

BANGOR



INDEPENDENT SCHOOL

Bangor Independent School
Achieve Create Excel

Attendance Policy

2020

Policy to be reviewed October 2021

Attendance Policy

Introduction

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. Bangor Independent School fully recognises its 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 this school and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of pupils who are registered at our school on our school website.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Head teacher and Senior Management Team 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. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.

Aims and Objectives

This attendance policy ensures that all staff 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.
- *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 to Nursery and Reception aged children in order to promote good habits at an early age.

- *Work in partnership with pupils, parents and staff 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 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.

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 and staff 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 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.

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.

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 good reason, even with the support of a parent.

Procedures

Our school will undertake to follow 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, parents and pupils.
- *To have consistent and systematic daily 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 Welsh Government where requested.
- *All staff should be aware that they must raise any attendance or punctuality concerns to the Senior Management Team with 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:

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 Head teacher where there are concerns and acting upon them.

Providing background information to support referrals.

Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns.

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.

Ensure the late book is filled out when on morning door duty.

Recording details of children who arrive late or go home.

Senior Management Team:

The SMT is responsible for:

Overall monitoring of school attendance.

Trends in authorised and unauthorised absence.

Contacting families 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 in Gwynedd.

Providing reports and background information to inform discussion with the school's EWO.

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.

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 Head teacher.

Sending out standard letters regarding attendance / lateness.

Parents

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 before 9.30am with a valid reason explaining the absence.

Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time.

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.

Registration

The school doors open at 8.30am. Pupils should arrive at school by 8.45am to come into their classroom and get settled.

Each class teacher has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance. Any pupil who is absent must be recorded at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session. The attendance register must be completed by the class teacher by 9.00am.

Registers are kept in the classroom with the teacher and are put away in a designated drawer out of sight. Attendance sheets are sent to the office every morning with details of any absences.

Attendance registers are legal documents and these must be kept secure and preserved for a period of three years after the date they were last used.

Lateness

Once the gates are locked at 9.15am the only way to get into school is to phone the school office. Any pupil who comes into school this way will be marked as late in the attendance record. Records are kept of those pupils who are late. This is documented on the register for each pupil (Attendance code A that has been circled).

Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school later than 9.00am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M).

Children who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning, often the most important aspect, as the beginning of the day is where the teacher explains the learning and what each child is expected to achieve.

Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness parents/carers will receive a letter advising them of the concerns and the school will provide opportunities for parents/carers to seek support and advice to address these issues.

ABSENCES

Parents/carers should contact the school 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. 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 Senior Management Team has the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.

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. Office staff check all of the attendance forms from 9.00am to 9.30am on a daily basis, to identify those pupils who are absent. There are occasions when we are unaware why the child is absent and we will contact the parent to check the reasons for the child's absence.

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 they can keep up to date with their school work.

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 their own enquiries.

Parental Request for Absence from School for Holiday

Parents must seek permission from the Head teacher if you want to take your child(ren) out of school during term time.

You can only do this if:

- you make an application to the head teacher in advance (as a parent the child normally lives with)
- there are exceptional circumstances

It's up to the Head teacher how many days your child can be away from school if leave is granted.

Instead, Head teachers will only be allowed to grant leave of absence for any reason if they are satisfied exceptional circumstances exist.

Addressing Attendance Concerns

The school expects attendance of at least 95%.

It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their primary school career. It is the responsibility of the Head teacher and Senior Management Team 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. Initially concerns about attendance are raised with parents face to face, and will be documented by the school. There will be opportunities for the parent/carer to discuss reasons for absence and support to be given by the school with the aim to improve attendance.

Monitoring Attendance

Our office staff, has the responsibility for ensuring that all of the attendance data is accurately recorded. Regular meetings are held with the Senior Management Team to discuss all attendance concerns and appropriate actions are taken following these meetings such as letters sent to parents or meetings arranged to discuss attendance concerns with parents.

Appendix 1 - Leave of Absence Form

Appendix 2 – Persistent Lateness



Bangor Independent School
School Registration Number 6616034

Leave of Absence during Term Time

Name of Pupil: _____ DOB: _____

Address: _____

I wish to apply for leave of absence for my child for the purpose of: _____

_____ (please state reason).

First day and date of absence: _____ returning to school on _____

Number of days absence from school: _____ child's class _____

The Department for Education has announced important amendments to legislation surrounding holidays in term time. From 1st September 2013 Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances and gives no entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. Headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances are exceptional and warrant the granting of leave.

Low cost travel or arrangements made by a family member or friends are not deemed to be exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school, if the leave is granted in accordance with arrangements made by the schools governing body. The Local Authority can fine parents for failing to ensure their child attends school.

Signed: _____ Parent/Guardian

Authorised for exceptional circumstances: _____ Headteacher

Unauthorised Holiday: _____ Headteacher



Bangor Independent School
School Registration Number 6616034

Dear _____,

Re: Persistent Lateness

I am writing to inform you that your child(ren)_____ is / are persistently late for school. Between *date* and *date* he/she was late on ____ occasions and missed ____ hours of education.

When pupils arrive late, they miss out on essential instructions given at the beginning of the lesson. This can significantly reduce achievement, regardless of academic ability. Your child(ren) may also feel awkward arriving to the classroom when everyone else is settled. Furthermore, when one pupil arrives late, it disrupts the entire class and the teacher – everyone's education is compromised.

Meanwhile, if anything can be done to support _____ getting to school on time, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Senior Management Team

Bangor Independent School