

2013/2016

Attendance Policy

Llanishen High School

This document contains the specific policy and associated information relating to Attendance pupils at Llanishen High School

Responsible Staff Member: Mrs S Tyler
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INTRODUCTION

At Llanishen High School 'We believe that all can succeed'. In order to reach their full potential it is vital that pupils attend school regularly and that the school is supported in promoting excellent attendance. The Welsh Government have set a target of 95% attendance for all pupils.

All school staff work closely with pupils and parents/ guardians to ensure each pupil attends school regularly and punctually. Regular and punctual school attendance is essential to enable all pupils to gain the maximum benefit from the opportunities provided through their education. Current research shows that 17 days of school missed through absence during a year results in that pupil dropping a GCSE grade. Improving attendance is a vital element of school improvement and as research indicates, positively impacts on the levels of achievement of pupils.

This policy sets out how together we can ensure our students have the best opportunity to reach their potential through maximising attendance.

The Law relating to attendance states that:

- Parents and guardians are required under section 7 of the Education Act 1996 to ensure that their child receives effective full-time education.
- Cardiff Local Authority is required under section 437 of the Education Act 1996 to ensure that a child for whom they are responsible is receiving suitable education by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Llanishen High School is required under The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 to take attendance registers twice a day; at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session.

As a parent or guardian you must be aware that you have a legal responsibility to make sure your child receives a full time education between the age of five and sixteen.

If you fail to send your child to school regularly, you could face a fine of up to £2500 or even be sent to prison.

In 2011, Cardiff Council prosecuted 145 parents who failed to ensure their children's regular attendance at school.

ARE THERE ANY EXCEPTIONS?

The school can authorise absences if informed in advance under the following circumstances:

- Your child is too ill to attend school and a message is left explaining the reason for absence
- Your child has a medical or dental appointment
- There is a family bereavement
- There is a need for religious observance

UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES

Cardiff Council have instructed all schools not to authorise requests for holidays in term time due to evidence that missing school has an adverse effect on children's education. Families are asked to make arrangements to take holidays in the 6 week break during July and August in order to help the school support your child in achieving success.

If your child is absent for any reason other than the exceptions stated above then that absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

MONITORING ATTENDANCE

Attendance monitoring and reporting of attendance at Llanishen High School includes:

- The completion of registers at the beginning of each lesson. The morning mark is provided during registration and at the start of period 4 for the afternoon mark.
- Regular attendance checks undertaken by the school.
- Sending letters home to parents of students where attendance is excellent or where attendance has significantly improved.
- An annual 'Guidance report' written to parents as part of the full school report.
- The production of attendance summary sheets every Friday afternoon for Form Tutors and Year Team Leaders to review the previous week's attendance.
- The promotion of the importance of good attendance across all year groups as part of the Thought for the Week assembly cycle.
- Identifying children 'at risk' early.

As well as monitoring attendance, we strive to reward good attendance in the following ways:

- Pupils receive a certificate for achieving 100% attendance at the end of every term. Certificates are distributed during the termly Praise assembly.
- Pupils are rewarded annually during the Awards Evening for achieving 100% attendance during the previous academic year.
- Rewarding pupils with improved attendance where the school feels that a pupil has shown a great effort to improve on their previous poor attendance.

Our aim is to ensure that there is an appropriate balance between rewarding good attendance and imposing sanctions for poor attendance.

The School tackles poor attendance as follows:

- A 'Lates on the Gate' system is used on a daily basis where the names of latecomers are recorded every morning by a Senior Teacher. Letters are sent to parents informing them of their child/children's poor punctuality following 2 late arrivals in any week.

- The School Attendance Officer and a member of the Senior Leadership Team with lead responsibility for attendance deliver termly assemblies to all year groups promoting good attendance –providing students with reasons and evidence on why they should attend school.
- Parents of children who have poor attendance are invited to a meeting with the School Attendance Officer to discuss the school’s concerns during Parents Evening every year.
- Pupils discuss attendance on a half termly basis with their Form Tutor during mentoring sessions and set targets for improvement.
- Pupil's individual attendance is recorded and tracked on SIMS – the school’s data management system.
- The Year Team Leader and School Attendance Officer meet on a weekly basis to discuss attendance concerns in the year group and any follow up that is required.

‘Buddies’ support Year 7 pupils but they are also available to work with small groups of pupils with worries about school. ‘Buddies’ are available to ‘shadow’ vulnerable students at specific times of the school day e.g. breaktime and lunchtime.

The school strives to reintegrate pupils following a lengthy absence. The school is able to use specially trained Teaching Assistants to help with the reintegration of some students by discussing their individual emotional and social needs on a 1 to 1 basis.

Partner Expectations:

The following table shows how this can be achieved:

Partners	Expectations
Pupils We expect all pupils to :	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attend school every day• Arrive on time properly equipped for learning• Tell a member of staff about any issue or worry that is making it difficult for them to attend school every day
Parents/Guardians We expect all parents/ guardians to :	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourage their child or children to attend school every day and on time• Ensure that they contact the school as soon as possible whenever their child is unable to attend school stating the reason for absence• Ensure that their child or children arrive in school fully prepared for the school day, providing the school with up to date home, work and emergency contact numbers• NOT arrange family holidays during the school term• Inform the school, in confidence about any problem which might affect their child's attendance or behaviour
School Parents/guardians can expect the school to :	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide a good quality education appropriate to their child's needs• Record their child's attendance regularly and accurately• Make every reasonable effort to contact the parent/guardian on the first day of absence, when their child fails to attend school without good reason by text where possible• Deal discretely with any problem notified to the school• Make all efforts to encourage and reward good attendance, punctuality and behaviour• Ensure proper enquiries are made before removing a child from the school roll

School and Local Authority actions

All staff at Llanishen High School strive to improve the overall attendance of all pupils. As well as the classroom teacher's promoting punctual arrival to lessons and excellent attendance to lessons, attendance is promoted and monitored in particular by the following staff:

- The Form Tutor welcomes the form into school every day. They review attendance with individual pupils every half term discussing recent absences using the weekly printout and SIMS to track attendance and absence patterns and setting targets for improving attendance. The Form Tutor will liaise with the Year Team Leader informing them of any concerns about an individual's attendance in their form.
- The school employs a School Attendance Officer who deals with the attendance of the High School and recently a further part-time School Attendance Officer has been employed to deal with the primary cluster schools' attendance.
- The Year Team Leader reviews the attendance of the year group and targeted pupils during a weekly meeting with the School Attendance Officer. The Year Team Leader will discuss ongoing attendance concerns with the Form Tutor and other members of the Year Team.
- The Pupil Support Team deal with daily attendance procedures and meet regularly with the Year Team Leader and School Attendance Officer. The Pupil Support Team report absences to parents and guardians as early in the morning as is practicable.
- A member of the Senior Leadership Team has lead responsibility for the school's attendance.

- The Senior Leadership Team link will meet with the Attendance Team on a weekly basis to discuss progress and new concerns.
- An Education Welfare Officer visits the school on a weekly basis to discuss ongoing concerns.
- Attendance at the school is regularly monitored by the Finance and Resources Committee.
- The School's Attendance Committee comprising of a Senior Teacher, the School Attendance Officer and Education Welfare Service link meet every fortnight to review recent poor attenders and to consider strategies to support these non- attenders.
- We monitor the attendance of all our students as a school focusing in particular on targeted groups of learners i.e. girls / boys attendance; pupils with Additional Learning Needs (including More Able and Talented students); pupils who are entitled to Free School Meals, Looked After Children and those from Ethnic Minorities and the travelling community.

From September 2014, all schools in Cardiff will work alongside the Education Welfare Service to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice under the Education (Penalties Notices) (Wales) Regulations 2013.

In certain circumstances, the school may request that the Education Welfare Service issue parents/guardians with a Fixed Penalty Notice.

A warning letter will be sent if:

- There have been 10 unauthorised sessions within one school term;
- Parents/guardians have failed to engage in attempts to improve attendance;
- The Police have regularly found a pupil to be absent from school without an acceptable reason;

The school reserve the right to request a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued for a holiday in term time.

The approach taken by the school operates in conjunction with the local authority's 'Five Step Approach of Attendance Management'. Details of this approach is illustrated in the table in Appendix 1.

We wish for every pupil in our school community to do their level best and to succeed. We believe that for our pupils to succeed they must attend school regularly achieving an excellent level of attendance in order to maximise their learning. We will support our students with their learning and ask parents to ensure that their child/children attend school regularly thus maximising the opportunity for all students to succeed.

Appendix 1

Five Step Approach of Attendance Management

Step 1	<p>School based interventions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1st day of absence contact made by Pupil Support Team via text, email or telephone• working with parents/ guardians to identify any underlying causes of non-attendance e.g. medical needs, bullying issues, social problems, lateness• address ongoing concerns with Year Team Leader• letters sent home expressing concerns regarding attendance below 90%• Parents/guardians invited to attend a meeting with the School Attendance Officer as part of Parents Evening or during the Year Team Leader's attendance meeting• The school's SIMS system is used to collate and identify issues and concerns.
Step 2	<p>Additional School based interventions put in place :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a referral is made to the School Attendance Officer from the Year Team Leader or a Senior Teacher where:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ there are block absences without explanation○ irregular patterns of attendance with frequent unauthorised absences○ Prolonged poor attendance pattern○ suspicious absences without medical corroboration○ known truants○ school refuser○ a sudden deterioration in attendance without any specific reason and no explanation given• The School Attendance Officer will contact parents/ guardians to establish reasons for non-attendance.• The School Attendance Officer may offer school based interventions e.g. reintegration programme and strategies to help resolve an issue and support with the return of a pupil• Involvement of External agencies where necessary e.g. CAB• The School Attendance Officer may set up a Home Visit to address the school's concerns or may visit the home unannounced.
Step 3	<p>A referral is made from the School Attendance Officer to the Education Welfare Service when the School Attendance Officer and school have contacted parents to discuss concerns but no improvement is seen and no valid reason given. At the outset of casework by the Education Welfare Officer, the parent will be given a written 'Initial Warning' letter reminding parents/ carers of their responsibilities and the possible legal consequences if their child's attendance does not improve.</p>
Step 4	<p>Case review and assessment – the Education Welfare Officer will arrange home visits to agree a way forward, meetings will be arranged between the school, parents and pupils and with other professionals.</p> <p>The Educational Welfare Service may negotiate a plan of support for pupils and families to receive additional specialist support e.g. counselling or group work. All casework will involve the setting of targets for improvement and will be time-limited and subject to regular review.</p> <p>A 'Final Warning' letter is sent where a child's attendance fails to improve advising the parent/ care that legal action may be started. A Pre-Court meeting would be held at this stage.</p>
Step 5	<p>Formal Statutory Action – Court proceedings will be considered at this stage.</p>