# Cyfarthfa High School

**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

# Attendance Policy

**POLICY DATE**

September 2026

**SCHEDULED REVIEW**

September 2027

**Policy Lead**

Jo Houghton | Deputy Headteacher

Approval date 08.10.26

## Approval

| Role | Name and signature | Date |
|---|---|---|
| Chair of Governors | D. Williams | 08.10.26 |
| Headteacher | B. Davies | 08.10.26 |
| Designated SLT member | J. Houghton | 08.10.26 |

# Attendance and Registration Policy

Policy date September 2026 | Scheduled review September 2027

## Introduction

Research has proven irrefutably that pupils who attend school regularly are far more likely to maximise their educational potential. Whilst the parent/guardian is primarily responsible for ensuring their child attends school regularly, the school clearly plays a key role in working with the Local Authority to help achieve this.

This document sets out all the systems employed by the school for ensuring regular attendance and investigating the cause of poor attendance. The policy outlines clear lines of accountability and has been developed in consultation with teachers, pupils, parents/guardians, administrative staff, Attendance and Well-Being Service, Senior Leadership Team, and Governors. These procedures have an important role in shaping the culture of the school as well as defining practice.

## Legal Requirements

### Parents/Guardians

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, the parent/guardian is responsible for ensuring that their child of compulsory school age receives efficient full-time education that is suitable to their child's age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs the child may have. This can be by regular attendance at school, alternative provision or by elective home education (the parent/guardian can choose to provide education for their child).

### School

Schools are required under the Education (Pupil Registration, Wales) Regulations 2010 to take an attendance register twice a day, at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. The accuracy of the register is important in order to support any statutory interventions that may be required. It should be noted that it is an offence not to maintain accurate registers.

### Daily

- All registers are taken electronically via ClassCharts at the beginning of every lesson.
- A register is also taken during registration period at 8.30am by the Form Tutor.
- Staff members/supply staff are directed to limit their code usage to a choice of three:

/ = present, N = absent, L = late.

- In order to ensure consistency and accuracy, all other codes/code changes are issued by the School Attendance Officer only. The Senior Attendance Lead will make weekly checks to ensure quality control. Strict adherence to Local Authority code usage guidelines is followed at all times.

Codes other than / or N are to be marked with a red flag and additional comments are added to justify the use of the code in question.

- Any missing marks (-) default to an N code until further enquiries are made.
- AM registration starts at 8.30am and the PM session commences at 12.15pm (lesson 4). Pupils who are over 30 minutes late are issued a U code, which is an unauthorised absence, and consequently lose their present mark for the session. Where pupils are under 30 minutes late an L code is issued which counts as present.

- After the AM registration is closed, the School Attendance Officer initiates the 'first day response system'. This involves notifying parents/guardians that their child is absent from school that day and trying to establish reasons for the absence. This is actioned on ClassCharts.
- Registers are also scrutinised meticulously to check for internal truancy.

**Attendance code categories**

| Statistical category | Codes |
|---|---|
| 1. Present | /\ and L |
| 2. Approved educational activity | B, B1, B2, J, P1, P2, V and W |
| 3. Authorised absence | C1, C2, C3, C4, F, H, I1, I2, M, S, E, R and T |
| 4. Unauthorised absence | N, O, G and U |
| 5. Not required to attend | D1, X, Y1, Y2, Z and # |

## Attendance code reference

| Code | Meaning | Category | How it should be used |
|---|---|---|---|
| /\ | Present at registration | Present | Present at the morning or afternoon registration session. Use only when the pupil is actually present at registration. |
| L | Late but arrived before the register closed | Present | Use when the pupil arrives after registration starts but before the register closes. Welsh Government advises a 30-minute opening period. |
| B | Educated off-site (not dual registration) | Approved educational activity | Use for supervised, school-approved, in-person educational provision away from the school. Do not use for online learning or provision on the school premises. |
| B1 | Online learning provided by a local authority | Approved educational activity | Use where an agreed local-authority/EOTAS arrangement provides synchronous online learning. Appropriate safeguards, consent and oversight must be in place. |
| B2 | Online learning provided by the school | Approved educational activity | Use where the school provides agreed synchronous online learning following appropriate local-authority panel/arrangement and safeguarding considerations. |
| J | Interview | Approved educational activity | Use for interviews with prospective employers, another school, further/higher education, apprenticeship or training provider. Evidence should normally be obtained. |
| P1 | Approved sporting activity | Approved educational activity | Use when the pupil is participating in an approved sporting activity supervised by an appropriately authorised person. Spectating is not included. |
| P2 | Approved performance | Approved educational activity | Use when the pupil is participating in an approved unpaid child performance. Appropriate supervision, safeguarding and risk arrangements should be confirmed. |
| V | Educational visit or trip | Approved educational activity | Use for school-organised educational trips, visits, residentials and appropriate transition activities. The activity must be educational and supervised. |
| W | Work experience | Approved educational activity | Use for qualifying work experience under section 560 of the Education Act 1996. Do not use where work placement is simply part of off-site educational provision coded B. |

| Code | Meaning | Category | How it should be used |
|---|---|---|---|
| C1 | Other authorised circumstances | Authorised absence | Use for exceptional circumstances not covered by a more specific code. Examples include bereavement, a family wedding, genuine young-carer crisis or other circumstances the school agrees warrant absence. |
| C2 | Absence due to a paid performance | Authorised absence | Use when a pupil is absent because they are taking part in a paid performance and the school authorises the absence. Education provided on set may instead be coded B/B1/B2 where applicable. |
| C3 | Pupil who is flexi-schooled | Authorised absence | Use for sessions the pupil is not attending under an agreed flexi-schooling arrangement. The headteacher must agree the arrangement and safeguarding must be considered. |
| C4 | Pupil on a part-time/reintegration timetable | Authorised absence | Use for sessions a compulsory-school-age pupil is not required to attend under an agreed reduced or reintegration timetable. The arrangement should be documented, monitored and aimed at return to full-time provision. |
| F | Agreed extended family holiday | Authorised absence | Use from day 11 of an agreed extended holiday where exceptional circumstances justify more than 10 school days. The first 10 days should normally be H. |
| H | Agreed family holiday | Authorised absence | Use for an agreed term-time family holiday of up to 10 days where exceptional circumstances justify the absence. Requests must be made in advance. |
| I1 | Physical illness | Authorised absence | Use where the pupil is absent because of physical illness, such as an infectious illness, sickness bug or physical injury. Medical evidence should not be requested unnecessarily. |
| I2 | Non-physical illness | Authorised absence | Use where the main reason for absence is non-physical illness or wellbeing concerns. Schools should respond appropriately to patterns of absence and consider support and safeguarding. |
| M | Medical or dental appointment | Authorised absence | Use for absence at registration due to a medical, dental or hospital appointment. This includes GP, dentist, CAMHS and hospital appointments, but not an inpatient stay. |
| S | Study leave | Authorised absence | Use sparingly for study leave, normally for Year 11 public examinations, with a maximum of 15 days. It is authorised absence, not approved educational activity. |
| E | Excluded – no alternative provision made | Authorised absence | Use where a pupil remains on roll but is excluded and alternative educational provision has not yet been made. Alternative provision should normally be arranged from the 16th day. |
| R | Religious observance | Authorised absence | Use for a day set aside exclusively for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil/family belongs. Additional holiday not exclusively set aside for observance is not R. |
| T | Traveller absence | Authorised absence | Use for a Gypsy, Roma or Traveller pupil absent because their family is travelling for work, where the statutory conditions apply and educational provision is not known. |

| Code | Meaning | Category | How it should be used |
|---|---|---|---|
| N | No reason for absence provided yet | Unauthorised absence | Use initially where the pupil is absent and no reason has yet been established. If no reason is provided within five school days after reasonable enquiries, replace N with O. |
| O | Other unauthorised absence | Unauthorised absence | Use for unauthorised absence not covered by another specific code. Examples include shopping, birthdays, haircuts or other unacceptable reasons. |
| G | Family holiday not agreed / excess days | Unauthorised absence | Use where a term-time holiday was not agreed, was not requested in advance, or exceeds the period agreed by the school. |
| U | Late after register closed | Unauthorised absence | Use when a pupil arrives after the register has closed and no other appropriate authorised code applies. Welsh Government advises registers should normally close after 30 minutes. |
| D1 | Dual registered – attending another educational setting | Not required to attend | Use where a pupil is registered at more than one school/setting and is expected to attend the other provision for that session. The setting expecting the pupil is responsible for recording attendance and following up non-attendance. |
| X | Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils | Not required to attend | Use for sessions that non-compulsory-school-age pupils are not expected to attend. Do not use for compulsory-school-age pupils or exclusions. |
| Y1 | Partial closure | Not required to attend | Use where part of the school cannot operate and affected pupils cannot attend, or qualifying exceptional travel/transport circumstances prevent attendance. It is not counted as a possible attendance. |
| Y2 | Whole-school closure | Not required to attend | Use for an unexpected whole-school closure or qualifying exceptional circumstances such as widespread disruption or infection-control requirements. Do not use for planned closures. |
| Z | Pupil not on roll yet | Not required to attend | Use for administrative purposes when setting up registers for pupils expected to join the school but who are not yet on roll. If an expected pupil does not arrive, the school should notify the local authority and follow its CME processes. |
| # | School closed to all pupils | Not required to attend | Use for planned whole-school closures such as holidays, weekends where required by the system, INSET/no-contact days and polling-station closures. Do not use for enforced closures; use Y1/Y2 as appropriate. |

## Procedures

### Weekly

Parents/Guardians of pupils who are absent are expected to contact the school/absence phone line to provide a reason why their child is absent from school. When this is not forthcoming, these absent pupils are picked up via the Attendance Officer who calls throughout the day from lesson 2. Details of such students are provided to Form Tutors and the Head of Year on a weekly basis via internal attendance tracking sheets. An unsatisfactory explanation will result in the absence being coded as

unauthorised (O). The school reserves the right to ask for supplementary information when deemed necessary.

## Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Authorised absence means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence. Unless exceptional circumstances apply, the only four legitimate reasons for absence:

- Religious observance
- Illness of child
- Death of a close family member
- Urgent medical or dental appointment

## Other Procedures

### Attendance Monitoring

Heads of Year, Raising Standards Leaders and the School Attendance Officer analyse attendance figures weekly and at the end of each half-term. Pupils who have an attendance less than 92% but above 85% are placed on internal attendance monitoring over a half term period. This involves a letter being sent home (see appendix 2) and weekly monitoring by the Form Tutor until the pupil's attendance improves in line with their target. At such a juncture, students will be removed from attendance monitoring and a letter of praise is sent home. Heads of Year will also monitor pupils weekly who have an attendance less than 85%. EWO staff will also work with the school to focus on pupils below 85%.

Form Tutors include all eFSM and ALN pupils within their monitoring cohort. The ALNCo (and team) is responsible for the attendance monitoring of all pupils on the ALN register.

When any pupil falls below 95% the stage 1 letter is sent home and parents/guardians are informed of a two-week monitoring period. Failure to improve, and a fall below 92% will result in a stage 2 letter being sent home and parents/guardians being invited into school to discuss attendance with the Head of Year and School Attendance Officer. Further escalation, and a fall below 85% will result in a stage 3 letter which will involve the Local Authority Attendance and Well-being Service.

## Attendance and Well-being Service Referrals

Pupils whose attendance falls below 85% are referred to the Attendance and Well-being Service who will take appropriate action which may involve legal action (see appendix 3). Such meetings would normally take place on a weekly basis. Heads of Year have autonomy not to implement, or to delay, the above proceedings on a discretionary basis under exceptional circumstances, e.g., family tragedy. This may involve consultation with the School Attendance Lead. Whatever the situation, close liaisons between the Senior Attendance Lead, School Attendance Officer, Head of Year, Attendance and Well-being Service, parents/guardians and pupils is essential.

## Lateness

Pupils are issued an after-school detention on a Friday after recording three late marks within a week, and parents/guardians are notified via a phone call home. Sanctions will be increased, further letters will be sent home, and parents/carers will be called into school for a meeting with the Head of Year, and possibly the Senior Attendance Lead, if lateness persists.

All pupils who arrive late to school are coded appropriately by school administrative staff.

## Frequent Illness

When the frequency of illness, either sporadic or prolonged, becomes a concern, parents/guardians are notified that any future illness will not be authorised unless certified by a medical practitioner.

Again, forensic analysis of data is conducted by the Head of Year and Senior Attendance Lead before such decisions are taken.

## Pupils on the Child Protection Register

Pupils whose names appear on the Child Protection Register have their attendance monitored daily by our Safeguarding Team. Children's Services are informed if a pupil on the register is away from school on two consecutive days or on a Friday and Monday. Also, if we receive no correspondence after 24 hours, an emergency home visit and /or referral will be made into the Attendance and Well-being Service.

## Leaving the premises during the school day

Leaving the school site throughout the day is not permitted for years 7-11 (including break, Year 7-11 and lunch time Year 7-11). Parents/guardians can request that pupils be allowed to leave to attend various appointments by notifying the school via ClassCharts or a phone call. This must be authorised by the Head of Year, Attendance Officer or SLT. The school may request evidence for medical/dental/other appointments.

## Phased returns

Phased returns are employed after extended periods of absence to positively reintegrate absentees into school life and will be put in place by the Head of Year and Senior Leadership Team link for the year group.

## Holidays in Term Time

Regular attendance is essential to pupils' learning and progress. Holidays during term time interrupt teaching, create gaps in knowledge and can make subsequent lessons more difficult. Parents/carers are therefore expected to arrange holidays during school holidays.

Cyfarthfa High School will not authorise term-time holidays unless the Headteacher determines that exceptional circumstances justify the absence. There is no automatic entitlement to authorised holiday absence, regardless of a pupil's attendance record.

Parents/carers intending to take their child on holiday during term time must complete a Holiday Notification Form (see appendix 4) and submit it at least four school weeks before the proposed departure date. School holidays do not count towards this notice period.

**Completing or submitting the Holiday Notification Form does not authorise the holiday and does not guarantee that the absence will be authorised. Acknowledgement of the form is not permission to take a pupil out of school.**

Where parents/carers believe exceptional circumstances apply, they must explain these when submitting the form and provide relevant supporting information. The Headteacher will consider the individual circumstances in accordance with Welsh Government guidance. The school will communicate its decision within 14 working days.

**Unless the school has expressly confirmed authorisation in writing before the holiday, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. Parents/carers must not interpret a lack of response as approval.**

Unauthorised holiday absence may result in referral to the Local Authority and consideration of a Fixed Penalty Notice under the applicable Local Authority arrangements. Submitting a Holiday Notification Form does not prevent this action.

## Use of data

Using data effectively is a crucial component of the school's policy. The Senior Attendance Lead, Attendance Officer and Heads of Year analyse data on a weekly basis in order to identify trends in learners or groups of learners. Anecdotal evidence about patterns of absence is considered insufficient and can be misleading. Attendance data facilitates strategic planning, allowing attendance issues to be managed more efficaciously and ensure suitable preventative measures and interventions are in place.

Factors frequently investigated include, but are not limited to:

- Declining attendance in year groups
- Effect of seasonal attendance
- Effect of staff absenteeism
- Fall in attendance preceding school holidays
- Effect of activity days or school trips
- Effect of pupil holidays in term time
- FSM/non-FSM
- Gender differences

Such analysis is discussed in various meetings involving Form Tutors, Heads of Year, School Attendance Officer, Senior Leadership Team, Attendance and Well-being Service, parents/guardians, pupils and School Governors.

Data is also compared with data from other similar schools periodically throughout the year.

## Rewards, Incentives and Sanctions

Studies have shown that rewards are far more effective than punishment in motivating pupils. Reward schemes are used, as appropriate, to encourage good attendance.

Various impositions are used as sanctions to deter lateness and truancy.

## Raising the Profile of Attendance

Maintaining a high profile with regard to attendance is vital. Of particular importance is reinforcing the link between attendance and achievement. Strategies employed to safeguard this include:

- Attendance as a fixed agenda item in regular meetings involving: The Senior Leadership Team, Heads of Year, Form Tutors and Governors.
- Awareness of attendance is raised with parents/guardians at every available opportunity, e.g.; interim reports, parents' evenings, ClassCharts, the school website and social media platforms.
- Attendance is a frequent feature in assemblies, in particular Achievement Assemblies, and in 'Thought of the Week' during registration.
- A strong emphasis is placed on attendance during the school evaluation and school development planning process.
- Attendance is incorporated into transition planning and the early identification of pupils in need of extra support.

## Safeguarding

The school views attendance as a safeguarding issue. For example, non-attendance may be an indicator of bullying, abuse, mental health or other issues. With this in mind, the school conducts a 'well-being survey' three times per year to help Heads of Year identify and address such issues.

## Other Links

Striving for excellence in behaviour, curriculum choices, teaching and learning also have a positive impact on attendance (see Behaviour for Learning and Teaching and Learning policies).

## Involving Parents/Guardians and Working with External Agencies

The school views parents/guardians as our most important partner in ensuring that young people are supported in learning and development. Parent/Guardian involvement is sought at the earliest possible opportunity when attendance issues become evident. All parents/guardians receive attendance information about children in their care throughout the year via first day response texts/phone calls, ClassCharts, school reports, parents' evenings, meetings.

External agencies such as the Attendance and Well-being Service, SNAP Cymru, Exchange Counselling Service, I2A, internal Wellbeing support systems, CAMHS and Educational Psychologists provide support where necessary.

## Target Setting

The Local Authority sets attendance targets in conjunction with the school. In order to set meaningful and appropriately challenging targets the following factors are considered:

- School inspection date and category
- Current performance against existing targets
- Comparison of existing performance to median
- FSM quartiles
- Percentage of pupils with attendance rates below 86%
- School size
- Past 3 years attendance data
- Known exceptional factors that impeded previous years' performance

## Appendices

1 - Stage 1 letter – below 95%

2 - Stage 2 letter – below 92%

3 - Stage 3 letter below 85%

4 - Holiday Notification Form

5 - Pupil Attendance Monitoring letter

## Appendix 1

Our Ref: Stage 1- Letter 1

Date: [Insert date]

**School Attendance Concern Stage 1**

Dear Parent/Carer of [Pupil name]

As part of my responsibilities for attendance, I, along with the team of Progress Leaders and EWOs monitor school attendance to identify any absences that cause concern. There is now a strict, graduated operational response to pupil absence through which we aim to provide pupils and parents/carers with early intervention and support.

We note that [Pupil name]'s overall attendance has now fallen below our aspirational target of 95% and therefore a Stage 1 monitoring period of two weeks has been actioned. We hope to see an improvement over the next two weeks.

As we know, frequent absences will have a serious effect on your child's progress. If a child misses one day a week over their whole school career, it will mean that they will miss over two years of education and very likely to not fulfil their academic potential.

[Pupil name]'s attendance reflects an average of [insert absence frequency].

I am sure you are aware of the importance of this matter, and I hope that you will take all possible steps to improve [Pupil name]'s attendance.

Please do not hesitate to contact your child's Head of Year/Raising Standards Leader or Mrs. Evans (school Attendance Officer) if you are having any difficulties regarding attendance, we will be happy to offer you support in this matter.

Yours faithfully,

Jo Houghton

Deputy Headteacher

## Appendix 2

Our Ref: Stage 2- Letter 2

Date: [Insert date]

**School Attendance Concern Stage 2**

Dear Parent/Carer of [Pupil name]

As part of my responsibilities for attendance, I, along with the team of school based and Local Authority staff monitor school attendance to identify any absences that cause concern. There is now a strict, graduated operational response to pupil absence through which we aim to provide pupils and parents/carers with early intervention and support.

We have previously written to you regarding your child's attendance. I note that [Pupil name]'s overall attendance has now fallen below our Local Authority target of 92% and therefore a Stage 2 monitoring period of a further two weeks has been actioned.

As part of this monitoring period we require you to attend a meeting at the school to discuss how your child can improve and sustain their attendance at school.

A meeting has been arranged for you on [insert date] at [insert time].

PLEASE CONTACT THE SCHOOL TO REARRANGE IF THIS TIME IS INCONVENIENT

As we know, frequent absences will have a serious effect on your child's progress. If a child misses one day a week over their whole school career, it will mean that they will miss over two years of education and very likely to not fulfil their academic potential.

I am sure you are aware of the importance of this matter, and I hope that you will take all possible steps to continue to improve [Pupil name]'s attendance.

Please do not hesitate to contact your child's Head of Year/Raising Standards Leader or Mrs. Evans (school Attendance Officer) if you are having any difficulties regarding attendance, we will be happy to offer you support in this matter.

Yours faithfully,

Jo Houghton

Deputy Headteacher

## Appendix 3

Our Ref: Stage 3- Letter 3

Date: [Insert date]

**School Attendance Concern Stage 3**

Dear Parent/Carer of [Pupil name]

As part of my responsibilities for attendance, I, along with the team of school based and Local Authority staff monitor school attendance to identify any absences that cause concern. There is now a strict, graduated operational response to pupil absence through which we aim to provide pupils and parents/carers with early intervention and support.

Unfortunately, despite our previous communications, [Pupil name]'s overall attendance has now fallen below our 85% and therefore a Stage 3 monitoring period has been actioned which will involve our school based EWO.

As we know, frequent absences will have a serious effect on your child's progress. If a child misses one day a week over their whole school career, it will mean that they will miss over two years of education and very likely to not fulfil their academic potential.

I am sure you are aware of the importance of this matter. I hope that you will take all possible steps to improve [Pupil name]'s persistent absence before the Local Authority commences routine legal procedures.

Please do not hesitate to contact your child's Head of Year/Raising Standards Leader or Mrs. Evans (school Attendance Officer) if you are having any difficulties regarding attendance, we will be happy to offer you support in this matter.

Yours faithfully,

Jo Houghton

Deputy Headteacher

## Appendix 4 Holiday Notification Form

Please complete this form and return it to the School Office at least four school weeks before the proposed absence. School holidays do not count towards this notice period.

Approval of absence for a term-time holiday can only be given in very exceptional circumstances and is at the discretion of the school, exercised by the Headteacher in line with Welsh Government guidance. Each request will be considered individually.

**Submitting this form does not authorise the holiday or guarantee approval. Acknowledgement of receipt is not permission. Unless authorisation is expressly confirmed in writing before the holiday, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.**

**Pupil details**

| Child | Full name | Date of birth | Year or form |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | | |
| 2 | | | |
| 3 | | | |
| 4 | | | |

First day of absence: _____ Last day of absence: _____

Expected return to school: _____ Number of school days: _____

Holiday destination: _____

**Very exceptional circumstances for consideration**

Explain why the absence is necessary during term time and attach supporting information. Continue on a separate sheet if needed.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Parent or carer name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

**For school use only**

Authorised days: _____ Unauthorised days: _____

Decision and reasons: _____

_____

Headteacher signature: _____ Date: _____

Chair of Governors signature: _____ Date: _____

Written decision communicated on: _____

## Appendix 5

Date: [Insert date]

**School Attendance Half Termly Monitoring**

Dear Parent/Carer of [Pupil name]

As part of my responsibilities for attendance, I, along with the team of Heads of Year, The ALNCo, Raising Standards Leaders and EWOs monitor school attendance to identify any absences that cause concern. There is now a strict, graduated operational response to pupil absence through which we aim to provide pupils and parents/carers with early intervention and support.

[Pupil name]'s overall attendance has fallen into our cause for concern bracket of 87-92% which is below our aspirational target of 95%.

[Pupil name], along with a cohort of fellow pupils, will be monitored by the Form Tutor each week, for the duration of half a term. With your support, we hope to see an improvement over the next few weeks.

Please do not hesitate to contact your child's Head of Year/Raising Standards Leader or Mrs. Evans (school Attendance Officer) if you are having any difficulties regarding attendance, we will be happy to offer you support in this matter.

Yours faithfully,

Jo Houghton

Deputy Headteacher