Bettws Lifehouse

Bettws Attendance Policy and Information

Adopted: **April 2019**

Review Date: **September 2020 - Checked**
September 2022 – Checked
September 2024 – Checked
September 2026 - Checked

1. Aim

The aim of Bettws Lifehouse attendance policy is to enable the school to provide a consistent practice that encourages and facilitates the regular attendance of all pupils. Regular attendance at school is key to steady pupil progress and enjoyment of learning, and for this reason the school is dedicated to ensuring its attendance policy is adhered to as much as is possible. Bettws Lifehouse takes a whole-school approach to maintaining excellent attendance and it is the joint responsibility of parents, pupils and all staff members to ensure that children are attending school as they should be. We endeavour to work with families to make sure that any problems or circumstances which may lead or be leading to poor attendance are given the right attention and appropriate support.

This document is supported by our policies on S**afeguarding and Child Protection**, **anti bullying**, and **positive behaviour management**

2. Legal framework

The *Education Act 1996* states that:

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 educational needs he may have,

either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A person begins to be of compulsory school age —

(a) when he attains the age of five, if he attains that age on a prescribed day, and
(b) otherwise at the beginning of the prescribed day next following his attaining that age.

Prescribed days are 31 August, 31 December and 31 March

A person ceases to be of compulsory school age at the end of the day which is the school leaving date for any calendar year (the last Friday in June) —

(a) if he attains the age of 16 after that day but before the beginning of the school year next following,
(b) if he attains that age on that day, or
(c) (unless paragraph (a) applies) if that day is the school leaving date next following his attaining that age.

Bettws Lifehouse is dedicated to complying with attendance laws set out by the legal framework and has set out this document accordingly.

MOST pupils are on full and varied timetables and are expected in school every day. **Pupils who are on reduced timetables** have a Personalised Learning Plan agreed between school, the placing authority, the pupil and the parent/carer. Personalised Learning Plans are always for an agreed time period with a view to moving towards full time education when and where possible. Reviews occur at least termly with all involved.

3. Roles and responsibilities

Directors and Head Teacher will:

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the directors will:

- ensure that the importance of attendance is made clear by promoting the relevant school policies and guidance directed at parents and staff
- annually review the school's attendance rules and ensure that all provisions are in place to allow school staff, parents and children to implement the rules effectively
- ensure that all legislation regarding attendance is complied with and that up-to-date guidelines are communicated to parents, children and staff
- take time at directors meetings to regularly review and discuss attendance issues that have arisen in order to stay on top of expected attendance targets for the year

- ensure that the school is implementing effective means of recording attendance and organising that data, including for children who are educated off-site
- ensure that senior leaders make the necessary referrals to the local authority and other relevant agencies in individual cases of non-attendance
- use any data gathered to devise solutions to problems, make the proper adjustments to attendance coordination and ensure provision is able to accommodate and work with hard to reach families and children.

Bettws site leadership team

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the leadership team will:

- be active in their approach to promoting good attendance to pupils and their parents, which includes forming positive relationships with families
- ensure that the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that pupils are taught the value of high attendance for their own progression and achievement
- coordinate with the directors to monitor the implementation of the attendance policy and its effectiveness
- ensure that all staff are up to date with the school's attendance process, legislation and government guidance, and that staff are fully trained to recognise and deal with attendance issues
- ensure that systems to record and report attendance data are in place and working effectively
- develop and engage with multi-agency relationships to help with poor attendance and support families who are having difficulties getting their child to attend
- document any specific interventions or steps taken to work with families to improve their child's attendance

Teachers and support staff

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the school's teachers and support staff will:

- be active in their approach to promoting good attendance to pupils and their parents, which includes forming positive relationships with families
- ensure that the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that pupils are taught the value of high attendance for their own personal progression and achievement
- ensure that they are fully aware and up to date with the school's attendance process, legislation and government guidance, and that they will speak to another member of staff or seek support if they are unsure how to deal with an attendance issue
- ensure that they are following the correct systems for recording attendance and that attendance is taken daily
- contribute to strategy meetings and interventions where they are needed
- work with external agencies to support pupils and their families who are struggling with regular attendance.

Parents and carers

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, we request that parents:

- engage with their children's education – support their learning and take an interest in what they have been doing at school
- promote the value of good education and the importance of regular school attendance at home
- encourage and support their children's aspirations
- follow the set school procedure for reporting the absence of their child from school **(see section 4)**, and include an expected date for return
- do everything they can to prevent unnecessary school absences, such as making medical and dental appointments outside school hours
- use the school as a support when they or their child are having difficulties, and work to form a positive relationship with the school so that there is easy communication when a problem arises
- keep the school informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance
- build a regular routine at home in terms of homework, bedtime, etc. so that the child is used to consistency and the school day becomes part of that routine. It is vital that the child receives the same message at home as they do at school about the importance of attendance
- do not take their children out of school for holidays during term time unless absolutely necessary. If parents would like to make a special request for this, they may do so to the Headteacher.

Pupils

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, we request that pupils do their best to:

- be aware of the school's attendance rules, and when and what they are required to attend. This will be communicated to them through the school staff, parents and the school timetable
- speak to their Champion or another member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance
- attend all lessons ready to learn. Lesson times will be made clear through their school timetable

4. Categories of absence and procedure for reporting absences

Absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence is given to the school. Parents cannot authorise absences.

It will be clear on the school register when taking attendance whether a child's absence is authorised or unauthorised. Where staff have concerns regarding absences they should report to the Wellbeing Lead and potentially follow the school's safeguarding procedures.

When a child is to be absent from school without prior permission, parents should inform the school by telephone on the first day of absence and let them know what date they expect the child to return. Alternative arrangements will be made individually with any non-English speaking parents or carers.

4.1 Illness

Most cases of absence due to illness are short term, but parents will need to make a phone call to alert the school on the first day of absence.

For prolonged absence due to illness, parents may be asked to provide the school with medical evidence such as a note from the child's doctor, an appointment card or a prescription paper. If these are not provided on request it may result in the absence being classed as unauthorised. The Wellbeing team may choose to make a home visit.

4.2 Medical or dental appointments
Parents should make every effort to ensure these appointments are made outside school hours. Where it cannot be avoided, children should attend school for as much of that day as possible.

4.3 Authorised absences
There may be some exceptional instances where the school will authorise absence such as for a family bereavement.

4.4 Exclusion
Exclusion is treated as an authorised absence. The head teacher will arrange for work to be sent home.

4.5 Family holidays and extended leave
Parents should make every effort to ensure that family holidays and extended leave are arranged outside of school term time. Parents may request a leave of absence during term time where there are exceptional circumstances.

All requests for authorised absence will be responded to in writing and will outline the details of when the child is expected to return to school. Parents should contact the school immediately if there will be a cause for delay from the stated date of return.

It remains the headteacher's decision whether to authorise any request for absence during term time.

If permission is not granted, but the child is still absent, the absence is classed as unauthorised and will be notified to the LEA.

4.6 Religious observance
Bettws Lifehouse recognises that there may be times where children of different faiths observe religious festivals that fall outside of school holidays and weekends, and will allow authorised absence for these times.

Parents will be aware of these dates and should give the school written notification in advance.

5. School action: following up absences

Where there are unexplained or unauthorised absences, the school will contact the parents or carers. If a pattern of unauthorised absences emerges, the Champion will contact the parent or carer to discuss possible reasons and school support systems that could help.

Parents/carers will be contacted if a pupil gives a reason for an unauthorised absence and there is doubt about the truth.

Where pupils have been away for either short or long term, the school will support that child when they re-enter school to help them catch up on any work that they have missed.

Bettws Lifehouse has a strong system of family support and options on timetables and activities. Everything will be done, in conjunction with families and the LEA and Social Services, where applicable, to ensure that access to an appropriate curriculum is meaningful and sustained.

Date of amendments/Review	By whom
Sep 2020	Fiona Davies
Sep 2022	Fiona Davies
Sep 2024	Fiona Davies
Sep 2026	Fiona Davies
Sep 2028	Fiona Davies