



**Pontypridd High School**

# **Attendance Policy**

February 2018

## Attendance Policy

Date of policy:	February 2018
Adopted:	Wellbeing Committee Meeting, 27 <sup>th</sup> February 2018
To be reviewed:	Summer 2019
Member of staff responsible:	Headteacher, Mr Huw Cripps
Committee Responsible:	Pupil Wellbeing

The procedures for monitoring attendance are outlined in this policy. The Wellbeing team work in partnership with all stakeholders, students, parents / carers, all staff, outside agencies (including Attendance Welfare Service) to maintain high levels of attendance and support pupils who may be having difficulties in school which may lead to absences.

### Aim

- To increase whole school attendance to above 95%

### Expectations

#### ***We expect that all students will:***

- attend school regularly, each student should know and strive for the 95% target
- arrive on time, appropriately dressed in school uniform and prepared for the school day
- Through our effective pastoral system, tell a member of staff about any problem which is making it hard for them to attend school regularly

#### ***We expect that all parents / carers will:***

- encourage their son / daughter to attend school every day and on time, students should be inside the school gates by 8.40am
- ensure that they contact the school as soon as possible i.e. on the first day of absence before 8.30am whenever their child is unable to attend school
- ensure that their children arrive in school appropriately dressed and fully prepared for the school day, full equipment lists and correct uniform can be found in the school planner
- provide the school with up to date home, work and emergency telephone numbers
- Not arrange family holidays to take place during the school term and where possible arrange all medical/dental appointments outside term time.
- Liaise with school and relevant staff if there are any problems / issues with their child that could affect their attendance

***Parents / carers can expect that the school will:***

- provide a good quality education with a diverse and enriching curriculum to suit all abilities
- record their son's/daughter's attendance regularly (every lesson), accurately and efficiently; this will be done via electronic registration using SIMs
- on the first day of absence contact the parent / carer using the schools text alert system, some pupils who have been highlighted by their WAMs as will have a phone call instead of a text message
- deal discretely and properly with any problem notified to the school by the parent or carer, to which might affect the students attendance
- make all efforts to encourage good attendance and behaviour throughout the school.

**Promoting good attendance**

Electronic registration MUST be completed immediately during morning registration, in the instance of assembly registered must be completed by the form tutor in paper format and given to the attendance officer.

Pontypridd High School will promote good attendance by:

- Ensuring electronic registers are completed within fifteen minutes of the start of the lesson, whenever possible.
- Contacting parents / carers by a text message if their child is absent
- Form tutors will chase authorisation of attendance from the student. If this is not received within a week of the absence, contact will be made with home via letter. A return slip will be attached and expected to return to school
- Staff and students tracking attendance on a weekly and cumulative basis, and by being placed in specific mentoring groups for attendance where applicable. Students will track attendance in their planner on a weekly basis. One form period a week is designated to attendance.
- Reporting attendance to parents / carers as part of the schools reporting procedure, and notifying parents / carers when their child's attendance is a cause for concern, eg; under 90%.
- Collecting data on attendance for the whole school and by year group, on a weekly and cumulative basis and making this available to governors and parents on request. Comparisons will be made on a half termly basis on whole school, year groups, gender, eFSM (free school meals) and ALN (additional learning needs). Comparisons will be analysed and strategies will be implemented accordingly
- Working closely with the Attendance Welfare Service (AWS) to monitor students of concern, arranging meetings with parents / carers when necessary
- Inviting parents / carers of extreme low attenders to an Attendance panel. This will be held every half term. Targets will be issued and consequences discussed

- Utilising the nurture facility. This is an area where students can feel secure and safe. It should be used for those students who are undergoing staged returns to school, have anxiety issues, need to catch up on specific subjects or who are struggling with day to day school life. The facility can also be used for mentoring, meetings and counselling. Use of the nurture facility will be tracked and evaluated on a termly basis.

### **Responding to Non-Attendance**

When a student fails to attend school without a satisfactory explanation, Pontypridd High School will:

- Contact the parent / carer on the first day of absence by text message (or phone call for highlighted students). If contact cannot be made a letter will be sent home that day to request authorisation.
- If authorisation is not gained a letter will be sent home asking parents / carers to confirm
- If the non-attendance continues beyond ten consecutive days, this will referred to the AWO and a possible well-being referral made. A home visit might be necessary
- If the student or parent / carer fails to respond, the matter will be discussed further with the school's Attendance Welfare Office, with a view to a formal referral

The return to school and the reintegration of a student who returns to the school after a lengthy absence requires special planning. The reasons for absence may vary, eg anxiety, home problems, truancy, bullying. The Leader of Attendance and Wellbeing with support from the appropriate WAM officer will be responsible for deciding upon the programme for return and for the management of the programme. All staff need to be aware that this is a difficult process which requires extreme sensitivity and that any problems should be notified as soon as possible. In collaboration with the parent / carer and the AWO, programmes will be tailored to individual needs and may involve phased, part-time re-entry with attendance at the Nurture facility.

ALN students might need extra involvement from the ALNCo. Staff will be notified of the return of a long-term absentee through the schools email system and information can be filtered to staff by the lead Attendance Officer or the relevant WAM. Details of the circumstances surrounding the pupil will be disclosed wherever possible. Meetings of subject staff who teach the student will be arranged if appropriate.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

Throughout the school each member of staff has a role in promoting good attendance with the students.

#### **Governors will;**

- ensure that the school has in place a whole school attendance policy.
- receive annual and half termly reports from the leader of attendance in respect of attendance data, trends and comparisons.
- monitor the effectiveness of the whole school policy.
- attend the Attendance Panel on a half termly basis

**Leader of Attendance will;**

- liaise with the WAMs and the wellbeing team on a regular basis
- produce half termly data comparisons on whole school and year groups
- report to the school's Senior Management Team on attendance matters and trends.
- ensure liaison with the LA Attendance Officer and ensure referrals are taking place
- monitor and track the mentoring of pupils with attendance below 86%
- manage and attend the Attendance Panels
- ensure the attendance policy is in place and being used effectively
- ensure consistency throughout the school with the approach to attendance
- Promote good attendance through planned initiatives

**Wellbeing and Attendance Managers will;**

- distribute weekly and cumulative attendance data to the form tutors and ensure the form tutors are using the data correctly
- monitor and work with pupils whose attendance is between 88-89.9%
- hold weekly meetings with their form tutors, providing all relevant and up to date information
- liaise with the lead officer on the reintegration of pupils and the use of the nurture facility
- oversee the electronic registration process and ensure that electronic registers are completed accurately and on time in liaison with data manager.
- raise the profile of attendance at appropriate times (e.g. assemblies, tutorials).
- implement sanctions for truancy and lateness
- provide the lead officer with referrals (If any) on a two weekly basis and provide a 'hit' list of five pupils on a half termly basis, to whom a text message is not sufficient (eg; regular non-attenders)

**The Form Tutor (Students between 90-94.9%), teachers and support staff will ;**

- ensure electronic registration is completed immediately in morning registration and at the start of each lesson
- inform attendance officers at start of each lesson, which student(s) they are supporting if withdrawn from a normal timetabled lesson
- attend weekly meetings with their relevant WAM
- work with students between 90-94.9% cumulative attendance. Each student will know the compact target of 95% and will aim for that. They will track their attendance in their pupil planner.
- promote good attendance and school initiatives and competitions
- chase up un authorised absences and report back to WAM
- report to the WAM any concerns of students regarding attendance or reasons for low attendance

### **The Attendance Officer(s) will;**

- provide weekly and cumulative data on attendance to the WAMs, including students who are below 86%
- liaise with the lead officer about reintegration of students and the use of the nurture facility
- visit a year group once a week, speaking to students about lateness and whose attendance is below 90% and chasing unexplained absences
- inform parents / carers in the first instance of absence with a text message or if student is on "hit list" a phone call.
- send letters to parents / carers if their child's attendance is below 90%, and inform of the next procedures
- collate telephone messages relating to student absence and request information from parents / carers, if no reason is given for absence
- follow up registers that have not been marked electronically and to collect paper registers (from supply teachers or following assembly) to transfer onto SIMS system. Ensure all registers have been completed correctly
- check registers with "N" marks or missing marks;
  1. Generate letters for unexplained absences
  2. Ask form tutors / WAMs to check and chase up unexplained absences
  3. Amend marks on system when information is obtained
- liaise with leader of attendance when obtaining and analysing half termly attendance data and comparisons
- maintain records on SIMs / electronically of any letters, communication, dialogue, meetings or AW referrals for any students. To collate evidence when communication with any relevant parties regarding attendance
- ensure any students who are officially excluded from school or have authorised absences are marked correctly
- produce first and second letters to be sent to parents of pupils whose attendance is below 90%
- liaise and work with leader of attendance and WAMs on the late patrol and sanctions for pupils who are continually late. Check the late book. Follow late procedures protocol.
- produce figures for the COMPACT certificates
- liaise with WAM and leader of Attendance to arrange meetings with parents / carers regarding attendance issues
- liaise with Leader of Attendance when monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the mentoring of pupils below 86% and all whole school initiatives

### **For Students under 90%;**

These pupils will highlight on a fortnightly basis, by data distributed attendance officer(s)

Parents / carers will be notified by letter that their child is below 90% and that their child will undergo a series of morning mentoring sessions, working on the importance of good attendance. Parents / carers are also notified of the consequences if their child's attendance does not increase, the first being the attendance panel.

The Attendance panel will be held on the final Thursday of a half term. The panel will consist of The WAM, lead officer, a member of SMT and a member of the Governing Body. Parents / carers will be informed of their child's attendance and will be given a target. They will be informed that if this target isn't met in the specified timescale, the case will be placed with the LA who will start prosecution proceedings.

## **Referrals**

On a fortnightly basis the lead officer will provide all WAMs with a copy of the students in their year group with a cumulative attendance of below 90%. If pupils are on this list twice in succession and are still decreasing they must then be referred to the lead officer and LA.

## **Support Systems at Pontypridd High School**

Pontypridd High School recognises that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and or at school itself. Parents / Carers should make School aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in School; for example, bereavement, divorce / separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help identify any additional support that may be required. Contact can be made through the use of pupil planner, or by contacting the form tutor, WAM or Leader of Attendance.

The School will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. These include;

- Texting on first day of absence
- Discussion with parents /carers and student
- Support and mentoring
- Nurture facility
- Referrals to support agencies
- Behaviour support
- Parent / Carer contracts
- Reintegration and staged returns of students
- Time limited part time time-tables
- Reward systems
- Attendance welfare service
- Excellent communication systems between school and home

## **Punctuality**

Late patrol will take place at selected times. Any students arriving after 8.40am will be recorded and information passed to the relevant WAMs.

Procedure:

- First lateness: Warning by WAM
- Second occasion: Letter sent home
- Third occasion: Parents / Carers will be invited into school for a meeting

Pupils who arrive late must be marked with "L" on SIMS

## **Whole School Initiatives**

At Pontypridd High School we have many whole school initiatives aimed to increase whole school attendance. These include;

- Attendance tracking in the pupil planner. Form tutors will give each pupil their weekly and cumulative attendance. This will be recorded and tracked.
- Attendance stalls in school meetings giving parents / carers and pupils information on attendance
- An Attendance Panel which meets at the end of every half term. This is for students with attendance below 86% and have still not improved. They will be invited to attend the panel at school along with their parent / carer
- Attendance is given to parents / carers on every school report
- Every half term selected students will be mentored. A minimum of 2 meetings will take place every half term where their attendance is discussed
- There are whole school initiatives with prizes given termly and throughout the academic year promoting and rewarding good and improved attendance.

## **Holidays**

The school will comply with guidance issued by the Local Authority. Holidays will only be granted in exceptional circumstances and will be judged on an individual basis. This will be based on several factors such as the time of year of the proposed trip, length and purpose of holiday, circumstances of the family, impact on continuity of learning and the overall attendance pattern of the child. Where appropriate, advice will be sought from the LA.

## **Unauthorised Absence**

The School considers any absence to be unauthorised when;

- no reason for absence from the parent / carer has been provided on the first day of absence
- a pattern of absence is recognised over a number of weeks through close monitoring of each individual student. This may be the case even following initial contact from the parent / carer. In such cases further evidence such as a 'self-certificate' form (available on school website) or GP / Hospital appointment card may be requested.

## **Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs)**

In some circumstances the school may request that the Educational Welfare Service issue parents / carers with a Fixed Penalty Notice under The Education (Penalty Notices, Wales) Regulations 2013. A Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) is a fine of £60 which may be issued to a parent / carer as a result of their child's unauthorised absence / lateness to school.

The Welsh Government has introduced this as an additional means of addressing absenteeism. The legislation allows headteachers and the police (including their nominated deputies) as well as local authority officers the powers to initiate FPN's.

The management and processing arrangements for the issuing of FPN's will be undertaken by Local Authority / Educational Welfare Service. If the £60 fine is not paid within 28 days of receipt of the notice, a £120 fine will be issued.



### **A warning letter will first be sent if:-**

- There have been 10 unauthorised sessions within one school term and the student has an attendance record of below 95%
- A child has been late (after registration has closed) on 10 occasions within one school term.
- Parents / carers have failed to engage in attempts to improve attendance.
- The police have regularly found a student to be absent from school without an acceptable reason.

### **A Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued if:**

- There is one further unauthorised absence within 15 school days of a warning letter having been issued.
- An unauthorised holiday is taken during term time and the pupil has examinations or an attendance record of below 95%. Please note that no warning letter will be issued. The attendance record for any named child is calculated over a period of one calendar year up to the day prior to the planned holiday request.

### **Children Missing in Education**

Although the duty is for local authorities to identify children and young people missing education residing in their area, it is recommended that those who have disappeared without a known destination should remain on the school register and a full investigation undertaken to ascertain the whereabouts of the child.

In the first instance an enquiry via the phone will be made to the parent / carer. Once communication has been made the school will confirm whether or not the student has transferred to another school. Secure systems will be used to appropriately share personal information.

If an address for a child or young person has been provided and there has been no contact then the correct person at the authority will be contacted and a home visit shall be undertaken. The school follows the LA guidance on emergency wellbeing referrals, and completes the CME form if appropriate.

The Attendance Policy which includes a reference to Children Missing in Education procedures is available to read on the School website.

Approved by:



Mr H Cripps, Headteacher

Mr Bill Davies, Chair of Governors

Date: February 2018

