

Attendance Policy

Llanishen High School

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



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 by parents and guardians in promoting excellent attendance. The Welsh Government has set a target of 95% attendance for all pupils in Wales. The school's own targets are 95.5% for 2016/17 and 95.75% for 2017/18.

All school staff work closely with pupils and parents/ guardians to ensure each pupil attends school regularly and punctually. Regular and punctual attendance is essential to enable all pupils to gain maximum benefit from the opportunities provided through their education. 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 pupils 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 between the ages of five and sixteen.
- 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.

A parent/guardian who fails to send their child to school regularly faces fines of up to £2500 or even a prison sentence.

Cardiff Council regularly prosecutes parents who failed to ensure their child's regular attendance at school.

Authorised Absences

The school can authorise absences, under the following circumstances:

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

In the cases of medical and dental appointments and religious observance, the school can only authorise such absences if it is advised in advance.

Unauthorised Absences

The City of Cardiff Council has asked head teachers not to authorise requests for a holiday in term-time. In line with this guidance, we ask families to make arrangements to take holidays in the summer break during July and August and in other school holidays because of the detrimental effect of such absences on pupils' success.

If a pupil is absent for any reason other than the exceptions stated above, then that absence is recorded as unauthorised.

Monitoring and Promoting Attendance

Attendance processes at Llanishen High School include:

- The completion of registers at the beginning of each lesson. The morning mark is provided at the start of period one and the afternoon mark at the start of period 5.
- Daily checks on registers by the Pupil Support team and first day of absence follow up with parents/guardians to establish the reasons for absence
- Letters home to parents of students where attendance is excellent or where attendance has significantly improved.
- An annual 'Guidance report' for parents/guardians provided as part of the full school report on their child
- The production of attendance summary sheets every Friday afternoon for Form Tutors and Year Team Leaders to review the previous week's attendance.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance to all year groups in assemblies
- Early Identification of pupils at risk of non-attendance

As well as monitoring attendance, we 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.
- All pupils who complete a full week of attendance receive a raffle ticket for the termly Attendance Reward Draw for a £200 voucher per year group.

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 when the names of latecomers are recorded every morning by a Senior Teacher. These names are passed to Pupil Support staff who phone home informing parents/guardians that the pupil will be placed into Late Detention that day.
- Pupils' individual attendance is recorded and tracked on SIMS – the school's data management system.
- Pupils discuss attendance on a half termly basis with their Form Tutor during mentoring sessions and set targets for improvement.
- 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.
- The School Attendance Officer and the 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.
- The School Attendance Officer makes contact/ home visits to discuss concerns regarding poor attendance with families. At these meetings support is offered to promote improved attendance.
- The School's Attendance Committee (member of the Senior Leadership Team with lead responsibility for attendance, School Attendance Officer, Youth Mentor) meets half termly to focus on persistent non- attenders, ie those with under 80% attendance. Parents are informed by letter that their child's attendance is being monitored by both the school and the Council. Targets are set for improvement. Failure to meet these targets results in parents being called to a meeting of the Attendance Committee. In cases where pupils and families are engaging, this meeting can draw up a 'Flexible learning Plan' to support improved attendance. If there is no engagement cases are referred to the Education Welfare Service for possible prosecution.
- The School Attendance Committee completes a termly Vulnerable Attendance Profile for Cardiff Council. This highlights pupils with persistent poor attendance and details the graduated level of support in place for these pupils.

The school aims to prevent dis-engagement due to lengthy absence in a number of ways:-

Close tracking of attendance identifies any pupil who is absent for a full week. Contact is made with the family and reasons for absence discussed. The range of support available is detailed and an action plan decided to support the pupil to ensure re-attendance as soon as possible. Support includes: -

- Re-engagement supported by Llanishen Tuition Staff teaching the pupil at home.
- Llanishen Tuition staff liaising with class teachers to support the pupil in catching up on missing work.
- Flexible Learning Plans facilitating a gradual re-entry into full time on site education.
- Reduced curriculum to reduce stress levels and to facilitate achievement in the remaining subjects
- Support from one of the school's Emotional Literacy Support Assistants

The school aims to prevent dis-engagement at transition from primary to secondary school in a number of ways:-

- Year 9 pupils are trained to act as 'Buddies'. These pupils return to their primary schools to meet year 6 pupils and familiarise them with Llanishen High. Buddies also support year 6 on their transition visits developing the relationship with year 6. When pupils arrive in Year 7 pupils Buddies attend each registration class and are also available to work with small groups

of pupils allaying worries about school. ‘Buddies’ are available to ‘shadow’ vulnerable students at specific times of the school day e.g. breaktime and lunchtime.

- The Additional Learning Needs Coordinator (ALNCO) meets with feeder primary Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOs) to obtain information on Additional Learning Needs (ALN) pupils. Information on areas of need, previous provision etc is shared to remove any potential barriers to successful transition for these vulnerable pupils. These pupils have additional transition visits to reassure them.
- The Behaviour Team visits every feeder primary in the summer term to meet staff and identify any pupil whose behaviour places them at risk of dis-engagement at transition. This team then meets with identified pupils, works with them in their primary school and brings them for additional sessions at LHS to establish support systems.

Expectations:

	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 to attend school every day on time • Ensure that they contact the school if their child is unable to attend school stating the reason for absence • Provide the school with up to date home, work and emergency contact numbers • NOT arrange family holidays during the school term • Inform the school of any problem which might affect their child’s attendance
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 their child's absence, and to do so by text where possible • Deal discretely with any problem notified to the school • Make all efforts to encourage and reward good attendance and punctuality • Ensure proper enquiries are made before removing a non-attending 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 teachers promoting punctual arrival to lessons and excellent attendance, attendance is promoted and monitored in particular by the following:

- The Form Tutor who meets their form daily at mid-morning registration. They review attendance with individual pupils every half term, discussing recent absences and setting targets for improving attendance. The Form Tutor liaises with the Year Team Leader informing them of any concerns about an individual pupil's attendance.
- The School Attendance Officer
- The Year Team Leader who reviews the attendance of the year group and targeted pupils in weekly meeting with the School Attendance Officer. The Year Team Leader discusses ongoing attendance concerns with the Form Tutor and other members of the Year Team.

- The Pupil Support Team who deal with daily attendance procedures and meet regularly with the Year Team Leader and the School Attendance Officer. The Pupil Support Team report absences to parents and guardians on the first day of absence.
- The member of the Senior Leadership Team with lead responsibility for pupil attendance who meets weekly with the Attendance Committee to discuss progress and new concerns.
- A Cardiff Council Education Welfare Officer who meets weekly with the School Attendance Officer to discuss ongoing concerns.
- The School's Attendance Committee and the Education Welfare Service Officer who meet twice a term to discuss pupils with persistent poor attendance and to consider support strategies.

The Governing Body Teaching, Learning and Evaluation Committee receives regular reports on pupil attendance and monitors progress against the attendance target set in the School Development Plan.

Although attendance of all pupils is monitored there is a particular focus on targeted groups of learners, i.e. pupils with Additional Learning Needs (including More Able and Talented pupils); pupils who are entitled to Free School Meals, Looked After Children and those from Ethnic Minorities and the traveller community.

The approach taken by the school operates in conjunction with Cardiff Council's 'Five Step Approach to Attendance Management' (see appendix 1) which includes the issue of initial and final warning letters which can lead to Court action if the situation does not improve.

Fixed Penalties for pupil non-attendance

Since September 2014, schools in Cardiff have worked alongside the Council's Education Welfare Service under the Education (Penalties Notices) (Wales) Regulations 2013 and in accordance with the authority's Code of Conduct for issue of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs).

FPNs are an additional option that can be used as part of a wide range of intervention and support strategies for tackling regular non-attendance at school. It is not intended that FPNs should be used as a response to entrenched non-attendance or to change traditional EWS casework with families. FPNs are intended more as a means of swift intervention which may be most effective in early intervention work or when issued for specific circumstances e.g. in the lead up to key stage 4 examinations.

Under the Code of Practice the school can request that the Education Welfare Service to issue parents/guardians an FPN if:

- There have been 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence in one school term – the absences do not need to have been consecutive;
- Where pupils persistently arrive after the close of the registration period i.e. more than 10 sessions in the current term;
- For a period of absence from school due to a holiday that was not authorised by school;
- Where parents/carers have failed to engage with the school and/or the EWS in attempts to improve attendance but where court action has not been instigated
- Where a pupil has regularly come to the attention of the police during school hours and is absent from school without an acceptable reason.

Before issuing a FPN the Education Welfare Service takes into account

- ✦ the level of absence
- ✦ any equalities considerations relating to the child or the family
- ✦ any statement of Special Educational Needs
- ✦ the history of attendance issues and action taken
- ✦ Welsh Government guidance

- ⤴ the likely effectiveness of a FPN as a tool for obtaining compliance
- ⤴ the level of parental engagement/cooperation
- ⤴ any adverse effect a fine will have on the welfare of the family

A FPN is £60 if paid within 28 days of receipt, rising to £120 if paid after 28 days but within 42 days of receipt. If the FPN is not paid in full by the end of the 42 days the Council must either prosecute parents/guardians under the Education Act 1996 or in limited circumstances such as the notice having been incorrectly issued, it may withdraw the FPN.

Appendix 1

Five Step Approach to 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 there are:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ block absences without explanation○ irregular patterns of attendance with frequent unauthorised absences○ prolonged poor attendance patterns○ suspicious absences without medical corroboration○ known truants○ school refusers○ a sudden deterioration in attendance without any specific reason and no explanation is 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• 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/carer will be given a written 'Initial Warning' letter reminding them 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>