



# Ysgol Y Bryn

## Attendance Policy

Written by: Miss G James and Mrs R Dawson

Approved by Full Governing Body: 25.10.23

Date/s reviewed annually: Autumn Term

Signed:

Mrs. R. Dawson    Acting Headteacher    Date: 25.10.23

Mr. G. Jones    Chair of Governors    Date: 25.10.23

At Ysgol Y Bryn ensuring high attendance and punctuality for all pupils is a priority. We want to ensure all our pupils receive a full- time education that will maximise all learning opportunities, which will provide our pupils with the best possible chances in life to succeed and achieve their goals.

## **Aims**

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

- Offer a safe and friendly environment welcoming all pupils
- Ensure all pupils reach their potential through a high level of school attendance and punctuality
- Respond rapidly to pupil attendance
- Communicate effectively with all stakeholders involved on the importance of regular attendance
- Identify pupils with irregular attendance and work with families and agencies to try and address and barriers that are stopping pupils attend school
- Keep accurate and up to date attendance data

## **Legal Framework**

The law outlining attendance is:

The Education Act 1996 places a legal obligation on:

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

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states

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

Section 444 further states:

*“The parent of a child of compulsory school age registered at school and failing to attend regularly is guilty of an offence punishable by law.”*

Compulsory school age means that children and young people should attend school from the start of the first term commencing after their fifth birthday and are of compulsory age until after the last Friday in June of the school year in which they have their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday.

An offence is not committed if it can be demonstrated that:

- The pupil was absent with leave (authorised absence)
- The pupil was ill or prevented from attending by an unavoidable cause.
- The absence occurred on a day set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil/parent belongs

## **Responsibilities**

Attendance is everybody's concern, and the school will expect all stakeholders to support and play their part in improving attendance.

## **Practice and Procedures**

The school encourages good attendance and punctuality by:

- creating a caring and nurturing environment whereby pupils' feels safe and appreciated as young people
- ensuring that attendance and punctuality are recognised within the whole school reward system
- developing positive relationships with parents / carers and external agencies working with the family/ pupil
- monitoring and evaluating the early intervention strategies adopted by the school
- working closely with multi agency colleagues and the School Safeguarding and Attendance Team to improve attendance and punctuality
- monitoring attendance data and trends and reporting this information termly to the Governing Body

## **Specific actions**

- The school will make its policy on attendance available to parents and pupils.
- The school will also communicate the importance of attendance to parents and pupils through assemblies, the school prospectus, newsletters and the school website / Facebook page.
- If no contact is received by the parent/ carer of an absent pupil on the first morning of the absence, a telephone call is made by the school's administration staff to investigate the reason for the absence. If the school is not able to contact the family, then this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (N no reason yet provided for absence).
- Details of the absence are recorded, if later received, and discussed with the Headteacher and a decision will be made with regards to authorisation as soon as possible. The Headteacher may ask the School Safeguarding and Attendance Team for advice with regards to this but the decision to authorise any absence remains with the school.

- If the pupil is registered as a Looked After Child or on the Child Protection register and absent from school without reason, then the school should contact Children's Services as soon as possible.
- When a pupil returns to school from an absence, but no explanation is offered, contact will be made with the parent/carer to establish a reason behind the absence
- A letter will also be sent out where there are concerns about attendance or if a pupil is persistently late to school
- Phone calls will be made by SLT members to discuss cause for concern around lateness and low attendance
- It is essential that, when school staff feel that a worrying pattern of non-attendance is emerging that they endeavour to meet with families and work closely with them to ensure that the appropriate level of intervention and support can be offered to the parent/carer and child to improve attendance
- Where school-based interventions do not improve attendance, advice will be sought from the School Safeguarding and Attendance Team. Where overall attendance is less than 80% and the main cause of absence is unauthorised, a formal referral to the Team will be considered. Alternatively, where there are concerns around unauthorised absence, school can consider requesting that a Penalty Notice is issued
- Where a pupil is missing for 10 school days (due to unauthorised absence), Schools have a duty to refer to the LA (School Safeguarding and Attendance Team) on the tenth day of absence where they have been unable to make contact with the parent/carer or child or have child welfare concerns (Statutory Guidance to prevent children and young people from missing education, Welsh Government circular no: 002/2017)
- The Welsh Government (WG) Education (Penalty Notice) (Wales) Regulations 2013 states that Local Authorities (LAs) are required by law to adhere to the Education Act 1996 section 444 to include penalty notices as one of the interventions to promote better school attendance
- Sections 444A and 444B of the Education Act 1996 provide that certain cases of unauthorised absence can be dealt with by way of a penalty notice. A penalty notice is a fine of up to £120 and may be issued to a parent / carer as a result of a child's unauthorised absence from school / education provision which brings their overall attendance to below 90%.
- The school adheres to the Code of Conduct for Penalty Notices as agreed and adopted by the LA, and therefore may request the LA to issue a penalty notice in certain cases
- **Only Headteachers can authorise the absence of children and young people**
- Information regarding the cause of the absence will always be required from parents/ carers.

### **The school will also:**

- ensure that all staff are aware of the registration procedures, registration regulations and education law relating to school attendance
- stress to parents and carers the importance of contacting the school as early as possible on the first day of absence;
- promote positive staff attitudes to pupils returning after absence;
- promote punctuality and attendance through a number of school based initiatives, for example, wake and shake, class attendance awards where an improvement can be shown, attendance certificates, half termly whole school prize draw
- consult with all members of the school's community and School Safeguarding and Attendance Team in developing and maintaining the whole school attendance policy
- ensure regular evaluation of attendance by the Governing Body
- work towards ensuring all pupils are supported and valued and so want to attend school

### **Role of Headteacher and the Senior Leadership Team**

The designated members of staff for attendance are Mrs R Dawson and Miss G James. They are responsible for the following:

- Overall management and implementation of this policy
- Monitoring and analysing school registers
- Setting targets and sharing progress with staff, pupils, parents, Governors, and the local authority
- Producing attendance reports and sharing with the school Governors
- Liaising with the LA officer for further support and information
- Inform parents when attendance is a concern through letters and where needed invite parents in for meetings
- Make referrals to other agencies where needed
- Notify the local authority when a 'child is missing education (CME)'
- Ensure the policy is readily available on the school website

The Acting Headteacher Mrs R Dawson is responsible for authorising any holiday requests through discretion (personal circumstances, pupil with additional learning needs etc) and consideration of previous years attendance. Holidays requests will be authorised when attendance is at 95% and above.

### **Role of the Governing Body**

- To approve the School's Attendance policy
- Discuss and challenge (where needed) attendance through termly Governing Body meetings
- Ensure a lead Governor is appointed for attendance

## Role of Teachers

- Registers are completed accurately
- complete school registers at the start of the morning session and afternoon session – the register is open for **30** minutes
- stress to parents and carers the importance of contacting the school as early as possible on the first day of absence
- To carry out the statutory role of completing attendance registers twice a day, one the morning and one in the afternoon
- Ensure absences are accounted for by parents and the correct code has been used.
- Follow up any unaccounted absences and raise a concern
- To promote good attendance and praise pupils' efforts
- Ensure pupils are greeted warmly into the classroom and build a relationship and trust with all pupils
- Liaise with the designated members of staff with any queries
- Ensure supply teachers record registers and pass on to Admin or Class teacher

## Responsibility of Pupils

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

## Responsibility of Parents

- Notify the school if their child is unable to attend on the first day, and every day thereafter
- Ensure their child/ren are arriving in school between **8.45am – 8.55am** every morning ready to start lessons by 9am
- Ensure the school have the updated contact details
- Where possible, try to book holidays and appointments outside of school hours or during the school holidays where possible
- Communicate and work with the school and agencies to address and issues
- Support their child by encouraging pupils to come to school every day
- Ensure that the school values of respect and calmness are adhered to when asked, as we are seeing some parents reacting negatively towards staff when being asked for reasons or reminded what time the school day starts.
- 

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| <b>8.15am</b>          | <b>Breakfast Club opens</b> and is free for all learners to attend.  |
| <b>8.35am</b>          | <b>Breakfast Club closes</b>   |
| <b>8.45am – 8.55am</b> | <b>School doors/Early Years gate open</b> where you will be greeted by staff.<br><br>Please ensure your child/ren are arriving in school between <b>8.45am – 8.55am</b> every morning ready to start lessons by 9am. |
| <b>8.55am</b>          | Doors close and Early Years Gate   |

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  |  |
| <b>If you arrive after 8.55am, please come to the main entrance (lateness is recorded)</b> |  |
| <b>9.00am</b>  | Register taken                                     |
| <b>9.10am</b>  | Registers close                                    |
| <b>3.00pm</b>  | Nursery end of the day/collection time             |
| <b>3.10pm</b>  | Reception to Year 6 end of the day/collection time |

### **Role of Admin Officer**

- Ensure all pupil absences are recorded and correct coding is used
- Ensure registers are completed and raise issue of those staff not compliant with the completion of registers
  
- Record any messages from parents informing reasons of pupil's absence
- Sends out daily text messages to parents where absence has not been reported
- To work closely with the Senior Leadership Team
- Adds and removes pupils to Teacher Centre

### **Local Authority – School Safeguarding and Attendance Team (SSAT)**

- Support schools with guidance and information
- Attend meetings with school and parents regarding attendance
- Update school on new information regarding pupils and families of concern
- Conduct planning meetings with families and the relevant professionals
- Intensive monitoring of individual pupil attendance
- Create agreement plans between SSAT, parent and pupil

### **Attendance System**

#### **Registers**

The register is a legal document and must be kept accurately. The register may be requested in a court of law as evidence in a prosecution for non-attendance. It will also be used for end of term reports, records of achievement and reference requests, and information for other schools, LAs and external agencies.

- No pupil should be marked present unless they are in school or other agreed educational activity
- The register should not have any missing marks
- Registers must be completed every morning and afternoon
- When a pupil arrives late but the register is still open, the pupils should be marked as late (L)
- When a pupil arrives late after the register has closed, the pupils should be marked as late (U)
- When a pupil is not present for registration, she/he should be marked as an unauthorised absence, unless a medical letter/phone call by parent is received and deemed to be genuine
- Pupils should not have access to the register
- The Headteacher is the only person who can authorise that a pupil be removed from the register – this can only be done with the agreement of the LA.

(See **Appendix 1** for the list of codes used in the registers.)

### **Lateness**

A pupil's punctuality is a legal requirement and the parent of a pupil who is persistently late is guilty of an offence. The law treats persistent lateness in the same way as irregular attendance and parents can be prosecuted if persistent late arrival is not resolved.

### **Holidays**

The Headteacher has the discretionary power to grant leave for the purpose of a family holiday and will consider every case on an individual basis. Parents do not have an automatic right to withdraw pupils from school for a holiday during term time. However, there may be circumstances that warrant a pupil taking time off in term time and this is why Headteachers are best placed to make the decision. The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 state that head teachers have a discretionary power to authorise leave for a family holiday during term time where parents seek permission.

Parents will need to complete a holiday request form ( See Appendix 2) The Headteacher will then make the decision based on the following criteria and acknowledgement of the families' personal situation.

- Time of year
- Pupils current and previous attendance records
- Length of time
- Impact on the pupil's learning

Parents are asked to make all medical and dental appointments outside school hours wherever possible.



## **Extended Overseas Trips**

They should only be agreed where schools have taken into full account the Welsh Government guidance and individual circumstances. Parents/carers should be advised of the impact such a lengthy absence will have upon their child(ren) and be encouraged, where possible to take their holiday to coincide with school closure. Trips overseas are the same as family holidays and parents can access a request form within the school. It is critical that pupils' time in school is maximised and whether it is for linguistic or delayed attainment reasons, parents need to be encouraged to plan for trips in the 13 weeks available to them outside term times. An agreed date of return should be made with the school prior to the trip. Failure to return on the agreed date, can result in your child(ren) being taken off roll. In these circumstances the parents/carers would need to make an application for re-admission on their return to UK and may not be guaranteed the school of their choice, as all available places could be taken. Therefore, a change of school would be required.

## **Authorised attendance**

The only reasons that the school will authorise attendance are:

- Illness
- Medical appointment
- Religious observance
- Exceptional circumstances

For cases where pupils are persistently ill, the school can request medical evidence before authorising attendance. The school can work closely with families to support pupils with medical conditions.

Every effort should be made to arrange appointments outside school hours. However we understand specialist hospitals/ clinics can take priority, a letter should be provided to the school.

## **Unauthorised**

Pupils will be recorded with unauthorised absences when an explanation has not been given, or a reason have been provided that we cannot accept. Examples include:

- Holidays (if not authorised by the head teacher)
- Shopping
- Birthdays
- Haircuts
- Too tired
- Late night due to a celebration
- Other family members are ill

## **Stages (See Appendix 3)**

For cases where pupil's attendance is irregular or a concern to the school, Letter 1 will be sent to the parents informing them of their child's attendance. The SSAT will be informed, and parents will be offered support and be expected to show improvement in the pupil's attendance.

If the pupil's attendance continues to decrease (2-3 week period), Letter 2 will be sent and a meeting will be scheduled.

Where parents do not attend meetings or attendance does not improve Letter 3 will be sent to parents inviting them to a meeting and referral will be made the SSAT.

### **School Strategies to Support Attendance**

Our aim is not to challenge but to encourage attendance and punctuality, which we believe will best support our pupils for their future. In doing so, the school have put the following strategies in place:

- Setting whole school target (95%) and sharing weekly and termly attendance reports via our website and assemblies
- Wake and shake (KS2) and Rise and shine (Foundation Phase) activities for pupils in school between 8:45 and 9:00am
- Assemblies about the importance of attendance with pupils
- Updating class attendance boards weekly
- Weekly 5 minutes extra play for pupils in every day on time each week
- Whole school homework to create a school mascot for attendance
- Certificates for 100% Amazing Attendance, Hit our target 95% attendance and Impressive Improvement Attendance
- Announcement of the most improved class each week and a whole class reward.
- Big prizes for pupils end of each term hitting the 95% +
- Communication with parents about attendance through phone calls, letters and meetings
- Attendance on weekly agenda in staff meeting, opportunity to liaise with teachers
- Set up meetings with SSAT for support and guidance

This policy will be reviewed every two years or earlier if needed and agreed with Governors.

We will raise awareness of this policy via:

- The school website and app
- Termly newsletters
- Meetings with parents
- Headteacher reports to the Governing Body

## Appendix 1 – Register codes of Teacher Centre

| <b>Code</b> | <b>Description</b>   |
|-------------|--|
| <b>/\</b>   | Present at registration  |
| <b>L</b>    | <i>Late but arrived before the register closed</i>                                   |
| <b>B</b>    | Educated off-site (not dual registration)  |
| <b>D</b>    | Dual registered (i.e. present at another school or at a PRU)                         |
| <b>P</b>    | Approved sporting activity   |
| <b>V</b>    | Educational visit or trip  |
| <b>J</b>    | Interview  |
| <b>W</b>    | Work experience (not work based training)  |
| <b>C</b>    | Other authorised circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description) |
| <b>F</b>    | Agreed extended family holiday   |
| <b>H</b>    | Agreed family holiday  |
| <b>I</b>    | Illness  |
| <b>M</b>    | Medical or dental appointment  |
| <b>S</b>    | Study leave  |
| <b>E</b>    | Excluded but no alternative provision made   |
| <b>R</b>    | Day set aside exclusively for religious observance                                   |
| <b>T</b>    | Traveller absence  |
| <b>N</b>    | No reason for the absence provided yet   |
| <b>O</b>    | Other unauthorised (not covered by other codes or descriptions)                      |
| <b>G</b>    | Family holiday (not agreed or in excess of agreement)                                |
| <b>U</b>    | Late and arrived after the register closed   |
| <b>X</b>    | Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils                           |
| <b>Y</b>    | Partial and forced closure   |
| <b>Z</b>    | Pupil not on roll yet  |
| <b>#</b>    | School closed to all pupils  |



## Appendix 2 – Holiday form

### APPLICATION BY PARENT/CARER FOR CHILD'S LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME

Pupil's Name.....

Class.....

Home Address.....

.....

I wish to apply for my child to be absent from school during the following dates:

Date of last day of school.....

Date of return to school.....

Total number of school days missed.....

Reason for absence from school:

*I make application for my child named above to have authorised absence from school for the reasons stated. I understand that if this is not agreed then any absence will be treated as unauthorised and may lead to the issue of a Penalty Notice or a Summons for irregular school attendance.*

Name of Parent/Carer making application.....

Signed.....

Date.....

PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED FORM TO YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL GIVING AT LEAST 4 WEEKS NOTICE OF INTENDED ABSENCE

## APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME

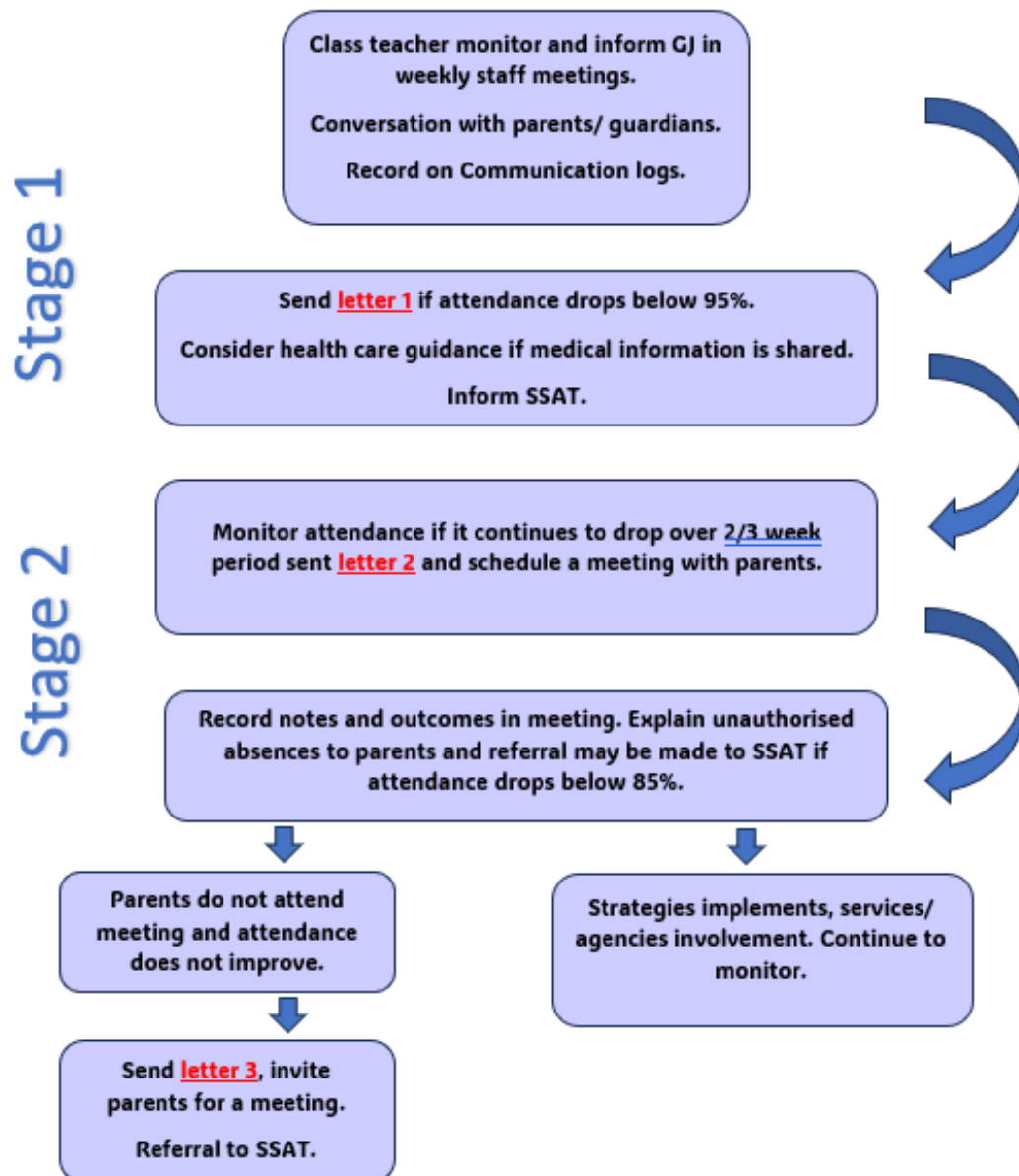
Attached is an application form for you to request permission for your child to be absent from school to take part in a family holiday. Before completing the application form, please read these notes carefully.

- The law states that you do not have the right to take your child out of school for holidays during term time. The Local Education Authority works with schools to reduce the numbers of children missing school because of holidays taken in term time and schools can refuse your request to take your child out of school.
- If you wish to take your child on holiday during term time, you must apply for permission in writing using the attached form. We can authorise leave of absence for holidays totalling no more than 10 school days in any school year, however, this is only if a pupil's attendance is 100% at this time. **Any days of a requested school holiday absence that would take the attendance below 95% would not be authorised.**
- There are certain times of the year when a child may experience problems because of missing school. These include examination periods, at the time of starting a new school and at the start of a new school term. In deciding whether to authorise your child's absence and give permission for a holiday in term time, the school will take these and other factors into account.
- If the school refuse your application and you still take your child out of school the absences will be treated as unauthorised. Unauthorised absences may lead to a Penalty Notice or a Summons being issued against you for irregular school attendance.

Having read these notes, if you still wish to apply for a leave of absence for your child to accompany you on holiday during term time then please complete the application attached. This form should be returned to your child's school as far in advance of the proposed holiday as possible

## Appendix 3 – Stages of attendance

### Ysgol Y Bryn Attendance System



STAGE 3 Referrals to SSAT will be accepted when

- The LA non-attendance process has been followed and there has been no improvement in attendance.
- There is lack of engagement from the parent/carer or lack of progress despite support
- Main cause of absence is unauthorised and attendance is 85% or below
- There are no mitigating circumstances which would prevent prosecution.