

**Blaenau Gwent County Council**  
**Attendance Policy**  
**Supporting Positive Attendance**

The Education Directorate's purpose is to deliver '*Better Schools, Better Citizens, and Better Communities*'

**Education Inclusion Service**

**Attendance Policy**

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**Blaenau Gwent**

County Borough Council

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## **Introduction**

Blaenau Gwent Local Authority aim to:

***Promote and support excellent school attendance by direct work with schools, pupils, their families and secure the engagement of appropriate agencies where their support is critical towards securing improved attendance.***

The importance of regular attendance cannot be overestimated. It is a prerequisite to a good education and securing it must be a high priority for schools and their governing bodies, as well as for parents and pupils. Pupils who fail to attend regularly not only diminish the value of the education provided but may also jeopardise their future life chances to succeed.

Good attendance also has a positive effect on wellbeing. Establishing good attendance patterns from an early age is vital for social development. The inter-relationship between attendance and wellbeing is considered so strong that attendance is often considered a proxy measure for learner wellbeing.

The Local Authority (LA) encourages schools to adopt a **whole school approach** to attendance. This requires commitment from all staff employed within the school, together with governors, parents, pupils, and the LA.

This approach relates to a wide range of other issues, including punctuality, rewards and incentives, re-integration of long-term absentees, curricular differentiation, home-school links and the role of the Education Welfare Service (EWS).

The Education Welfare Service will work in partnership with Blaenau Gwent schools to monitor and address a wide range of attendance issues. The following document outlines our commitment to support schools as an Education Welfare Service in addition to outlining school responsibilities within this process. There will also be links provided to key attendance documents which frames the work undertaken, to ensure that young people and children in Blaenau Gwent benefit from regular school attendance.

This document will:

- Provide guidance to develop and implement whole school attendance strategies.
- Summarise efficient and effective early intervention and support strategies.
- Encourage educational provisions to work collaboratively with a range of partners to support and promote the welfare and wellbeing of children and young people
- Outline the LA's role in dealing with non-attendance.
- Explain legal contexts such as the Attendance Pathway, Fixed Penalty Notices and Legal frameworks and provide guidance in relation to the use of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) as a measure to improving attendance and safeguarding
- Provide an outline of the support available through the Education Welfare Service.
- Identify Schools responsibilities and parental responsibilities.
- Outline information which should be included in School Attendance Policies

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- Provide school attendance codes and explanations with a clear definition of authorised and unauthorised absences
- Identify legalities around registration.
- Explore the use of data analysis to support positive attendance.
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### **Legal Frameworks**

The law on school attendance and right to a full-time education:

- The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any additional learning need they may have.
- Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly.
- For the most vulnerable pupils, regular attendance is also an important protective factor and the best opportunity for needs to be identified and support provided.

Whilst the legal responsibility for regular school attendance rests with parents, the school shares with them, and the local authority (LA), responsibility for encouraging good attendance and improving poor attendance. Schools are required by law to maintain specific records and to produce specified information on the attendance of pupils. Statutory obligation apart, **the school is committed to improvements in attendance standards** as a direct stimulus to raising pupil achievement. Poor attendance is destructive on educational achievement, undermines the well-being of each pupil and demoralises staff.

Under section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents are responsible for ensuring that their child(ren) of compulsory school age (5-16), receives efficient full-time education, suitable to the child's age, ability, aptitude and any additional learning needs (ALN) the child may have. This can be through regular attendance at school or educated otherwise by the Local Authority. The law also permits parents to educate their child(ren) at home under the terms of Elective Home Education (EHE).

The LA has a statutory duty to ensure that a child for whom they are responsible is receiving suitable education and as a registered pupil at school means attending school regularly and on time.

**Compulsory school age** means that children and young people should attend school from the start of the first term commencing after their fifth birthday and are of compulsory school age until after the last Friday in June of the school year in which they have their 16th birthday.

If a registered pupil of compulsory school age fails to attend school regularly, the parent could be guilty of an offence under section 444 Education Act 1996.

An offence is not committed if it can be demonstrated that:

- the pupil was absent with leave (authorised absence);
- the pupil was ill or prevented from attending by an unavoidable cause;
- the absence occurred on a day set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil/ parent belongs;

- the school is not within the prescribed walking distance of the child's home and suitable transport arrangements have not been made by the LA. The law relating to walking distance effectively is defined as two miles for pupils under eight and three miles for all other pupils. Distance will be measured by nearest available walking route;

Only the registered school of the child can authorise an absence.

## **Registration**

Schools are required under The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010, to take an attendance register twice a day, at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. The register is a legal document and must be kept accurately. The register may be requested in a court of law as evidence in a prosecution for non-attendance. It will also be used for end of term reports, records of achievement and reference requests, and information for other schools, LAs and external agencies. No pupil should be marked present unless in attendance at school or other agreed educational activity. The register should not have missing marks. When a pupil arrives late but the register is still open, the pupils should be marked as late but counted as present for the session. When a pupil misses registration, they should be marked as an unauthorised absence, unless a medical letter/ phone call by parent is received and deemed to be genuine. Pupils should not have access to the register. The headteacher is the only person who can authorise that a pupil be added or removed from the register; this can only be done with the agreement of the LA.

In addition to twice daily registration in form groups, a class register is taken for every lesson throughout the day. These are checked by the Head of Year / Phase to identify possible truancy and any pupil found to have missed a lesson. More information and guidance on school attendance codes can be accessed at <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-03/guidance-on-school-attendance-codes.pdf>

It can also be found in Appendix 1. It provides specific guidance to schools around how to use the codes to record attendance and absence in schools. Estyn has identified that schools that have both quality assurance procedures in place (with a member of the senior management team responsible for overseeing the coding of attendance) and good systems in place to analyse data are able to adapt their approaches to improve attendance.

An accurate and consistent registration system is crucial if poor attendance and punctuality within a school are to be tackled. It is vital that pupils are aware that registration is a significant part of the school day.

All staff involved with the registration process should be made aware that the law is specific regarding the keeping of registers. Marking and keeping the register is of the utmost importance and it is an offence not to maintain accurate registers.

## **National Context**

Attendance is key to whole school improvement and has direct influence on a pupils' learning, progress and well-being.

The Welsh Government Guidance document, *Inclusion and Pupil Support 2016*, provides advice and guidance and sets out responsibilities for maintaining high levels of attendance, positive behaviour and well-being of all pupils.

The All Wales Attendance Framework provides a toolkit on practice standards and guidance for Education Welfare Service practitioners. This key document aims to ensure greater consistency of practice throughout Wales and the toolkit usefully includes a section for schools that contains examples of strategies that can be employed to improve school attendance and manage lateness.

## **Local Context**

Blaenau Gwent County Council is committed to supporting positive school attendance by developing and implementing, policies and guidance documents aimed at improving levels of attendance and well-being for schools; providers of EOTAS, pupils, parents, and carers, in order to improve learning, progress and well-being for all pupils.

All schools in Blaenau Gwent are served by a small team of Education Welfare Officers, who provide a link between the schools, education services, families, children, and young people. The early intervention and support provided by an EWO includes improving whole school attendance, regular attendance meetings with school links, supporting individual pupils / families, and acting on behalf of the Local Authority to meet its legal responsibilities. The EWS service follow the attendance pathway (Appendix 2) and offers advice, guidance, support, and signposting to other services, working closely with health services, careers, youth services, police, and social services, with a focus on early intervention and support.

## **Support for Schools**

We support schools to develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance including:

- Recognising the importance of good attendance
- Recognising the interplay between attendance and wider school improvement efforts
- Recognising improving attendance is a school leadership issue.
- Ensuring all staff know the importance of good attendance.
- Ensuring attendance support and improvement is appropriately resourced.
- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils and communicate these regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels
- Demonstrating the benefits of good attendance throughout school life
- Recognising that irregular attendance is never 'solved' and is a continuous process.
- Recognising children missing education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues.

## **School Policies**

Blaenau Gwent encourages each school to have a clear school attendance policy which all leaders, staff, pupils, and parents understand. School policies should:

- Include the attendance and punctuality expectations of pupils and parents,
- Outline the name and contact details of the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in school.
- Provide a detailed timetable of the school day for parents including times for morning and afternoon registration
- Share information and contact details of the school staff who pupils and parents should contact about attendance on a day to day basis
- Include the school's day to day processes for managing attendance
- Address how the school is promoting and incentivising good attendance
- Outline the school's strategy for using data to target attendance improvement efforts to the pupils or pupil cohorts who need it most
- Outline the school's strategy for reducing persistent and severe absence
- Include the point at which Fixed Penalty Notices for absence and other sanctions will be sought
- Ensure compliance with all statutory requirements.
- Ensure that clear information is regularly communicated to parents and pupils.
- Collect and make effective and constructive use of attendance data.
- Contain clear procedures to identify and follow up all absence and lateness.
- Recognise the importance of early intervention.
- Make provision for first day of absence contact.
- Monitor post-registration truancy through the taking of class registers and spot checks.
- Be alert to critical times (include reference to supporting attendance in all transition plans)
- Identify a range of strategies to deal with absenteeism / lateness.
- Develop attendance incentive schemes which recognise pupils' attendance achievements.
- Consider the setting of targets for individuals, classes, year groups, etc.
- Establish procedures for identifying and reintegrating long-term absentees.
- Provide for regular structured meetings between school staff and the EWO.
- Follow the attendance pathway (appendix 1) before an appropriate referral is made to the EWS.
- Stress to parents the importance of continuity of learning, particularly in relation to family holidays during term-time (schools should grant leave for term-time holidays sparingly)
- Highlight how they use opportunities such as parents' evenings and the school prospectus / brochure to remind parents of the school policy on attendance;
- Involve governors in the creation and updates of the school policy
- Identify a key senior member of staff with overall responsibility for attendance.
- Ensure that good practice is identified and disseminated.
- Be regularly monitored and reviewed; and
- Take steps to create a culture which encourages attendance, addressing school-based causes of poor attendance such as bullying, racism, the curriculum, etc.

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A model attendance policy can be found in appendix 3.

Each school will also be provided with an operational level agreement between the school and the EWS to ensure best practice. – appendix 4

### **Whole school attendance improvement strategies**

Instil a staff mindset of high expectations around attendance.

- Establish a senior leadership team presence around school to support punctuality to school and each lesson.
- Make good attendance everyone's responsibility.
- Work closely with parents.
- Involve the local community.
- Give pupils a purpose to be in school each day.
- Offer pupils the tools to come to school.
- Provide secure conditions for learning.
- Use your exciting curriculum and four purposes to entice pupils
- Anticipate family patterns.
- Appoint an attendance lead who's passionate about high expectations.
- Include clear stages of action in your attendance policy.

Blaenau Gwent EWS also offer training and resources to schools to support and improve whole school attendance which can be requested via the EWO and these include - Whole school attendance improvement, Positive attendance workshops with Pupils, Coding information, Attendance pathway training, best practice etc.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, schools and partners should work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.

### **Engagement is key to improving attendance.**

Some key actions which can support positive attendance include the following:

- Building positive relationships when children first start school. Home visits provide the opportunity to meet parents in a more relaxed setting and to share information about the importance of good attendance. This also allows the school to have an understanding of the individual context of children and families within the school.
- Providing clear guidance and information on attendance and the school's expectations.
- Allowing parents to feedback their views on attendance and to be involved in co-constructing the policy and approaches that the school adopt.

### **Emotionally Based School Avoidance**

Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) is a broad umbrella term used to describe a group of children and young people who have severe difficulty in attending school due to emotional factors, often resulting in prolonged absences from school. The impact of EBSA on young people is far reaching. Outcomes for young people who

display EBSA include poor academic attainment, reduced social opportunities and limited employment opportunities (Garry 1996, Pellegrini 2007, and Taylor 2012).

There are information booklets for schools, parents, children, and young people. This guidance can be found on Blaenau Gwent Website.

Literature suggests that children experiencing EBSA, experience a range of 'push' and 'Pull' factors: 'Push' factors (i.e., those that push the child towards attending school or towards staying at home) • 'Pull' factors (i.e., those pull the child away from attending school or towards home). The literature indicates that EBSA is most likely to occur when the risks are greater than resilience and when the 'pull' factors that promote school avoidance overwhelm the 'push' factors that encourage school attendance.

|   |   |
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| <p><b><u>PUSH- TOWARDS ATTENDING SCHOOLS</u></b><br/>                 e.g., academically capable,<br/>                 school dinner,<br/>                 friends<br/>                 like certain subjects</p>   | <p><b><u>PULL FACTORS- PULLING AWAY FROM SCHOOL (home factors)</u></b><br/>                 E.g., worried about parent.<br/>                 Difficulties sleeping<br/>                 Parental illness</p>  |
| <p><b><u>PULL FACTORS- AWAY FROM SCHOOL (School factors)</u></b><br/>                 Poor relationships with peers<br/>                 Struggling with work<br/>                 Disengaged from curriculum.<br/>                 Prolonged period of absence<br/>                 Noisy environment<br/>                 Clashes with teachers</p> | <p><b><u>PUSH FACTORS - TOWARDS STAYING AT HOME</u></b><br/>                 Reduced anxieties about leaving the home.<br/>                 Reduced anxieties about going to school.<br/>                 Reduced pressure around academic work.<br/>                 Not having to complete homework.<br/>                 Reduced peer pressure</p> |

School plays a key role in the identification of children and young people who are currently experiencing, or at risk of, EBSA. It is important for schools to develop effective whole school systems to support young people, be vigilant to early indicators and employ a thorough assess, plan, do and review cycle placing the young person at the heart of the interventions. To break the cycle, schools should be looking to recognise the early warning signs: a change in attendance and/or punctuality, reduced engagement or negative talk about school, or a change in behaviour. It is important that this includes front line and support staff, as well as parents and families, as they are most likely to experience early signs before it reaches Head of Year/ALNCo /Headteacher etc. For schools with young people experiencing EBSA and struggling with attendance, it is the Headteacher's decision whether to authorise absence or not.

If a school decides to refer a student to the EWS where EBSA is an issue, the expectation would be that the school will have tried and exhausted an array of strategies to encourage and support the young person's attendance, including those outlined in Blaenau Gwent documents as well as having exhausted supportive interventions from other professionals prior to the referral to the EWS. Following referral, the allocated worker from the EWS can then assess whether there is a focus of work for the team and provide further advice.

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Working with parents is essential to successful outcomes. While the focus is on the child, it is also important to remember that parents may need their own support and consideration should be made to support services.

When undertaking direct work with children and families at risk of EBSA, areas which can be explored include the child's:

- educational history/ their early experiences at school
- strengths, interests, and aspirations
- any potential changes or losses within the family or child's life (You could ask them to draw a family tree/ genogram).
- Relationships with other children both in and out of school/ any adults within school
- academic progress School should be aware if the child has identified ALN needs and should ask about these needs and the support in place. If there is no identified ALN school should ask if they have any concerns, or if the child has spoken about difficulties.
- the child's views- what are their specific fears/worries, what is going well in school (e.g., teachers, lessons, friends) Behaviour and symptoms of anxiety When s/he is worried what does it look like? What do they say they are feeling?
- Typical day – when they go to school and when they do not go to school
- How does their non-attendance impact on parents/ carers? And on other family members?
- Exceptions to the problem- Have there been times when s/he managed to get into school? What was different about those times? Previous attempts to address the problem What has been the most helpful thing that someone else has done in dealing with the problem so far? What has helped in the past when things have been difficult? What strategies have been most helpful so far in managing their anxiety?

## **Safeguarding and child protection**

All schools and education settings have statutory duties to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of learners. All staff members must be aware of and understand how to contact and raise concerns with the designated safeguarding person for the school. Absence from school is a potential safeguarding risk and tracking and monitoring attendance has a crucial safeguarding role. Absence can signal possible wellbeing issues or problems at home.

Keeping Learners Safe guidance states that:

- Education settings should use their attendance policy and practice to ensure they are in regular contact with parents if a child is absent from school without authorisation or if they have patterns of absence. The child's attendance record at school could be an indicator of safeguarding concerns and an opportunity to identify and deal with abuse such as child exploitation.

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- If a child is absent without notification, it could also be without the knowledge of their parent or carer and could be an early sign that the child is missing from home or care. The education setting should ensure any absence is followed up quickly to ensure the child is safe and not missing from home or care.
- If the education setting identifies the child is missing from home or care they should refer to the Wales Practice Guide 'Safeguarding children who go missing from home or care'.

Schools should regularly review attendance data to identify and respond to children who are at risk. Schools should have first day absence reporting processes in place and processes for deciding whether welfare sightings are needed. These systems should ensure back-up staff are in place when key attendance staff are themselves absent.

Where a child is registered at a school and subsequently attends a setting such as EOTAS the original school should assume responsibility for checking the child's attendance (at both settings) daily.

It is good practice for all staff to share information when necessary and lawful and to work closely with the designated safeguarding person and Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to ensure that support for vulnerable learners is timely and joined up. One of the specific circumstances in which data protection legislation allows the sharing of sensitive personal information without the consent of the child or parent is to safeguard children and protect them and others from harm. Staff should be trained to understand when information should be shared with other stakeholders and what information may be disclosed.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Parent / Carer Responsibilities**

Parents are responsible in law for ensuring that their child / children attend the school at which they are registered, regularly, on time, properly dressed and in a fit condition to learn (parents are also responsible for ensuring that their children stay at school once they have registered).

Parents can do a great deal to support the regular and punctual attendance of their children, including:

- take an active interest in their child's school life and work;
- attend parents' evenings and other school events, if possible;
- ensure that their child completes his/her homework and goes to bed at an appropriate time;
- be aware of letters from school which their child brings home or alternative communications from the school;
- ensure that their child arrives at school on time each day;
- ensure that their child only misses school for reasons which are unavoidable or justified, such as illness or days of religious observance;

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- always notify the school as soon as possible - preferably on the first morning - of any absence;
- confirm this in writing when the child returns to school;
- avoid booking family holidays during term-time.
- talk to the school if they are concerned that their child may be reluctant to attend.
- make all medical and dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible.

If a child misses' school without an explanation from the parents / carer, or if the school is not satisfied with the explanation, the absence will be recorded as 'unauthorised', that is, truancy.

Although parents / carers may provide a reason for the absence, it is the school that decides whether the absence is recorded as authorised or unauthorised.

If parents / carers think there may be a reason why their child does not want to go to school, they should speak to their child's class teacher for help and support in the first instance.

| ATTENDANCE %         | LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES                | OUTCOME  |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| 95-100% attendance   | Best chance of success                | Your child is taking full advantage of every learning opportunity.                                     |
| 90-95% attendance    | At least 2 weeks of learning missed   | Satisfactory. Your child may have to spend time catching up with work.                                 |
| 85-90% attendance    | At least 4 weeks of learning missed   | Your child may be at risk of underachieving and may need extra support from you to catch up with work. |
| 80-85% attendance    | At least 5 ½ weeks of learning missed | Your child's poor attendance has a significant impact on learning.                                     |
| Below 80% attendance | At least 7½ weeks of learning missed  | Your child is missing out on a broad and balanced education. You are at risk of prosecution.           |

## **School and Governing Bodies Responsibilities**

All schools are expected to develop processes that meet the needs of their pupils and contexts that include arrangements to:

- Develop and maintain a whole school attendance policy.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the registration procedures, registration regulations and education law relating to school attendance.
- Complete school registers at the start of the morning session and afternoon session\*
- Stress to parents and carers the importance of contacting the school as early as possible on the first day of absence.

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- Promote positive staff attitudes to pupils returning after absence.
- Ensure regular evaluation of attendance by the Governing Body
- Work towards ensuring all pupils are supported and valued and so want to attend school.
- Proactively manage lateness.
- Encourage parents to contact the school when their child is absent to explain the reason.
- Identify any absences that are not explained for each session and contact parents.
- Develop positive relationships with parents / carers and external agencies working with the family/ pupil.
- Monitor and evaluate the early intervention strategies adopted by the school.
- Where reasonably possible, hold more than one emergency contact number for each pupil.
- Regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) consider to be vulnerable.
- Identify pupils who need support from wider partners and agencies.
- Make the necessary statutory data returns to the local authority.
- Support pupils back into school following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence.
- Support the EWS audit when requested.

Schools should identify a designated member of staff for attendance matters, including monitoring registers, liaise with teaching staff, meet with the local authority officer on a regular basis, refer to other appropriate agencies, refer to school nurse in regards to the validity of an illness, oversee the use of standardised letters to parents addressing specific aspects of attendance, arrange for attendance meetings in the case of repeated, unexplained absences, ensure the EWO's role is known and understood in school, and ensure all staff are aware that attendance is the responsibility of all staff.

Schools also have a safeguarding duty, under section 175 Education Act 2002, to investigate any unexplained absences.

\* Schools are required under the Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 to take an attendance register twice a day: at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. The accuracy of the register is important to support any statutory interventions that may be required. It should be noted that it is a legal offence not to maintain accurate registers.

### **Attendance Pathway**

In addressing patterns of poor attendance, schools are responsible for closely following the graduated and escalated response as duly outlined within the Blaenau Gwent 'Attendance Pathway' document. The key elements are noted below:

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- Schools to contact home on the first, second and third morning of absence (when no explanation is received).
- If no contact on the third day of absence then the EWO can do a welfare check providing school have exhausted all avenues.
- Initial attendance concerns, school to send out Letter 1.
- If no improvement, school to send out Letter 2.
- If no improvement, school to arrange AIM 1 (Attendance Improvement Meeting).
- If no improvement, school to arrange AIM 2.

EWO's will support the school with their attendance at AIM's when able to do so. If an attendance matter cannot be resolved by the school and the appropriate steps have been followed, then a referral will be made to Blaenau Gwent Education Welfare Service for further investigation – [EducationWelfareService@Blaenau-Gwent.gov.uk](mailto:EducationWelfareService@Blaenau-Gwent.gov.uk)

### **Local Authority Responsibilities - Education Welfare Service (EWS)**

The role of an Education Welfare Officer (EWO) is to address any issues or difficulties that might prevent regular attendance. They will explore the reasons behind school absence, offer information and guidance, undertake planned interventions, advise families about specialist support services and support referrals to appropriate services when required.

The EWS provides support to schools, pupils, and parents to ensure regular attendance and address problems relating to absenteeism. EWO's identify barriers to accessing education and supporting strategies to encourage positive outcomes. If school attendance has not improved following EWO involvement, there is an expectation that legal action will be explored.

There is an expectation that all pupils, regardless of their individual circumstances or needs, can secure their entitlement to high quality learning, teaching and support. Regular attendance is therefore critical if all our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities and support provided. Regular attendance and punctuality are essential to allow children to achieve their full potential during term time at school. Regular attendance also ensures that children are safe and lessens the opportunities to become involved in truanting and associated anti-social activities.

EWS case work is managed via a referral system, with threshold criteria set below 85% - the LA's attendance pathway, FPN Code of Conduct & referral system are updated and shared each term by link EWO's, all of which are informed by up to date WG guidance, research and are available via Hwb / SharePoint links.

EWS encourages collaborative working between schools, agencies, and pupils to support best outcomes. Agencies and support available include: School Nurse, Youth Service, Families First, CAMHS, Pastoral Support Plans (PSP's) and Youth Offending Service

### **Penalty Notices**

Regular and punctual attendance of pupils at school and alternative provisions is both a legal requirement and essential for pupils to maximise the educational opportunities

available to them. In law, an offence occurs if a parent / carer fails to secure their child's regular attendance at school / alternative provision and that absence is not authorised by the school. The Welsh Government (WG) Education (Penalty Notice) (Wales) Regulations 2013 states that Local Authorities (LAs) are required by law to adhere to the Education Act 1996 section 444 to include Penalty Charge Notices as one of the interventions to promote better school attendance.

If a pupil has

- a minimum of 10 sessions (five school days) that have been lost due to unauthorised absences during the current term and this brings the overall pupil's attendance to below 90% in the school year (these absences do not have to be consecutive)
- unauthorised absences of at least 10 sessions (5 school days) due to holidays in term-time if the absences take a pupil's overall school attendance to below 90% in the school year to date (these absences do not have to be consecutive), or
- persistent late arrival at school i.e. after the register has closed at least 10 sessions of late arrival (U code) within a term; these do not need to be consecutive but should bring a pupil's overall school attendance to under 90% in the school year to date.
  - A penalty notice is £60 if paid within 28 days of receipt of the notice;
  - This rises to £120 if paid after 28 days but within 42 days of receipt;
  - If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 42-days, the local authority must either prosecute for the offence or withdraw the notice.

The prosecution proceedings will be for the offence of failing to secure the child's regular attendance at school and not for non-payment of the penalty fine. The prosecution will be brought under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. Withdrawal of the notice can only take place in limited circumstances as set out in the Code of Conduct.

Regular attendance and punctuality are essential to allow children to achieve their full potential during term time at school. Regular attendance also ensures that children are safe and lessens the opportunities to become involved in truanting and associated anti-social activities.

For further information on Penalty Charge Notices please refer to the Code of Conduct.

It is important to note that if there are no valid reasons for non - attendance then there are a range of legal measures that may be implemented by the LA; these can include the issue of FPN's, Education Prosecutions, Education Supervision Orders and School Attendance orders.

The Local Authority can apply for an Education Supervision Order under section 36 Children's Act 1989 if it believes a child of compulsory school age is not being properly educated. This can include irregular attendance at school.

## **Data Analysis**

The school and Local Authority should regularly analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.

The key to this is regular data analysis to both identify and provide immediate additional support to pupils or pupil cohorts that need it, and to look at historic and emerging patterns across the school and develop strategies to address them.

This can include:

- The monitoring and analysis of weekly attendance patterns and trends and deliver intervention and support.
- Looking further into patterns of attendance within a session to ensure all pupils are attending all timetabled lessons.
- Using this analysis to provide regular attendance reports to class teachers or tutors.
- Identifying the pupils who need support and focus staff efforts on developing targeted actions for those pupils.
- Conducting thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full year data to identify patterns and trends.
- Benchmarking attendance data.
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data.
- Monitor the data to evaluate the impact of whole school and bespoke attendance efforts.
- Provide data and reports to support the work of the governing body.

## **Reduced hours, flexi-schooling, study leave and blended learning.**

Reduced hours or part-time timetables, as part of a pastoral plan, can help learners reintegrate into a school after a long absence or be a means of preventing greater absence, they have the overall effect of reducing time in school for learners with a possible negative impact on their progress and wellbeing.

Such arrangements should generally be a short-term measure, with the intention of returning to full-time education as soon as feasible. They should never be used as a means of managing behavioural issues. All learners are entitled to a full-time education and access to the curriculum. In addition, schools are required to deliver the curriculum, other than where exceptions apply.

Reduced hours arrangements should be recorded in a plan as a formal arrangement between the parents, the child, and the school, for example as part of a reintegration plan following exclusion (see Exclusions from schools and PRUs section 6.7), or a managed move arrangement (see Effective managed moves - appendices include forms MM1 and MM2), or as part of a Pastoral Support Programme (PSP) or Behaviour Support Plan (BSP).

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When considering placing a learner on a reduced timetable, the school should:

- evaluate the support already implemented and have a clear rationale for the proposed arrangements, such as EOTAS or blended learning provision, considering the needs of the learner
- consider the need for any additional interventions such as external behaviour support or family support.

Once it has been agreed a child had a reduced timetable, the school should:

- set out the new arrangements in a written agreement such as a Pastoral Support Plan signed by all parties and supplemented by supporting evidence from professionals such as CAMHS, health consultants or educational psychologist
- provide a detailed written action plan to education. and their parent, or young person with a named person responsible, clear objectives, targets and review dates and a time frame for expected return to full-time education
- liaise throughout with the parents or carers, gain parental approval and written permission,
- liaise throughout with the local authority, and all relevant agencies, and provide them and the EWS with a copy of the Pastoral Support Plan
- risk assess the safeguarding implications of the learner being out of school and arrange that the pupil is sighted virtually by a professional regularly if face to face attendance is not possible
- review the arrangements regularly
- maintain a formal record of all learners on reduced timetables, including the date implemented and review dates.

Where a reduced timetable has been agreed by all parties, the offer of provision may also include distance or blended learning through the school's online platforms to ensure continuity of learning. Schools should not use code B (approved educational activity that counts as present) when a pupil is studying at home as part of an agreed reduced hours or part-time timetable arrangement. When not in school, learners are unsupervised, and the arrangement does not meet the legal definition of approved educational activity. The authorised absence registration code C should be used when a pupil has been placed on an agreed reduced hours, part-time timetable.

## **Appendices**

### **Appendix 1 WG Attendance Code Guidance**



attendance code  
guidance.pdf

### **Appendix 2 Blaenau Gwent Attendance Pathway**



EWS Attendance  
Pathway Document 2

### **Appendix 3 Model Attendance Policy**



Model attendance  
policy.doc

### **Appendix 4 Blaenau Gwent Operational Level Agreement**



OLA.doc

### **Appendix 5 School Allocation List**



Schools Served by  
Officers from Septern

### **Appendix 6 Whole School Attendance letter example**



SCHOOL  
ATTENDANCE letter 1

### **Appendix 7 First Day Absence Response Guidance**



School First Day Call  
Procedure.docx



Our First Day  
Response Procedure:

### **Appendix 8 Reason for Absence Letter**



Reason for absence  
letter.docx

## **Appendix 9 Holiday Request Form**



APPLICATION FOR ANNUAL HOLIDAY Leave Request for Authorisation.docx



Accepting a Parental Request for Authorisation.docx



Declining a Parental Request for an authorisation.docx



Relevant Consideration.docx

## **Appendix 10 Extended Holidays Form**



Microsoft Word 97 - 2003 Document

## **Appendix 11 Emotionally Based School Avoidance**



Blaenau Gwent Inclusion Service EBS

## **Appendix 12 Reduced Timetables**



Policy on Reduced Timetables.docx

## **Appendix 13 Pregnant School Girls Guidance**



Pregnant school girls Guidance.docx

## **Appendix 14 Policy on Children with a Parent/relative in Prison**



Policy on education of children with a parent in prison.docx

## **Appendix 15 School Attendance Self Evaluation**



SEWC School Attendance Self Evaluation.docx

## **Appendix 16 Register Inspection Template**



register inspections sept 2023.docx

## **Appendix 17 Targeted Support Meeting Template**



Targeted Support  
Meeting for attendar

## **Appendix 18 Traveller Attendance Guidance**



Traveller Attendance  
Guidance.docx

## **Appendix 19 Children Missing from Education Policy**



CME Policy  
September 2023.doc

## **Appendix 20 Education Welfare Service Legal Policy**



Blaenau Gwent  
Education Welfare Se

## **Appendix 21 Fixed Penalty Notice Policy**



Blaenau Gwent FPN  
September 2023.doc

## **Appendix 22 Parenting Contracts and Orders**



Parenting contracts  
and parenting orders

## **Appendix 23 Educational Neglect Policy**



Education Neglect  
Policy.docx

## **Appendix 24 BG Protocol for Schools with Lower than Expected Rates of Attendance**



BG Protocol for  
Schools with Lower t

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## **Appendix 25 Elective Home Education Policy**



Elective Home  
Education Policy 202

## **Appendix 26 Cross Border Working Protocol**



Cross Border  
Working Protocol SE