

Birchgrove Primary School



Where every child is a star!

Attendance Policy

Chair of Governors Mrs Christine Salter
Headteacher Mrs S Morgan

Birchgrove Primary School

Attendance Policy

1. Introduction and aims

1.1 All young people have the right to education, based on equality of opportunity, and Birchgrove Primary School, in partnership with parents and other parties, must take measures to encourage regular school attendance and reduce rates of absenteeism.

1.2 A child's success at school is likely to be affected negatively if their attendance is poor. Those who do not attend regularly may fall behind in their learning, leading to underachievement, both academically and socially.

1.3 Birchgrove Primary School recognises the crucial role that parents play in promoting good school attendance. The school therefore seeks to provide professional, quality information and advice, communicated frequently by telephone, email, leaflets, parents' evenings, school reports and the school website.

1.4 Birchgrove Primary School aims to:

- Give attendance and punctuality a high priority;
- Clearly define roles and responsibilities to ensure consistency and accuracy;
- Provide support, advice and guidance to families;
- Use attendance data systematically to evaluate success and to prioritise appropriate follow-up procedures;
- Use rewards to celebrate good attendance;
- Use sanctions sensitively and only when necessary;
- Work in partnership with the Education Welfare Service to improve attendance; and
- Support pupils returning to school after significant periods of absence.

2. Rights, responsibilities and roles

2.1 Birchgrove Primary School are 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.

2.2 Parents are required under section 7 of the Education Act 1996, to ensure that their child receives effective full-time education.

2.3 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.

2.4 The school operates in conjunction with Cardiff Local Authority's System of Attendance Management.

2.5 Birchgrove Primary School aims to work in partnership with young people, parents and families so that pupils can benefit from the educational opportunities provided to them at school.

3. Procedures

Class Teacher procedures

- *Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance, looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, improvement in attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/or unusual explanations for absence offered by children and their parents/guardians.*
- *Informing the Headteacher and School Attendance Officer where there are concerns and acting upon them.*
- *Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness.*
- *Discussing attendance at consultation evenings/days.*
- *Setting an example by arriving promptly to lessons.*

Registration procedures

3.1 To ensure consistency, all pupils are registered at the same time.

3.2 Pupils are registered within the first ten minutes of the morning and afternoon sessions. Pupils' attendance is therefore recorded twice during the school day.

3.3 Teachers and Supply Teachers are required to record present or absent against each pupil's name. No pupil may be left with a 'missing' mark.

3.4 In instances of lateness, members of staff are required to alter the absent mark to the late mark. The degree of lateness may be recorded as necessary.

Procedures for absence and lateness

3.5 Parents are asked to contact the school office by telephone every day of their child's absence. These telephone calls are monitored by the admin staff throughout the day.

3.6 Should a pupil be absent from school without explanation, they will be marked as unauthorised, parents will be contacted in order to seek an appropriate authorisation for pupil's absence.

3.7 Should the school be unable to ascertain the reason for absence a letter will be sent to parents seeking explanation.

Authorisation of absence

3.8 Absences may only be approved by authorised representatives of the school.

3.9 The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 give schools discretionary power to grant leave for the purpose of a family holiday during term time. Parents do not have an automatic right to withdraw their child from school for a holiday and, in law, have to apply for permission from the school in advance. Birchgrove Primary School will only authorise family holidays where parents are able to demonstrate that unique or exceptional circumstances prevent the holiday from being taken outside of term time. In general, holidays during term time will not be authorised (see 4.4).

4. Intervention

4.1 Birchgrove Primary School operates a 'same day contact' scheme in an attempt to prevent prolonged absence and encourage pupils to return to school promptly.

4.2 Periodic 'late book' punctuality checks will be undertaken to challenge patterns of lateness. Those highlighted will be referred to the School Attendance Officer and communication made with parents where necessary.

4.3 In cases of concern where the attendance level is falling or consistently low, the School Attendance Officer will engage with the pupil and family by use of appropriate means. This may include telephone conversations, letters, home visits and meetings in school which may involve other senior members of staff. The School Attendance Officer will provide information and advice and seek to support the pupil in returning to school.

4.4 In some circumstances following the Education (Penalty Notices) (Wales) Regulations 2013 and Welsh Assembly Government guidelines, it may be appropriate that Educational Welfare Service in consultation with Birchgrove Primary School, issue parents/carers with a Fixed Penalty Notice. Circumstances when they could be used are as follows:

- When a child has a minimum of ten unauthorised sessions recorded during the current term (these do not need to be consecutive and please note that a school day is divided into two sessions, am and pm);
- In response to persistent late arrival at school i.e. after the registration period. Again, this will be when there are at least ten recorded late marks in the current term;
- For unauthorised holiday absence of the equivalent of 5 days or more (10 sessions). Parents are advised that taking a family holiday during term time may result in an FPN payment;
- If a parent(s)/carer(s) does not attempt to engage with the school or Local Authority regarding their child's absence;
- If a pupil regularly comes to the attention of the police during school hours without an acceptable reason, the police authority may request the Local Authority issue an FPN.

Before a Penalty Notice is issued, parent(s)/carer(s) will receive a written warning outlining the extent of the child's absence and the possibility of receiving a Penalty Notice.

4.5 In addition to Fixed Penalty Notice when the school feels that, despite its best efforts to support the family, attendance is not improving, a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service. A referral might be made when, for example:

- A pattern of irregular attendance has developed;
- Parents/carers have failed to engage in attempts to improve attendance
- A period of entrenched non-attendance has become established;
- There is a lack of parental cooperation in ensuring a child's regular attendance; or
- A pattern of truancy is persisting.

4.6 When a pupil has been absent for an extended period, they are welcomed positively on their return. The class teacher is responsible for ensuring that extended support is made available to the pupil, helping them to 'catch up', and a phased return may also be arranged where appropriate.

4.7 The Attendance Officer works closely with the Whitchurch High School cluster group to ensure that good school attendance is maintained.

4.8 Good attendance is celebrated at regular intervals in assemblies.

4.9 Birchgrove Primary School will liaise with the Education Welfare Service to provide the evidence required to prosecute parents who fail, without reasonable justification, to cause their child to attend school regularly, under sections 444(1) and 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996.

5. Monitoring and evaluation

5.1 The Attendance Officer and admin staff are responsible for maintaining accurate attendance records for each pupil.

5.2 Admin staff are required by the Headteacher to produce detailed reports pertaining to the attendance of pupils upon request.

5.3 The Attendance Officer meets at least half-termly with the Headteacher to discuss individual cases of absenteeism, truancy or lateness across all year groups and reflect upon the effectiveness of interventions to date. Decisions are taken at this time as to whether individual cases meet the criteria for referral to the Educational Welfare Service, for either Fixed Penalty Notices or possible legal action.

5.4 The Attendance Officer meets with their designated Educational Welfare Officer once per half term (or as required) to review cases and seek advice when required.

5.5 Attendance data is reviewed each academic year by the Senior Leadership Team and is used to populate the Self-Evaluation document and inform the School Improvement Plan.

