



**BRYN CELYNNOG**

Comprehensive School

*Nurturing Success*

# **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

**UPDATED SEPTEMBER 2023**

**LAST APPROVED BY GOVERNORS: JULY 2023**

**DATE FOR REVIEW: JULY 2024**

## BRYN CELYNNOG COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

### ATTENDANCE POLICY

At Bryn Celynnog Comprehensive School we continually strive for high standards in all that we do to ensure your child succeeds. Excellent attendance and punctuality are an essential element of life in school and, in preparing young people for the world of work. This policy outlines how we will help our pupils improve and maintain an excellent attendance record. School attendance is compulsory.

#### Aims

- Create a positive ethos across the school which identifies the importance of regular and punctual attendance.
- Make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school, including students, parents, teachers and governors.
- Develop positive communication between home and school concerning attendance and punctuality.
- Recognise and respond to the needs of individual students when planning the reintegration following significant periods of absence.
- Set targets to improve individual student and whole school attendance levels, using attendance related data.
- Seek clarification from the Local Education Authority (LEA) regarding support for parents whose children's attendance levels are causing a concern.

#### Key terms

- **Authorised Absence** – student absence that has been approved by school and coded accordingly as an acceptable reason has been provided (for example, illness, to attend a family funeral or an unavoidable medical appointment during school time).
- **Parent(s)** – where parent(s) is used this relates to the person(s) who have parental responsibility for the child (parent(s), legal guardian(s) / carer(s)).
- **Unauthorised Absence** – student absence that has not been approved by school and coded accordingly as the school does not consider the absence to be reasonable (for example, a shopping trip, a family holiday or any form of truancy).

#### Absence Procedures

Please contact our attendance officers as possible if your child is absent. You can contact the school by either telephoning us on: 01443 203411 or by emailing or [attendance.wellbeing@bryncelynnog.org.uk](mailto:attendance.wellbeing@bryncelynnog.org.uk).

## **Responsibilities**

### **The Governing body will:**

- Approve the policy;
- Receive reports from the Headteacher;
- Review the working of the policy in the light of the Headteacher's report;
- Ensure that the policy is promoted and implemented throughout the school, and is known by the parents.

### **The Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for Attendance and Well-being will:**

- Ensure that strategies are in place to promote and implement the policy throughout the school, and monitor progress;
- Notify parents as appropriate that if a student of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly his/her parents commit an offence;
- Liaise with the LEA and police if they wish to exercise their powers to enforce truancy;
- Provide regular attendance updates to the Headteacher and Senior Management Team;
- Produce termly and annual reports with statistics to the governing body.

### **The Attendance Lead will:**

- Oversee attendance arrangements;
- Work with Heads of Learning to ensure efficient running of the system;
- Monitor SIMS daily for missing registers;
- Keep the Assistant Headteacher informed of the progress of the policy.

### **The Heads of Year will:**

- ensure that all registers are completed during registration time;
- ensure that all suspected truancy is followed up and dealt with;
- contact parents over student absences where appropriate;
- liaise with the Attendance Lead/Attendance Officers with any relevant attendance concerns;
- ensure that key attendance messages are disseminated by all form tutors.

### **The Attendance Officers will:**

- notify parents by Class Charts message every day of unknown absence;
- check the automated system for any messages regarding student absence;
- provide the parent/carer of every student with information about their child's attendance, each term;
- monitor and send letters to those parents whose child attendance falls below 95%;
- liaise with the Attendance Wellbeing Officer (AWO) on attendance and issue referral letters to the AWO and to parents as appropriate (less than 86% attendance);
- regularly record communication on SIMS and or ClassCharts/ProvisonMap;
- regularly check the system for unauthorised absence and contact parents to ascertain a reason;
- meet with parents regarding persistent and/or sporadic absence;
- enter note commentaries for absence on SIMs;
- liaise with primary feeder schools on Year 6 to Year 7 transition data regarding attendance (KS3);
- liaise with SMT/HOY if there is reasonable concern about a child's welfare;

### **Registration Tutors will:**

- ensure that students are registered accurately during registration times;
- keep the Head of Year informed of any signs of suspected truancy; and
- inform the Head of Year of any possible underlying problems which might account for absences;
- actively promote attendance during registration, using positive praise where appropriate;

**Classroom Teachers will:**

- check the attendance of students at their lessons and complete registers promptly;
- record on Class Charts if a student is present earlier in the day and yet not in the current lesson

**Administration staff will:**

- provide a safe/secure drop-box for absence notes to be placed by pupils, which will then be collected by the Attendance Officers;
- liaise with the Attendance Officers on matters regarding students attendance.

**Parents will:**

- ensure that their child/children attend school regularly unless they are ill or have an authorised absence;
- inform the school daily of non-attendance;
- provide evidence in the form of an appointment card or an explanatory note if appointments are made during school time.

**Safeguarding**

All staff will be alert to potential safeguarding issues when considering reasons for student absences.

A robust escalation protocol is in place for use by the Attendance Team and SMT where a student is unaccounted for by school and home.

**Legal responsibilities**

The legal framework governing attendance is set by the Education Acts and their associated regulations (which relate to schools and Pupil Referral Units).

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that “...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 need she/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 ... ..”

**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 unavoidable cause;
- the absence occurred on a day set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil/parents belong;
- the school is not within the prescribed walking distance of the child’s home and suitable transport arrangements have not been made by the LEA. The law relating to ‘walking distance’ effectively is defined as two miles for pupils under eight and three miles for all other pupils.
- Educational activity or sporting event taking place off school premises

**Authorising Absence**

Only a Headteacher can authorise an absence. Parents and the LEA do not have the power to authorise absences, this includes family holidays.

In regards to holidays taken in term time, whilst the legislation under Section 7 (3 and 4) of The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 allows head teachers to “*grant leave of absence from school for the purposes of a family holiday for no more than 10 days in an academic year*”, the school will support

the local authority stance which is one that will discourage holiday absence unless the pupil and family are exempt under one of the three “exceptional” circumstance criteria. Those exemptions are:

- Families of serving armed forces personnel;
- Parent or child experiencing a life limiting illness;
- Families that have suffered an acute trauma.

A holiday will only be authorised with the understanding that their attendance should be 95% or more at the time the holiday is to be taken.

### **Fixed Penalty Notices for Non-Attendance at School**

The school may request the local authority to issue a fixed penalty notices where a parent/carer has failed to secure their child’s regular attendance at school. A penalty notice can be requested against one of the following criteria:

1. Where there is a minimum of 10 unauthorised sessions (5 school days) in the current term (these do not need to be consecutive) which may or may not include pupils who are persistently arriving after the close of the registration period (Recommended that registers be kept open for thirty minutes);
2. Where a parent(s)/carer(s) refuses to engage with a school in the interest of improving their child’s school attendance levels;
3. Where a pupil is repeatedly caught truanting in public places during school hours (Police can request a penalty notice be issued for this offence);
4. Where a holiday in term time has been requested but has been unauthorised.

To comply with The Education (Penalty Notices) (Wales) Regulations 2013, Bryn Celynnog Comprehensive School will operate in accordance with the local authority’s Code of Conduct for fixed penalty notices for regular non-attendance at school. It remains the discretion of the head teacher to authorise absences in line with The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 attendance codes and supplementary guidance provided by the local authority.

Each pupil’s absence will be considered on its own merits and if appropriate, a fixed penalty notice may be requested to encourage improved future attendance. If a pupil’s attendance is significantly low, a referral to the Attendance and Wellbeing Service may be considered as an alternative to requesting a penalty notice.

## **Lateness**

The majority of pupils at the school have excellent punctuality and there are of course occasions where a late may occur through certain circumstances – we are aware of this, however punctuality is extremely important as registration time is a crucial time in the day where key messages are given.

To this end we are asking for your support in ensuring that your son/daughter understands the importance of being punctual to school. Pupils are required to be in school for statutory registration at 8:45am. Arrival at school after 8:45am will result in the student receiving 5 negative Class Charts points. Arrival after 9am will result in 10 negative points.

## **Encouraging good attendance and punctuality**

It is important to remember that the majority of pupils at Bryn Celynnog Comprehensive School arrive on time and are present every day. An important part of our attendance policy is that this good practice is commended. In order to do this, we:

- Award certificates to pupils who achieve 98-100% attendance.
- Award ClassCharts reward points for achieving attendance challenges.
- Praise pupils in assemblies who have achieved excellent attendance.
- Liaising with feeder schools to promote attendance across the cluster.

## **Monitoring**

The Headteacher or Attendance Lead will report to the Governing Body, with attendance data and any specific trends or difficulties with individual pupils.

## **Review**

This policy is due for review annually. Its success should be judged by answers to the following questions:

1. Are all staff, pupils and parents aware of the procedures to be followed?
2. Has the profile of attendance been raised positively over the period of this policy?
3. Do teachers and pupils have high expectations of themselves and others in terms of attendance?