a specified time period (but not less than 15 days beginning with the day the notice was served).

Local authorities are responsible for prosecuting parents if they breach an SAO and also have the option of seeking an Education Supervision Order.

Education Supervision Order (ESO)

As well as or instead of prosecuting you the local authority may apply to a court for an ESO. This order means that a supervisor will be appointed to you to give you help and advice on getting your child back into education.

Taking you to court

The local authority may prosecute you and this could result in a more severe penalty.

You could get a fine of up to £2,500, a community order or, in extreme cases, a jail sentence of up to three months. If the court thinks it will help to stop your child missing school, it may also impose a Parenting Order.

Parenting Order

A Parenting Order is a court order which requires you to attend parenting education or support classes. You will also have to do whatever the court says is necessary to improve your child's behaviour and attendance at school.