



**TAFF BARGOED
LEARNING PARTNERSHIP**

'Learning and Growing Together'

Attendance Policy

Attendance Policy

Introduction

Regular and punctual school attendance is important and a key focus for us at the Taff Bargoed Learning Partnership. Pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. All schools within the Taff Bargoed Learning Partnership fully recognise their responsibilities to ensure pupils are in school and on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours.

Our policy applies to all children registered at our schools and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of pupils who are registered at our school via our school website.

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority. It is important to understand that good attendance at school is a legal requirement of all Parents/Carers and action can be taken where this is not the case.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Headteacher and Governors at our school work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations.

Aims and Objectives

This attendance policy ensures that all staff, governors and parents in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this Policy we aim to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Aim to achieve a minimum of 95% attendance for all children, apart from those with chronic health issues.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.

- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Ensure that our policy applies right from entry into Nursery in order to promote good habits at an early age.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the Education Welfare Service so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.
- Establish a pattern of regular monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance.

Promoting Good Attendance and Punctuality

We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and pupils.
- Ensuring that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development.
- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, pupils, staff and governors on school attendance matters.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.

Definitions – 'Authorised' and 'Unauthorised' Absences

Authorised absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence.

In instances involving health, parents will be requested to provide proof of appointments through an appointment card or letter to verify the absence.

Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised and should there be any reason for the school to doubt the legitimacy of reasons given, then authorised codes can be overturned by direction of the Headteacher.

Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school. Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without valid reason, even with the support of a parent.

Procedures

Our school will undertake the following procedures to support good attendance:

- To maintain appropriate registration processes.
- To maintain appropriate attendance data.
- To communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, governors, parents and pupils.
- To have consistent and systematic records which give detail of any absence and lateness.
- To follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school.
- To inform parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
- To strongly discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time.
- To work with parents to improve individual pupils' attendance and punctuality.
- To refer to the Educational Welfare Service any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve.
- To report attendance statistics to Merthyr Tydfil LA where requested.
- All staff should be aware that they must raise any attendance or punctuality concerns to the Headteacher who has responsibility for monitoring attendance.

Responsibilities

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

Class Teacher

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Maintaining the accuracy of their class register (SIMS).
- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance, looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/carers.
- Informing the Headteacher where there are concerns and acting upon them.
- Providing background information to support referrals.
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness.
- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation which should be noted inside the register.
- Discussing attendance issues at Parents' Evenings where necessary.

Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Promoting initiatives and strategies to secure the ongoing improvement in attendance.
- Overall monitoring of school attendance.
- Trends in authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Ensuring families are contacted where concerns are raised about absence, including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues.
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised.
- Making referrals to the EWO service.
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.

Administration Staff

Staff in the School Office are responsible for:

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information.
- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence.
- Ensuring the 'Late Book' is completed.
- Carrying out weekly reviews of attendance and collating reports for the Headteacher.
- Contacting parents of absent children where no contact has been made.

- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance, looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/carers and reporting concerns to the Headteacher.
- Sending out letters regarding attendance and punctuality.

Parents/Carers

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment.
- Contacting the school office on the first morning of absence.
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we do require evidence from the doctor or dentist (appointment card/letter).
- Making requests for authorised absence in term time, only if absolutely necessary, as these are not automatically authorised.
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

School Day and Registration

Trelewis and Bedlinog Schools

The following timings apply:

- **Breakfast Club:** 8:15am – 8:40am
- **Reception – Year 6:** 8:55am – 3:30pm
- **Nursery:** 9:00am – 3:20pm
- **Attendance and Dinner Register:** 8:55am – 9:05am

Parents/carers are asked to ensure that children arrive promptly and are ready to begin their school day.

School attendance is recorded through the school registration system. Attendance registers are legal documents and must be maintained accurately and securely.

Lateness

Punctuality is an important part of good attendance. Children who arrive late miss valuable learning, particularly at the beginning of the school day when teachers explain the learning and what each child is expected to achieve.

Any pupil who arrives late will have their lateness recorded in the school's attendance system. Records are kept of pupils who are late.

A pupil is considered late if they arrive after the expected start time. For Reception to Year 6, pupils should be in school and ready for the start of the school day at 8:55am.

The school will monitor patterns of lateness and will work with parents/carers to identify and address any barriers to punctuality.

Lateness Monitoring and Support

Where a child is late **more than 5 times in a term, arriving after 9:00am**, the school will contact parents/carers to discuss the concern and offer further support.

Trelewis

- **More than 5 late arrivals in a term:** Mrs Bennett will send a letter to discuss lateness and offer further support.
- **No improvement following the initial letter:** Parents/carers will receive a further letter inviting them to a meeting with **Mrs Bennett and Mrs Robertson** to discuss the concerns and agree appropriate support.

Bedlinog

- **More than 5 late arrivals in a term:** Mrs Morgan will send a letter to discuss lateness and offer further support.
- **No improvement following the initial letter:** Parents/carers will receive a further letter inviting them to a meeting with **Mrs Morgan and Mrs Rees** to discuss the concerns and agree appropriate support.

The school's approach is intended to be supportive and preventative. The aim is to work with families to identify any difficulties affecting punctuality and to improve attendance and punctuality.

Absences

Parents/carers should contact the school, either verbally or via the school app, on the first day of their child's absence. When parents/carers notify us of their child's absence, it is important that they provide us with details of the reason for their absence.

All absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised absences on the computer. It is important that we receive accurate information from parents with reasons for the child's absence. This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. The Headteacher has overall responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.

Where we have not received reasons for a child's absence, and have not been able to get in touch with you via telephone, a message will be sent directly to parents/carers via the school app requesting an update. If the message is not responded to, the school may issue a letter requesting an update.

If this information is not provided and returned by the specified date, then the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (Attendance Code 'O').

First Day Contact

Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, then we initiate a first day contact process via our school app. Our system automatically generates this using the information within our SIMS system.

Office staff check all of the registers daily to identify those pupils who are absent.

Illness

We understand that there may be times where a pupil is required to remain off school due to short-term sickness/illness. These should be reported at the earliest opportunity so that the school can update registers accordingly (Attendance Code '11 - Physical Illness' / '12 - Non Physical Illness').

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school long term, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their schoolwork. However, work will not be provided for short-term illness as this is impractical and would significantly increase the workload of staff.

Where, over the course of an academic year, a child has repeated periods of illness, the school will write to parents to ask them to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness-related absence. This evidence could be a doctor's note, appointment card or copy of a

prescription. We may seek written permission from you for the school to make its own enquiries.

Attendance Below 90%

The school expects attendance of at least **95%** as a minimum.

Attendance will be monitored regularly. Where a child's attendance falls below **90%**, the school will contact parents/carers to discuss the attendance concern and offer further support.

Trelewis

Where a child's attendance falls below 90%, **Mrs Bennett** will send out a letter to discuss attendance and offer further support.

If there is no improvement in attendance following the letter, parents/carers will receive a further letter inviting them to a meeting with **Mrs Bennett and Mrs Robertson**.

Bedlinog

Where a child's attendance falls below 90%, **Mrs Morgan** will send out a letter to discuss attendance and offer further support.

If there is no improvement in attendance following the letter, parents/carers will receive a further letter inviting them to a meeting with **Mrs Morgan and Mrs Rees**.

The purpose of these meetings is to understand any barriers to regular attendance, agree appropriate support and work together to improve attendance.

Where a child's attendance record does not improve over a period of time, the school has a responsibility to make a referral to the Educational Welfare Service.

Addressing Attendance Concerns

The school expects attendance of at least **95% as a minimum**.

It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their primary school career. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly.

In primary school we rely upon parents to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually and therefore, where there are concerns regarding attendance, parents are always informed of our concerns.

The school will monitor attendance and punctuality regularly. Where concerns arise, the school will:

1. Identify the concern through regular attendance monitoring.
2. Contact parents/carers to discuss the concern.
3. Offer appropriate support and work with the family to identify barriers.
4. Send a letter where attendance or punctuality continues to cause concern.
5. Invite parents/carers to a meeting where there is no improvement following correspondence.
6. Consider referral to the Educational Welfare Service where attendance does not improve and school-based support has not resulted in sufficient improvement.

The school's aim throughout this process is to work positively with families and support children to attend school regularly.

Parental Request for Absence from School for Holiday in Term Time

As a school and governing body, we do not support parents taking holidays during term time. Missing large periods of school can impact on a child's learning and we want to make sure that all of our pupils have the opportunity to be in school as regularly as possible.

However, in line with Local Authority attendance arrangements, parents can request up to a total of **5 school days** of holiday leave during term time. This is at the discretion of the Headteacher and is based on an individual child's current attendance.

Holiday Authorisation

If your child's attendance is **95% or above**, and **prior notification is given**, a holiday of up to **5 school days** may be granted and recorded as authorised absence.

Approval is not automatic. Each request will be considered individually in accordance with the school's attendance policy and relevant Local Authority arrangements.

Where a holiday is taken in term time and the school is informed in advance, an 'H' code will be recorded in the register where the absence has been authorised.

Should a holiday be taken during term time without the school being informed, or should the school be made aware that a holiday has been taken but a different reason for absence has been provided, this will be classed as an unauthorised absence and may result in further action being taken.

Holiday Request Form

A Holiday Request Form must be submitted to the school via the school app. All requests must be submitted before taking the holiday and must not be submitted via any other method of communication.

The form should be completed with as much information as possible.

Once submitted, the school will confirm that the form has been received via the app.

Attendance and FPN Action

When the school receives a request for a holiday in term time, the child's rolling attendance over the previous 12 months, from the date of form submission, will be reviewed.

The school will consider the child's attendance when making its decision. In particular:

1. **If your child has attendance of 95% or above**, a holiday of up to 5 school days may be approved, subject to the Headteacher's consideration of the request.
2. **If your child has attendance below 90%**, the holiday will not normally be approved and an FPN may be issued in accordance with the relevant Local Authority arrangements.
3. If a holiday is taken during term time without the school being informed, or a different reason is provided for the absence, this will be treated as an unauthorised absence and an FPN may be issued.

The school will review attendance before the holiday takes place. If attendance has fallen below the required level since the holiday request was submitted, the school may reconsider the original decision and take appropriate action.

FPNs may also be considered where pupils take multiple holidays during term time, despite having good attendance, where this has an impact on their learning.

Important Holiday Information

We highly recommend avoiding taking lengthy holidays during the **Autumn Term**, as this is an important time for pupils to settle into their new classes.

We understand that, on occasion, holidays or time away from school may be necessary due to special or exceptional circumstances. We would welcome parents/carers discussing these circumstances with us.

Do You Need Support?

We understand that sometimes families may need a little extra support, and we are always here to help.

Our aim is to work together with you and your family to ensure we are doing everything we can to support your child and help them attend school regularly.

If there are concerns about attendance or punctuality, the school will seek to understand the reasons behind these concerns and identify appropriate support wherever possible.

If there is anything you would like to discuss, or if you feel you would benefit from some additional support, please do not hesitate to get in touch with the relevant member of staff via the School App to arrange a chat or appointment.

Trelewis

Please contact **Mrs Bennett or Mrs Robertson** via the School App to arrange a chat or appointment.

Bedlinog

Please contact **Mrs Morgan or Mrs Rees** via the School App to arrange a chat or appointment.

We are always happy to listen, support and work with you in any way we can.

Attendance Initiatives

Within the school, we recognise the importance of promoting good attendance amongst our pupils. As a school, we run a number of initiatives to promote attendance and celebrate the achievements of pupils who are regularly in school.

These initiatives include:

- **100% Weekly Attendance:** Pupils at the start of the year are provided with an 'Awesome Attendance' reward card to collect stickers. For each week of full

attendance that a pupil is in school they get a sticker for their reward card. After 10 full weeks of attendance, pupils are rewarded with a prize for having good attendance.

- **Good Attenders Reward:** At the end of each term pupils with 97%+ attendance are given a special Attendance Certificate and rewards to celebrate their excellent achievement in attending school regularly.
- **Weekly Class Competition:** As a school we run a weekly attendance competition between classes within the school. There are competition rockets in each class and an attendance competition board in the school hall. Winners are announced in Special Assembly with the winning class attending being provided with a special 'Class of the Week' trophy and extra break on a Friday afternoon.
- **Class of the Term:** At the end of each term, the class with the best attendance has a 'Movie Morning' where a film and popcorn is provided for the winning class.
- **100% All Year Reward:** We want to celebrate those pupils who miss no school during a school year. These pupils are rewarded at the end of the year with a special voucher which allows them to purchase books and stationery for themselves, supporting their ongoing education.

Monitoring Attendance

Our office staff have responsibility for ensuring that all attendance data is accurately recorded on the SIMS attendance software.

Regular meetings are held with the Headteacher to discuss all attendance concerns and appropriate actions are taken following these meetings, such as letters being sent to parents or meetings being arranged to discuss attendance concerns.

Attendance and punctuality data will be monitored regularly to identify:

- Attendance below 95%.
- Attendance below 90%.
- Patterns of repeated absence.
- More than 5 late arrivals in a term, where the child is arriving after 9:00am.
- Lack of improvement following communication and support.
- Any other patterns that may indicate that a child or family requires additional support.

The school will continue to work with parents/carers and relevant professionals to improve attendance and punctuality and ensure that pupils are able to access their education as regularly as possible.

Appendix

Trelewis Attendance

Lateness



Your child is late more than 5 times in a term (arriving after 9am)

Mrs Bennett will send out a letter to discuss lateness and offer further support.

No improvement with lateness following letters.

You will receive a letter which invites you to a meeting with Mrs Bennett and Mrs Robertson

Attendance Below 90%



Your child's attendance falls below 90%.

Mrs Bennett will send out a letter to discuss attendance and offer further support.

No improvement with attendance following letters.

You will receive a letter which invites you to a meeting with Mrs Bennett and Mrs Robertson.

Holiday Policy

If your child's attendance is 95% or above, and prior notification is given, a holiday of up to 5 school days will be granted and recorded as authorised absence.

We highly recommend avoiding taking lengthy holidays during the Autumn Term, as this is an important time for pupils to settle into their new classes.

We understand that, on occasion, holidays or time away from school may be necessary due to special or exceptional circumstances. We would welcome you discussing these circumstances with us.

Do you need support?

We understand that sometimes families may need a little extra support, and we are always here to help. Our aim is to work together with you and your family to ensure we are doing everything we can to support your child and help them attend school regularly.

If there is anything you would like to discuss or if you feel you would benefit from some additional support, please don't hesitate to get in touch with Mrs Bennett or Mrs Robertson via the School app to arrange a chat or appointment.

We are always happy to listen, support and work with you in any way we can.

Important Information:

Breakfast Club 8:10 – 8:40am

Reception-Yr 6: 8:55am – 3:30pm

Nursery: 8:55am – 3:20pm

Attendance and Dinner Register: 8:55 – 9:05am

Why does attendance matter?

95% attendance

9 school days missed

90% attendance

24 school days missed

85% attendance

28 school days missed

80% attendance

38 school days missed

75% attendance

57 school days missed

Why does lateness matter?

5 minutes late per day

3 days lost

10 minutes late per day

6.5 days lost

15 minutes late per day

10 days lost

20 minutes late per day

13 days lost

30 minutes late per day

19 days lost each year!

Between 9–9:30am your child takes part in essential reading, spelling and wellbeing tasks.

This is an important part of the school day, helping children to develop their reading and spelling skills while also supporting their emotional wellbeing and readiness to learn. Arriving on time ensures they don't miss these valuable activities.



Bedlinog Attendance



Lateness



Your child is late more than 5 times in a term (arriving after 9am)

Mrs Morgan will send out a letter to discuss lateness and offer further support.

No improvement with lateness following letters.

You will receive a letter which invites you to a meeting with Mrs Morgan and Mrs Rees

Attendance Below 90%



Your child's attendance falls below 90%.

Mrs Morgan will send out a letter to discuss attendance and offer further support.

No improvement with attendance following letters.

You will receive a letter which invites you to a meeting with Mrs Morgan and Mrs Rees.



Holiday Policy

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If there is anything you would like to discuss or if you feel you would benefit from some additional support, please don't hesitate to get in touch with Mrs Morgan or Mrs Rees via the School app to arrange a chat or appointment.

We are always happy to listen, support and work with you in any way we can.

Important Information:

Breakfast Club 8:10 – 8:50am

Reception–Yr 6: 8:55am – 3:30pm

Nursery: 9 – 3:30pm

Attendance and Dinner Register:
8:55 – 9:05am



Why does attendance matter?



95% attendance

9 school days missed

90% attendance

24 school days missed

85% attendance

28 school days missed

80% attendance

38 school days missed

75% attendance

57 school days missed



Why does lateness matter?



5 minutes late per day

3 days lost

10 minutes late per day

6.5 days lost

15 minutes late per day

10 days lost

20 minutes late per day

13 days lost

30 minutes late per day

19 days lost each year!

Between 9–9:30am your child takes part in essential reading, spelling and wellbeing tasks. This is an important part of the school day, helping children to develop their reading and spelling skills while also supporting their emotional wellbeing and readiness to learn. Arriving on time ensures they don't miss these valuable activities.

