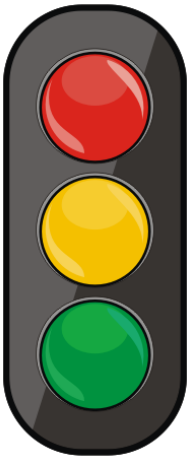
Torfaen County Borough Council – Education Welfare Service

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# STRIVE FOR 95+% Scheme

# #NOT IN MISS OUT!

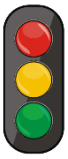
# Blaenavon Heritage VC School
## Attendance Policy



## Introduction

**Blaenavon Heritage** School is a very successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Attendance Policy sets out how together **we** will achieve this.



**Torfaen County Borough Council – Education Welfare Service**

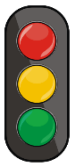
# STRIVE FOR 95+% Scheme

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**Our whole school attendance target is:**

95%

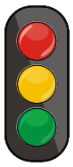
## Why Regular Attendance is so important:



**Learning**

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any student's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

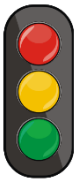


**Safeguarding**

Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses:-

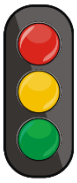
- Attendance
- Behaviour Management
- Health and Safety
- Access to the Curriculum
- Anti- Bullying

**Failing to attend this school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.**



**Promoting Regular Attendance:**

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents, students and all members of school staff.



**To help us all to focus on this we will:**

- Give you details on attendance via our web-site and the Torfaen CBC web-site
- Report to you regularly on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments;
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements;
- Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates and outings/events.
- Take part in all schools events to promote good attendance including the Strive for 95% campaign attendance awards/lottery

# The Law relating to Attendance

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that 'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full time education suitable:-

(a) To age, ability and aptitude and

(b) To any special educational needs he/ she may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'

**The Law relating to Safeguarding**
Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

Since March 2001 there has been an aggravated offence, where a parent of a child of compulsory school age who, knowing that their child is failing to attend regularly at school, fails without reasonable justification to cause their child to attend.

**Understanding types of absence:**
Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily.
- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Absences which have never been properly explained.
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark.
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

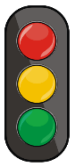
# Attendance & Punctuality in a Nutshell

**If attendance is 80%, this means your child will have missed:**

- 1 day EVERY week
- 6 days EVERY half term
- 12 days EVERY term
- 36 days EVERY year
- 180 days in five years…

**…that's nearly ONE WHOLE SCHOOL YEAR!**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
|  | 100% Attendance | 0 days of learning missed | Best chance of success |
|  | 95% Attendance | 2 weeks of learning missed | Poor attendance will impact on learning |
| | 90% Attendance | 4 weeks of learning missed | |
|  | 85% Attendance | 5½ weeks of learning missed | Very poor attendance. At risk of prosecution! |
| | 80% Attendance | At least 7½ weeks of learning missed | |



**Persistent Absenteeism (PA):**
A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 15% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

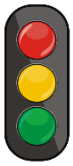
We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

PA students are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

# STRIVE FOR 95+% Scheme

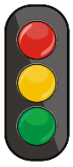
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## Absence Procedures:



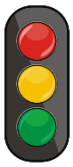
**If your child is absent you must:**

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence. If you need to report your child as absent, then please let us know by 9am each morning by ringing 01495 766500 and following the instructions to ensure that your message reaches the appropriate destination, or buy using the Class Charts app. Please indicate clearly your child's name, year group, form and the reason for absence. This allows us to properly record all absences and notify parents of any students who are not in school and for whom we have not received an absence notification from parents. The use of a specific attendance message line frees our office team to deal with the urgent business of the day.
- Or, you can call into school and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with you.



**If your child is absent we will:**

- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Attendance Officer and Family Engagement Officer or Head teacher if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the Torfaen Education Welfare Service if attendance moves below 95%.



**Attendance/Signing Out:**

- All students MUST stay in school at Break times
- If your child needs to leave school to attend a medical appointment please provide a copy of the appointment card.
- Wherever possible routine appointments like a dental check-up should not be scheduled for school time.
- To ensure safety, it is expected that a responsible adult will collect your child from the General Office before they depart for their appointment. If this is not you as the parent, please let the school know who you have given permission to collect your child.

**Telephone numbers:**
There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

**The School Attendance Officer:**
Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Torfaen Education Welfare Service. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorized absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from http://wales.gov.uk/docs

# Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving students also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence. LATENESS ADDS UP!

**Being 15 minutes late every day will add up to TWO WEEKS of school missed every year**

**How we manage Lateness**

The school gates open at 8:45am and we expect your child to be in class by 9am.

Registers are marked at 9am and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At 9.30am the registers will be closed. In accordance with the regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Family Engagement Officer or Head teacher and/or Attendance Governor to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

# Holidays in Term Time

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not to take children away in school time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

Any period of leave taken in school term time and all absence of this type may be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a detailed in the Welsh Government All Wales Attendance Framework http://wales.gov.uk/docs. We will consider each application on an individual basis.

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

The preferred level of attendance for this school is 95 % + attendance and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares.

Our target is to achieve better than this however because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

# Fixed Penalty Notices

The school follows the **Local Code of Conduct - Education Fixed Penalty Notices** (January 2023) for the South East Wales Consortium.

**Protocols and procedures in relation to Fixed Penalty Notices**

**Issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice**

- A Fixed Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence;
- Fixed Penalty Notices will be restricted to one notice per parent of a pupil in an academic year;
- In cases where there is more than one poorly-attending pupil in a family, notices may be issued for more than one child.
- There will be no restriction on the number of times a parent may receive a formal warning of a possible Fixed Penalty Notice

Fixed Penalty Notices may be considered appropriate when:

- At least 10 sessions (5 school days) are lost due to unauthorised absence during the current academic year. These do not need to be consecutive;

- Unauthorised absences of at least 10 sessions (5 school days) due to holidays in term time or delayed return from extended holidays; or
- Persistent late arrival at school, i.e. after the register has closed, in the current term. "Persistent" means at least 10 sessions of late arrival;
- Truancy, where the child has come to the attention of the Police or public during school hours for being absent from school, without an acceptable reason.

With regard to a request from a school for a Fixed Penalty Notice linked to a holiday related unauthorised absence, a LA will only issue a Notice where the school has provided the necessary paperwork and evidence. This paperwork should comprise:

- A copy of newsletter or letter sent to all parents during the current Academic year which clearly states that parents may receive a Fixed Penalty Notice for an unauthorised holiday in term time. (The LA will not need a hard copy of this newsletter/letter each time a school applies for an unauthorised holiday Fixed Penalty Notice, just on the first occasion each academic year);
- A copy of the holiday request form submitted by a parent, and a copy of the response sent to the parent by school. In the event of the holiday request is being denied the school's response should state the reason why the holiday is unauthorised and should again advise the parent that they may receive a Fixed Penalty Notice if they take their child out of school;
- A copy of the letter sent by school to the parent advising that the school has referred the matter to the LA and that a Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued;
- Signed registration certificate from the Head Teacher or their nominated deputy confirming that non-attendance during the period was unauthorised;

**Considerations and Assessment as to whether a Fixed Penalty Notice should be issued**

Head Teachers, their nominated deputies and the Education Welfare Service (EWS) will take into account the following when determining whether a Fixed Penalty Notice should be issued:

- Level of absence;
- Any Equalities considerations relating to the child or family (as listed in the Council's Strategic Equality Plan);
- Any Special Educational Needs and or Additional Learning Needs (ALN). LAs should consider whether attendance problems may be related to a pupil's ALN. Schools should be able to demonstrate that they have made appropriate provision for the pupil's needs, which may include consideration to support through School Action, School Action Plus or in collaboration with the LA, carry out a statutory assessment.
- History of the attendance issues and action taken;
- Welsh Government (WG) Guidance;
- Likely effectiveness of Fixed Penalty Notice as a tool for obtaining compliance;
- Level of parent engagement/cooperation;
- Any other reasonable consideration.

**Procedure for Issuing Fixed Penalty Notices**

The designated officer(s) within the EWS will be the only individuals permitted to issue Fixed Penalty Notices, which will ensure consistent and equitable delivery and allow schools to maintain good relationships with parents and ensure that they reinforce any other enforcement sanctions.

Fixed Penalty Notices will never be issued as an instant action, e.g. during a Truancy Sweep. This will enable officers to ensure that all evidential requirements are in place and limit the health and safety risks to individuals.

**Requests for issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice**

Where schools, Police or neighbouring LAs request the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice, their request will be investigated and actioned by the EWS, provided that:

- The circumstances of the case meet the criteria specified in this Code of Conduct;
- The pupil is registered within a school within the SEWC area;
- All necessary evidence is provided to the EWS to establish whether an offence under Section 444(1) or 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996 or Section 108 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 has been committed;
- Issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice would not conflict with another intervention strategy already in place or another enforcement sanction already being processed and there is a reasonable expectation that the use of a Fixed Penalty Notice would improve the child's school attendance.

Responding to requests for the issuing of a fixed penalty notices

Following the warning notice issued by the school or Police, parents have a period of 15 school days within which to respond. During this time, the pupil must have no unauthorised absence. This information can be included in the formal written warning letter, where one has been issued.

The EWS will respond to all requests from schools or Police within 10 school days of receipt of a request. When satisfied that all of the relevant criteria have been met the LA will then issue a fixed penalty notice.

**Fixed Penalty Notices for unauthorised holidays**

Where the requested Fixed Penalty Notice is in response to a holiday related unauthorised absence, or is in relation to an offence under section 108 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, the formal warning letter and 15 day improvement period will not apply.

**Monitoring and Review**

All Fixed Penalty Notices will be entered onto a database maintained by individual LAs to ensure that no duplicate Fixed Penalty Notices are issued and to evaluate the effectiveness of the process.

**Excluded Pupils**

The basis of the fixed penalty notice powers, do not extend to excluded pupils. Section 108 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 came into force in October 2010 and amends section 16 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to extend Police powers for the removal of excluded pupils to designated premises, if a child or young person excluded from school is found in a public place in a specified area during a specific period and during school hours.

**Procedure for the Withdrawal of Fixed Penalty Notices**

Once issued, a Fixed Penalty Notice can only be withdrawn if the EWS is satisfied that:

- The Fixed Penalty Notice was issued to the wrong person;
- The use of the Fixed Penalty Notice did not conform to this Code of Conduct;
- The Fixed Penalty Notice was delivered to the wrong address;
- The circumstances of the case warrant its withdrawal (reasonable justification).

**Right of appeal**

There is no statutory right of appeal, but where a parent contests the issuing of a Fixed Penalty Notice, they can submit any complaints to the EWS and/or opt to face proceedings in the Magistrates' Court under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, where all of the issues relating to their Fixed Penalty Notice can be fully debated heard.

**Payment of Fixed Penalty Notices**

Arrangements for payment will be detailed on the Penalty Notice. Payment of a Fixed Penalty Notice discharges the parent's liability for the period in question and they cannot subsequently be prosecuted under other enforcement powers for the period covered by the Fixed Penalty Notice.

If the Fixed Penalty Notice is paid within 28 days, the penalty payable is £60, or £120 if within 42 days. Payments will not be accepted from parents after 42 days has elapsed and cannot be paid either by instalments.

Individual LAs will only be able to retain enough revenue from the Fixed Penalty Notices, to cover administration costs for the process of issuing Fixed Penalty Notice, the surplus is to be surrendered to the Welsh consolidated fund.

**Non-Payment of Fixed Penalty Notices**

Non-payment of a Fixed Penalty Notice will result in prosecution for the period covered by the Fixed Penalty Notice under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

**Equalities and Welsh Language**

The issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices must comply with other related legislation and regulations, in order to ensure that they are used in a fair and consistent manner and have paid due regard to the

circumstances of the child/children and families involved. These include, but are not limited to the following:-

- Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011
- Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011
- Human Rights Act 1998

Councils' Strategic Equalities Plan covers the full range of issues that may need to be considered, depending on the individual case.

**Staff names with responsibility for attendance:**
**Mrs Anna Britten – Head teacher**
**Mrs Alison Coombs – Deputy Head teacher**
**Mrs Leanne Mason – Attendance Officer**
**Mrs Suzanne Challenger – Family Engagement Officer**
**Mrs Hilary Roberts - ALNCo**

## Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and students as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible and that every child's welfare and life opportunities are promoted.

| **Date of Policy/Review:** | |
|---|---|

# STRIVE FOR 95+% Scheme

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**This year we will not be requesting signed forms. In the event that you have any concerns or queries regarding this policy, please contact the school office prior to Friday 4th December.**

| Pupil's Name | | Class: | |
|---|---|---|---|

I have read and understood the terms and conditions of the attendance policy at Ponthir Church in Wales School

| **Parent/Carer Signature** | | **Date**: | |
|---|---|---|---|