



School Attendance Policy

GB member/staff responsible for policy review:	Assistant Headteacher, Mr J Toghill
GB Link Governor:	Mrs A Clarke

1. Mission statement

St John Baptist Church in Wales High School is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.

We will provide an environment where all pupils 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 All Wales Child Protection procedures and local protocols in relation to specific and identifiable wellbeing issues that prevent a child from accessing education, or where there are safeguarding concerns.

For a pupil to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all pupils. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance. The policies and procedures of the school apply to all year groups, including the Sixth Form, and the school will always endeavour to follow a graduated response for each pupil to ensure that poor attendance is tackled throughout the school year. There is a Parent Guide to Attendance available on the school website, as well as guidelines for reporting pupil absence.

School attendance is subject to education law and guidance and our school attendance policy is written to reflect this legislation and the guidance produced by the Welsh Government. For information relating to this legislation and guidance, see Appendix 2.

The legislation makes provision for a school day which is to be divided into two sessions with a lunch break in the middle and to be available for 190 days in any school year.

The school will review its systems for improving attendance on an annual basis to ensure that it is achieving its set goals and targets as identified by the Governors, local authority, Central South Consortium and the Welsh Government.

This policy will contain the procedures that the school will use to work towards meeting its attendance targets, as set by the local authority.

2. Promoting attendance

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents, carers and pupils.

We will ensure that our pupils are made aware of the importance of good attendance and how this will benefit them, both now and in the future; we will offer reward schemes for individual learners, classes and year groups who have high levels of school attendance and/or have shown to significantly improve their attendance rates.

We will use a variety of strategies to intervene at an early stage to encourage improved attendance of individual pupils 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.

The home school agreement will contain details of how we will work with parents and carers and our expectations of what they will need to do to ensure pupils' achieve good attendance. These expectations and potential consequences of not meeting the expectations will be regularly communicated to parents throughout the academic year in various ways such as text messages, the school website and at parents' evenings.

3. School procedures

Any pupil 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 head teacher, or a member of staff acting on their behalf, can authorise absence.

If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence will be recorded in the first instance as unexplained (N code) and promptly followed up by the school as part of its early intervention and safeguarding strategies. This will be in the form of a text message, telephone call or letter to the parent or carer to enquire about the whereabouts of the pupil. If no reason is given by the end of 10 school days or the reason given is not reasonable, the pupil will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (O code).

The coding for any absences will be in accordance with the guidance provided by the Welsh Government's All Wales Attendance Framework as in Appendix 1.

4. Punctuality

Morning registration will take place at the start of school at 8.40 am, although pupils are expected to be in school by 8:35, at the latest, for the first bell, which is the start of morning lines. The registers will remain open for a maximum of 30 minutes from this start time, in accordance with Welsh Government guidance. 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 in this instance).

Pupils arriving after the start of school but before the end of the 30 minute registration period will be coded as late (L code).

Afternoon registration is at the start of Period 5 and any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an authorised absence (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, which is Period 5.

In the event of numerous late arrivals, the school will contact the parent by letter to inform them of the impact on their child's attendance and subsequent attainment. Should the pupil continue to arrive late for registration after being issued with this letter, the school will issue sanctions as appropriate. Following this, if the pupil is late again, parents and carers will be invited to a meeting with the head teacher or attendance lead together with the Link Governor for Attendance to discuss the matter and possibly take further action.

Parents and carers are reminded that the local authority may issue a fixed penalty notice for persistent lateness after the close of the register in accordance with the local authority's Code of Conduct for the Issuing of Fixed penalty Notice for Non-School Attendance, if the number of U codes is 10 sessions or greater in the current term.

5. First day absence

Parents and carers are reminded that they should contact the Mrs Bezani at the school by 9:00am 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 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 your child is absent, you must contact us by 9:00am on the first day of absence; and then on a daily basis. If your child will be absent for a few days or more, please contact Mrs Bezani.

If a parent or carer does not contact the school, staff will endeavour to ascertain the specific reason for non-attendance as soon as possible on the first day of absence, after both morning and afternoon registration. This may include a telephone call, texting service or a home visit from a member of school staff or an Attendance and Wellbeing Officer. 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).

Priority will be given to children who are deemed to be particularly vulnerable, e.g. those known to Children's Services or are looked after (CLA). The local authority's Attendance and Wellbeing Service will be notified of unexplained absences of five days or more, which will be reduced to only 24 hours if the pupil is on the child protection register, who may conduct an unscheduled home visit to determine if the pupil is safe and well.

6. Absence notes and supporting evidence

Notes received from parents explaining the reason for the absence will be kept on file for an academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil that may require further investigation, then the notes should be retained in line with the education retention schedule. Parents and carers are aware that only the head teacher or their representative can authorise an absence and that further information such as a letter from a GP or consultant may be required to support reasons given for absence.

7. Medical and illness absences

The school appreciates that there are times a pupil has to attend a medical appointment during the school day. In these instances, a copy of the hospital appointment letter should be provided to the school **prior** to appointment date to inform the school of the set scheduled time. This, however, does not apply to GP or dental appointments, which can and should be arranged for times outside of the school day.

If a pupil is repeatedly absent due to illness, the school may request supporting evidence that the pupil 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 they will unauthorise all future absences until the necessary medical evidence has been provided, and a referral to the Attendance and Wellbeing Service may be made.

8. Dual Registration

Pupils who attend another school or unit will be dually registered at both venues. The enrolment status within the management information system (MIS) indicates the main place of education and which the subsidiary is. An example would be a pupil registered at this school but attending EOTAS provision or a pupil referral unit for certain days each week. The main school will be whichever the child attends for more than 50% of their time. The other will be the subsidiary.

The school or provision where the child is expected to attend is responsible for accurately recording the pupil's attendance and chasing up non-attendance. School will liaise with the other education provider on a daily basis in order to identify pupils who are absent for the session and mark the register accordingly.

9. Retention of records

Computer registers are preserved as electronic back-ups copies. Attendance regulations stipulate that attendance records should be retained for at least three years; however it is good practice to extend this period in line with the education record retention schedule.

10. Register checks

The local authority will formally check the school registers on a termly basis to ensure there is compliance with the national legislation. It should be noted that registers are legal documents and it is an offence not to maintain accurate records.

11. Attendance targets

Each year the local authority will set the school's attendance targets and provide these to the school by no later than October half term. Targets for the following two academic years will also be provided, although these are provisional and are subject to change based on the current year's outcomes.

A system for analysing performance towards the targets has been established and the head teacher is responsible for overseeing this work. The school and Governing body will make use of the attendance data available from the Central South Consortium and the local authority when reviewing its targets and analysis of the outcomes in comparison with similar schools from across the region.

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.

There are many strategies that are used to raise standards of attendance including:

- Daily Coding Checks
- Coding Meetings with AWO
- Letters for UA, poor attendance, punctuality, medical letters
- Regular AWS referrals for 86-94% attendance and 90-94%
- FPN referrals and holiday requests as appropriate
- Generic YEPS and AWS referrals
- Fortnightly meetings with Learning Manager
- Daily spot checks
- First, second and third day phoning

- All actions logged on SIMS
- Home Visits by JB and JT
- Advice and mentoring for pupils
- Punctuality sanctions
- Late Gate initiative/DART Scheme
- Attendance Workshops/Assemblies
- Rewards Initiatives including certificates, postcards and fast passes
- Figures on the weekly bulletin
- Red and Orange category students out to staff on a Monday morning
- Letters home to parents highlighting under performance
- Pupil interviews
- Prominent attendance display in foyer and notice boards illustrating performance
- Texting and phone calls home
- Attendance Governor Panels