



## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Taliesin Education Ltd (t+centres) meets legal requirements for collecting and analysing attendance data as it maintains a daily register and reviews and analyses the data within this on a regular basis (termly). This information is collected by hand and then stored electronically.

We recognise that the law defines compulsory school age as between 5 and 16 years old and that parents/carers must secure full-time education for children of compulsory age which is suited to the child's age, aptitude and ability and to any special needs the child has. As all our students have special needs, absences will sometimes be a feature of an underlying problem which may need to be addressed by liaising with other agencies such as Education Welfare and Social Services. Should there be problems with attendance, we will liaise with the placing authority and provide information as to how we are addressing the issue.

The aim of our Attendance Policy is to

- Promote a welcoming atmosphere that makes students feel safe and valued;
- Encourage good relationships between the school and parents/guardians;
- Ensure that students attend school every day and make the best use of the time they have with us;
- Stress the importance of good attendance – in assemblies, tutoring sessions and to parents and carers;
- Ensure that attendance is monitored effectively and absence followed up promptly (phonecall/letter home);
- Inform all parents/guardians they are required to report absences that morning.

### **Register**

We ensure that we record attendance daily at the start of the school day by hand which is then transferred to a computer register, using standard symbols to indicate different types of absences and situations. We use the standard DfE definitions of authorised and unauthorised absences. These are explained clearly to staff in staff meetings.

We ensure that an absence is recorded as authorised or unauthorised. We follow up all unauthorised absences at once if we have not heard from parents/guardians. This is recorded. An afternoon

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register is not taken as students do not go home for lunch. Attendance is always chased up on the first day of absence.

We will report to the relevant Local Authority if a student fails to attend regularly, or his absence is a cause for concern. The school will work closely with the student and their family to address any underlying issues surrounding non attendance. For example, we would look make any relevant changes to the curriculum or adjustments to timetabling. We will then work with representatives from the appropriate Authority personnel or hire an Educational Welfare Officer to improve attendance rates. Should it become clear that due to school phobia, extreme disaffection or other reason such as previous chronic non-attendance, a student will be unlikely to attain full attendance, we will put in place an Outreach programme tailored to his individual needs, but continue to work towards regular school attendance alongside this.

### **Following up absences**

When registered with t+centres, the student must agree to attend regularly and punctually. The only exception to this is if there is a prior agreement that the student may come in earlier or later for a specific reason connected with their special needs. Any absences are investigated promptly and appropriate action taken to address any problems which arise.

### **Preventing truancy after registration**

Students may truant after registration for a variety of reasons, such as to meet others in the community, pursue a drugs habit, or to abscond. As we have a small number of students on roll and a high level of staffing, many such episodes can be intercepted. Should truancy occur, a sanction will be put in place and parents/carers notified.

**Carlee Ridpath** is responsible for checking that the registers are accurately maintained.

### **Recording attendance**

Information about attendance is recorded electronically, printed out and stored in files for each academic year. Although our numbers are too small to produce wide-ranging statistics, some basic analysis is carried out. Non-attendance falls into two categories – when a student is agitated or in crisis and begins to abscond regularly usually for a set period of time; when school disaffection takes the upper hand and the student withdraws from education for a period of time. Both problems are addressed by engaging the student in the process of education more fully, encouraging them to take on more responsibility and making any changes in the timetable or provision which may encourage re-attendance.

The school also publishes the percentage and number of authorised and unauthorised absences in parental information every term and we comment on the rate of unauthorised absences in the students annual report.

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To summarise:

- Attendance and punctuality is a high priority;
- We meet legal requirements, especially the requirement to identify unauthorised absence;
- We keep up-to-date and accurate figures on attendance;
- We detect and quickly follow up unauthorised absence, note patterns of absence and truancy after registration, and we monitor these interventions effectively to promote improvement;
- We have in place procedures to follow up repeated short absences and longer term absences which require specific interventions;
- We set short- and long-term targets for individual pupils who may have problems with attendance;
- We reward good attendance and punctuality, linked to the school merit system and to t+centres certificates of achievement (weekly and half termly awards);
- We have procedures for helping children settle in after long absences, by shortening the school day and gradually extending it as required;
- We ensure that all pupils benefit from attending school, including pupils with special educational needs and pupils who speak English as an Additional Language, in terms of achieving targets and gaining qualifications as well as the enjoyment of learning;
- All staff know the pupils well and are aware of anything that might affect their attendance. Regular information sharing amongst staff ensures that reasons which underlie absences can be discussed;
- We communicate clearly with other agencies, including the Traveller Education Service, if relevant, Cornwall Educational Psychology Service, the health service, social services (including the Education Support Service and the Virtual School), the police, the youth offending service (YOS) and Careers South West where appropriate;
- We deal with authorised and unauthorised absence fairly using sanctions which both we and the student consider to be fair.

### **Authorised absences**

These may include:

- Receiving education elsewhere, for example in outsourced provision. In this case, the outsourced provision is obligated to inform us of any absences on a daily basis.
- Taking part in a licensed public performance or sports event.
- Attendance on a field trip, educational visit or individual trip as part of a project based elsewhere.
- Attendance at work experience.
- Short-term for family reasons discussed in advance.

## **Unauthorised absences (truancy)**

Her Majesty's Inspectors define unauthorised absence as:

*'absence from school for any period as a result of a premeditated or spontaneous act by pupil or parent or both. This includes parentally condoned absence'.*

**Parentally condoned absences** which are unacceptable or require investigation, might include:

- A parent who is ill, or has a chronic condition, using the child as a childminder or carer or to support other members of the family;
- Work patterns, for example shift work, making it difficult for the family to supervise the child's attendance;
- A parent who wants to keep the child with them for company;
- A parent giving in to the pupil who wants to stay at home, sometimes due to lack of parental control;
- The pupil's birthday;
- A parent not committed to the pupils' attendance, hostile towards the school or towards education and in general, distrusting of authority;
- A parent taking the pupil shopping, to the hairdresser or who has in some other way prioritised a minor activity over school;
- A parent who cannot control the pupil;
- A pupil who is in paid work;
- A parent using the pupil as an interpreter.

In all the above cases, we work closely with parents/carers to address the problems and contact other relevant agencies to offer support where appropriate. We ensure that parents/carers realise the importance of continuous attendance.

## **Punctuality**

As most of our students come to school by taxi, punctuality is not an issue. Those who live locally may be transported by parents or guardians. For the few who live locally who make their own way to school, any lateness is recorded and addressed within a meeting with the student. If, after this, punctuality does not improve, a letter will be sent home, or parents/carers may be asked to attend a meeting to pinpoint and address the causes.

## **Authorising holidays within term time**

It is clearly stated within the Parents' Handbook that all holidays should be taken within the 13 weeks of set holidays. However, there are occasions when holidays are booked within term time, for example if the holiday was booked before the placement started or there are other reasons for the time selected. All such cases will be judged individually on their merits.

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In line with regulation 7 of the Education (Pupil registration) (England) 2006 we acknowledge that Headteachers may allow authorised absences for family holidays during term time, but parents have no right to demand that absences are authorised. We will not allow an absence of more than 10 school days for a family holiday unless the situation is exceptional. Each situation is considered individually, on its own merits. If a student goes on holiday during term time without permission without prior agreement, we record the absence as unauthorised and contact the relevant LA. If a parent takes a child on holiday after we have refused the parent's request, we may warn the parent in writing and prosecution could follow.

### **Recording attendance**

We record information about attendance effectively by:

- Reporting to parents;
- Providing the LA with the information it needs to monitor the school's performance;
- Providing information to the DfE if required;
- Gaining access to methods of improving performance e.g. Education Welfare Officer service
- Setting targets for individual students and the school as a whole.

Should our attendance rates be below average we set yearly targets to improve these.

### **Risk assessments of absences**

The school recognises that with there may be a correlation between a pupil who has poor attendance and a risk of his safety being compromised. Therefore, gaps in attendance can substantially increase his risk assessment. When not in school, a pupil is at increased risk of reduced safeguarding and may be open to dangers and hazards connected to sources of danger such as Child Sexual Exploitation, Radicalisation and Extremism, Drug and Alcohol Abuse, Human Trafficking and Slavery, and increased activity using IT such as social media communication which contains bullying and threatening behaviour. It is imperative that parents/guardians work proactively with the school to solve this problem.

### **Possibility of bullying**

Alongside our Attendance Policy is our Anti-Bullying Policy which recognises the potential correlation between a student's non-attendance based on their being bullied within the school. In this case we address this or other underlying issues as a primary issue. It may be that adjustments made to the individual programme for the pupil may be put in place to encourage improved attendance.

### **Procedure for prolonged absences**

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1. If a student is absent for one day (2 sessions) without a parent/guardian having contacted us with an explanation for the absence, we contact them as soon as an absence has been identified as a possibility.
2. Should the absence continue through the same week, we will make a visit to the home at the end of the first week of absence, as well as issuing a letter explaining the legal requirement of the parent/guardian to ensure attendance.
3. After this initial visit or meeting, an assessment is completed, upon which an **Improving Attendance Plan** is put into place. (Appendix 1)
4. Attendance is monitored for a set period of time, the amount of time being dependent on the circumstances.
5. During this period of time, particularly when attendance is linked with other problems such as behaviour within the community, further initiatives will be put into place, such as: involvement of other agencies e.g. Social Services, Youth Offending Service, Police Community Support Officer. Where substance abuse is involved and is impacting upon attendance, services indicated by relevant teams e.g. Cornwall Psychosis Intervention team and 'Wiseup', will be utilised.
6. This alternative strategy must lead to reduction in unauthorised absence or legal action may be initiated.
7. If this alternative strategy fails, legal action may be initiated. This involves contact with Education Welfare Officer service to instigate legal proceedings.
8. An Education Planning Meeting will be set up with relevant personnel, or discussed within a Common Assessment Framework to review case and decide on outcomes.

### **History and implementation of this Attendance Policy:**

Accepted by SLT in this format: September 2017

Approved by t+centres Governors: September 2020

Last revised: September 2020

To be reviewed: September 2021

SLT, all staff and governors have read, discussed and contributed to this policy.

The Head of Centre will be responsible for ensuring all staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in this policy.



## Taliesin Education Ltd (t+centres) Improving Attendance Plan

<b>Student Name:</b>	<b>Current Attendance:</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Date of Plan:</b>	<b>Attendance Target:</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Current Attendance Issues:</b>		
<b>Planned Actions:</b>		
<b>Improvement Targets:</b>		
1.		
2.		
3.		
<b>Review of Impact:</b>		
<b>Signed Student:</b>		
<b>Signed Parent:</b>		
<b>Signed Head of Centre:</b>		