

YSGOL BRYN PENNANT SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

Ysgol Bryn Pennant is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all. We will provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcomed and are committed to the fundamental principle that early intervention and partnership working is crucial in ensuring the attendance, protection and well-being of all children and young people.

The school will follow the All Wales Child Protection procedures and local protocols in relation to specific and identifiable welfare issues that prevent a child or young pupil from accessing education, or where there are safeguarding concerns.

For a pupil to reach their full education achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all pupils. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

School attendance is subject to education law and guidance and this school attendance policy is written to reflect this legislation and the guidance produced by the Welsh Government (WG). The legislation makes provision for a school day which is to be divided into two sessions with a lunch break in the middle and to be available for at least 190 days in any school year.

The school will review its systems for improving attendance on an annual basis to ensure that it is achieving its set goals and targets as identified by the Governors, the Local Authority, GwE and the WG.

We will ensure that our pupils are made aware of the importance of good attendance and how this will benefit them; we will use a variety of strategies to intervene at an early stage to encourage improved attendance of individual learners. Our home school agreement contains details of how we will work with parents and carers and our expectations of what they will need to do to ensure pupils' achieve good attendance.

Leave of absence/holidays in term time

Leave of absence during term time will be discouraged. Parents and carers do not have the automatic right to withdraw their children from school for an annual holiday and will be reminded of the effect that absence can have on a pupil's potential achievement. The school will consider any application for leave of absence. All applications must be on the application form which has been adopted by the Holywell Consortium of schools. We will only agree to authorise in exceptional circumstances; parents and carers must apply in advance for permission for their child to have leave of absence.

Parents and carers are advised that Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) may be issued by the LA when permission for a holiday or leave of absence has not been authorised by the school and exceeds 10 sessions.

School procedures

Any pupil who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period will have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity (attendance out of school).

If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence will be recorded in the first instance as unexplained (code N) and promptly followed up by the school, as part of its early intervention and safeguarding strategies. The secretary will attempt to contact parents on the first morning of any absence.

Lateness

School starts at 8.55a.m. Any children arriving at school after 9.15a.m. will be recorded in the register as late. (code L) The registers remain open until 9.30 a.m. and any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence (code U) unless there is an acceptable explanation i.e. school transport was delayed.

In cases for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered.

Afternoon registration will be at 1.00 p.m. and any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence (code U) unless there is an acceptable explanation.

Pupils arriving after the start of afternoon registration period will be coded as late.

First day absence

School will endeavour to ascertain the specific reason for non-attendance as soon as possible on the first day of absence, after both morning and afternoon registration. The secretary will attempt to contact parents as soon as possible. Once the specific information is received, the register will be amended to reflect the appropriate absence code (Appendix 1).

Priority will be given to children who are deemed to be particularly vulnerable, e.g. those known to child protection/safeguarding services or are looked after (LAC). Flintshire Children Services will be notified of unexplained absences of more than two days of a pupil on the child protection register, or one day following the weekend.

Absence notes

Notes received from parents explaining absence will be kept for an academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil, that may require further investigation, then the notes should be retained in line with education retention schedule.

Parents and carers are aware that in the event of persistent medical absences a letter from the GP or consultant may be required to support reasons given for absence.

Continuing and frequent absence

Within the school it is the responsibility of the class teacher / secretary / attendance officer to be aware of and bring attention to the Head teacher (or person to whom they have delegated responsibility for attendance), any emerging attendance concerns.

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem as soon as possible, before a referral is made to the Education Welfare Service (EWS).

This may involve inviting the parents or carers and the pupil into school for a meeting. For unauthorised absences of 10 sessions or more in a school term (there are two sessions in a day, morning and afternoon), the school can request that the LA issue a FPN.

Persistent absence

The Welsh government defines persistent absence as pupils whose absence level is more than 20% (80% attendance). The action plan will include engagement with relevant agencies that can support the pupil's attendance and could include the schools Education Welfare Officer (EWO). In Ysgol Bryn Pennant, our EWO is Mr Trevor Jones. He visits the school at least once every half term and works with the Headteacher to monitor attendance.

Absence related to discrimination

A pupil's absence from school may be due to bullying, which can take many forms and can be direct (either physical or verbal) or indirect, for example, ignoring a pupil or not talking to them. Some of this bullying may be discriminatory. It is against the law for a school, governing body or the LA not to take action where this type of bullying takes place between pupils.

As a school, we are required to monitor and report on discriminatory incidents each term and if the reason for pupil's absence is related to any of the above issues, must take action to deal with the situation.

A welcome back

The school will welcome back all pupils on return from an absence. This will include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other pupils.

Attendance awards

In Ysgol Bryn Pennant, good attendance is celebrated. The school uses an awards system to reward pupils who have good or improving attendance. The reward systems we use are meaningful to the children. Any child achieving 97% or greater in any calendar month receives a reward in sharing assembly and a photograph is taken for display in school.

We also have a class attendance trophy which again, is awarded during the last assembly of the month to the class with the best attendance. A photograph of this class with their trophy is also displayed in the corridor.

Categorisation of absence

All pupils who are on role but not present in the school must be recorded within one of these categories.

- Authorised Absence

- Unauthorised Absence
- Approved Educational Activity

Unauthorised absence

This is for those pupils where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason.

Authorised absence

This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid.

Approved educational activity

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off the school site but with approval of the school and or the LA. This would include:

- Work experience placements
- Field trips and educational visits
- Sporting activities
- Link courses or approved education at another venue
- Education arranged by the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)

Dual Registration

Pupils who attend another school or establishment are dually registered at both venues. The school or provision where the child is expected to attend is responsible for accurately recording the pupil's attendance and chasing up non-attendance. School will liaise with the other education provider on a daily basis in order to identify pupils who are absent for the session and mark the register accordingly.

Retention of records

Computer registers will be preserved as electronic backups. Attendance regulation stipulate that attendance records should be retained for at least three years; however it is good practice to extend this period in line with education record retention schedule.

Register checks

The LA will formally check the registers on a regular basis to ensure there is compliance with legislation. It should be noted that registers are legal documents and it is an offence not to maintain accurate records.

Attendance Targets

Each year the school and governing body, will set attendance targets and submit to the Local Authority by no later than 31st December in every school year. A system for analysing performance towards the targets will be established and the Headteacher or senior school manager will be responsible for overseeing this work.

Our school targets are:

2013/2014: 94
2014/2015: 94
2015/2016: 94
2016/2017: 93.5
2017/2018: 94
2018/2019: 94

Action Plan

The school will produce an action plan to show how the school will set about achieving its attendance targets.

Legislation and guidance

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states: The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable:

- (a) To his age, ability and aptitude
- (b) To any special needs he may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise

For educational purposes the term parent means natural parents and includes any person who has parental responsibility or has day to day care of the child.

The Educations (Penalty Notices) (Wales) Regulations 2013 set out the framework for the operation of the Fixed Penalty Notice scheme.

The Equalities Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 Registers and Admission.

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010
- The Education (School day and School Year) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2006

Guidance documents relating to attendance

- All Wales Child Protection Procedures
- Keeping Learners Safe
- The All Wales Attendance Framework
- The National Assembly for Wales Circular 47/2006 Inclusion and Pupil Support
- Welsh Government Guidance on penalty notices for regular non-attendance at school
- Welsh Government Guidance on attendance codes