



# ATTENDANCE POLICY

**Chair of Governors:**

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# **Attendance Policy**

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## **Introduction**

Our school is committed to ensure regular attendance at school is a priority which will in turn provide pupils with the best possible chances in life to succeed and to achieve their goals.

Our school will endeavour to work with parents, pupils, the local authority and the Education Achievement Service (EAS) to ensure that all pupils receive an appropriate education and to attend school regularly.

This attendance policy reflects the local authority's Attendance Strategy.

## **Aims**

This policy aims to ensure that attendance and punctuality remains a key focus for all, including governors, teachers, parents, pupils and partner agencies. We will strive to:

- offer a safe and friendly environment which welcomes children regardless of race, gender or ability.
- raise standards and ensure all pupils reach their full potential, through a high level of school attendance and punctuality.
- ensure all stakeholders receive communication about information on the importance of regular school attendance.
- identify those pupils with irregular attendance at an early stage and work with partner agencies to try and address any barriers that stop pupils from attending school regularly.
- keep accurate and up to date attendance data.
- ensure all pupils are safe, and for schools to follow the local authority's 'Children Missing Education' guidance.
- reward those pupils who have made significant progress in raising attendance levels.

This document is supported by the All Wales Attendance Framework.

<http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/pupilsupport/framework/?lang=en>

## **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):**

Under the Education Act 1996 section 437- 443 a School Attendance Order applies when a parent of compulsory school age fails to prove that the child is receiving a suitable education and where the

authority believes the child should attend school. A School Attendance Order 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.

## **DEFINITIONS**

Compulsory school age – under section 8 of the Education Act 1996, children and young people should attend school from the start of the first term commencing after their fifth birthday. The ends of the term dates are 31st March, 31st August and 31st December. A young person ceases to be compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they have their 16th birthday.

'Parents' section 576 of the Education Act 1996 includes:

- All natural parents whether married or not.
- Any person who although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a young person or child, and any person, who although not a natural parent has care of a child or young person.

Meanings:

*'EWS' – Education Welfare Service*

*'EWO' – Education Welfare Officer*

*'CME' – Children missing education'*

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 Head teacher:**

- To be responsible for overall management and implementation of this policy.
- To work closely with the school's governing body.
- To set attendance targets with the Local Authority, EAS challenge advisors and governors.
- To use discretion when receiving applications for holiday requests and to provide reasons to parents when a holiday in term time is not authorised.
- To produce regular attendance reports and share with governors.
- To work closely with the local authority's Lead EWO and nominated school EWO, and other support services.
- To notify the local authority when a 'child is missing education' and follow the local authority's Children Missing from Education procedures.
- Ensure this policy is readily available for stakeholders including on the school website.

## **Governing Body:**

- Approve the policy.
- Receive and discuss attendance reports from the head teacher on a regular basis.
- Ensure policy is shared with all relevant stakeholders.
- Ensure a lead governor for attendance is appointed.

## **Deputy Head Teacher**

- Work with all staff responsible for attendance and punctuality.
- To look at attendance data on a weekly basis, linking in with the school EWO.
- Regularly check attendance registers.
- Ensure all absences are recorded in line with the Welsh Government attendance codes guidance document.
- Attend/Provide regular update training on attendance for all relevant staff
- Raise issues of those staff not compliant with the completion of registers.
- Discuss any initiatives with all staff
- To speak with parents on a daily basis to establish reasons for pupil's absence.
- Ensure all pupil absences are recorded, and absence notes are received.
- Ensure registers are completed.
- Work closely with the school attendance clerk.
- Work closely with the school EWO, providing valid attendance data on individual pupils.
- To attend regular formal meetings with the EWO.
- Contact parents/guardians of those pupils who have not attended and not provided reasons for absence on a daily basis.
- Deal with any truancy concerns
- To arrange letters and meetings for those parents whose children's attendance poses a concern.
- To monitor patterns of irregular attendance.
- To provide rewards to those pupils with improved or excellent attendance.

## **Class Teacher/Form Tutors:**

- 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 for by ways of a note provided by parents.
- Follow up unaccounted reasons for absence and raise concerns to the Attendance Officer.
- To continue to raise the profile of attendance to all pupils.
- Contact the school attendance clerk with any queries.

## **Pupils:**

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

## **Parents:**

- Ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually.
- Notify the school if their child is unable to attend, on the first day of absence and every day thereafter.
- Keep the school updated on parents/guardians contact details, including mobile numbers and new addresses.

- Work with school and partner agencies to address any issues of irregular attendance of their children.
- Work with their child in relation to homework, not completing homework is not a reason for missing school.

## **Role of Admin Officer**

- Ensure all pupil absences are recorded, and absence notes are received.
- Ensure registers are completed.
- To speak with parents on a daily basis to establish reasons for pupil's absence.
- To record absences daily, registers as and when required.
- To 'mop up' missing marks, providing reasons and inputting reasons on the red flag system on SIMS.
- To telephone parents who have not contacted school in order to establish reasons for absence.
- To work closely with EWO and support staff in school.
- To work with SMT and Head teacher closely.
- To ensure transfer of the Common Transfer File (CTF) of pupils is completed in a timely manner and pupils are not removed from roll unnecessarily.

## **Keeping school registers**

The school's register is a legal document and under The Education (pupil registration) (Wales) regulations 2010 the school is required to keep an accurate record of attendance. Registers need to be marked twice a day, once in the morning and once in the afternoon.

Registers may be needed in a court of law if deemed appropriate.

Schools Information Management System (SIMS) is used in most schools across Newport to record all pupils' attendance.

By the end of the school week the schools overall attendance registers will be completed and an overall attendance figure will be calculated by the school.

## **Types of absences**

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

The head teacher can only decide on whether an absence should be classed in either one of these categories, parents cannot.

Absences may be authorised for the following reasons:

- Illness.
- Religious observance.
- Medical/Dental appointments during school hours.

- Fixed term and permanent exclusions.
- Holiday agreed by the head teacher.

Examples of what are classified as unauthorised absence are the following, however they are not limited: Absences may be unauthorised for the following reasons:

- Truancy.
- Late after the close of registration.
- Staying at home for no reason – condoned absence.
- Going shopping.
- Birthdays.
- Holiday not agreed by the head teacher.

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

- Late before the close of register.
- Educated off site, pupils attending vocational courses at college/pupils attending alternative provision agreed by school.
- Sporting activity.
- Educational visit.
- Traveller absence.
- Interview.
- Work experience.
- Where pupils are on roll at school and also at another education establishment.

Please see appendix 1 which includes a breakdown of codes set by Welsh Government.

## **Punctuality**

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

Persistent lateness after the register has closed may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Those parents of pupils who are persistently late will be contacted by the class teacher/ Senior Management team.

A record of pupils who are late must be kept in the office.

## **Medical absences**

Where a child is continually absent from school on the grounds of medical reasons, it will be necessary for the parent to provide medical evidence to school. This will be initiated by the school and the EWO which will result in the pupil and family receiving the appropriate support in assisting in attending school regularly. There may be times where a reintegration plan may be necessary which will be a partnership agreement between the family, pupil, EWO and school.

## **Holidays during term time**

Parents do not have an automatic right to withdraw pupils from school during the school term for a holiday. Under the Education (pupil registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010, head teachers 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 schools holiday request form and completed by the parents/guardians. (please see Appendix 2).

The head teacher will make the decision and may include the following contributory factors:

- Time of year.
- Length of time.
- Overall percentage of attendance.
- Impact on the child's learning.

## **School procedures**

Parents are expected to contact school on the first day of absence and to provide reasons for their child's absence. This will then need to be followed up by an explanation note and handed into the class teacher which will be kept on record by school.

If parents fail to notify school, then the school will make every effort to contact the parents and also other persons listed as a point of contact. The absence will be recorded as unauthorised if no contact is made. Failure to receive any contact on the third day of absence may result in the involvement of the EWO.

The school has a duty to safeguard pupils and under the Education & Inspections Act 2006, requires the local authority to make arrangements to enable them to establish the identities of children residing within Newport who not receiving an education. For example these may be pupils who have not attended school for an excessive amount of time without any contact or reason for the absence. The duty lies within the Local Authority to investigate further. The Common Transfer File (CTF) will be sent to the forwarding school once being notified.

## **Schools Strategies to improve attendance**

We aim that all pupils achieve 100% attendance, however there maybe instances where pupils are unwell or have important appointments that they need to attend.

The school operates a 'Callio' process which provides parents with information of the links between attendance and attainment. This shows which category the child's attendance falls into when attendance is as follows:

100% - Gold
95-99% Green
92-95% Amber



NB: Where a child falls in between these categories they will be rounded up to the nearest whole figure. Each parent will receive a 'Callio letter' on a termly basis informing them of which category their child's attendance is currently in. This ensures that early intervention is received to pupils and families who are in need. (see appendix 3).

The Governing Body of Ysgol Bryn Derw have decided not to use Callio as a standard process for all pupils, and to only use it when it would be productive and beneficial to the child and family involved. This decision has been based upon the complexity of the needs of the pupils and the lack of specialist relevance of the Callio system and language – including reference to 'top grades and jobs'.

## **Schools Website**

The school's website and social media pages will also provide parents, pupils, governors and the public with all the relevant attendance information. This includes the school's attendance policy, along with all other schools policies and procedures.

## **Schools Newsletters**

This is another way of communicating with parents, and our school's newsletters are sent out on a termly basis. This includes informing parents and pupils where the school stands showing overall attendance figures.

Parents will need to check the attendance information on a regular basis and also check on school holiday dates and inset dates for the school. Please ensure that you check regularly to ensure there is no confusion as wrong dates are not reasons for children to be absent from school.

## **The School Environment**

The school will provide a happy, welcoming and organised environment to ensure all pupils enjoy learning which results in good attendance. It is the responsibility of all staff members to ensure that the classroom and the school is a happy place.

## **Staff Awareness**

All staff are fully aware of the importance of regular school attendance, and will notify the attendance officer if a child is absent with no explanation.

## **Transition Process**

As we are all aware it is difficult at times to deal with change. We as a school appreciate that pupils find it hard to cope with the various transitions that take place throughout the school day. Our school

ensures that with high staff ratios and home-school communications that these transitions will be as smooth as possible.

## **Parental Consultations**

Parental Consultations may offer the support of the EWO if parents need advice and guidance or additional support in trying to ensure the regular school attendance.

## **Additional Attendance Strategies**

### **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 visits the school on a regular basis, depending on need.

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

### **ROLE OF SCHOOL'S CHALLENGE ADVISORS**

Our school works closely with the Education Achievement Service (EAS) which provides us with a nominated Challenge Advisor who visits our school and advises and supports us in our school improvement process. Challenge Advisors, senior Local Authority Staff and EWO's work closely with those schools needing additional support where attendance is a concern.

### **GOOD PRACTICE STRATEGIES**

In addition to the strategies above, other initiatives may be conducted at any point.

## **Attendance Monitoring**

Attendance is monitored overall by a lead school governor, Attendance Officer, EWO, parent and on occasions include the pupil. Whilst the panel's aim is to address the attendance of pupils, it is not always in the best interest of the pupil to be out of class.

Parents- whose children's attendance have been monitored and is not improving are invited into school to discuss their child's attendance, with a view for an action plan to be completed and signed which will

regularly be reviewed. Letters of invitation will be sent to parents in advance and parents are asked to notify school as to whether they will be attending or not. If they are not available to attend then another letter will be sent. Failure to attend without notification may result in a visit or telephone call from the EWO.

## **Truancy Patrols**

Truancy Patrols are initiated by the school's police liaisons officers. Under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 this gives the Police the power to remove truants on the day of the truancy patrol. Any child found unaccompanied by an adult can be taken back to school or to a designated place of safety. Parents and pupils details are logged, along with the reasons for the pupil being out of school. These patrols are held as and when needed throughout the academic year.

## **First Day contact**

Whilst we as a school operate a first day contact, there may be times where the Education Welfare Officer will conduct this, and contact parents of those pupils who are absent on a specified day. This is deemed as good practice and identifies those pupils who are regularly absent at an early stage with a view to referring to additional support services.

## **Data Collection**

Our school's attendance data is continually being tracked and monitored electronically both on an individual pupil level and also as a whole school. This data is collated by the Lead EWO and shared amongst all schools across Newport on a monthly basis.

## **Monitoring and reporting**

The school will regularly provide reports to the governing body, senior management and challenge advisors, and the local authority which will inform them of current attendance. In addition parents will also be notified through the schools regular communication channels.

## Appendix 1

<b>Code</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Statistical meaning</b>
/\	Present at registration	Present
L	Late but arrived before register closed	Present
B	Educated off-site	Approved educational activity
D	Dual registered	Approved educational activity
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved educational activity
V	Educational trip or visit	Approved educational activity
J	Interview	Approved educational activity
W	Work experience ( not work based learning )	Approved educational activity
C	Other authorised circumstances( not covered by another code)	Authorised absence
F	Agreed extended family holiday	Authorised absence
H	Agreed family holiday	Authorised absence
I	Illness	Authorised absence
M	Medical/dental appointment	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
E	Exclusion	Authorised absence
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
T	Traveller Absence	Authorised absence
N	No reason provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Other unauthorised absence( no explanation provided)	Unauthorised absence
G	Family Holiday ( not agreed )	Unauthorised absence
U	Late arrival after the close of registration	Unauthorised absence
X	Un-timetabled sessions for non-compulsory school age	Not required to attend
Y	Partial and forced closure	Not required to attend
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not required to attend
#	School closed to all pupils	Not required to attend

**Appendix 2**

**Holiday in term time request**

**Section A**

To be completed by the Parent/Guardian at least 2 weeks in advance.

Name of Child:	Class	dob	Address	Tel no.
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				

Holiday dates: (including possibility of late flight arrivals if possible)

From: ..... to .....

Destination .....

(NB – This is for child protection reasons ensuring all our children are safeguarded)

We will make reasonable adjustments for students with special educational needs or disabilities. Please outline the exceptional circumstances that means you are requesting a holiday in term time:

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**Declaration:**

I understand that this holiday request may be authorised or not authorised and the head teacher will use his/her discretion in making the decision based on my child's circumstances. If the head teacher does not authorise this holiday, this may lead to a request for a Fixed Penalty Notice to the Local Authority Lead EWO which will be determined in line with the schools attendance policy. (Please ask for a copy at school or the schools website)

Parent/Guardian .....

### **Appendix 3 – ‘Callio’**

Communicating children’s attendance levels on a regular basis with parents is vital when improving attendance. Therefore through the use of SIMS and SIMS Discover colour coded letters are sent each half term to all parents informing them of their child’s current attendance and where this falls on the colour chart. It is very clear and easy to understand; explaining how much school time has been lost to absence and the impact on their child’s education as a result.

<b>Annual Attendance</b>	<b>School Missed</b>	<b>Result</b>
<b>100%</b>	<b>No lessons missed</b>	<b>Gold Standard – Superb! These pupils have the best chance of getting the top grades and jobs.</b>
<b>95 - 99%</b>	<b>95% = missing about two weeks of school</b>	<b>Green Standard – these pupils are more likely to gain the best grades in school and have the best employment chances.</b>
<b>92 – 95%</b>	<b>92% = missing about three weeks of school</b>	<b>Amber Standard – it will be much harder for these pupils to keep up with work and gain the best grades at school.</b>
<b>Below 92%</b>	<b>Missing more than three weeks of school</b>	<b>Red Standard – these pupils are missing too much school. This is likely to affect their grades and therefore the jobs available to them after leaving school.</b>

When a child fall into the ‘red zone’ i.e. less than 92%, a set of clear procedures that follow to manage this level of attendance. These procedures are detailed on the final page of this policy.

A example letter that may be sent to a parent/carer highlighting a pupil’s attendance is on the following page.

## EXAMPLE LETTER

### Attendance Information

Name of child ..... Class  
.....

Your child's attendance is currently 100%

We wish to congratulate your child on their excellent attendance of 100% so far this year. This is an excellent achievement and what we would consider to be the GOLD standard.

<b>Annual Attendance</b>	<b>School Missed</b>	<b>Result</b>
<b>100%</b>	<b>No lessons missed</b>	<b>Gold Standard – Superb! These pupils have the best chance of getting <i>the top grades and jobs.</i></b>
<b>95 - 99%</b>	<b>95% = missing about two weeks of school</b>	<b>Green Standard – these pupils are more likely to gain <i>the best grades in school and have the best employment chances.</i></b>
<b>92 – 95%</b>	<b>92% = missing about three weeks of school</b>	<b>Amber Standard – it will be much harder for these pupils to keep up with work <i>and gain the best grades at school.</i></b>
<b>Below 92%</b>	<b>Missing more than three weeks of school</b>	<b>Red Standard – these pupils are missing too much school. <i>This is likely to affect their grades and therefore the jobs available to them after leaving school.</i></b>

As a school we believe that good attendance is where success starts.

Thank you for your continued support in our drive to ensure good attendance.

Best wishes,

Head teacher

Who?	Action	Timescale	Template Tools
Callio Officer- Attendance Lead- Laura Foley	<u>LETTER AND PHONE CALL TO PARENTS / CARERS</u> 1. attendance levels will be monitored over next 2 weeks 2. If no significant improvement a meeting held to develop a plan 3. Keen to work together 4. Named contact in school	Week 1 & 2  2 weeks to improve attendance	Letter of concern
Present: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Callio Officer/Attendance lead</li> <li>• Parents/Guardian</li> <li>• Pupil</li> </ul>	<u>MEETING WITH PARENTS</u> 1. Identify issues preventing attendance 2. Develop joint attendance plan/Individual Development Plan	Week 3 – Meeting within 5 school days	Attendance Action Plan / IDP template including attendance agreement
Callio Officer- Attendance Lead	<u>MONITOR IMPACT OF PLAN OVER 4 WEEKS</u>	Week 4-7 –  Attendance Action Plan/ IDP Monitoring	
Present: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Callio Officer/ attendance lead</li> <li>• Parents/Guardian</li> <li>• Pupil</li> </ul>	<u>ESCALATION MEETING</u> 1. Review and update attendance plan 2. Intensive support including home visits by EWO 3. No further absence without medical support	Week 8 –  Meeting within 5 days	
Callio Officer/ Attendance lead	<u>MONITORING IMPACT OF INTENSIVE PLAN OVER 4 WEEKS</u>	Weeks 9-12  IDP Monitoring	
Head Teacher	FORMAL LETTER SENT and informs family a formal referral to the EWS	Week 13 – Formal letter sent to parents/ guardian	Formal letter to parents informing the case has been referred to EWS