

# Ysgol Bryn Castell



## Attendance Policy

**ADOPTED:** Summer Term 2018

**REVIEW:** Spring Term 2021

### Policy Review and Monitoring

*This policy is based upon the BCBC Schools Attendance Policy template (February 2016)*

This policy is due to be reviewed at the time stated, unless circumstances determine that this policy needs to be reviewed at an earlier time.

Person	Date	Activity
BCBC	February 2016	Policy template prepared
Bryntirion Cluster	January 2018	Policy discussed; agreed that all schools in Cluster would agree with small changes to make specific to their school
Headteacher	January 2018	Draft policy prepared
Stakeholders including staff and GB	January 2018	Consultation period
Headteacher	June 2018	Amendment following Peer Enquiry feedback
GB	June 2018	Agreed amendments

**Signed:** Chair of Governors

**Headteacher**



Ysgol Bryn Castell

## Attendance Policy

<b>CONTENTS</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
Introduction	2
Aims	2
Legal Framework	2
The Education Wales Regulations 2013	3
Definitions	3
Roles and Responsibilities	5
Keeping School Registers	7
Types of Absences	7
Punctuality	8
Medical Absences	8
Holidays during Term Time	9
School Procedures	9
Schools Strategies to Improve Attendance	9
Data Collection	11
Monitoring and Reporting	11
Appendix 1 – Codes	12
Appendix 2 - Holiday Authorisation Request Form	13

## 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. Regular school attendance is essential for all children and young people. Failure to regularly attend can increase the risk of leaving school without any qualifications, and can also increase the likelihood of pupils being drawn into criminal and anti-social behaviour.

Our school will endeavour to work with Parents/Carers, pupils, the local authority and Central South Consortium Joint Education Services 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/Carers, 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 to 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.

### **The Education (Penalty Notice) Wales Regulations 2013:**

This legislation came into force in September 2014 and has given local authorities new powers to issue fixed penalty notices. (FPN). A code of conduct has been agreed by Bridgend County Borough Council on the issuing of the FPN which includes the following criteria:

- Minimum of 10 unauthorised absences in the current term which do not have to be consecutive.
- Minimum of 10 sessions of lateness after the close of registration.
- Parents/Carers who chose to take their children out of school on holiday during term time without authorisation from the Head teacher for a minimum of 10 unauthorised sessions.
- Pupil regularly coming into contact with the police during school hours without a justified reason.
- Parents/Carers failing to engage with school/EWS but where prosecution has not been instigated.

The Head teacher will inform the parent by letter that a request for a fixed penalty notice will be completed and sent to the Lead Education Welfare Officer (Lead EWO) for the local authority. The Lead EWO will consider the request, taking into account levels of absence, level of parental engagement, any equality implications, history of attendance and also any statement of special educational needs.

A fixed penalty notice warning may be issued and a period of 15 days will be monitored for an immediate improvement. A warning may not be issued in respect of an unauthorised holiday in term time.

A penalty notice is £60 if paid within 28 days in receipt of the notice, increasing to £120 if not paid within 28 days. If not received by 42 days then the local authority can prosecute Parents/Carers for the child's absence.

For further information please see the BCBC website; [www.bridgend.gov.uk](http://www.bridgend.gov.uk).

YBC issues FPNs infrequently as the complexity and severity of the challenging behavior displayed by the pupil in the home environment may make it impossible and/or dangerous for the Parent/Carer to enforce; applying a legal sanction can escalate the pressure applied by the Parent/Carer resulting in more challenging behaviour from the pupil. Each decision is considered using an individualised multi-agency approach.

### **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 31<sup>st</sup> March, 31<sup>st</sup> August and 31<sup>st</sup> 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 16<sup>th</sup> 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

CSCJES – Central South Consortium Joint Education Service

CTF - Common Transfer File – pupil file transferred to relevant school

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:

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Headteacher**

- To be responsible for overall management and implementation of this policy.
- Work closely with the school's Governing Body.
- Set attendance targets with the Central South Consortium challenge advisors and governors, and take advice from the local authority if needed.
- To use discretion when receiving applications for holiday requests and to provide reasons to Parents/Carers.
- Regular attendance reports shared and provided to governors.
- 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 CME procedures.
- Ensure policy is readily available for stakeholders including on the school, and website.
- To work with CSC Challenge advisors and to provide a comprehensive plan in terms of attendance, including future plans.
- To provide rewards to those pupils with improved or excellent attendance.

### **Governing Body**

- Approve the policy and amend if necessary.
- Receive reports from the head teacher on a regular basis.
- Attend meetings as and when required.
- Ensure policy is shared with all relevant stakeholders.
- Lead governor for attendance is appointed.

### **Senior Management Team**

- To support the above actions as may be required.
- To ensure that admin staff manage relevant aspects of attendance work and provide timely information to Headteacher, governors, senior staff and LA / CSC staff as required.
- Discuss any initiatives with all staff.
- Respond to any truancy concerns.

### **Class Teacher/Pastoral Team**

- To carry out the statutory role of completing attendance registers twice a day, once in the morning and once in the afternoon.
- To ensure that any notes or communication in relation to absences or lateness are recorded promptly via SIMs or notes sent to the admin office.
- To continue to raise the profile of attendance to all pupils.
- Follow up unaccounted reasons for absence and raise concerns with SMT.
- Contact Home School Liaison Officer/Admin Team with any attendance queries.

### **Home School Liaison Officer (HSLO)/Administrative Team**

- To ensure all registers are completed twice daily and absences recorded with notes received.

- To provide first-day response to 'mop up' missing marks, and pursue any outstanding missing marks, providing reasons and inputting reasons on SIMS.
- To check messages regularly, on the schools answerphone and text messaging system for any attendance issues.
- To contact Parents/Carers individually who haven't contacted school by text, letter or telephone in order to establish reasons for absence.
- To monitor patterns of irregular attendance.
- To arrange letters and meetings for those Parents/Carers whose children's attendance is posing a concern.
- Ensure all absences are recorded in line with the guidance of codes document including those unauthorised absence and no reasons provided.
- Raise issues of any staff non-compliance with the completion of registers.
- Work closely with the schools EWO and support staff in the school.
- To work closely with Headteacher and SMT closely.
- To ensure transfer of CTF of pupils are completed in a timely manner and pupils are not removed from roll unnecessarily.
- To attend relevant or update training on attendance as required.

#### **Parents/Carers**

- To ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually.
- To notify the school if their child is unable to attend, on the first day of absence and regularly thereafter.
- To keep the school updated on Parents/Carers contact details, including mobile numbers and new addresses.
- To work with school and partner agencies to address any issues of irregular attendance of their children.
- To work with their child in relation to homework, not completing homework is not a reason for missing school.

#### **Pupils**

- Attend regularly and on time unless unwell or in receipt of an agreed authorised absence.
- To bring in and take home any notes/communication from Parents/Carers regarding attendance.

#### **Local Authority Education Welfare Service (EWS)**

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 EWO will meet with a senior member of staff within school and discusses those pupils who have attendance of which causes concern.

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/Carers of your child's attendance, make a telephone call home, invite you into school or/and will conduct a home visit.

Parents/Carers have a legal duty to ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually, or otherwise, under the Education Act 1996. Where Parents/Carers 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/Carers. (Please see BCBC Non-school Attendance Enforcement Policy). However the EWS does not take this lightly and will endeavour to work and support Parents/Carers, schools and pupils to improve attendance levels.

### **Additional Local Authority Support Services**

The EWS sits within the early help team which comprises of a multi-disciplinary teams which are based in co-located areas across the county of Bridgend covering the North (CCYD), East (Civic Offices) and the West (Pyle life centre).

The early help team consists of a variety of support services including family support workers, family engagement officers, counsellors, and youth workers. The early help team is designed to support families and pupils where a need has been identified. All officers are professionally trained and work with families, schools and agencies to ensure all Parents/Carers and pupils receive the best possible support to enable them to have better opportunities in life. Parents/Carers can also self-refer into the service directly via [www.earlyhelp@bridgend.gov.uk](mailto:www.earlyhelp@bridgend.gov.uk) or alternatively telephone on 01656 815420.

### **School's Challenge Advisors/Central South Consortium Joint Education Services.**

Our school works closely with Central South Consortium which provides us with a nominated challenge advisor who visits our school and advises and supports us in our school improvement process. Challenge advisors and EWO's works closely with those schools needing additional support where attendance is a concern.

### **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 all schools across BCBC to record all pupil's 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/Carers to understand the definition of the different types of absences. They are classed as unauthorised absence and authorised absence. The Headteacher can only decide on whether an absence should be classed in either one of these categories, Parents/Carers cannot.

Absences maybe 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. Those Parents/Carers of pupils who are persistently late will be contacted by letter initially, and subsequently invited to meet with the Headteacher to discuss any issues.

Pupils who are late come to the main entrance and give reasons to the admin team who maintain update registers with times/reasons accordingly.

## **Medical Absences**

Where a child is continually absent from school on the grounds of medical reasons, it may 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/Carers 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, Headteachers 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/Carers are expected to contact school on the first day of absence and to provide reasons for their child's absence. Parents/Carers are able to do this in person, by note, telephone or text. All of these are kept on record, using the SIMs register system.

If Parents/Carers fail to notify school, then the school will make every effort to contact the Parents/Carers 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.

As a school, we have a duty to safeguard all our pupils. The Education & Inspections Act 2006 requires the local authority to make arrangements to enable them to establish the identities of children residing within BCBC who are not receiving an education ('Child Missing in 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.

For further information please see [www.bridgend.gov.uk](http://www.bridgend.gov.uk) (CME document)

## YBC's Strategies to Improve Attendance

We aim that all pupils achieve 100% attendance, however there maybe instances where pupils unfortunately are unwell or unable to attend school due to other valid reasons. We ensure that Parents/Carers are informed where levels of attendance are of a concern; this ensures that early intervention is received to pupils and families who are in need.

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

GREEN	93% - 100%
AMBER	87% - 92.99%

RED
-----

below 87%
-----------

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 half termly informing them of which category they are currently in. This ensures that early intervention is received to pupils and families who are in need.

### **Informing Parents/Carers**

The school's website provide Parents/Carers, pupils, governors and the public with all the relevant attendance information including the school's attendance policy, along with all other schools policies and procedures. Parents/Carers receive letters and other messages which include information on attendance, school holidays and inset dates for the school. Parents/Carers will need to check attendance information regularly to ensure there is no confusion as wrong dates are not reasons for children to be absent from school.

### **School Environment**

YBC aims to provide a happy, welcoming and organised environment to ensure all pupils enjoy learning and encourages good attendance. All staff work to ensure that the classroom and the school is a happy place and are fully aware of the importance of regular school attendance, and pupils will regularly be made aware of this during the school day from staff.

### **Attendance Assemblies and Rewards**

Good attendance is celebrated regularly through school assemblies as well as in class. Celebrating attendance and involving pupils gives them an incentive, motivation and encouragement with a sense of self-worth. This promotes the wellbeing of children as well as rewarding them. Pupils at YBC receive awards for high levels of attendance on a termly basis.

### **Transition Process**

As we are all aware it is difficult at times to deal with change. We appreciate that some pupils find it hard to cope with the transition into YBC and we seek to provide an individualised approach to ensure a smooth successful long-term integration into the school.

A number of pupils at YBC can display high levels of emotional distress and/or challenging behaviour which can impact negatively on their attendance at school. In these instances, the school works closely with Parents/Carers and multi-agency colleagues to develop individualised programmes of reintegration to support these pupils.

### **Positive Behaviour Management including Therapeutic Interventions**

YBC offers a range of supportive strategies to support the engagement of pupils with education. This include but are not limited to;

- Team Teach positive behaviour management approach
- Learning Recovery department
- School counsellor
- Man in Van provision
- Basic Skills SSO
- Home Tuition (for a small number of pupils)
- Access to specialised therapies such as Music therapy and Play therapy

## **School Sanctions**

In specific circumstances where pupils are continually truanting/absconding from school we may give pupils a consequence for their behaviour in the form of detention either during lunch time or after school. Parents/Carers will be notified on each occasion.

## **Good Practice School Strategies**

### **Attendance Drives**

EWOs across the county will work collaboratively with schools and early help teams to complete an attendance drive which will consist of visiting homes to Parents/Carers of pupils who are absent from school on a particular day and whose attendance is below the agreed target. Members from the early help team will assist the EWOs. This is a pro-active partnership approach in assisting schools, Parents/Carers and pupils in identifying issues with attendance and any other needs.

### **Truancy Patrols**

Truancy Patrols are initiated by the school's police liaisons officers and the EWS. 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/Carers 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/Carers 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 Bridgend on a termly basis.

### **Monitoring and Reporting**

The school will regularly provide reports to the Governing Body, challenge advisors, and the local authority which will inform them of current attendance. In addition Parents/Carers will also be notified through the schools regular communication channels.

*RU*

## Appendix 1

Code	Meaning	Statistical meaning
/ \	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



# Ysgol Bryn Castell

## Holiday Request Form

PLEASE PASS TO SCHOOL OFFICE TWO WEEKS BEFORE THE DATE OF REQUESTED ABSENCE.

Name of Pupil:			
Class:	Date of Birth:	/	/
Name of person making request:			
Relationship to pupil (e.g. mother):			
Dates of holiday: FROM		TO	No. of school days lost:
Destination (for safeguarding purposes):			
<b>Reason why this holiday is being taken during term time:</b>			
<b>Declaration:</b>			
I understand that this holiday request may be authorised or not authorised and the Headteacher will use his/her discretion in making the decision based on my child's circumstances. If the Headteacher 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.			
Signed: _____ (Parent/Carer)    Date: _____			

OFFICE USE ONLY - to be completed by school staff.			
Attendance so far this school year %		Attendance previous school year %	
Authorised Absences	Unauthorised Absences	Authorised Absences	Unauthorised Absences
No. days holidays taken this school year.		No. days holiday days taken last school year.	

Your request for authorisation of the above holiday period during term time:	
<i>*Delete as appropriate</i>	<b>Reason</b>
Has been authorised	
Has NOT been authorised	

A completed copy of this form will be returned to home and copy retained on file for our records

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Headteacher    Date: \_\_\_\_\_