

Date	Review Date	Co-ordinator	Nominated Governor
October 2022	October 2024	Mrs J Roche	Mrs R Goodall

CAERAU PRIMARY SCHOOL



School Attendance Policy

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17 **Introduction**

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

Regular school attendance is essential for all children and young people. Failure to attend regularly 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 work with parents, pupils, the local authority and Central South Consortium Joint Education Services to ensure that all pupils receive appropriate education and attend school regularly.

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

Aims

This policy aims to ensure that attendance and punctuality remain 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 high school attendance and punctuality.
- Ensure all stakeholders receive communication about the 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 that schools 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 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 them to receive efficient, fulltime education suitable to their age, aptitude and ability and any special educational needs they 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 a 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 upon 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 Headteacher for a minimum of 10 unauthorised sessions.
- Pupils 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 Headteacher 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, equality implications, history of attendance, and any statement of special educational needs.

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

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

For further information please see the BCBC website.

www.bridgend.gov.uk

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 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.
- Although not a natural parent, any person 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 the relevant school.

Attendance is everybody's concern, and the school expects all stakeholders to play a part in improving attendance. This will contain all having clear expectations and roles, which include:

Role of Headteacher:

- To be responsible for the 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.
- Use discretion when receiving applications for holiday requests and provide reasons to parents.
- Regular attendance reports are shared and provided to governors.
- Work closely with the local authority's Lead EWO, 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.
- Contact the local authority or relevant persons and inform them if a pupil on the child protection register or a CLA pupil is absent from school.
- Ensure the policy is readily available for stakeholders, including the school and website.
- To work with CSC Challenge advisors and provide a comprehensive plan for attendance, including future plans.

Governing Body:

- Approve the policy and amend it if necessary.
- Ensure the policy is shared with all relevant stakeholders. Receive reports from the head teacher regularly.

- Attend meetings as and when required.

The lead governor for attendance is appointed.

Senior Management Team:

- Work with all staff responsible for attendance and punctuality.
- To look at attendance data every week, linking in with schools EWO.
- Regularly check registers.
- Ensure all absences are recorded in line with the guidance of the codes document, including those unauthorised absences and no reasons provided.
- Regular and updated training on attendance for all relevant staff using the LA ICT SIMS team.
- Raise issues of those staff not compliant with the completion of registers.
- Discuss any initiatives with all staff.

Heads of Year:

- Ensure all pupil absences are recorded, and notes received.
- Registers are completed daily.
- Work closely with the school's attendance clerk.
- Work closely with the schools EWO, each providing valid attendance data, those not achieving the threshold of 93%. To attend set and pre-arranged meetings with the EWO.
- Contact parents/guardians of those pupils who have not attended and have not provided reasons for absence daily.
- Truancy concerns are dealt with.
- Arranging letters and meetings for parents whose children attend is 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 way of a note provided by parents.
- Follow up unaccounted reasons for absence and concerns raised to the Head of year.
- To continue to raise the profile of attendance to all pupils.
- Contact the attendance admin with any queries.

Pupils:

- Attend regularly and on time unless unwell or received an authorised absence.
- Bring to school a note explaining reasons for absence and give it to class/form teacher.
- Inform the teacher of planned absences.

Parents:

- To ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually.

- To notify the school if their child cannot attend on the first day of absence and every day after that.
- Keep the school updated on parents/guardians' 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.

Role of School Admin:

- To speak with parents on a daily basis to establish reasons for pupils' absence.
- To record absences daily and record the reason for absence on SIMS.
- Inform DSL (HT) if looked after pupils and pupils on the child protection register are absent.
- To 'mop up' missing marks, provide reasons and input reasons on the SIMS red flag system.
- Send text messages to those parents who haven't contacted the school or telephone parents individually to establish reasons.
- To work closely with EWO and support staff in school.
- To work with SMT and Headteacher closely.
- To ensure transfer of CTF of pupils is completed in a timely manner and pupils are not removed from roll unnecessarily.
- To check messages, if necessary, either on the school's answerphone or text messaging system.

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 attendance record. Registers must be marked twice daily, 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 pupils' attendance.

By the end of the school week, the school's overall attendance registers will be completed, and the school will calculate an overall attendance figure.

Types of Absences

Parents need to understand the definition of the different types of absences. They are classed as unauthorised absence and authorised absence.

The school headteacher can only decide 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 marks, which include the following:

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

Please see appendix 1, which includes a breakdown of codes set by the 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 disrupts other pupils within the class and throughout the school.

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

All pupils who are late must sign in at the school 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 the school. This will be initiated by the school and the EWO, which will result in the pupil and family receiving the appropriate support

in attending school regularly. There may be times when a reintegration plan may be necessary, which will be a partnership agreement between the family, pupil, EWO and school.

The school would expect all pupils to attend school before a medical appointment and return to school following the appointment.

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 the discretion to authorise a holiday of up to 10 days during term time; over 10 days can only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

All holiday requests must be completed on the school 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.
- The overall percentage of attendance.
- Impact on the child's learning.

School Procedures

Parents are expected to contact the 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 explanatory note and handed to the class teacher/form tutor, which will be kept on record by the school.

If parents fail to notify the school, then the school will make every effort to contact the parents and 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 to safeguard all our pupils. The Education & Inspections Act 2006, requires the local authority to make arrangements to establish the identities of children residing within BCBC who are not receiving an education. For example, these may be pupils who have not attended school for excessive time without any contact or reason for the absence. The duty lies within the Local authority to investigate further. The Common transfer file will be sent to the forwarding school once notified.

For further information, please see
www.bridgend.gov.uk (CME document)

Schools Strategies to Improve Attendance

We aim that all pupils achieve 100% attendance; however, there may be instances where pupils, unfortunately, are unwell.

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

GREEN	97% - 100%
AMBER	93% - 96%
RED	Below 93%

NB: Where a child falls between these categories they will be rounded up to the nearest whole figure.

Each parent will receive an 'Attendance update' on a termly basis informing them of which category they are currently in. This ensures that early intervention is received by pupils and families who are in need. (Please see appendix 3).

Pupil Involvement

Pupils are allocated mentors to assist other pupils in achieving improved attendance levels. Leading a good example positively impacts those pupils underachieving due to irregular attendance.

Ensuring pupils are involved in this process and giving them responsibilities will improve their confidence and self-esteem.

Parents Notice Boards

The parent's notice board is displayed at the front of the school, which includes regular information and updates on attendance.

Schools Newsletters

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

Parents will need to check the attendance information regularly and also check on school holiday dates and inset dates for the school. Please ensure that you regularly check 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, resulting in good attendance. The staff is responsible for ensuring that the classroom and the school are happy places.

Breakfast Club

Our school has the privilege of offering breakfast to all our pupils. Children having this opportunity allows them to have breakfast with friends and ensures they have had a meal at the start of the day, which statistics shows helps the thinking process. The breakfast club starts at 8.15 am and is supervised by the catering staff.

Staff Awareness

All staff are fully aware of the importance of regular school attendance, and pupils will regularly be made aware of this during the school day by staff.

Attendance Assemblies

Celebrating attendance should be a priority, and involving pupils gives them an incentive, motivation and encouragement, with a sense of self-worth. This promotes the well-being of children as well as rewarding them.

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 transition from year groups and also from primary to secondary school. Our school ensures that we have all staff involved in this process, and taster days for all pupils are set.

Parents Evening

Parent's evenings may offer the support of the EWO if parents need advice and guidance or additional support in trying to ensure regular school attendance.

Rewards

Our reward scheme includes pupils and also local businesses within the community. Rewards can include the following:

- ✦ Pupil Certificate.
- ✦ Badges/Pens
- ✦ Class Trophy.
- ✦ 100% awards for the academic year for pupils.

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 regularly, depending on need. The EWO will meet with a senior staff member within the school and discuss pupils with an attendance of below 93%.

In a joint discussion, the school will then refer the pupil to the EWO if necessary. The individual circumstances of each pupil will be considered. The EWO will 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 the prosecution of parents. (Please see BCBC Non-school Attendance Enforcement Policy)

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

Additional Local Authority Support Services

The EWS sits within the early help team, which comprises a multi-disciplinary team 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 with identified needs. All officers are professionally trained and work with families, schools and agencies to ensure all parents and pupils receive the best possible support to enable them to have better opportunities in life.

Parents can also self-refer to the service directly via: www.earlyhelp@bridgend.gov.uk or telephone 01656 815420

Role of 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 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 Drives

EWO's across the county will work collaboratively with schools and early help teams to complete an attendance drive which will consist of visiting the homes of parents 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 EWO's. This is a pro-active partnership approach in assisting schools, parents and pupils in identifying attendance issues and other needs.

Attendance Panels

Attendance panels are seen as good practice in schools and involve school governors, members of senior staff, EWO, parents and, on occasions, the pupil. Whilst the panel aims to address the attendance of pupils, it is not always in the pupil's best interest to be out of class.

Parents are invited into school to discuss their child's attendance and to develop 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 the school whether they will be attending. If they are not available, 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 liaison officers and the EWS. The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 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 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 the first-day contact, there may be times when the Education Welfare Officer will conduct this and contact parents of those absent pupils on a specified day. This is deemed good practice and identifies those pupils who are regularly absent at an early stage to refer to additional support services.

Data Collection

Our school's attendance data is continually being tracked and monitored electronically on an individual pupil level and 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, senior management and challenge advisors, and the local authority, informing them of current attendance.

In addition, parents will also be notified through the school's regular communication channels.

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 was 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 is not yet on roll	Not required to attend
#	School is closed to all pupils.	Not required to attend

Appendix 2 – ‘Traffic Light’ Attendance Information

Green	100%	Not missing any lessons.
	99%	Missing about 10 lessons.
	98%	Missing about 20 lessons.
	97%	Missing about 30 lessons.
Amber	96%	Missing about 8 days of school. It will be difficult to catch up on the lost learning from about 40 lessons.
	95%	Missing about 2 weeks of school.
	93%	Missing 14 days of school. This is almost three weeks which is a significant amount of education to lose.
Red	92% and below	Missing more than 3 weeks of education. A serious loss of learning which is likely to have a detrimental effect on achievement and life chances.

Every lesson counts, and every school day counts!

Appendix 3 - Special Leave/Holiday in term time request.

Section A

To be completed by the Parent/Guardian between 2 to 4 weeks before the special leave/holiday.

Full Name of Child	Class

Special Leave/Holiday Dates

From (first day of absence):

To (day of return to school):

Destination
.....
.....
.....

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

Declaration

I understand that this holiday request may be authorised or not authorised, and the Head Teacher will use their discretion in making the decision based on my child's attendance and 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 school's Attendance Policy (this can be viewed on the school's website or requested from the school office).

Parent/Guardian (Signature)

Date:

Section B

To be completed by the Head Teacher within at least 1 week from the request.

Name of Child	Attendance %	Holidays Taken To Date

Reasons for authorising

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.....

Reasons for not authorising

.....

.....

.....

.....

I, as Headteacher, have authorised / unauthorised (**delete as applicable*) the holiday request for the reasons specified above.

Please see attached attendance registration certificate.

Signed

Headteacher

A copy of this form will be retained on file for our records.

