



# Bassaleg Cluster

## Attendance Policy/ Polisi Presenoldeb

**September 2023**

**This policy was adopted by the governing body September 2023 and is due for review – September 2024**



The Bassaleg Cluster Attendance Policy has been agreed by all schools and governing bodies within the cluster.

### **Contents:**

Our principles, aims and objectives.

The wider aims of the cluster school attendance policy.

Guidance and procedures and stakeholder responsibilities.

Absence from school and re-integration.

### **Our shared principles:**

- Every child/young person has a fundamental right to be educated, to flourish personally and to achieve their very best academic results. These are secure with high levels of attendance.
- By law all children/young people of compulsory school age must receive a proper full-time education.
- Parents/carers and staff have a duty to ensure maximum attendance at school.
- Our cluster expects every student and parent/carer to aim for 100% attendance in each academic term and year.
- There is a proven link between attendance and achievement at school. The Bassaleg Cluster believe that high attendance for pupils from the start of their educational journey is a priority. From the moment a child starts in Nursery attendance is promoted and rigorously monitored, to ensure equality of opportunity for all.

### **Our shared aims:**

- To foster and ensure maximum pupil attendance in every class and every year group in every term.
- To encourage pupils to take full advantage of their educational opportunity by attending regularly.
- To recognise the external factors which influence pupil attendance and work in partnership with parents/carers and the educational welfare officer (EWO) to address difficulties.

### **Our shared objectives:**

- To encourage our children/young people to take full advantage of their educational opportunities by attending regularly.
- To recognise, praise and reward high levels of attendance and improvement in attendance every term.
- To provide an effective and efficient system for the monitoring of attendance.
- To identify patterns of non-attendance at an early stage and work to resolve any personal/social difficulties.
- To strive to reduce unauthorised absences.



### **The wider aims of our cluster attendance policy are to:**

- Share the message of the importance for excellent attendance and punctuality with children/young people and their families.
- Support families with individual needs to improve attendance and their access to education.
- Work effectively with our partners to maximise levels of attendance.
- Raise levels of attainment and achievement at school through high expectations of excellent attendance and punctuality.

The Bassaleg Cluster aims to ensure that the provision outlined in the attendance policy considers the varied individual needs and expectations of all stakeholders. We aim to ensure that everyone has equal access to this provision regardless of race, ethnic origin, language, gender, disability, age, sexuality, nationality, religious or non-religious belief, family background or any other individual characteristics. We aim to ensure that all stakeholders also share these values.

Excellent and regular attendance at school is essential if students are to succeed and fulfil their potential. To ensure this, the Bassaleg Cluster employs a whole-school approach towards attendance with class teachers, form tutors, wellbeing teams, school support/attendance officers, designated leadership and the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) all fully involved in monitoring student attendance.

Excellent attendance is given a high profile throughout all schools and we all aim to ensure that the children/young people in our school attend regularly and on time, and where this is not the case staff follow a staged procedure designed to encourage consistent attendance.

### **What parents/carers can expect from each school:**

- The Bassaleg Cluster School Attendance Policy which has been approved, is reviewed regularly by the governing bodies and is available to parents/carers on the school website (and/or the school office).
- Clear advice and guidance relating to the policy and procedures including the use of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN).
- A positive and welcoming atmosphere in which children/young people and parents/carers feel safe, secure and valued.
- A motivating, relevant and accessible curriculum for all children/young people.
- A high priority of attendance and punctuality monitoring.
- Regular and efficient recording of attendance; twice daily.
- Early contact with parents/carers when a child/young person fails to attend school without good reason.
- Early contact on any notified problems.
- Efficient and effective communication between home and school.



### **What children and young people can expect from school:**

- A safe learning environment in which they feel valued and secure.
- Consistently applied rewards and recognition for excellent and improving attendance.
- Support when experiencing any difficulties.
- Contact with home when feeling unwell.
- Home visits from the schools EWO, school meetings, letters, and telephone calls with parent/carers regarding attendance issues.

### **What the cluster can expect from Newport City Council Education Welfare Service:**

- Provide support to schools, children/young people and parents/carers to ensure regular attendance and address problems relating to absenteeism.
- Liaise with multi-agencies, in order to assist with providing important links between home and school and will work in partnership, so that that our children/young people will benefit from the educational opportunities available to them.
- Provide statutory support in the form of FPN, cases for magistrate's court proceedings and supervisory function for Education Supervision Orders.
- Swift follow up on Children Missing Education (CME) referrals.

### **Attendance policy guidance and procedures:**

The oversight of attendance will be the responsibility of the designated school leader in each school with whole-school responsibility for attendance. Support will be given by the school support/attendance officer who will act as coordinator of the School Information Management System (SIMS)/attendance system.

### **Specific responsibilities include:**

Encouraging excellent attendance and punctuality is the shared responsibility of our schools, parents/carers, children/young people, cluster staff and our cluster partners.

### **Our cluster can expect all schools to:**

- Use the Bassaleg Cluster Attendance Policy to guide attendance tracking and monitoring and investigate any problems that may lead to non-attendance, including challenging parents/carers about regular or intermittent illness absence.
- Keep parent/carers informed of any attendance-related issues.
- Register pupils accurately and keep up-to-date records.
- Complete accurate and timely CME referrals.
- Use a wide range of attendance support strategies and have a robust system of keeping accurate records of all contacts and actions taken.



### **Parent/carers responsibilities:**

- To perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age attend regularly. Absences should only be for genuine illness or in exceptional circumstances.
- To ensure their children attend school punctually (the school is mindful of exceptional circumstances).
- To provide school with their current and at least two emergency telephone numbers, an email address for school records and keep school updated on any changes.
- To inform schools on the first day of their child's absence.
- **To only take holidays during the school holiday periods**; any leave of absence during term time must be applied for in advance.

### **In the case of absence our parents/carers will:**

- Contact school via the recognised system - telephone/email etc to notify of absence.
- Arrange medical appointments outside of school time whenever possible
- Arrange family holidays during the school holidays.
- Contact the school to report any attendance concerns.

### **Children/young person's responsibilities:**

- To aim each year for 100% attendance and to attend school regularly.
- To arrive at school on time and follow school procedures for registration.
- To arrive at school in the correct uniform and equipped for learning.
- To seek support in school regarding any barriers to attendance, attainment and achievement.

### **Our primary class teachers and secondary form tutors will:**

- Raise the profile and importance of excellent attendance.
- Monitor attendance of their class/tutor group daily and ensure SIMS attendance records are updated.

### **Secondary school subject teachers will:**

- Liaise with directors of wellbeing about young people whose learning is being negatively affected by repeated lateness or absence.
- Raise the profile and importance of excellent attendance.

### **Secondary school Directors of Wellbeing, with the support of the attendance manager/officer will:**

- Monitor attendance weekly.
- Monitor the lateness of young people who are late on a daily and weekly basis.
- Follow systems of identification and consequences for regular poor punctuality.



- Follow up with parents/carers of young people who are repeatedly late.
- Follow up on all young people who have been absent for three days or more through home contacts.
- Communicate with the EWO on a regular basis.
- Follow Newport City Council (NCC) protocols as identified in the local authority attendance policy.
- Communicate concerns with parents/carers.
- Discuss attendance issues with form tutors at weekly briefing sessions/team meetings.
- Use attendance rewards to improve attendance.
- Distribute rewards for attendance and ensure attendance receives a high profile in assemblies and through displays.
- Co-ordinate work for long-term absentees.
- Target a 'spotlight group' of students whose attendance can be improved and work with these students.
- Arrange for the production and distribution of termly attendance certificates.
- Meet with parents/carers as appropriate when there are attendance and punctuality concerns.
- Provide a regular report on attendance in year groups for the designated senior lead.

#### **Our school support officers will:**

- Monitor the SIMS system, and report concerns and faults to the relevant class teachers and school leaders.
- Contact the parents/carers of all students on first day of absence by telephone/text message or other method.
- Refer children/young people who have been absent for three days with no response to the director of wellbeing or designated school lead.
- Update attendance data daily with parent/carer returns/holiday forms/manual registers.
- Produce registers and statistics regularly or when requested for the school lead and wellbeing team.

#### **The designed senior lead in secondary/primary school will:**

- Ensure that all key staff are aware of whole school and year group attendance targets and progress on achieving these. (Secondary school only)
- Produce summary documents for governors and the Headteacher when required.
- Ensure parents/carers, staff, children/young people are made aware of changes to attendance recording or reporting.
- Monitor attendance weekly.
- Liaise with directors of wellbeing (Secondary school) and the EWO to ensure resources are used effectively and that children/young people are monitored appropriately.
- Meet with parents/carers as appropriate.
- Lead on fortnightly meetings with attendance manager and EWO. (Secondary school only)
- Discuss concerns of low attendance and identify actions for the team.



- Ensure attendance outcomes from the fortnightly meetings are shared and actioned. (Secondary school only)
- Review persistent unauthorised absences, issue warning letters and liaise with the local authority over the issue of FPN.

### **Our EWO will:**

- Liaise with the school support officer/manager about daily contacts.
- Meet with designated school lead and attendance manager to discuss attendance issues. (Fortnightly Secondary school, ½ termly primary schools.)
- Prosecute parents/carers where all other avenues have failed.
- Visit parents/carers of children/young people who have unsatisfactory attendance and devise suitable home-school agreements strategies to support their reintegration to school.
- Visit parents/carers as requested by the designated school lead/wellbeing team.

### **Absence from school:**

All schools will use the correct authorised and unauthorised codes, set out by the Welsh Government guidance in 2010. Authorisation of absence is only at the discretion of the individual Headteacher.

### **Authorised absence:**

An absence is deemed authorised when the school accepts that there is good reason for the absence and communication from the parent has been received.

### **Unauthorised absence:**

An absence is deemed unauthorised when there is; no communication from the parent/carer, exceptional leave has been requested but declined, leave of absence has been taken without prior request, the child/the young person has higher than average illness, where no medical proof (appointment card, prescription etc.) has been provided or is a persistent absentee where an attendance plan may be in place.

### **Absence codes:**

B - Educated off-site	Approved educational
C - Other authorised circumstance	activity
D - Dual-registered	Authorised absence
E - Excluded	Approved educational
F - Extended family holiday (agreed)	activity
G - Family holiday (not agreed)	Authorised absence
H - Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I - Illness	Unauthorised absence



J - Interview	Authorised absence
L - Late (before registers close)	Authorised absence
M - Medical appointment	Approved educational activity
N - No reason yet provided for absence	Present
O - Unauthorised absence	Authorised absence
P - Approved sporting activity	Unauthorised absence
R - Religious observance	Unauthorised absence
S - Study leave	Approved educational activity
T - Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U - Late after registers close	Authorised absence
V - Educational visit or trip	Authorised absence
W - Work experience	Authorised absence
Y - Partial or enforced closure	Unauthorised absence
X - Non-compulsory school age absence	Approved educational activity
# - School closed to all pupils	Approved educational activity
Z - Pupils not on role	Attendance not required
	Attendance not required
	Attendance
	Attendance not required

### **Registration:**

- All schools have their own individual registration times.
- In Bassaleg School, registers will be taken in each lesson every day.
- A young person arriving late and before the registers are closed will receive an 'L' mark.
- Any young person arriving after the registers have closed will received the 'U' code, which will be followed up by school as with all other unauthorised absences.

### **Procedure for absence concerns:**

- Mark register with the appropriate code.
- School to initiate first-day response to parent/carers via, text and/or telephone. If the pupil is regarded as particularly vulnerable then a phone call will also be made.
- When the absence remains an issue, school will make further contact with home via phone to raise attendance concerns.
- If required, also send written correspondence (letter 1) and/or, invite the parent/carers for a school meeting.
- School to action further correspondence (letter 2), should there be insufficient improvement with the attendance.
- All on-going absence concerns, are reported to the EWO, (fortnightly in secondary and termly in primary) EWO/ senior leadership team link/ attendance officer meetings.
- As attendance improves, the school will continue to monitor.
- Action a referral to EWS for the following reasons:
  - On-going concerns.



- No response or poor response from the parent/carer.
- Parent/carer fails to fully engage.
- School must continue to keep the EWO regularly updated with all absence concerns.

### **Medical appointments:**

All schools will code absences 'M' as medical if sufficient evidence has been provided by the parent/carer.

Our cluster reserves the right to trust what our parent/carers tell us, but for extended medical absence or if there is any doubt about absence then an appointment card or letter will be requested.

### **Entertainment licenses:**

Schools will only consider granting leave of absence for pupils who are in possession of an up to date entertainment / performance license.

### **Leave of absence in term time:**

The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations, make clear **that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.** If the leave is granted, Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school.

Leave of absence will be considered by the Headteacher/attendance lead and the governing body. For the leave of absence to be authorised, all of the following criteria must be met:

- The child/young person is of statutory school age (five years and above)
- The child's/young person's average level of attendance across the rolling 12 months prior to the date of requested leave is 95% or above.
- The child/young person is always punctual to school.
- The child's/young person's attendance record for the current academic year shows no unexplained or unauthorised absences.
- The requested leave does not fall within the assessment/examination period for the year group.

### **Holiday requests**

**The Bassaleg Cluster takes a consistent and standard response and does not authorise any holiday in term-time; indeed, FPNs may be/are issued if a highly significant number of days are taken for holiday.**

In accordance with Newport local authority guidance, absence due to family holidays will be considered by each school in the cluster.



## **Fixed Penalty Notices**

**\*Each school in the cluster will take its own stance on the issue of FPNs in accordance with their context and understanding of the best way to tackle absence from school.** Therefore, the decision around the issue of an FPN rests with each designated leader in each individual school.

## **For those schools in the cluster using FPNs, these may be considered appropriate when:**

- At least 10 sessions (five school days) are lost due to unauthorised absence during the current term. These do not need to be consecutive:
- Unauthorised absences of at least 10 sessions (five school days) due to holidays in term time or delayed return from extended holidays; or
- Persistent late arrive at school, ie. after the register has closed, in the current term. 'Persistent' means at least 10 sessions of late arrival.
- Truancy, where the child/young person has come to the attention of the Police or public during school hours for being absent from school, without an acceptable reason.
- FPNs are currently set at £60 and must be paid within 28 days. Non-payment within this timeframe results in a total penalty of £120. Non-payment of fines will result in prosecution.

## **Child Missing Education (CME)**

- If the child/young person fails to return to school on the agreed date, the school must take action and consider following the CME process.
- When a child's absence is unexplained, schools will contact the parents/carers on the first day of absence and endeavour to continue to make contact throughout the day until they can speak with the parent/carer.
- If the absence remains unexplained, the school must take steps to establish the child's/young person's safety and whereabouts.
- All reasonable enquires with emergency contacts, friends in school and neighbours should be made before a CME referral to the local authority is completed.
- The CME referral should be made to the local authority after enquiries have proved unsuccessful.
- If a child/young person moves out of the Newport City Council Authority, not attending school and school are unable to locate the child/young person / family, a CME referral to the local authority must be actioned.

## **Admissions and deletions from school roll:**

- Schools are required to inform the local authority in every circumstance when they are about to delete a pupil's name from the admissions register.
- This would include informing the local authority of the pupil's name, address, parents' name(s), parents/carers email address and contact telephone numbers, expected new destination and proposed new school name/local authority, within five days of the pupil leaving their school.



## Re-integration

The school has arrangements to reintegrate children/young people who have been absent for extended periods. In such cases each child/young person will be treated individually, and arrangements will be made that are most appropriate to the individual's circumstances. All reintegration plans are formalised by the designated school leader for attendance in conjunction with supporting staff.