

Dear Parents/Carers

Re: School Attendance

We are writing this letter to remind you of our Attendance Policy here at Ysgol Bryn Elian, how we promote positive attendance patterns and also respond to issues regarding pupil absences.

The school wishes to promote high levels of attendance and supports pupils where absences have been unavoidable. Consistent attendance at school is important for learning and pupil progress. However, irregular attendance will be monitored, addressed and challenged by the school, along with the Local Authority, in order to maximize best outcomes for our pupils.

This letter explains the approach we are following to manage attendance.

Types of Absence

Each absence is classed as authorised or unauthorised. Absences are coded as authorised where reasons are considered valid and unauthorised where no explanation or unacceptable reasons are given.

Unacceptable Reasons for absences

The following reasons are not acceptable:

- shopping trips
- birthdays
- days out to theme parks or to attend concerts/shows
- parents' work commitments or business trips
- holidays taken in term time (including long weekends taken on Fridays and/or Mondays)

Unauthorised absences will be referred to the school attendance officer.

Illness and First Day Call

If your child is unable to attend school through illness you should inform us by telephone on the first day of absence, ideally before 9.00am. It is useful to know the expected day of return. If you do not supply us with this information we have a duty to contact you so that we may be sure of your child's whereabouts as this is a safeguarding measure. Where the child is absent through illness or medical appointments this will normally be counted as authorised. Where we have concerns over excessive absence patterns through illness we will need to discuss this with parents in order to gain a better understanding of the problems and to offer support. In ongoing cases we will request medical evidence to authorise further absences (GP appointment card/medical letters).

Medical/Dental Appointments

It is generally better if these can be arranged outside school hours, but we know this is not always possible. Where children need to attend such appointments during the school day, it is important that students sign out at the front office and sign back in when they return to school. Medical and dental appointments count as authorised absences.

Emergency Occasions

There are some occasions e.g. bereavements, family problems etc. where it may be inappropriate for children to attend school; we will be sympathetic to such needs.

Lateness

Please try to ensure that your child arrives at school so that they are present for registration; the register is taken at 8:25 am each day and valuable information regarding the school day/events are shared at this time. Where genuine reason for lateness exists, consideration will be given, however generally pupils will be expected to attend a lunchtime detention and a late mark will be recorded in the register. Arrivals after 9.30am will be recorded as an absence.

Leave of Absence:

Holidays

In accordance with County Policy we do not authorise holidays in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The only exemption to this is where parents serve in the armed forces (this does not extend to the emergency services i.e. Police, Fire, Ambulance etc.). Where authorisation is not granted then subsequent term time holiday absence will be reported as a matter of course to the Local Authority, who will follow the Fixed Penalty Notice procedure.

What we are aiming for?

Average attendance for a student should be 95% for the year, with outstanding attendance above 96%.

Our duty of care in responding to unauthorised and persistent absence – possible consequences

We have a duty of care, shared with the Local Authority, to challenge poor attendance. Where attendance levels are low and where there are invalid reasons (judged by the Education Social Work Service, not the parent) for a pupil's frequent absence or where parents condone absence (e.g. by taking children out of school on unauthorised holidays) then parents render themselves liable to a fine of £60 per pupil per parent. This could mean a fine of £360 for two parents of three children. Of course, no one wants this to happen but we need to be very clear about the issue. We hope that this information will help you to have a clear understanding about Ysgol Bryn Elian's expectations regarding attendance.

Can I take this opportunity to remind parents that student attendance figures along with school reports and student behaviour points are all available to parents on the SIMs app. We strongly advise parents to download the app in order to receive current information on their child's progress within the school.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and we would be very pleased to answer any questions you may have about our approach to maintaining and improving our pupils' attendance record.

Yours sincerely



Mr Jeff Powell

Assistant Headteacher