

BRYN-Y-DERYN



CARNEGIE CENTRE
Gyfleoedd ar gyfer newid a
llwyddiant
opportunities for change and success

Attendance & Punctuality Policy 2018-2019

Rationale

A learner's success at school is likely to be affected negatively if their attendance is poor. Those who do not attend regularly may fall behind in their learning leading to feelings of frustration and unhappiness. As a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) we seek to provide an environment in which all young people can flourish as a member of a happy, caring and safe community. It is our goal that each of our learners attends school regularly and on time, making the most of the opportunities available to them.

Non-attendance is an important issue that is treated seriously. However, every case is different and we will always try to support families to improve the situation. The Bryn y Deryn Attendance Policy is designed to help teachers, parent/carers and learners understand their rights, responsibilities and roles when it comes to school attendance. By working in partnership, it is our aim that every learner achieves over 85% attendance.

Objectives

- Give attendance and punctuality a high priority
- Clearly define roles and responsibilities to ensure consistency and rigour
- Provide support, advice and guidance to families
- Use attendance data systematically to evaluate success
- Use rewards to celebrate good attendance
- Work in partnership with the Education Welfare Service to improve attendance
- Support learners returning to school after significant periods of absence

Rights, responsibilities and roles

The Bryn y Deryn Attendance Policy has its basis in Article 28 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). We believe that all young people have the right to education, based on equality of opportunity, and that the school, in partnership with parent/carers and other parties, must take measures to encourage regular school attendance and reduce rates of absenteeism.

Bryn y Deryn is required under The Education (Learner Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010, to take attendance registers twice a day; at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session.

Parent/carers are required under section 7 of the Education Act 1996, to ensure that their learner receives effective full-time education.

Cardiff Local Authority is required under Section 437 of the Education Act 1996, to ensure that a learner for whom they are responsible is receiving suitable education by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

This framework operates in conjunction with Cardiff Local Authority's 'Five Step System of Attendance Management'. The Inclusion and Learner Support document (Circular 47, 2006); section 4, highlights that attendance is a priority in all schools and all children must be given the opportunity to reach their potential.

The PRU consistently strives to maintain and encourage regular attendance and refers persistent non-attendance to the Education Welfare Service. The Head of Centre and the Attendance Officer meet fortnightly to review attendance.

The PRU is required to keep and maintain two forms of register:

- Admissions Register; a list of the learners on the school roll;
- Attendance Register; a register of attendance for every session that the school is open to learners.

When a learner is placed on the PRU roll (s)he must be placed on a register of attendance. The learner's attendance or absence must be maintained throughout the time the learner is on the PRU roll.

The learner can only be removed from an attendance register when (s)he has been removed from the PRU roll.

Attendance is monitored weekly and reported termly to the Attendance and Behaviour subcommittee who subsequently report back to the Management Committee. The academic term dates of the PRU are consistent with maintained schools in Cardiff.

PROCEDURES

Registration procedures

To ensure accuracy and consistency, all learners are registered electronically via the Capita School Information Management System (SIMS).

Learners are registered within the first ten minutes of the morning session and afternoon session.

Categorisation of absence

Teachers, Cover Supervisors, Teaching Assistants, Admin staff and Supply Teachers are permitted to use the following registration codes only: Present (/) absent (N) and late (L) or (U).

Use the following codes as set out by the Welsh government 2010:

- L Late (arrived before registration closed)
- B Educated off-site
- D Dual-registered
- P Approved sporting activity
- V Educational visit
- J Interview
- W Work experience
- C Other authorised circumstance
- I Illness
- M Medical appointment
- S Study leave
- E Excluded
- R Religious observance
- T Traveller absence
- N No reason for absence yet provided or other unauthorised circumstance
- G Family holiday (not agreed)

Where learners are not required to attend school the additional codes X, Y and # may be used.

Procedures for absence and lateness

Parent/carers are asked to contact the school by telephone/email or by letter every day of their learner's absence.

Should a learner be absent from school without explanation, a phone call will be made or text message will be sent to parent/carers asking them to make contact with the school.

Should the school be unable to ascertain the reason for absence, the Attendance Officer (AO) in consultation with the Head of Centre (HOC) will send a letter to / or visit parent/carers seeking explanation.

Authorisation of absence

Absences may only be approved by authorised representatives of the school. Bryn y Deryn exercises caution in the authorisation of absence and parent/carers must seek to provide the school with a full picture of the reasons leading to their learner's absence. In some cases absences will not be authorised without medical evidence.

The school will not authorise the majority of term time holidays and those not authorised may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Fine. The HOC retains the right to authorise holidays where there are exceptional circumstances.

Intervention

Bryn y Deryn recognises the important role that parent/carers play in promoting good school attendance. The school therefore seeks to provide professional, quality information and advice, communicated frequently by text message, leaflets, parent/carers' evenings, school reports and the school website.

Bryn y Deryn operates a 'same day contact' scheme in an attempt to prevent prolonged absence and encourage learners to return to school promptly.

The newly established post of engagement TA, will work with learners and their families building positive bridges into reconnecting with education.

The AO will meet on a fortnightly basis with HOC to identify learners whose attendance is a concern.

Learners with identified mental health issues will have individual attendance targets based on joint identified need with CAHMS, building up a programme etc. The aim is to increase attendance. When it is known that a learner will be absent for an extended period for unavoidable (and agreed) reasons, the learner will be referred back to the FAP panel. In the interim, efforts will be made to provide the learner with suitable work to ensure continuity of learning.

When a learner has been absent for an extended period, they are welcomed positively on their return. The pastoral teacher is responsible for ensuring that support is made available to the learner, helping them to 'catch up'. In some cases, the HOC may choose to re-examine the learner's curriculum offer to encourage better attendance.

Good attendance is celebrated regularly.

Hierarchy of sanctions

Bryn y Deryn is a caring school and always seeks to resolve matters of poor attendance through effective partnership working with parent/carers. On the rare occasion that the school is unable to elicit in parent/carers the support deemed necessary to encourage learners to attend school, sanctions may be used. In the first instance, parent/carers will receive letters which

- Request reasons for their child's absence
- Express concern about their child's absence and offer advice and support in a restorative manner
- Advise them about their child's lateness and ask for their help in getting their learner to school on time
- Advise them that the school has taken the decision not to authorise an absence;
- Advise them that the AO intends to visit their home
- Request medical evidence for their child's absence
- Advise them of their legal responsibilities to ensure their child attends school regularly
- Advise them that they are at risk of receiving a Fixed Penalty Notice (further details below)
- Advise them that a referral has been made to the Educational Welfare Service (further details below)

Fixed Penalty Notice

In some circumstances, the school may request that the Educational Welfare Service issue parent/carers/carers with a Fixed Penalty Notice under The Education (Penalty Notices) (Wales) Regulations 2013. A warning letter will first be sent if:

- There have been 10 unauthorised sessions within one school term;
- A child has been late (after registration has closed) on 10 occasions within one school term;
- Parent/carers/carers have failed to engage in attempts to improve attendance;
- A learner has regularly come to the attention of the police during school hours and is absent from school without an acceptable reason.

A Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued if:

- There is one further unauthorised absence within 15 school days of a warning letter having been issued;
- An unauthorised holiday is taken during term time (note that no warning letter will be received).

Educational Welfare Service Referral

When the school feels that, despite its best efforts to support the family, attendance is not improving, a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service. A referral might be made when, for example:

A pattern of irregular attendance has developed

A period of entrenched non-attendance has become established

There is a lack of parent/ carer cooperation in ensuring a learner's regular attendance; or a pattern of truancy is persisting

Bryn y Deryn will liaise with the Education Welfare Service to provide the evidence required to prosecute parent/carers who fail, without reasonable justification, to cause their learner to attend school regularly, under sections 444 (1) and 444 (1A) of the Education Act 1996.

Monitoring and evaluation

The HoC is responsible for ensuring the school maintains accurate attendance records for each learner. Registration data is recorded using SIMS and details of interventions and strategies are recorded using the Communications Log.

The HOC and AO meet fortnightly to discuss individual cases of absenteeism, truancy or lateness and reflect upon the effectiveness of interventions to date. Decisions are taken at this time as to whether individual cases meet the criteria for referral to the Educational Welfare Service.

The HOC and AO will meet to review cases and seek support. The AO is responsible for contributing to Bryn y Deryn's drive for school effectiveness through providing advice on proven good practice and promoting the school's Attendance Framework. They must also provide up-to-date feedback on open cases.

Attendance data is reviewed at the end of the academic year by the Senior Management Team and is used to populate the Self-Evaluation Report and inform the School Improvement Plan.

A summary of attendance promotion strategies can be found in appendix A.

This policy will be:

Monitored by the relevant subcommittees, full management committee or SLT as relevant in order to be fully reviewed as part of the school's rolling programme of policy review.

All policies are reviewed with regard for equalities.

Appendix A

- Staff take register by 9.15 am
- If any staff member is aware of any reason for absence (that day or in advance) please enter in the SIMS register under a red flag
- Ensure admin are aware of any changed timetables
- 9.20 – Admin staff ring regarding any absentees & put a red flag in the register with the reason for absence. Text to parent/carers if no answer
 - Admin to ask parent/carers to ring us every time their child is not in school
 - If no answer two or more days letter to go home to ask parent/carers to ring the school to notify us of the reason for absence
- Admin must notify the wellbeing officer to contact Children's Services if:-
 - there is an unexplained absence of a pupil on the CP register of more than two days duration from school (or one day following a weekend)
- Please let admin know immediately if a learner arrives late
- Following day morning meeting pastoral teacher reports reason for absence
- Pastoral teacher to ask the non-attenders friends to encourage them to come in because they are missing out. We/they are missing them
- Pastoral teacher to contact family to positively encourage attendance
- If number not working a letter to be sent out by admin requesting parent/carers get in touch with new contact details - to also include attendance % and emphasising the importance of attending school
- 3 days absence – attendance admin to send a 'we miss you/come back soon' postcard home to the learner
- If no contact within a week admin to look on o drive for siblings in other schools
- If no numbers still working admin to contact the attendance officer (AO) Angela Gregory to call at the home for contact details
- After continued absences parent/carers to be invited in for a meeting (adult bus tickets available if necessary) with any combination of wellbeing officer/AO or SLT
- If two meetings missed a home visit to be done by any combination of wellbeing officer/AO or SLT
- School Attendance Officer (SAO) to make regular contact and home visits to learners who's attendance is identified for concern at fortnightly attendance meetings or have been absent for 5 or more days
- Teachers to set an additional attendance target each half term on IEP, for those with attendance below 80%
- Fixed penalty notices and prosecution for ongoing absences

Attendance admin ByD – C Jones

Attendance admin CC – S Clarke

Date ratified: December 2009

Dates reviewed and or amended: December 2010, March 2012, October 2015, November 2017, October 2018

Signed: 
F. Simpson
Head of Centre

Signed: 
J. Heerey
Chair of Management Committee