



# Attendance Policy

School	Ysgol Treffynnon
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Review frequency	2 Yearly (unless there is any legislation changes)
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Chair of Governors	<i>N. Cellin</i>

## Accessible Formats

This document is available in English and Welsh in Microsoft Word and pdf formats in Arial font size 12 as standard. This document is also available in large print. To request a copy of this document in an accessible format contact Miss Lynette Evans (01352 710011).

## Introduction

At Ysgol Treffynnon we are committed to supporting all of our students to achieve their full potential. Regular attendance is essential for students to gain the greatest benefit from the education provided.

### **The importance of good school attendance for all learners:**

“Regular school attendance has a positive effect on children and young people and a strong impact on learner outcomes, standards and progression. Within this, regular attendance supports the development of literacy and numeracy skills, and on the conceptual understanding needed for further study and success in the workplace. Analysis shows that examination outcomes link strongly to attendance rates, for example, where a modest increase in absence can lower outcomes. Lessons missed can mean missing key information, skills and ideas.

Good attendance also has a positive effect on emotional and physical wellbeing. Establishing good attendance patterns from an early age is vital for social development. For example, the more time a child spends with other children in the classroom and as part of broader school-organised activities, the more chance they have of making friends, of feeling included, and of developing social skills, confidence and self-esteem. Conversely, extended absence from school is linked with behavioural and social problems. These effects can be long lasting and can affect a young person’s mental health and their long-term life chances. Absences can start a negative cycle, where learners start to be absent for reasons such as bullying or not coping with school work, with prolonged absence only likely to make the situation harder to resolve. The inter-relationship between attendance and wellbeing is considered so strong that attendance is often considered a proxy measure for learner wellbeing.

Attending school also supports learners’ wider development as full and rounded members of society. The Curriculum for Wales is based on four purposes that demonstrate the breadth of the academic, wellbeing and social benefits that learners gain by attending school. Because of the well-established links between attendance and attainment, wellbeing and citizenship, improving attendance has long been an important policy aim for governments, local authorities and individual schools. Internationally, the advantages of education are such that the right to a comprehensive range of education and learning opportunities is one of the seven core aims of the Welsh Government based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).”

*Quotation taken from: ‘Belonging, Engaging and Participating: Guidance on improving learner engagement and attendance – Welsh Government – October 2023*

## Statutory Responsibilities:

Establishing and maintaining a pattern of regular school attendance can only be achieved when school and parents / carers work together, both have statutory responsibilities relating to attendance.

### Parents / Carers

Parents have a statutory responsibility for ensuring that their compulsory school-age children receive a suitable education appropriate to their age, ability and aptitude and to any additional learning needs they may have. This can be through regular attendance at school, agreed education provision other than at school, or by elective home education. When children / young people are registered with a school, parents / carers have a duty to ensure that the child / young person attends school on a regular basis.

*Education Act 1996: c56, Part 1, Chapter 1, Compulsory Education, Section 7*

### Mainstream Schools

Schools are required to maintain an accurate attendance register and to provide data on student absence to the Local Authority.

*Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations  
School Performance Information (Wales) Regulations 2011/1963  
The School Information (Wales) Regulations 2011/1944*

## Promoting Regular Attendance

In order to encourage excellent attendance, the school will:

- Maintain an accurate record of attendance.
- Have clear expectations around attendance, and regularly publicise these to students, parent and carers.
- Have a clear procedure for managing absence, which is openly shared with staff, students, parents and carers.
- Share information about each individual students' attendance with the students and their parent(s) / carer (s), through ePraise and school reports.
- Monitor and report on whole school attendance, including sharing information with the Governing Body.
- Encourage regular attendance by rewarding and celebrating excellent or improving attendance.

## Understanding types of absence

The school day is made up of two sessions. Every half-day absence from school will be classified by the school (not the parents, carers or guardians) as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**.

The school will usually authorise absences where a student is:

- Unable to attend school due to a serious illness (an explanation must be provided).
- Required to attend an emergency medical appointment. Wherever possible routine dental/medical appointments should be made after school or during school holidays.
- Absent due to other exceptional circumstances (at the discretion of the Head Teacher).

Circumstances would only be authorised as exceptional (register code C) if the school has reason to believe that the absence is necessary, appropriate, and unavoidable.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider necessary, or those for which no explanation has been provided. These types of absence can lead to the Local Authority taking further action, which may include the issuing of a Fixed Penalty Notice and/or legal proceedings.

### Absence Due to Illness

The school will seek to support pupils with medical conditions, in accordance with the Healthcare Needs Policy. It is acknowledged that some medical conditions result in unavoidable absence from school, and when this is the case the school should offer suitable support in order to minimise any detrimental impact on the pupil's learning.

The school can authorise up to 5 days of absence per term due to illness. Any additional days of absence may only be authorised if suitable medical evidence is provided. Acceptable forms of medical evidence include letters or appointment cards from GPs, Consultants or CAMHS. Parents, carers and guardians are not expected to pay for, or provide, a Statement of Fitness for Work ('sick note'). Where suitable medical evidence is not provided the school may not authorise further absences. Pupils with long-term medical conditions, who have a Health Care Plan completed by the School Nurse, are not required to provide medical evidence.

### Holidays

Absence due to term-time holidays is detrimental to a child's education. Ysgol Treffynnon expects parents, carers and guardians to support their child's education by avoiding term time holidays.

## **There is no entitlement in law to time off school to go on holiday.**

The school reserves the right to refuse to authorise term time holidays. The decision whether or not to authorise a holiday will be made by the Head Teacher on a case-by-case basis and holidays will only be authorised in the most exceptional circumstances. Arranging holidays during term time because of lower costs will not be a sufficient reason for the leave to be authorised.

## **Reluctance to attend school**

Some students may occasionally be reluctant to attend school, this can occur for a variety of reasons. If this happens it is important that parents, carers and guardians communicate promptly and honestly with the school and that school staff and parents, carers and guardians work in partnership to identify and resolve any issues faced by the student. It becomes very difficult for the school to resolve issues or offer support to students who are absent; parents, carers and guardians should therefore ensure that their children come into school to discuss the situation. If the school has not been given the opportunity to rectify an issue, but the student does not attend school, then the absence may be considered unauthorised.

## **Persistent Absenteeism**

A student is considered a persistent absentee when attendance falls below 90% for any reason. Absence at this frequency is of significant detriment to children's learning and Ysgol Treffynnon expect parents', carers' and guardians' full support to improve attendance and limit absences. The school will monitor all absence thoroughly and persistent absentees will be tracked by the attendance team; where appropriate interventions will be implemented to support students to improve their attendance. When attendance becomes a cause for concern the school will invite parents, carers and guardians to discuss this; it is a cause for concern if parents, carers and guardians fail to engage with this process, such concerns will be shared with the Local Authority.

## **Returning to School**

When a pupil has been absent from school for an extended period, whatever the reason for absence, then it is possible that they will need some support to return to full-time education. The type of support required will vary depending on the needs of the individual, and the circumstances and length of their absence. The school may offer a formal plan to suit the needs of the individual, this may include (but is not limited to) a reduced timetable,

small group provision, timetable adjustments, or access to an alternative curriculum. Any such plans should be regularly reviewed and should support pupils to resume full-time, mainstream education as quickly as possible.

## Procedure for Explaining Absences

All students are expected to attend every school day unless there is an appropriate and unavoidable reason for absence. If a student is not attending school then the parent or carer should contact school as soon as possible on the first day of absence to provide an explanation. When students are absent for consecutive days, parents, carers or guardians should phone every day unless a clear and definite date of return can be provided.

Explanations for absence must be provided by a parent or carer; it is not sufficient for the student to explain their own absence. If an appropriate explanation for absence is not provided then the school will follow the following procedure:

- Automated truancy call
- Unexplained absence letter
- Register updated according to response to call / letter (or lack thereof)

**It is essential that school has accurate contact information for all students** – it is the responsibility of the parent(s) or carer(s) to provide accurate information and ensure that this is updated as necessary.

## School Attendance Procedure

The school will have a clear procedure for dealing with attendance concerns; this should include:

- Notifying parents / carers that the school has concerns about a student's attendance / frequency of absences.
- Providing parents / carers with opportunities to share information about reasons for absence.
- Providing opportunities for school staff, parents / carers and students to work together to improve attendance.
- A process for escalating concerns about student attendance to the Local Authority's Education Welfare Service.

## Education Welfare Service

The school will hold regular meetings with a representative of the Local Authority's Education Welfare Service (Education Welfare Officer) to discuss all students with attendance below 85%, regardless of the reasons for absence.

The school will request direct support from the Education Welfare Officer where the school has concerns about a student's attendance, and the initial stages of the school attendance procedure have been followed, but have not resulted in sufficient improvement.

The Education Welfare Service will support parents / carers to improve their child's attendance, however where there is unsatisfactory progress, it may be necessary for the school to request a Fixed Penalty Notice, or for the Local Authority to initiate legal proceedings.

The Local Authority / Education Welfare Service may also provide the school with additional support to improve attendance through short-term funded projects such as Community Focused Schools, or Attendance Support Officers.

## Fixed Penalty Notices

The Education Act (1996) states "If a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school, his [or her] parent is guilty of an offence."

*[Education Act 1996, c.56, Part VI, Chapter II, School attendance: offences and education supervision orders, Section 444]*

The Education (Penalty Notices) (Wales) Regulations 2013 gives Local Authorities the power to issue Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) to the parents, carers or guardians of children and young people who are persistently absent from school without authorisation.

Fixed Penalty Notices are issued by Flintshire Local Authority. The Local Code of Conduct: Education Fixed Penalty Notices (2014), states that a penalty notice may be considered when at least 20 sessions (10 school days) are lost due to unauthorised absence during the current term. These do not need to be consecutive.

- A Fixed Penalty Notice can only be issue in cases of unauthorised absence.
- Use of a Fixed Penalty Notice will be restricted to one notice per parent of a pupil per academic year.

- In cases where there is more than one poorly attending pupil in a family, notices may be issued for more than one child.

Non-payment of a Fixed Penalty Notice may result in prosecution for the period covered by the Fixed Penalty Notice under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

## Punctuality

Poor punctuality is not acceptable; students who arrive in school late are likely to have missed important information and may cause disruption to the rest of the class. All students should arrive in school by **8:40am** to ensure that they are seated in their classroom ready for registration which begins at 8:45am.

## Registers

The school has a statutory duty to keep accurate registers. Form tutors will take a register every morning between 08:45 – 09:00am. Students will also be registered in each of the five lessons that occur during the school day. The afternoon session registration will be based upon attendance to lesson four. Any member of staff responsible for supervising students during the school day must ensure the prompt and accurate completion of the relevant register. **Accurate registers are essential for safeguarding and health & safety.**

## Equality

Ysgol Treffynnon is committed to ensuring equality of support and provision for all members of the school community in keeping with the Equality Act 2010. When any member of the school community is subject to unacceptable behaviour because of their protected characteristics<sup>1</sup> the school will uphold the provisions of the Equality Act 2010, the Human Rights Act (1998) and, where applicable, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Victims of any such unacceptable behaviours will be supported so that they may participate fully in the life of the school.

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<sup>1</sup> Age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, sexual orientation.



There is special provision in law for Traveller Families [**Education Act 1996 – Section 444**]. The school acknowledges this provision and will record all relevant absences in the register as code T.

There is special provision in law for absences due to religious observance [**Education Act 1996 – Section 444**]. The school acknowledges this provision and will record all relevant absences in the register as code R.

The school is committed to ensuring that absences directly related to or connected with ‘Protected Characteristics’ will not be used against the family for the purposes of criticism or prosecution.

## Summary

- Parents / carers have a duty to ensure that their child/children attend school every day possible and to work with the school to improve attendance if there are concerns.
- The school has a legal responsibility to maintain accurate records of attendance and share relevant attendance statistics and information with Welsh Government and the Local Authority.
- The school will monitor the attendance of individual students, and take appropriate action where there are concerns about the frequency or duration of absence.
- The school will work in partnership with the Local Authority to address concerns regarding student attendance.