Attendance Policy

Llanidloes Cluster

THIS ATTENDANCE POLICY HAS BEEN WRITTEN AGREED BY ALL SCHOOL

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Policy Revision History

Date	Version	Reviewed by	Description	Date ratified by full GB
Dec 24	1	RW		
June 25	2	RW		

1. Mission statement

Llanidloes High School is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all learners and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.

We will provide an environment where all learners feel valued and welcomed and are committed to the fundamental principle that early intervention and partnership working is crucial in ensuring the attendance, protection and wellbeing of all children.

The school will follow the Wales Safeguarding Procedures, *Belonging, engaging and participating*[1] and local protocols in relation to specific and identifiable wellbeing issues that prevent a child from accessing education, or where there are safeguarding concerns.

As outlined in *Belonging, engaging and participating*, 'attendance cannot be considered in isolation. The many interrelated and overlapping causes of absence and the varied nature of the learner experience in school, the community and at home mean that whole school strategies and strong multi-agency working arrangements are needed, designed to support all learners.' [2]

The school will review this policy and its systems for improving attendance and the whole school approach for promoting strong attendance and a positive learning environment on an annual basis to ensure that it is in line with national and local guidance, school priorities and effectively supports learners to access education.

2. Promoting attendance

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents, carers and learners as outlined in *Belonging, engaging and participating*[3], the Welsh Government guidance on improving learner engagement and attendance.

'Improving attendance requires a whole-school and whole-system approach'[4], where 'learner engagement and improving attendance is a continuous process that begins with developing trusting relationships between school staff and learners'[5].

We will:

[1] Welsh Government, October 2023, Belonging, engaging and participating: Guidance on improving learner engagement and attendance, https://www.gov.wales/improving-school-attendance, accessed 20.08.24

[2] Welsh Government, October 2023, Belonging, engaging and participating: Guidance on improving learner engagement and attendance, https://www.gov.wales/improving-school-attendance, accessed 14.11.24, p.6

[3] Welsh Government, October 2023, Belonging, engaging and participating: Guidance on improving learner engagement and attendance, https://www.gov.wales/improving-school-attendance, accessed 20.08.24

[4] Welsh Government, October 2023, Belonging, engaging and participating: Guidance on improving learner engagement and attendance, https://www.gov.wales/improving-school-attendance, accessed 20.08.24, p. 17

[5] Welsh Government, October 2023, Belonging, engaging and participating: Guidance on improving learner engagement and attendance, https://www.gov.wales/improving-school-attendance, accessed 20.08.24, p. 20

- ensure that our learners are aware of the importance of good attendance and how this will benefit them, both now and in the future
- offer reward schemes for individual learners, classes and year groups who have high levels of school attendance, no unauthorised absence and/or have shown to significantly improve their attendance rates.
- use a variety of strategies to intervene at an early stage to encourage improved attendance of individual learners and assist to overcome any barriers that may be preventing the expected level of attendance. These strategies may be school-based, or may be implemented jointly with other partners to ensure the most appropriate support for the individual and their family.
- Clear guidance of how the school and families will work together to ensure learners' have good attendance in the home-school agreement.

3. Roles and responsibilities

To support a learner effectively, it is important to establish close working relationships between families, learners, schools, the local authority and other professionals.

A key part of any successful working relationship is a clear understanding of each person's role and responsibilities. The following section clarifies the roles and responsibilities for those people engaged in supporting learner attendance.

The Parent / Carer

Parents / carers are responsible for ensuring that their child attends full-time education that is suitable to their child's age, ability and aptitude and to any additional learning needs (ALN) that the child may have.

Parents / carers are also responsible for ensuring that their child attends school on time; this is a legal requirement. We understand that sometimes there are situations at home that may make it difficult for a learner to arrive on time, it is important that parents / carers let us know should such a circumstance arise.

The School

Schools have a range of responsibilities in respect of attendance. The school will:

- Take an attendance register twice a day; at the **start** of the morning session and once during the afternoon session.
- Monitor individual attendance rates daily to identify any emerging trends and possible safeguarding concerns.
- Use their interventions to improve individual learner attendance.
- Have 'eyes on' a learner who has been absent from school for more than five school days. This includes undertaking home visits where contact is not possible at school or in the community.

- Make a referral to the Education Welfare Service for support, advice and guidance when the school has exhausted all other reasonable methods.

Attendance Lead

Mr Jordan Davies - ASL will be responsible for the strategic management of attendance across the school.

THE NAMED PERSON WILL:

- Gather and scrutinise attendance data;
- Monitor trends and patterns across cohort of learners;
- Identify individuals or groups requiring interventions;
- Inform the Designated Safeguarding Person that if a learner/s on the child protection register is absent from school; this must be on the first day of absence.
- Direct resources for the best possible outcomes;
- Coordinate and monitor interventions;
- Evaluate interventions for their impact and effectiveness;
- Amend and revise the school's approaches.

Form tutors/class teachers

THE FORM TUTOR (SECONDARY) WILL:

- Be responsible for completing the morning registers fully and accurately (in secondary, the afternoon registration may be completed based on the class registers for the period after lunch – this should be explained);
- Record any details known to them about reasons for absence;
- Hold 'return to school' discussions with learners after periods of absence to ascertain the reason and to understand if there are any barriers to the pupil fully engaging in their education or if they require any additional support.

Subject Teachers

THE SUBJECT TEACHERS WILL:

- Be responsible for completing lessons registers accurately;
- Ensuring that lesson registers are completed fully and accurately at the start of the lesson.

Attendance Officer / Attendance Administrator

THE ADMINISTRATION STAFF WILL:

- Be responsible for the daily operation duties of the attendance team;

- Follow up on any unmarked registers;
- Escalate concerns about registers to the attendance lead;
- Undertake first day calling every day for a learner whose family has not made contact; collate and log any supporting evidence;
- Flag any first-day absences of learners on the child protection register with the designated safeguarding person;
- Flag any first-day absences of learners who are children looked after with the designated teacher for children looked after;
- Chase any outstanding forms, absence notes, holiday request forms etc.;
- Compile data for analysis by the attendance lead, form tutors and heads of year/progress leads;
- Make referrals to the Education Welfare Service where appropriate.

Designated Safeguarding Person

THE DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING PERSON WILL:

- Ensure that social workers for learners on the child protection register are informed of any absences on the first day of absence.

Designated Teacher for Children Looked After

THE DESIGNATED TEACHER FOR CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER WILL:

- Ensure that the workers for learners who are looked after are informed of any absences on the first day of absence.
- Ensure that the home authority's virtual school / looked after children education coordinator are kept informed of the attendance of children looked after in the school.

Headteacher

THE HEADTEACHER WILL:

- Make the final decision on coding, including authorisation or not of holidays.

4. School procedures

Any learner who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period will have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity (attendance out of school). Only the headteacher, or a member of staff acting on their behalf, can authorise absence.

Registration coding is in line with the Welsh Government guidance on school attendance codes[6].

4.1 Punctuality

Morning registration will take place at the start of school at **8.55am** The registers will remain open for a maximum of 30 minutes from this start time, in accordance with Welsh Government guidance.

Learners arriving after the start of school but before the end of the 30-minute registration period will be coded as late (L code). Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence (U code) unless there is an acceptable explanation i.e. school transport was delayed. In addition, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered (M code).

Afternoon registration will be at **12.20pm** and any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as present but late (L code) if they arrive within 30 minutes or an unauthorised absence (U Code) if they arrive more than 30 minutes after the start of the afternoon session.

The school will follow-up on lateness with the learner and / or their parent / carer via **Text / Phonecalls home.**

If a learner is persistently late, the school will **communicate with parents via phone and letter, arrange meetings with parents and escalate to the EWO if required**

4.2 Dual Registration

Where a learner attends another school, the Pupil Referral Unit or receives medical tuition, they will be dual registered with both the school and the other provider. The main school will be whichever the child attends for more than 50% of their time. The other will be the subsidiary.

Both schools or provisions must maintain an accurate register. The school will liaise with the other education provider on a daily basis in order to identify learners who are absent and mark the register accordingly.

If the learner attends, the education provider where they attend will mark them as present (/ or \ code) and the school will mark the register with a D code (which counts as present). If they are absent, the education provider and the school will both mark the register with the appropriate absence code.

[6] Guidance on school attendance codes, Welsh Government, 2016 https://www.gov.wales/school-attendance-codes-guidance#:~:text=School%20attendance%20codes:%20guidance.%20The%20codes%20that%20schools%20must%20use, accessed on 26.09.2024

If a learner attends a college course or alternative provision for one day a week, or has extended work experience, this is not a dual registration. The school will liaise with the college, provider or work experience placement on a weekly basis in order to identify learners who are absent and mark the register accordingly. If the learner attends the course or provision, the register will be marked with a B code, or a W code for work experience. If they do not attend, the appropriate absence code will be used.

4.3 First day absence

Parents and carers are reminded that they should contact the school by **8.55am** if their child is not able to attend school on that day. Parents and carers must state the **full** reason for the child's non-attendance (not just "feeling unwell") and indicate the likely date they will return to school. Parents and carers should be prepared for the members of school staff to ask questions about the pupil's condition, the patterns or trends in their absences and any treatment they may be receiving.

If a parent or carer does not contact the school, staff will try to find out the specific reason for non-attendance as soon as possible on the first day of absence. The school will contact parents as soon as possible to find out why a child is not in school. Once the specific information is received, the register will be amended to reflect the appropriate absence code (see Appendix 1 for the types of code).

If no appropriate reason is given for the absence, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised (O code).

4.4 Absence – supporting evidence

Supporting evidence or communication received from parents / carers explaining the reason for the absence will be recorded and / or kept on file.

Parents and carers should be made aware that only the headteacher (or an appropriately delegated member of the SLT) can authorise an absence. Further information (such as a letter from a GP or consultant} may be required to support reasons given for absence.

4.5 Persistent and severe absence

The school will work proactively identify emerging persistent absence. Where a pattern begins to develop, the school will **communicate with parents via phone and letter, arrange meetings with parents and escalate to the EWO.**

The Welsh Government defines persistent absence as below 90%.

The local authority defines severe persistent absence as below 50%.

The use of the terms persistent and severe absence helps to clearly define the difference between those learners who are occasionally absent and those learners who are seen in school far less frequently. This supports schools to target interventions and responses effectively as well as understand where safeguarding risks may be heightened.

4.6 Medical and illness absences

Where a learner requires a routine medical appointment (such as a dentist appointment), these should be made outside of the school day. If this is not possible, a copy of the appointment letter should be provided to the school ahead of the appointment date. The parent / carer should try to ensure that the learner attends school some of the day, where possible.

If a learner is repeatedly absent due to illness, the school may request supporting evidence that the learner is receiving the necessary medical treatment. An appointment card, consultant letter, photograph of prescription medication, would all suffice as medical evidence. Without the necessary evidence, the school may notify the parent or carer that all future absences will be unauthorised until the necessary medical evidence has been provided, and a referral to the Education Welfare Service may be made.

In addition, some learners may require additional provision and support where their known medical needs have a long-term and persistent impact on their attendance[7]. Examples could include, but are not limited to:

- Recuperation following a hospital stay or operation;
- A longer period of illness (such as glandular fever);
- Conditions for which regular appointments or treatments are unavoidable (such as kidney dialysis, chemotherapy, radiotherapy).

The school will provide appropriate support on a case-by-case basis. This may include seeking additional advice, guidance, support or provision from the local authority.

4.7 Holidays

Holidays during term time should be avoided as any absence can have an impact on learning.

Parents / carers should apply in advance to take holidays in term time: the fact that holiday has been booked does not automatically give permission. If the headteacher doesn't agree and the family goes anyway, it's an unauthorised absence. The headteacher is not obliged to authorise holiday absence, and there is no minimum entitlement of holiday absence.

[7] Supporting learners with health care needs, Welsh Government, 2018, https://www.gov.wales/supporting-learners-healthcare-needs-0#:~:text=Guidance%20for%20local%20authorities%20and%20schools%20on%20how%20to%20help, accessed on 26.09.24

The headteacher has the discretion to authorise absences for up to 10 days in a school year. Part of the decision-making process will include a review of the learner's absences to date. If a learner is away for longer than agreed, the period outside the agreed dates will be an unauthorised absence. There is no right to appeal: the decision of the headteacher is final.

Should a family wish to submit a request for their child to be absent from school for the purposes of a holiday, they should complete the cluster holiday request form and submit it to school 28 days before the requested date.

The family will be notified of the outcome of the request in writing one week before the date of the family holiday.

Parents and carers are advised that a fixed penalty notice may be issued by the local authority when permission for a holiday or leave of absence has not been authorised by the school. The local authority's Code of Conduct for issuing Fixed Penalty Notices can be obtained from the school, the local authority's website or the Education Welfare Service.

5. Attendance initiatives and multi-agency working

The school will raise the awareness of school attendance, promote good attendance and tackle unauthorised absence.

The school will use a rewards system to reward learners who have excellent or improving attendance.

The school will work with other agencies, including the local authority, on general school attendance matters. Additionally, the school will seek advice and guidance from, and make referrals to, appropriate agencies to support individual learners.

The school will work closely with feeder (pre-) schools to support transition.

The Education Welfare Service (EWS)

'The EWS is committed to the fundamental principle, that early intervention strategies and partnership working, is crucial in ensuring the protection and wellbeing of all children and young people.'[8]

Sometimes it will be necessary for the school to contact the EWS about an individual learner to seek advice, guidance and support to improve their attendance. This may involve the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) contacting the family and / or making a home visit. Parents / carers, and the learner where appropriate, may also be invited to a meeting with the school and the Education Welfare Officer.

Youth Service (Secondary Schools)

[8] Welsh Government, October 2023, Belonging, engaging and participating: Guidance on improving learner engagement and attendance, https://www.gov.wales/improving-school-attendance, accessed 26.09.24, p. 52

The Youth Service will focus on working with young people aged 11 years and above to raise self-esteem, build confidence, support peer-to-peer working, to assist integration into education. The Youth Service will support a young person to overcome social and emotional barriers they are facing that are preventing them from fully engaging in school life and may be limiting their attendance.

OTHER AGENCIES THAT THE SCHOOL WORKS WITH FREQUENTLY INCLUDE:

- School-based counselling service (Area 43)
- Family Liaison Officer
- CAMHS In-reach
- Early Help
- School Nursing
- Integrated Disability Service
- Educational Psychology Service (in cases of Emotionally-Based School Avoidance)

6. Reintegration following absence

The school will welcome back all learners on return from an absence. This will include ensuring that the learner is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other learners.

If the learner has been absent for a considerable period of time, the school will meet with parents and other agencies that are working with the family to ensure that they are well supported with the transition back to school. In some cases, a reintegration plan will be introduced tailored to the needs of the individual. .

7. Fixed Penalty Notices for non-attendance at school

The school may, in line with the local authority's Code of Conduct, request the local authority to issue a fixed penalty notices where a parent/carer has failed to secure their child's regular attendance at school.

8. Retention of records

Attendance regulations stipulate that attendance records should be retained for at least three years.

9. Attendance targets

A system for analysing performance towards the targets has been established and the headteacher is responsible for overseeing this work. The school and Governing

body will make use of the attendance data available from the local authority when reviewing its targets.

The head teacher will present the attendance data in each of the termly reports to the Governing body for the figures to be scrutinised against the attainment data. The Governors will have the opportunity to challenge the data alongside the practices for managing attendance, in order to tackle the overall absence rates across the school and within specific cohorts of learners.

APPENDIX 1: Registration codes

The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
****	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical / Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education
W	Work experience	Approved Education
X	Un-timetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age learners	Not counted in possible
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible
#	School closed to learners	Not counted in possible

APPENDIX 2: Legislation and guidance

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable:

(a) to his age, ability and aptitude and
(b) to any special needs he may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent means natural parents and includes any person who has parental responsibility or has day to day care of the child.

Section 444 1, 1(a) and (ZA) contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school or alternative provision arranged by the Local Authority.

The Education (Penalty Notices) (Wales) Regulations 2013 set out the framework for the operation of the Fixed Penalty Notice scheme.

The Equalities Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011

Registers and admission.

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010
- The Education (School Day and School Year) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2006

Attendance targets

- The Education (School Performance and Unauthorised Absence Targets) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2006.

Guidance documents relating to attendance

- Belonging, engaging and participating
- Celebrate and participate: Education guidance to support Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children and young people
- All Wales Attendance Framework
- Powys Code of Conduct [relating to the Fixed Penalty Notice scheme]
- Welsh Government Guidance on penalty notices for regular non-attendance at school
- Welsh Government Guidance on attendance codes Wales Safeguarding Procedures
- Keeping learners safe