Attendance Policy
2022-23

DATE POLICY AGREED WITH GOVERNORS: December 2022

DATE FOR REVIEW: December 2023

General Principles

Raising attendance is a given priority in the School Improvement Plan and it anticipates all staff complying with the clear and detailed guidelines for register keeping, the effective working procedures for detecting and dealing with non-attendance and its strongly associated problem of lateness.

Lesson by lesson electronic registration improves the quality of monitoring of pupil attendance by teachers. The school also subscribes to a text messaging system and Class Charts alerts to query all instances of nonattendance, ensuring that 'first response contact' is made swiftly. Using these methods and communicating personally with parents/carers, the school works hard to secure improvements in the attendance of all groups of learners. Procedures for recording and monitoring attendance along with all other secondary schools across Cardiff Council, Cardiff West Community High School operates a computerised attendance recording system. This enables attendance records to be processed on the computer, allowing immediate access to individual pupil data and whole school attendance data.

Procedures for Recording and Monitoring Attendance

As with any form of registration process however, the computerised attendance data will only be of value to the school if individual class registers are scrupulously kept, according to agreed procedures, by all participating staff and if careful housekeeping procedures are maintained by the Pastoral Support Officers, Welfare Manager and School Attendance Officers. It is a combination of these methods, supported by close working relationships with parents/carers and pupils which will secure significant improvement in pupil attendance.

Staff Guidelines for Marking Computerised Registers

All staff have access to Class Charts in the classroom and have been trained on the use of the system. Accessing the register is done by logging on to Class Charts and selecting the Classes option at the top of the screen. Teachers will see their classes for the day displayed and need to click on the relevant class to take the register.
It is important to note that absence codes are issued by Welsh Government, and it is the school's responsibility to ensure that the most current codes are in use and that staff are aware of any changes.

Lateness Procedures

Pupils arriving late during registration are met at the main pupil entrance by the School Attendance Officers. Pupils arriving at the Late Gate during the registration period have their names noted on standard forms and after the registration period the School Attendance Officers check they have been marked present on the register. Pupils arriving late after the registration period must initially report to the Reception Desk of the main office to sign in with the Receptionist and electronically on the INVENTORY system the pupils will then be assigned a late mark, thereby recording the pupil present on school premises. Similarly, pupils who are required to leave the school premises must report to Reception where they will electronically sign out on the INVENTORY system: Regular incidents of lateness as well as being unsatisfactory, will, if not discouraged, impact on progress and may lead eventually to absenteeism. When initially recognised, by the number of late marks 'L' on the weekly attendance data sheets, the pupil will be warned initially by the Form Tutor and referred on to their PSO and Progress Leader if the situation persists. PSOs and SAOs will contact the

parent/carer to raise concerns about persistent lateness to school and lessons through a graduated response to punctuality that includes a series of staged punctuality letters and sanctions.

Parental Responsibilities and School Procedures following pupil absences

It is believed that early intervention following an absence will prevent pupils drifting into more frequent or prolonged absences. The fact that the pupil knows their absence will be noted, and that there will be a prompt following up, may be a sufficient deterrent for many having unnecessary absences. The relevant PSO and Progress Leader and SAO will routinely contact the parents of pupils who systematically lose time from school and record the reasons given for the absence. The appropriate code will then be assigned to the absence, where it is deemed appropriate, thereby authorising it. Where an absence occurs, and phone contact or Class Charts communication has not been established between the parent and the relevant PSO, it will be followed up by written communication, if contact remains unestablished, a referral to the Welfare Manager will be made. This may result in a SAO or Welfare Manager visit or where necessary an EWO referral. All actions regarding attendance are noted on the SIMS attendance tracker.
We have a graduated response to absence:

- If attendance reaches 96%, an attendance concern letter is sent
- If attendance reaches 94% a letter will be sent and if there is no improvement within 2 weeks a parental meeting will be arranged with the PSO
- If attendance reaches 92% a letter will be sent requesting a further meeting with the PSO and Progress Leader to agree an Attendance Action Plan
- If attendance reaches 88% or below a letter will be sent to arrange a meeting with a member of the Senior Leadership Team, the Progress Leader and PSO
- If no improvements are made following all the actions above the pupil is referred to the relevant School Attendance Officer for monitoring and a referral to EWS is made if no progress is made

It is the daily duty of the PSO to question and chase up absences that are indicated on the absence data sheet as N. Those occurring in the preceding week, which have been explained in a parental phone call need no further action. They will be assigned an appropriate code by the PSO, Progress Leader or Welfare Manager and will no longer appear as N on the following absence data sheet. Where the letter N remains however, this flags up to the PSO that the pupil and their parent/carer should be referred to the relevant Progress Leader or the Welfare Manager who will secure an explanation for which an appropriate code to replace the N code can be made, thus closing the N code. The N code indicates that the resolution, or otherwise, is pending, that further contact needs to be made with the parent and then final action taken on the N code.

Truancy

If, by following procedures outlined above, it is established that the pupil was in fact sent to school and that the parent/carer was unaware of the absence(s), the period(s) of absence will be coded by the PSO, Progress Leader, Welfare Manager or School Attendance Officer as a truancy.

Internal Truancy

Truanting lessons after registration can have the same adverse effect on a pupil's progress as other forms of absence. All teaching staff therefore are required to use the electronic attendance register on Class Charts, for each group they teach. This registration of attendance is to precede the lesson and should always be carried out in a formal manner in order that pupils become accustomed to the fact that an attendance check will always be made by the teacher. Furthermore, recording pupil attendance at the very beginning of each lesson, within the first 10 minutes, will also deter lateness. Daily truancy spot checks will be carried out by the PSOs, PLs and SLT using the extensive reports available within the Class Charts Attendance module and through their profile and visibility. This can be done without disruption to lessons and the PSOs will be able to note absences from the class register and compare these with the official daily register.

Any pupil found to be truanting from a lesson may be checked against registers in previous lessons for that day. If additional absences have taken place the pupil's official attendance mark will be coded as truancy for that specific morning or afternoon session. SLT's lesson by lesson Learning Support also deters internal truancy and the PSOs visibility and presence provides an additional check and balance for pupils out of lessons. Staff moving around school between lessons are also proactive in identifying truancy.

Sanctions imposed for truancy

In all cases of truancy, the PSOs will inform parents/carers that truancy has taken place via Class Charts. Daily sanctions for truancy for each case are actioned by SLT.

Persistent Truancy

Pupils will never be excluded for truancy, but persistent truancy will be addressed by detentions, parental meetings, Progress Leader reports and Internal Exclusion if the problem persists.

Expected Long Term Absence

In the event of expected and forthcoming long-term absence (more than 4 weeks), due to injury or other health reasons, PSOs, Progress Leaders with the Welfare Manager, will liaise with Area Leads to provide work, in liaison with parents/carers and take and collect the work from home by a pre-agreed arrangement with parents/carers. Should a long-term absence continue, the necessary referral to initiate Home Tuition provided by the Authority or an appropriate supportive arrangement will be made by the Welfare Manager.

Irregular Attendance

Where concerns regarding irregular attendance exists at a subject level, the Progress Leader will arrange to investigate the query with the PSO and initiate further enquiries. Where infrequent attendance exists and intervention by PSO and Welfare Manager fail to make a significant improvement, a formal written warning from the school should be sent to the pupil's parent/carer, giving details of attendance over a specified period.

This document provides the parent with an accurate record of their child's attendance and invites them to attend a meeting with the PSO and/or Progress Leader/Welfare Manager to discuss the situation. These may bring to light changes in family circumstances which could be making regular attendance exceedingly difficult. Should this be the case, then the school would be in a better position to understand the events surrounding the absences and therefore be able to advise and/or initiate assistance which may prevent further absenteeism. Where such circumstances do not exist,

these documents serve as a clear warning of further action being taken that could well lead to a prosecution for non-attendance

Pastoral Support Team

The school currently has the benefit of 5 PSOs, 5 Progress Leaders, Welfare Manager, 2 School Attendance Officers, Family Engagement Officer and an Emotional Health and Wellbeing Leader who can provide intensive input to help address issues relating to attendance. The PSOs support wellbeing, including wellbeing issues impacting on attendance, they also support behaviour and emotional issues and attitudes to learning. The PSOs and Welfare Manager have experience and training in a range of specialist areas which add value to their ability to work with pupils and which in turn adds to a holistic approach to pupil attendance. Through specific interventions they can support pupils who would otherwise be persistent non-attenders. The PSOs are line managed by the Welfare Manager and work in conjunction with the Progress Leaders, Family Engagement Officer and Emotional Health and Wellbeing Leader. An Assistant Headteacher leads strategically on attendance and chairs the Attendance Review half termly meetings that are attended by the PSOs, SAOs and the Welfare Manager. The Assistant Headteacher also chairs the BESD provisions fortnightly attendance meetings and liaises with relevant staff to ensure the welfare, attendance, and progress of pupils. The Assistant Headteacher Ethos and Wellbeing, the Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for Attendance and the Welfare Manager meet regularly and in response to arising needs. Progress Leaders support the Attendance lead by meeting weekly with their relevant PSO and SAO to review the attendance of pupils in their year groups and agree actions for those causing a concern, all actions are recorded on the SIMS attendance tracker. The Welfare Manager meets the PSOs daily to address issues arising. The pastoral teams identify pupils that should receive rewards for good attendance and ensure that attendance is high profile in the weekly celebration of achievements assemblies and end of term assemblies.