

Brynmill Primary School



Attendance Policy

UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools Articles 28, 29, 31

**“There is a clear link between pupil attendance and attainment”
(DfES)**

Attendance Personnel for Brynmill Primary School

HEADTEACHER

NAME: Miss J. Simons

CONTACT NUMBER:01792 463019

DESIGNATED STAFF MEMBER WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR MONITORING ATTENDANCE

NAME: Miss L. Rees

CONTACT NUMBER:01792 463019

DEPUTY STAFF MEMBER WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR MONITORING ATTENDANCE AT THE SCHOOL

NAME: Mrs K. Morgan

CONTACT NUMBER: 01792 463019

NOMINATED MEMBER OF THE GOVERNING BODY FOR MONITORING ATTENDANCE

NAME: Mr. J. Searle

Contacts within the Local Authority

THE NAMED OFFICER WITHIN SWANSEA LA IS MRS SUSAN GRIFFITHS

CONTACT NUMBER: Tel: 771935 or 07796275034

E-MAIL: Susan.Griffiths@swansea.gov.uk

THE NAMED EDUCATION WELFARE OFFICER: Mrs Vanita McGlynn

CONTACT NUMBER: Tel: 01792 411400

RATIONALE

- The school bases its attendance policy on the guidelines as set out by the ERW Consortium.
- Whilst the legal responsibility for regular school attendance rests with parents, the school shares with them, and the local authority (LA), responsibility for encouraging good attendance and improving poor attendance.
- The school is required by law to maintain specific records and to produce specified information on the attendance of pupils.
- Statutory obligation apart, the school is committed to improvements in attendance standards as a direct stimulus to raising pupil achievement.
- Poor attendance is destructive of educational achievement, undermines the well-being of each pupil and demoralises staff.
- The LA has a statutory duty to ensure that a child for whom they are responsible is receiving suitable education and, if a registered pupil at school, this means attending school regularly and on time.

OBJECTIVES

- To promote good attendance as this is vital to educational achievement.
- To convey clearly to parents and pupils that:
 - regular attendance is essential;
 - unauthorised absence and persistent lateness is not acceptable;
 - only the headteacher in the context of the law can approve absence;
 - parental condoned, unjustifiable absence will be investigated and will be recorded as unauthorised absence.
- To keep records of attendance which:
 - clearly distinguish between authorised and unauthorised absence by pupils;
 - provide accurate information on actual attendance to enable monitoring and evaluation of school attendance rates through centrally held statistics.
- To build on existing good practice that fosters a positive attitude to good attendance by:
 - responding rapidly to pupil absence;
 - recognising pupils who maintain ‘excellent’, ‘good’ and ‘improving’ attendance records.
- To be sensitive to situations where regular attendance patterns are disrupted by external factors such as family bereavement.

STATUTORY 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 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 school age until after the last Friday in June of the school year in which they have their 16th 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;

Absence from the centres will be authorised if it is for the following reasons:

- sickness;
- unavoidable medical or dental appointments;
- a day of religious observance;
- exceptional family circumstances,

Absence from school will not be authorised for:

- shopping;
- haircuts;
- missed bus;
- overslept;
- no uniform;
- looking after brothers, sisters or unwell parents;
- minding the house;
- birthdays;

- holidays / day trips taken in term time.

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

Schools are required under the Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 to take an attendance register twice a day: at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. The accuracy of the register is important to support any statutory interventions that may be required. It should be noted that it is an offence not to maintain accurate registers.

PRACTICE AND PROCEDURES

Clear systems and procedures will govern response to all pupil absence. The school will follow the 'Procedures for Non Attendance' flowchart as agreed by the ERW Consortium.

The school adheres to the descriptors received from ERW.

95-100% attendance	Best chance of success	Your child is taking full advantage of every learning opportunity.
90-95% attendance	At least 2 weeks of learning missed	Satisfactory. Your child may have to spend time catching up with work.
85-90% attendance	At least 4 weeks of learning missed	Your child may be at risk of underachieving and may need extra support from you to catch up with work.
80-85% attendance	At least 5 ½ weeks of learning missed	Your child's poor attendance has a significant impact on learning.
Below 80% attendance	At least 7½ weeks of learning missed	Your child is missing out on a broad and balanced education. You are at risk of prosecution.

The school encourages good attendance and punctuality by;

- creating a caring and nurturing environment whereby pupils' feels safe and appreciated as young adults;

- ensuring that attendance and punctuality are recognised within the whole school reward system, eg lunch passes and tokens, attendance levels considered before a pupil is eligible for merit trips and trips abroad;
- 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 Education Inclusion Service 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 clear to parents and pupils through: the initial transition meeting prior to admission and also in Year 9 option choice meetings.
- 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 contact is made by the School Attendance Officer 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 Education Inclusion Service for advice with regards to this but the decision to authorise any absence remains with the school.
- If the pupil is registered as a Child in Need or on the Child Protection register and absent from school without reason, then the school should contact Social Services as soon as possible.
- if an absence remains unexplained for 3 consecutive days then arrangements should be made to visit the home.
- When a pupil returns to school from an absence, but no explanation is offered, a letter will be sent to the parent.
- A letter will also be sent out if a pupil is persistently late to school.

- Ultimately, if an attendance matter cannot be resolved by the school and the appropriate steps have been followed (as outlined in the 'Procedures for Non Attendance document), then a referral will be made to the LA Service for further investigation.

The school will also:

- ensure that all staff are aware of the registration procedures, registration regulations and education law relating to school attendance;;
- complete school registers at the start of the morning session and afternoon session – the register is open for **40** minutes and closes at **9:30** am;
- 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;
- consult with all members of the school's community and LA Service 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.

The Designated Member of Staff

Attendance is the responsibility of all staff. There is, however, a designated member of staff for attendance matters and all staff are able to discuss individual pupil attendance with this person. The Designated Member of Staff for Attendance:

- monitors the school's registers;
- liaises with teaching staff;
- meets with the Educational Welfare Officer on a regular pre-arranged basis;
- refers to other agencies if appropriate;
- refers to the school nurse if there are doubts about the validity of an illness;
- oversees the use of standardised letters to parents addressing specific aspects of attendance and requiring parental response,
- arranges for an attendance meeting in the case of repeated, unexplained absences (school will consider inviting the named governor for attendance to such a meeting);
- ensures that the Education Welfare Officer's role is known and understood in school.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS

Parents are responsible in law for ensuring that their children attend the school at which they are registered, regularly, on time, properly dressed and in a fit condition

to learn (parents are also responsible for ensuring that their children stay at school once they have registered).

Parents can do a great deal to support the regular and punctual attendance of their children. Parents should:

- a) take an active interest in their child's school life and work;
- b) attend parents' evenings and other school events, if possible;
- c) ensure that their child completes his/her homework and goes to bed at an appropriate time;
- d) be aware of letters from school which their child brings home;
- e) ensure that their child arrives at school on time each day;
- f) ensure that their child only misses school for reasons which are unavoidable or justified, such as illness or a day of religious observance;
- g) always notify the school as soon as possible - preferably on the first morning - of any absence;
- h) avoid booking family holidays during term-time;
- i) talk to the school if they are concerned that their child may be reluctant to attend.

REGISTRATION

Keeping the 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 actually in attendance at school or other agreed educational activity.
- The register should not have missing marks.
- When a pupil arrives late but the register is still open, the pupils should be marked as late but counted as present for the session.
- When a pupil misses 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..

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.

Parental request for term-time absence for holidays.

Where possible and in appropriate circumstances the taking of term time holidays is actively discouraged. Parents are advised to avoid term time disruption and reminded of the link between attainment and attendance. Whilst considering each request on its merits, head teachers do play an important role in scrutinising the taking of term time holidays and should properly apply their discretion based upon their knowledge of the pupil and their family. Whilst individual requests for holidays in term time will be considered, "parents should not expect, or be led to expect, that schools will agree to family holidays during term time" (All Wales Attendance Framework). Schools can only agree to absence of more than 10 school days in a school year if they believe there are exceptional circumstances" (Guidance on School Attendance Codes June 2010).

We have a system of holiday request forms for parents wanting to take children on holiday during the school term in order to keep a record of absence and ascertain whether the individual circumstances of the case warrant authorisation. Parents need to submit this at least 2 weeks prior to the proposed term time holiday in order to allow time for their request to be processed. WG guidance states that schools cannot authorise holidays retrospectively.

The Head teacher will carefully consider before granting a leave of absence:-

- the age of the pupil
- the time of year of the proposed trip
- the length and purpose of the holiday
- the impact on continuity of learning
- circumstances of the family
- wishes of the parents
- overall attendance pattern
- the stage of education
- the child's progress

This list is not exhaustive and the Headteacher can consider other factors.

- The Headteacher requests to meet all parents notifying the school of their intention to take their child/ children on an extended holiday (3 weeks +). We can arrange bilingual support (courtesy of the EMLA Service) in different languages to help our parents who have English as an additional language understand the impact taking their child on an extended holiday will have on their child's education.
- If the pupil/s do/does not return by the agreed date they are at risk of losing their school place/s and they will be removed from the school register in accordance with the admission guidance Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 section 4 which states 'the pupils has ceased to attend the school and no longer resides within a reasonable distance from the school'.
- We cannot guarantee that a place will be available for your child in the school of your choice on your return but you will be offered a place at the nearest school with room available in the year group. Failure to return on the agreed date will prompt welfare concerns; a child who goes missing from education may be considered to be at risk of significant harm. Any such concerns will immediately be referred to the statutory authorities for consideration.

Penalty Notices

A penalty notice fine may be issued to a parent / carer as a result of a child's non-attendance at school. Reference to Penalty Notices is already included on the City and County of Swansea website, together with some frequently asked questions on <http://www.swansea.gov.uk/educationpenalty>

Registration Codes

/	Present (AM)
\	Present (PM)
B	Off Site Education
C	Other Authorised Circumstances
D	Dual Registered i.e Present at another school or PRU
E	Excluded (No alternative provision made)
G	Family holiday (Not agreed)
I	Illness
J	Interview

L	Late (Before the registers closed)
M	Medical / Dental Appointment
N	No reason yet provided for absence
O	Unauthorised Absence (Not covered by other code)
P	Approved Sporting Activity
R	Religious Observance
S	Study Leave
T	Traveller Absence
U	Late (after registers closed)
V	Educational Visit or Trip
W	Work experience
Y	Partial or Enforced closure
X	Non-compulsory school age absence
#	School closed to all pupils
Z	Pupils not on roll yet

MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF POLICY

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Approved & Ratified by Governing Body (date)	
Scheduled for review	Summer term 2017
Head teacher's signature	
Chair of Governors signature	