



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol
MERTHYR TUDFUL
MERTHYR TYDFIL
County Borough Council

Pupil Attendance **at School Handbook**

2026-2029

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	<u>Page</u>
INTRODUCTION	3
AIMS AND OBJECTIVES	3
LEGAL CONTEXT	3
ROLE OF PARENTS AND CARERS	4
SCHOOL LEVEL ACTION	5-6
• Registration Practices	5
• Lateness	6
• Reduced timetable	6
WHOLE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY	6-10
• Effective Practices for Promoting Regular Attendance At School (School Based Initiatives)	7
• Parental Engagement	7
• Management Of Data	7
• Vulnerable Groups	8
• Target Setting	9
• Attendance Data	10
• Early Intervention	10
• Referral for Additional Support	11
LOCAL AUTHORITY ACTION	11-15
• Education Welfare Service	11
• LA Statutory Functions	11
• Fixed Penalty Notices	12
• Prosecution Process	13
• Warning notices	14
• Documentation	14
• Management of Data	15
APPENDICES	16-44
1. Persistent Absenteeism	16
2. Graduated Response Guidance	18
3. Registration Information	20
4. School Attendance Codes	22
5. Lateness	24
6. Guidance on Codes	26
7. Guidance for Model Policy	29
8. Good Practice for Improving Attendance	32
9. Exemplar Parental Policy	36

INTRODUCTION

The importance of school attendance cannot be understated. School gives lasting friendships, important social skills, opportunities, choices and experiences.

If a child misses school they are likely to;

- have problems keeping up with school work;
- dislike school more;
- obtain poor examination results;
- not achieve to their full potential;
- lose their place in friendship groups and become isolated from peers;
- become involved in anti-social or criminal behaviour; and/or
- find difficulty in getting into further education or a job/career.

Merthyr Tydfil is committed in ensuring that all children and young people fulfil their potential – regular attendance at school is one of the biggest factors in achieving this.

Improving educational outcomes for our children and young people is a key priority for the Local Authority. The links between poor attendance and attainment are compelling and the Local Authority continues to endeavour to address the root cause of non-attendance with persistent absenteeism a significant area of challenge.

‘Persistent failure to send children to school is a clear sign of neglect’. Please see **Appendix 1** for ‘persistent absentees’.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this handbook is to promote a consistent message that attendance at school is a key priority in Merthyr Tydfil. It also intends to;

- outline the roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders in promoting attendance at school;
- provide advice and guidance to schools on effective practices and strategies to improve attendance;
- clarify the role of the Education Inclusion Officer in tackling attendance issues, including case management and prosecution processes; and
- clearly identify links to other policies.

LEGAL CONTEXT

Regular School Attendance

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, states that the parent is responsible for making sure that their child of compulsory school age (5-16 years) receives efficient full time education that is suitable to the child’s age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs the child may have. This can be

by regular attendance at school or by education otherwise (the parent can choose to educate their child at home).

The legal definition of a parent means: 'all natural parents whether married or not, any person who although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility.

If it appears to a Local Authority (LA) that a child of compulsory school age is not receiving a suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise, they must begin procedures for issuing a School Attendance Order under Section 437 of the Education Act 1996.

If a child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly at the school then the parent is guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

Since March 2000, there has been a further offence where a parent, knowing that their child is failing to attend regularly at school, fails without reasonable justification to cause him/her to attend (Education Act 1996, Section 444(1A) as amended by the Criminal Justice and Court Service Act 2000). This offence requires proof that the parent knew of their child's non-attendance and failed to act. Under this aggravated offence, a warrant can be issued compelling a parent to attend court and conviction can lead to a custodial sentence.

ROLE OF PARENTS AND CARERS

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to ensure that their child of compulsory school-age receive a suitable education appropriate to their age, ability and aptitude and to any additional learning needs they may have. It is also the responsibility of the parent/carer to inform the school their child is registered at as soon as possible if their child will be absent, and ensure a satisfactory explanation is given to the school.

Parent/carers can do a great deal to support the regular and punctual attendance of their children at school taking the following actions:

- Start good habits early, arrive at school on time and keep to school rules.
- Inform the school on the first day of any illness or absence, providing medical evidence where appropriate.
- Make it known that they do not approve of poor attendance, lateness or truancy. Ensure their children only miss school for legally allowed reasons such as illness or days specifically set aside for religious observance.
- Always send in notes to explain an absence.
- Avoid booking family holidays during term time.
- Attend parents' evenings and other school events.
- Read all letters that the child brings home from school.
- Talk to the school or the Education Welfare Service about any problems or difficulties they may be experiencing.
- Support school in encouraging good behaviour in school as well as out of school.
- Take an interest in their child's schoolwork and homework.

SCHOOL LEVEL ACTION

The school is initially responsible for identifying and following up pupil absences. Every school should have an effective and recognised procedure. All pupil absences should be followed up as soon as possible. The action taken, and the responses received, should always be recorded. Please see **Appendix 2** for the Graduated Response.

Registration Practices

The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 set out the requirements on schools to maintain admission and attendance registers. Schools must keep two registers: an admission register, which serves as the school roll, and an attendance register. The admission register should include details of pupils from the date they have been admitted to the school.

Attendance registers must be called twice a day: at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. The afternoon registration must take place at the start or during the afternoon session, not at the end of the morning session or during the break between sessions. The register must show whether each pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, or absent. In addition, where a pupil of compulsory school age is absent, the register must also show whether the absence was authorised by the school or unauthorised.

Authorised absence means either the school has given approval in advance, or that a satisfactory explanation has been given afterwards (the absence should be classified as unauthorised until that time). Registers need to be up to date so that schools can account for all pupils particularly in an emergency.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as 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 the LA using 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; and
- day trips and holidays in term time.

Only schools can authorise an absence however if they are in doubt that the explanation is not a reasonable basis for missing school the absence must be treated as unauthorised until further investigations are made.

Excessive amounts of authorised absence can also disrupt learning and encourage disaffection. Schools should therefore look out for emerging patterns of authorised absence for individual pupils or groups of pupils and these can be challenged by asking for medical evidence if appropriate.

No pupil should be marked present unless actually in the room when the register is called or unless he or she has been given permission to be absent by the registering teacher. **Spaces must not be left in the register.** See **Appendix 3 and 4.**

Lateness

Registers should be closed at an agreed time each day. Welsh Government advises schools should close their register to pupils no later than 30 minutes after the register was taken. The school will need to determine a constant and consistent arrangement. See **Appendix 5.**

- Where a pupil arrives late but the register is still open the pupil should be marked as late but counted as present for that session.
- Where a pupil misses registration but provides an adequate explanation, he/she should be marked as late but counted as an authorised absence and marked as an 'L'. Good practice would be to insert a comment as to reasons why a pupil is late.
- Where a pupil misses registration (and arrives after registration, without an adequate explanation and the register has closed), the absence must be marked as an unauthorised absence – "U".

Reduced timetable

There is no statutory basis upon which to establish a reduced timetable, however, in exceptional circumstances schools may need to implement a reduced timetable in order to support a pupil who cannot attend school full-time for a short, time-limited and agreed period.

It is important that schools act to ensure that the WG regulations in respect of attendance are correctly observed for pupils on a reduced timetable.

'C4' code is to be used when a pupil has been placed on an agreed reduced time timetable / reintegration.

Welsh Government has updated the school attendance codes and guidance which come into effect from 1st September 2026. This supports accurate and consistent recording of attendance across Wales. A corporate set of attendance coding is attached at **Appendix 6.**

WHOLE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

National Assembly for Wales Guidance Circular 203/2016 Inclusion and Pupil Support and the Belonging, Engaging and Participating guidance 2023, advises that all schools should have effective systems and procedures for encouraging regular school attendance and investigating the underlying causes of poor attendance, which should be set out in a School Attendance Policy. The School Attendance policy should be published and easily accessible for learners and parents.

Detailed attendance policy documents should specify the roles and responsibilities for learners, parents, staff and governors. It should also set out procedures for dealing with any attendance and absence issues that are likely to arise, as well as being a vehicle for planning interventions and support mechanisms for individual learners when they have difficulty in attending regularly for whatever reason. Consultation with staff, and with learners and their parents, should be a well-established basis for developing all school strategies, policies and practices, including those on attendance.

(Guidelines on a Model Attendance Policy are attached at **Appendix 7.**)

Effective Practices For Promoting Regular Attendance At School (School Based Initiatives)

Some examples of good practice in schools used to raise the profile of attendance are as follows:

- First day contact;
- Reward assemblies;
- Reward systems such as non-uniform day;
- Certificates for most improved and 100% attendance;
- End of term 'fun' days for pupils with full attendance for that week; and
- Reward trips for best attendance.

See Appendix 8 for a more extensive list on good practice.

Parental Engagement

In order to promote wellbeing schools have been asked to create their own parental engagement policies which will develop family engagement through effective practice procedures, ensuring positive outcomes towards raising standards to bridge the gap between home, school and the community.

See Appendix 9 for an exemplar parental policy

Management of Data

Sampling weekly attendance at specific sessions may show up regular patterns of non-attendance and may reveal, for example, an association with certain subjects, teachers or teaching groups.

Such analysis can also draw attention to the improvement or deterioration in the attendance of individual pupils. The analysis can help to target intervention more selectively and help to establish the cause of an absence.

All schools hold a great deal of information about attendance which is not always fully used. This information can be of great use in schools for strategic planning and can enable schools to manage attendance issues more effectively. Whole school attendance figures produced monthly, termly or yearly, based on year groups, gender, FSM etc can indicate factors such as:

- declining attendance in year groupings; and
- the effect of seasonal attendance e.g. inclement weather and preceding school holidays.

Weekly figures may illustrate the:

- effect of staff absenteeism;
- fall in attendance preceding teacher training days, half terms, study leave or work experience;
- effect of ending terms on a Monday or Tuesday;
- effect of activity days, day trips or residential trips; and
- effect of the timing of the school day;

Continuous analysis of individual pupil's attendance and of the whole school can give scope to strategic planning. By identifying those levels which the school considers are indicators of persistent absenteeism or irregular attendance, it will be possible to identify the extent of the problem. The school can then target time provided by the education inclusion officer/school FLO and pastoral staff more effectively by producing:

- individual attendance records which highlight reasons for absence and the pattern and rate of unauthorised absence; and
- lists of all pupils with unexplained absence which can be fed back to the responsible member of staff.

The pastoral staff will be able to identify those pupils who give cause for concern. Coded absence, broken down into a class and/or group format, would allow identification of excessive unauthorised absences.

Vulnerable Groups

- **Looked After Children** - children and young people may be looked after by the LA for a variety of reasons. Most children are looked after under voluntary arrangements. A minority are subject to care orders. Most children looked after will have been affected by distressing and damaging experiences. They may be living away from home because of family breakdown, abuse or neglect or social need. Nearly all will have to cope with some sense of loss of family, siblings, friends or familiar surroundings. Some may carry feelings of guilt or hidden injuries or may have low self-esteem. All or any of these factors will affect the way these children act. Many children may also be behind in their education. The Audit Commission's 1994 report "*Seen but not Heard*" identified low educational achievements and irregular attendance of children in residential care. It is important, therefore, that these disadvantages are not compounded and that early entry into a local school is facilitated.
- **Traveller Children** - the special position of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families is recognised by Section 444(6) of the Education Act 1996. It protects Traveller parents/carers of no fixed abode from conviction if the parent can demonstrate that:
 - He/she is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as requires him/her to travel from place to place.
 - The child has attended a school as a registered pupil as regularly as the nature of the trade or business permits.
 - Where the child has attained the age of six years, he has made at least 200 attendances (i.e. sessions or half days) during the preceding twelve months.

The purpose of this section is not to protect Traveller parents/carers from legal action, nor does it relieve parents/carers of their duties under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996. It is to ensure that children are receiving suitable education when not in school.

In general, the aim should always be to ensure that Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children, in common with all other children, attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible – 200 attendances should not be regarded as the norm. A balance has to be found between the need for legal action taken against individual cases, the interests of the child and adopting a sensitive and sympathetic approach that recognises the lifestyle and cultural traditions of the family.

Schools may authorise absence of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children where they are satisfied that a family migrates but gives reasonable indications that it has every intention of returning. This includes Gypsy and other Travellers, circus and fairground families leaving sites and winter quarters, with every expectation that they will return. Some schools in these circumstances are able to maintain contact with the children by outreach work or the provision of distance learning packs, although such activities should not be viewed as a preferable alternative to attendance at school. Some reasonable latitude on absence might also be offered in respect of families who have moved from, or have been evicted from, unauthorised sites while the family finds another site. However, in the latter circumstances, all efforts should be made to encourage the maintenance of attendance at school. Where Traveller children are registered pupils at a school and are known to be present either at a site (official or otherwise) or in a house and are not attending school, the absence should be investigated in the same way as that for any pupil.

- **English As An Additional Language (EAL)** - parents/carers of children from diverse cultural ethnicities, such as (Polish and Portuguese) families may feel that a school setting is not a safe environment for the child/children. It is critical that all schools recognise and appreciate this cultural diversity and endeavour to recognise any issues that may arise, which may prevent these pupils from accessing suitable education. In addition, many schools can offer bilingual support that is utilised in the classroom setting.

Attendance Target Setting

During 2020, the Welsh Government revoked the School Performance and Absence Targets (Wales) Regulations 2011 meaning schools were not required to set targets for future years or report on those previously set for 2019 to 2020 onwards. However, as part of their quality assurance processes, schools are advised to set targets for attendance. Targets need to be carefully formulated and be based on previous trends and the projected effects of any new approaches to improving attendance. High expectations are central to the target setting process and to providing the conditions that enable all pupils to realise their potential.

“The greatest danger is not that our aim is too high and we miss it, but that it is too low and we reach it”. (Michelangelo)

All schools should have clear strategies and plans for achieving targets. These should be integral to the process of school improvement planning. The strategies will be informed by:

- a shared belief that pupils in the school can achieve as well as pupils in the highest performing similar schools;
- a precise understanding of each pupil's strengths and areas for improvement;
- robust, accurate and regular tracking of each pupil's progress;
- intervention and support that are closely aligned to individual needs and have a proven record of success;
- the involvement of each pupil in assessing strengths, areas for improvement and in identifying how particular aspects of their learning can be improved - pupils are more likely to make progress if they understand clearly their present levels of achievement, know what they need to do next and are involved in discussing how to improve their work; and
- the involvement of pupils and their parents to develop a shared understanding of the roles they play in achieving the targets.

In order to ensure that attendance matters are addressed swiftly it is recommended that a whole school target for attendance is confirmed with the governing body early in the Autumn Term.

Regulations also place a duty on schools to publish within the annual report for every school year the following information:

- Actual absence rate in the relevant school year.
- The absence target (as outlined above).
- A statement setting out the extent to which the actual absence rate met the final target set for the same school year.

Attendance Data

Schools are required to ensure that their data is complete and that there are no missing marks. This will allow the LA to pull the data through MRI and provide schools with comprehensive data packs and analysis which will be sent to schools on a half termly basis. The information required is such as:

- Group session summary for the month
- Group session summary for the rolling figure – i.e. from the first day of the school year to the end of the current month
- Group analysis by attendance code for the month
- Group analysis by attendance code for the rolling figure (as above)
- Gender for all of the above reports

Early Intervention

The importance of monitoring absenteeism and follow up action by school staff before serious cases are referred to the Inclusion Service cannot be underestimated. Often early intervention at the start of any attendance issues can lead to a swift and positive outcome. Good practice suggests that before a referral is made to another agency schools should first have:

- sent a general absence letter to parents/carers to advise them of falling attendance and offering support;
- spoken to the pupil to see if they have any issues that are making it difficult to attend school, i.e. bullying, curriculum difficulties etc; and

- invited parents/carers to come into school to discuss difficulties and agree any appropriate support packages.

All school level action should be recorded as this will be needed as supporting information for a referral to the education inclusion service should additional support become necessary.

Referral for Additional Support

There are various agencies that schools can refer to for additional support for a pupil if needed, such agencies are:

- Education Inclusion Service
- School Wellbeing Team
- Educational Psychology Service
- Children Social Services
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
- School Nurse
- School Based Counselling
- Early Help Hub
- Youth Support
- English as an Additional Language (EAL)
- Gypsy Traveller Support
- Llamau
- Merthyr Integrated Drug and Alcohol Service (MIDAS)
- Youth Offending Support
- Inspire to Achieve
- Parenting Team

LOCAL AUTHORITY ACTION

Education Welfare Service

The Education Welfare Service (EWS) is a team within Inclusion in the Learning Department. The service provides advice and guidance to all schools on attendance and welfare matters. The LA statutory functions are as listed below.

LA Statutory Functions

- Instigate and authorise the prosecution process in conjunction with school
 - Issue “A” and “B” warning letters prior to commencing court action
 - Quality assure prosecution file
 - Sanction file and facilitate legal process
- Administer and monitor the FPN process i.e.
 - Issuing FPN warning letters
 - Monitor the 15 day monitoring period

- Issue FPN
- Monitor payments of FPNs and progress cases of non-payment to court
- Safeguarding of children in schools as directed in the Children's Act 1989
- Tracking/tracing Children Missing Education (CME)
- Attending and supporting Pupil Disciplinary Committees (PDCs) Exclusion hearings
- Attending and supporting Pupil Disciplinary Committees (PDCs) Exclusion appeals
- Responsible for the administration and monitoring of Child Employment Licensing
- Responsible for the administration and monitoring of Child Entertainment Licensing
- Responsible for the administration and monitoring of Child Chaperone Licensing
- Responsible for the administration and monitoring of Education Supervision Orders (ESOs)
- Responsible for the administration and monitoring of Attendance Orders (AOs)
- Auditing of School Attendance Registers and use of WG codes
- Monitoring of exclusions

Legal action to enforce attendance can only be taken by the LA.

For those schools who have bought into the EWS SLA, the Education Inclusion Officer (EIO) has a dual role to play as a provider of a service to the school and as mediator between home and school. The EIO will undertake attendance improving activities as directed by the Headteacher. Some examples of concerns for school to ask the EIO to become involved are as follows;

- Unresolved attendance problems
- Unexplained absences
- Repeated, condoned absences
- Irregular attendance
- Emotional/behavioural problems
- Suspected illegal child employment
- Material needs
- Family trauma – pupil distressed, mood swings, sudden changes in character
- Concern over the care and control, health or general wellbeing of a child at home or in the community.
- Pupil is developing a pattern of lateness

Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN)

Legal Basis and Rationale

New legislation has empowered designated Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council (MTCBC) Officers to issue Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) to the parents/carers of children and young people who have unauthorised absence from school on behalf of the Headteacher.

The issuing of FPNs will remain the responsibility of the Education Welfare Service (EWS) in response to requests made by Headteachers and their nominated deputies.

Regular and punctual attendance of pupils at school is a legal requirement and essential if pupils are to maximise the educational opportunities available to them. Parents/carers and pupils are

supported at school and at local authority level to overcome barriers to regular attendance through a range of assessment and intervention strategies with sanctions of any nature only used where parental cooperation is either absent or deemed insufficient to resolve the presenting problem.

Penalty notices are an added means of enforcing attendance where there is a reasonable expectation that their use will secure an improvement.

Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for the pupil to be absent from school, or where an explanation offered afterwards has been accepted by the school as satisfactory justification for the absence. Only schools, and not the parents/cares, can authorise an absence, and schools must consider whether the reason for the absence is reasonable before doing so. Any absence that is not authorised by the school should be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

In law, an offence occurs if a parent/carer fails to secure their child's attendance at school and that absence is not authorised by the school. The legislation governing the implementation of FPNs is outlined in the following:

- Sections 444A, and 444B of the Education Act 1996;
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006;
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (Wales) Regulations 2013;
- Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011;
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child (the right to an education).

A penalty notice is a fine of up to £120 which may be issued to a parent/carer as a result of their child's regular non-attendance at school.

The LA is responsible for developing a Code of Conduct within which all partners will operate and as part of the statutory duties for ensuring school attendance, it is appropriate that the EWS will assume this responsibility on behalf of the LA.

MTCBC's EWS investigates cases of irregular attendance from school, and following a period of intervention and support, to resolve a concern for non-attendance will, if deemed appropriate instigate legal action. New legislation bringing FPNs offer a means of swift intervention to prevent individual cases becoming entrenched and progressing to the local magistrate's courts.

Prosecution Process

Every case of non-school attendance is dealt with on an individual basis. Welsh Government guidance confirms that before consideration can be given for the prosecution of parents/guardians, that where a SLA, is in place with the school, that the EIO is obliged to make every effort to engage and work with the child and family which includes additional support offered if necessary. Where an SLA, is not in place this remains the responsibility of the school. If after working with the family the attendance does not improve sufficiently, the EWS will decide whether and at which point to instruct legal services to consider prosecution for the offence under section 444(1) and section 444(1a) of the Education Act 1996.

Ultimately, the decision to refer the matter to legal for prosecution lies with the Headteacher of the school but will be overseen by the Senior Education Welfare Officer (SEWO). These cases normally

are when parents refuse to engage or cooperate with either the school or the EWS, or where it is felt that the parents/carers could have done more to improve their child's attendance.

Decisions to instigate legal proceedings in MTCBC are not taken lightly. Consideration will be given as to whether it is appropriate and in the public interest to proceed. All children have a right to be in education, and the local authority has a duty to them to make sure that they receive an education.

Warning Notices

Consequences of non-school attendance should be made clear to parents/carers. There are two warnings which are issued to parents which give the parents/carers an opportunity to improve the situation. The expectation is that there will be an improvement in attendance. The parent(s) may be invited to a formal meeting to discuss the reasons for non-school attendance.

If, following the second warning, the situation does not improve, the matter will be referred to the Local Authority's legal department. Local authority lawyers will advise the education department whether it is in the public interest to prosecute and will go through the evidence that is presented from the education department. The local authority lawyers will act on behalf of the Authority and present the case in the local Magistrate's Court.

Documentation

Evidence for prosecution must be provided by the school. Either the school or the EWS, (depending on if the school is part of the SLA) will prepare a witness statement outlining the involvement with the pupil and parent(s). This needs to be recorded in first person and checked by the SEWO. A witness statement should include name of pupil, date of birth, name of parent, period of complaint and the school that the child is registered to attend. The witness statement should exhibit the registration certificate and any other relevant exhibits, including warning letters.

When the matter is referred to the legal department, previous convictions, if appropriate, should be highlighted. Local authority lawyers will assess the evidence and advise whether the matter is suitable for prosecution. If the legal department advise that the matter is suitable for prosecution, they will proceed to draft the summons and associated documents and will serve documentation upon the parents.

The case is presented in the Magistrates court by MTCBC lawyers. If the matter progresses to trial or has other complicating features, it may be necessary for the individual who wrote the statement to attend court. The legal department will advise the SEWO if attendance from school or EIO is required in court.

It may be necessary to interview parents under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 in order to ascertain from parents the reasons for non-attendance. The evidence given in interview can then be used as evidence for court if necessary.

School is not usually required to attend court.

Document name	Submitted	Not submitted	Comments and dates
Section 9 statement using template			
Section 9 statement by EWS if required			
Dates of warning letters and copies of letters			
Dates of non-attendance and monitoring period			
Date of FPN			
Court warning letters (A)			
Court warning letters (B)			
Registration certificate			
Narrative/context of the individual for more complex cases			
Details of contact made with family- phone calls, letters, home visits etc			
Is there sufficient evidence to secure a realistic prospect of conviction?			
Is the prosecution in the public interest?			

Management of Data

The Inclusion Team will provide schools and chairs of governors with half termly data packs and suggested actions to improve attendance in order to assist in the targeting of resources.

Appendix 1

PERSISTENT ABSENTEEISM

Welsh Government defines the current persistent absenteeism threshold as pupils whose absence level is more than 10%, (90% or below attendance) in line with the definition currently used in England (from September 2023).

When a student is on his/her way to becoming persistently absent, the school should conduct additional investigations to try to identify the underlying problems and causes of school absence.

Half termly attendance data is collated by the EWS and persistent absenteeism data is sent to schools on a half termly basis in order for schools to analyse and reasons for absence sought, so that the correct support can be put in place for the family in order for improved wellbeing and attendance.

It is hoped, this collaborative approach will reduce persistent absenteeism rates and lessen the need for court action.

See below 'Traffic light attendance information' for guidance on attendance percentages and amount of days lost:

Days	Attendance	Days Lost	Weeks Lost
190	100%	0	
189	99.47%	1	
188	98.95%	2	
187	98.42%	3	
186	97.89%	4	
185	97.37%	5	1 School Week
184	96.84%	6	
183	96.32%	7	
182	95.79%	8	
181	95.26%	9	
180	94.74%	10	2 School Weeks
179	94.21%	11	
178	93.68%	12	
177	93.16%	13	
176	92.63%	14	
175	92.11%	15	3 School Weeks
174	91.58%	16	
173	91.05%	17	
172	90.53%	18	
171	90%	19	
170	89.47%	20	4 School Weeks

169	88.95%		
168	88.42%		
167	87.89%		
166	87.37%		
165	86.84%		5 School Weeks
164	86.32%		
163	85.79%		
162	85.26%		
161	84.74%		
160	84.21%		6 School Weeks
159	83.68%		
158	83.16%		
157	82.63%		
156	82.11%		
155	81.58%		7 School Weeks
154	81.05%		
153	80.53%		
152	80%		
151	79.47%		
150	78.95%		8 School Weeks
149	78.42%		
148	77.89		

GRADUATED RESPONSE GUIDANCE

Attendance	Non-Attendance	Poor Punctuality
100% - 90% School Action	School's actions • expect parent/carer to make telephone contact with School on first day of absence • make telephone contact with parent/carer on first day of absence where necessary • generate a 'reason for absence' letter when there is failure to contact; where necessary requesting medical evidence to support continuing 'illness' absences • invite parent/carer in for an interview • issue 'Callio' 'Green Letter' to parents for children with attendance percentages of above 96% • engage FLO to work with pupils and families • undertake a home visit • consider the use of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) in respect of unauthorised absences exceeding five days per term- contact EWS • consider referral to Early Help Hub; • issue 'Callio' 'Amber Letter' to parents for children with attendance percentages between 92% and 96% and continue to monitor • issue 'Callio' 'Red Letter' to parents for children with attendance percentages below 92% and continue to monitor Reference - Welsh Government's All Wales Attendance Framework Alerts Where schools have identified pupils with attendance absence 'patterns' from 90% and below and where the strategies utilised by the school have not brought about improvements, then alerts to be discussed with EWS in order to provide advice and guidance on actions.	School's actions • issue letter to parent/carer • invite parent/carer in for an interview • engage FLO to work with pupils and families • consider the use of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) in respect of high levels of unpunctuality - contact EWS • contact via phone calls • undertake a home visit • make a referral to Early Help Hub • carry out a lateness patrol Alerts Where schools have identified pupils with high levels of poor punctuality and where the strategies utilised by the school have not brought about improvements, then alerts to be discussed with EWS in order to provide advice and guidance on actions.

Attendance	Non-Attendance	Poor Punctuality
90% - below School Action Plus	School actions • Discuss with EWS pupils whose attendance is 90% or below and is a cause of concern. Discuss reasons for absence e.g. health • Agree actions to be undertaken by EWS, such as • issue an FPN • send an 'A' notice warning NB- continue to liaise with EWS if attendance continues to decline Having made a home visit if no contact has been made with the child or parent/carer then 1. Confirm if either EHH or Social Services are involved and request their support. Please note that any child on the CP register if absent for two consecutive days school should notify Social Services. 2. Contact the Police on 101 requesting a Welfare Check	School actions • Discuss with EWS pupils whose punctuality continues to cause concern • Agree actions to be undertaken by EIO, such as • issue an FPN
85% and below	Request the EWS to issue B notice; SEWO and or AIO to advise in respect of commencing Court Action. Time scale between A notice and B notice and court action should be 10 – 15 school days depending on the individual case. <u>Evidence required for case to proceed to prosecution</u> <u>School to provide-</u> • Chronological contact record of actions taken e.g. phone calls, letters, home visits meetings arranged with family etc • Medical evidence <u>EWS to provide-</u> • Copies of A and B Warning Letters • Advice with regards to writing a statement	

Contact details for EWS

Senior Education Welfare Officer- Adele Pugh- 07800 708768
Attendance Inclusion Officer- Emma McCarthy – 07938 500582
FPN Officer Sarah Friel- 01685 724607

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

- Accurate recording of attendance codes is essential to ensure the safety of all pupils and to meet legal requirements.
- 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 afternoon registration must take place at the start or during the afternoon session, not at the end of the morning session or during the break between sessions. The register may be requested in a court of law as evidence in a prosecution for non-attendance.
- All staff involved with the registration process should be made aware that the law is specific regarding the keeping of registers. The register shows whether the pupil is present, engaged in approved educational activities off site, absent or not required to attend. Where a pupil is of compulsory school age, the register must show whether the absence was authorised by the school or unauthorised.
- Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for the pupil to be absent from school, or where an explanation offered afterwards has been accepted by the school as satisfactory justification for absence. Only schools, and not parents/carers, can authorise an absence, and schools must consider whether the reason for absence is reasonable before doing so. Any absence that is not authorised by the school should be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Registration procedures need to be clearly outlined in the school's attendance policy and repeated in the staff handbook.

Welsh Government has updated the school attendance codes and guidance which come into effect from 1st September 2026. This supports accurate and consistent recording of attendance across Wales.

Attendances codes are grouped under five statistical categories as noted in the table below. The table shows the category and the new revised codes (highlighted in red) that sit within the category.

Statistical category	Notes
Present	\ and L
Approved educational activity	B, B1, B2 , J, P1, P2 , V and W
Authorised absence	C1, C2, C3, C4 , F, H, I1, I2 , M, S, E, R and T
Unauthorised absence	N, O, G and U
Not required to attend	D1, Y1, Y2 , Z, X and #

It is important that:

- all staff have a general understanding of when each code may be used and its statistical meaning;
- staff responsible for entering codes should have a thorough understanding of the issues regarding attendance;
- staff should also be aware of when and to whom they should refer instances of absence in accordance with school guidelines;

- clear guidance also needs to be given on what constitutes 'other authorised circumstances' so that a consistent approach is maintained across the school;
- careful use of codes is paramount to avoid safeguarding issues arising, e.g. where pupils attend education other than at school (EOTAS) provision.

School Attendance Codes

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 set out the framework for how schools record attendance. The revisions to the attendance codes will ensure they are clear, relevant, and support consistent application across all schools in Wales and ensure that our attendance recording system continues to meet the needs of pupils, schools, and communities across Wales.
- Electronic systems support a more consistent approach to collecting school attendance data across Wales, allowing greater potential for exploring further the reasons why pupils are absent, improving the safeguarding and tracking of pupils and in turn putting in place strategies to deal effectively with specific problems.
- The use of fixed codes assists schools, local authorities and Welsh Government in monitoring not only whether pupils are absent with or without the permission of the school, but why pupils are absent from school. They can use this information to formulate interventions to address deteriorating attendance, poor attendance, persistent absence and other issues that the data reveals. Education welfare officers (EWOs) should investigate and challenge variations in the use of attendance codes.
- 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.
- The guidance may be used in conjunction with systems to record attendance in lesson-by-lesson systems, but schools may find that they need to record other reasons in this type of system. However, in schools where such systems are used and the first lesson in the morning or any session in the afternoon is used to substitute for the morning and afternoon registration, the codes in this guidance must be used for those sessions.

Computerised Registers

- Schools may use computers to maintain attendance and admission registers but, in common with manual registers, if the computer package allows, the appropriate change to the original entry in a register and any subsequent correction must be clearly distinguishable. The original entry must not be replaced by the corrected entry. Both the original entry and the correction should be preserved so that, on retrieval, the entries appear in chronological order. Prints of the register must clearly distinguish between the original entry and the corrected entry.
- Schools using computers for attendance registration must make a hard copy of the attendance register at least once a month. As soon as practicable after the end of the school year the printed sheets must be bound into annual volumes and, as with manual registers, retained for a period of not less than four years after the end of the school year to which each volume relates. This would mean that Year 11 pupils would have attendance records from Year 7. Electronic records should

be readily accessible to authorised officers, such as EWOs, to allow easy checking of individual pupils' attendance patterns

LATENESS

Registration Code: U	
Brief Description	Late (after registration closed)
Statistical Meaning	Unauthorised Absence
Legal Meaning	Absent
Physical Meaning	Late for session
Use	Schools should actively discourage late arrival and be alert to patterns of late arrival, which could provide grounds for prosecution. Schools should have a policy on how long registers should be kept open.

Additional useful information

- This code should be used when a child arrives late to registration period after the registers have been closed.
- For example
 - Register opens 8.30 pupil present /
 - Register opens 8.30 and pupil arrives 8.40 L
 - Register opens 8.30 and pupil arrives 9.05 then U
 - If a pupil arrives late after a medical appointment and provides evidence then Code M would be used.
 - If a pupil arrives after the registers have closed then the school must have a system to record this.

The Assembly Government advises that schools should close the register to pupils **30 minutes after the start of the session**. It also advises schools against leaving the register open for the whole session (see Code L and Code U).

For health and safety reasons, schools need to be aware of where pupils are, particularly those leaving or arriving on the premises during a session. This might be achieved through a paper system in the school office to record that a pupil has arrived on the school premises during the session. "Lesson monitoring" can also help with this process.

Under the School Day and School Year Regulations, schools can set different session times for different pupils, such as during public examinations and setting different lesson times for pupils in exclusions units. However, they must have regard to the Assembly Government advice on the minimum taught time for pupils and the requirement to offer 380 sessions

For safeguarding and educational reasons, schools must follow up all unexplained and unexpected absence in a timely manner, such as through "First Day Calling" procedures.

Registration Code: L	
Brief Description	Late (before registers closed)
Statistical Meaning	Present
Legal Meaning	Present
Physical Meaning	Late for session
Use	Schools should actively discourage late arrival and be alert to patterns of late arrival, which could provide grounds for prosecution. Schools should have a policy on how long registers should be kept open.

Additional useful information

- L to be used when a pupil has arrived late for registration period
- Registers should remain open for a maximum time of 30 minutes
- E.g. if registration period opens at 8.30, pupil arrives after 8.30 but before 9.00 then the pupil can be coded L. If pupil arrives after 9.00 then Code U should be used
- E.g. if the school has an internal provision where the registration period opens at 9.00 and pupil arrives after 9.00 but before 9.30 then pupil can be coded L. If pupil arrives after 9.30 then code U should be used.
- Afternoon registration period is the first session after the lunch break not the first session after 12 pm which could still be before the lunch break
- Safeguarding: Schools must follow up on all unexplained absences in line as part of their first day response processes.

GUIDANCE ON CODES

The recommended codes are grouped under the following five statistical categories:

- present;
- approved educational activity (treated as present);
- authorised absence;
- unauthorised absence;
- not required to attend.

Code	Meaning	Statistical category
/\	Present at registration	Present
L	Late but arrived before the register closed	Present
B	Educated off-site (not dual registration)	Approved educational activity
B1	Pupil in receipt of online learning provided by a local authority	Approved educational activity
B2	Pupil in receipt of online learning provided by the school	Approved educational activity
J	Interview	Approved educational activity
P1	Approved sporting activity	Approved educational activity
P2	Approved performance	Approved educational activity
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved educational activity

Code	Meaning	Statistical category
W	Work experience (not work based training)	Approved educational activity
C1	Other authorised circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code or description)	Authorised absence
C2	Absence due to a paid performance	Authorised absence
C3	Pupil who is flexi-schooled	Authorised absence
C4	Pupil who is on a part-time timetable	Authorised absence
F	Agreed extended family holiday	Authorised absence
H	Agreed family holiday	Authorised absence
I1	Physical illness	Authorised absence
I2	Non-physical illness	Authorised absence
M	Medical or dental appointment	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
E	Excluded but no alternative provision made	Authorised absence
R	Day set aside exclusively for religious observance	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
N	No reason for the absence provided yet	Unauthorised absence
O	Other unauthorised (not covered by other codes or	Unauthorised absence

Code	Meaning	Statistical category
	descriptions)	
G	Family holiday (not agreed or sessions in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
U	Late and arrived after the register closed	Unauthorised absence
D1	Dual registered (pupil attending other educational setting)	Not required to attend
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	Not required to attend
Y1	Partial closure	Not required to attend
Y2	Whole-school closure	Not required to attend
Z	Pupil not on roll yet	Not required to attend
#	School closed to all pupils	Not required to attend

GUIDELINES FOR MODEL POLICY

Schools are required to develop a whole school policy on attendance in discussion with staff, the Governing Body, parents and pupils, taking account of Welsh Assembly Government's guidance on Inclusion and Pupil Support, and the belonging, engaging and participation guidance 2023 and good practice identified by the Local Authority. A whole school approach to attendance should be adopted reflecting the importance of early intervention, and this policy should:

- give a high priority to attendance and punctuality, ensuring compliance with all statutory requirements;
- promote the importance of attendance to pupils through school assemblies; competitions, incentives, displays, peer mentoring, role models and other restorative approaches;
- set a whole school target for attendance;
- consider the setting of targets for individuals, classes and year group;
- develop attendance incentive schemes which recognise pupils' attendance achievements;
- identify a key senior member of staff with overall responsibility for attendance; track and monitor attendance patterns;
- monitor post-registration truancy through the taking of class registers and spot checks;
- identify a range of strategies to deal with absenteeism / lateness;
- establish procedures for identifying and reintegrating long-term absentees;
- provide clear guidance to staff on the process of registration and on the appropriate coding of absences; making provision for first day response in respect of absences and contain clear procedures to identify and follow up all absences and lateness;
- stress to parents the importance of the continuity of learning, particularly in relation to family holidays during term-time. (Authorising of leave for term time holidays remains at the discretion of the Headteacher).
- use opportunities such as parents' evenings and the school prospectus/brochure to remind parents of the school policy on attendance, e.g. Callio;
- ensure that all reasonable steps are taken by the school before an appropriate referral is made to the EIO;
- provide for regular structured meetings between staff responsible for school attendance and the EIO.

(Name of School)

(Name of Policy)

Date Agreed: _____

Next Review: _____

Co-ordinator
(if applicable): _____

Signature: _____

(Chairperson)

Introduction

Why regular attendance is important

The role of the parent/care in promoting regular attendance and the support available from the school

Named person with responsibility for attendance within the school

Understanding types of absence

Authorised absences

Unauthorised absences (*see page x of the LA attendance handbook for further details*)

Absence procedures

Set out what parents/carers need to do when their child is absent, e.g. phone to notify the school,

Set out what the school will do when the child is absent, e.g. first day contact.

Lateness

Stress importance of punctuality

Set out the times for the school, e.g.

The school day starts at **8.45am** and we expect your child to be in class at that time. Registers are marked by **8.55am** and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At **9.30am** the registers will be closed. 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.

Holidays during term time

Set out the factors that will need to be considered when granting leave of absence for holidays during term time.

Set out the process for parents to apply for holidays during term time, including any standard forms, letters and period of notice

What will happen if leave is taken without authorisation, E.G. the issuing of a fixed penalty notice, at the discretion of the Headteacher.

Education Inclusion Service

Who is the officer for the school?

Set out the circumstances in which referrals will be made to the EWO

Contact details

School projects and initiatives to raise attendance

What the school will do to promote regular attendance, e.g.

- Give parents/carers details on attendance in your regular home – school bulletin.
- Report to parents/carers at least half termly on how their 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.
- Run promotional events when parents/carers, pupils and staff can work together on raising attendance levels across the school.

(For more information please see page x of the LA attendance handbook)

School attendance data and targets

Set out what the school does to monitor data.

It would be useful to include some previous data on performance, e.g. as provided in the EIO governing body reports.

Set out what the school's attendance target is, e.g.

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets. Our target for xxx is to achieve xx% attendance.

Headteacher

Chair of Governors

Chair of School Council

GOOD PRACTICE FOR IMPROVING ATTENDANCE

1. Self-evaluation audit

Having received responses from all schools the following good practice/areas of focus has been shared with schools:

- scrutinise specific cohort/vulnerable groups –to address identified issues with specific year group cohort.
- **Persistent absentees**-to engage with targeted families and use a targeted approach to enable effective interventions and monitoring
- **Year groups**-to identify worst performing year group and follow a targeted approach
- **FSM**-to monitor and identify effective interventions. Such as breakfast for vulnerable pupils.
- **Gender**-to monitor and look at patterns alongside year groups.
- **ALN**-continue to monitor impact of LRB class on overall attendance. Review of pupil support plans/IDP, half termly, ALNCO involvement
- Measure the impact of attendance interventions on pupil outcomes rather than just measuring an improvement in attendance
- Pupil voice and attendance ambassadors to promote attendance.
- Reward Schemes.
- Letters to be issued to parents informing them of the registration period/ lateness.
- Attendance to be discussed weekly by SLT and during every staff meeting to ensure whole staff involvement.

2. Strategies being trialled in Merthyr schools

As with any approach these are most effective when implemented consistently as a whole school

- Attendance included SDP as a target
- Have a designated member of staff responsible for attendance
- Carry out timely First Day Response actions
- Routinely request medical evidence
- Challenging absences and setting expectations for return to school date
- Close monitoring and analysis of data
- Address attendance at higher threshold i.e. 95-90%
- Make home visits and invite parents in to discuss attendance
- High visible praise of good attendance
- Weekly awards; shorter periods proved to be more effective for those harder to reach
- Rewards for staff & students
- Pupil engagement e.g. Pupil Attendance Champion and/or Committee
- Timetables for the end of term shared with pupils and parents
- Internal competitions e.g. between classes
- All staff being aware of their role in respect of attendance
- Use every opportunity to raise the profile of attendance e.g. Discos & school fetes

- Individual target plans – agree short but achievable actions with parents
- Show parents what their child’s attendance as a percentage equates to as days lost
- Send Callio type letters to parents
- Information sent to parents - Newsletters, website, text etc.
- Unauthorise absences if dissatisfied with reason given, or when no reason is given for an absence, so that a FPN warning letter can be sent at the earliest opportunity
- Agree an approach to the issuing of FPNs as a cluster of schools for consistency
- Clear times given to parents for the registration period
- Engagement with the local community in supporting school attendance

3. Strategies of effective practice as identified by Estyn in the thematic report “Effective practice in improving attendance in primary schools”

The following strategies have been identified as good practice in improving attendance and would recommend that these be trialled in schools with their effectiveness monitored.

- **The “5 full weeks” initiative**

St Monica’s Primary School in Cardiff uses a number of innovative and effective reward programmes to highlight attendance and to engage pupils.

- ✓ **The ‘5 full weeks’ initiative** rewards pupils who attend school for five weeks with no absence during one term. **This is effective as even if a pupil misses one day, then they are still able to get a reward as they start their five weeks again.**
- ✓ The school holds raffles on random days where each child in attendance on that day receives a raffle ticket, which gives them a chance to win stationery.
- ✓ The award of a ‘green certificate’ (in line with the traffic-light system) for pupils with over 95% attendance encourages those with only a few days of absence.

Results from the ‘5 whole weeks’ campaign demonstrate an increasing number of pupils with full attendance for the five weeks:

- ✓ 38% of pupils with full attendance in the five weeks in the autumn term
- ✓ 62% of pupils with full attendance in the five weeks in the spring term
- ✓ 75% of pupils with full attendance in the five weeks in the summer

- **Pupil engagement “learning squad”**

Pupil involvement at Herbert Thompson Primary School, Cardiff

School leaders identified that absences for holidays during term time were not significant, but absence due to illness was a major contributor to weak attendance rates overall.

Strategy

The school developed a wide range of strategies to improve attendance that included:

- ✓ engaging parents more fully in the life of the school
- ✓ improving support mechanism for parents
- ✓ improving the way the school responds to the pupil voice and the role pupils play in improving attendance

- ✓ developing a clear whole-school structure for managing attendance
- ✓ improving information for parents on attendance, including a clear and easily understood policy

Attendance has been a priority in the school improvement plan for most of the last five years and remains in the plan even though attendance rates place the school in the top 25% or top 50% when compared with similar schools.

The school has developed a 'learning squad' comprised of Year 5 pupils who act as pupil representatives to support school leaders with school improvement. Two of the squad support the drive to improve attendance. Each term, these pupils work with around 20 pupils that the school identifies as needing to improve their attendance.

Action

Each morning, the learning squad visits the 20 pupils during registration and gives them a sticker if they are present. They aim to encourage these pupils to have full attendance for the week. If successful, they are able to attend a Friday lunchtime club, specifically set up for them.

The club is organised and run by senior staff and the learning squad. Twice each half-term, the learning squad and targeted pupils decide what activities they would like to undertake in their club, for example art and craft. Pupils may also choose to act as play leaders for pupils in the Reception class during club time.

Actions taken also include:

- ✓ having a weekly focus in morning briefings on attendance, which allows teachers to discuss individual pupils and to identify any support or challenge that they may require
- ✓ sending out attendance leaflets every half-term to all parents reminding them of the school's attendance targets and the importance of attendance
- ✓ making attendance information easy for parents to understand by giving parents their child's individual attendance rate but also using a traffic light system to show parents whether the level of attendance is good enough or not
- ✓ monitoring by the deputy Headteacher, in the role of the school's inclusion leader, when pupils' attendance falls below 90% making sure that all teachers have a learning review with the inclusion leader each term which also focuses on individual pupils' attendance
- ✓ establishing an attendance tracker where actions for individual pupils are monitored carefully by the inclusion leader

The school has established a **parents' council**, made up of two parents from each year group. They form a support network for parents and are at the school on a daily basis. Individuals can approach them to ask for help or discuss issues. One of their goals is to improve attendance.

Impact

The school's detailed tracking of pupils shows that their strategies have helped to make a measurable and significant impact on improving the attendance of identified pupils. For example, in one term, the school targeted 32 pupils with attendance of below 80% (half with attendance of less than 75%). Of these, 29 improved their attendance notably. Twelve pupils (over a third) achieved attendance of over 90% and eight pupils (a quarter) had attendance of over 95%. Four pupils achieved 100% attendance for the term. The average improvement in attendance was 17

percentage points. The impact of all the school's strategies on whole-school attendance has been to lift the school into the top 25% or higher 50% when compared with similar schools.

- **"Extra play"** initiative as used in neighbouring LAs

Strategy

Visits having been undertaken to other LA's, in respect of 'Good Practice' in relation to primary attendance a 'reward package' of **"Extra play"** has been identified, which is proving to be effective. It costs nothing, and is improving school attendance levels across the authorities' primary schools.

Pupils in each class are encouraged to improve their attendance, and peer pressure amongst the class is found to be more productive than other forms of 'support' or encouragement.

Each week a **high profile attendance assembly highlights the attendance of each class**, this being in the form of a presentation in front of the whole school for 5th place' up to 1st place'; these being given praise and ovation, and reward trophy (which all schools already have). Additionally the reward for the 'best attending class' is having **an extra 10 minutes at break/lunchtime in the playground each day** for the commencing week. This emphasises to the remaining classes that the best attendees stay out to play when the remaining classes go back in; this has been found to promote better attendance in all schools that are utilising it.

Obviously those pupils with genuine issues that may stop them regularly attending are removed statistically from the class attendance, so as not to discriminate the remaining class members.

EXEMPLAR PARENTAL POLICY

POLICY

Parent Involvement Policy

Step-By-Step Guide

Developing a parent involvement policy is a great way to ensure a sustainable and effective approach to engaging all parents. The policy should include information on how the school will address communication, parenting, skills, children's learning, volunteering, school decision making and community involvement. This document takes you through a step-by-step approach to help create your parent involvement policy.

STEP 1: Aims

Aims are general statements about the overall goals, ends or intentions of the school. Objectives are the individual stages that your school must achieve on the way in order to reach these goals. Aims are general; objectives are specific.

To the side are a few examples of what you can include in this section.

Aims

Aims of our school:

- To promote parent involvement in children's learning and the life of the school.
- To enhance the learning experiences of all pupils.
- To encourage parents and carers to be involved in their children's learning.
- To ensure that maximum use is made of parents' and other family members' skills and experience to enrich learning opportunities.
- To support parents as their children's first and most important educators.
- To involve parents in the life of the pre-school and their children's education.
- To support parents in their own continuing education and personal development.
- To provide a partnership between home and school, seeking to ensure that families feel welcome and valued.

AIMS:

Objectives

Below are a few examples:

- Create an atmosphere that is respectful and positive towards everyone in the school – children, parents/carers and staff.
- Maintain an 'open door' approach so that parents can communicate with staff regularly.
- Foster an ethos and atmosphere where all parents feel welcome and valued.
- Work with parents to promote positive behaviour at home and at school.
- Seek to provide a range of opportunities throughout the year to invite families into school.
- Provide information in timely, specific, targeted and accessible ways so that parents feel confident to support their children's learning.
- Seek parents' views and opinions and act upon them.
- Provide support and encouragement for families with difficulties or barriers to involvement.
- Work with parents to promote positive behaviour at home and at school.
- Provide a range of activities, courses and workshops, to promote parent involvement in children's learning and 'lifelong learning' for children and adults alike.

STEP 2: Objectives

Objectives are the steps you are going to take to achieve your school's aims. Highlight how your aims are to be accomplished. Objectives should be specific statements that define measurable outcomes (i.e. what steps will be taken to achieve the desired outcome). When writing your objectives, try to use strong, positive statements.

OBJECTIVES:

Communication

STEP 3: Communication

In this section inform parents how you intend to communicate with them. Maintaining effective two-way communication to deal with behaviour, attendance, interests, activities and other school-based events, including any external trips or visits, is very important. To the right are a few examples of what you can include.

- **Parent teacher meetings:** Inform parents that these are organised on an annual basis. Additional meetings can be facilitated throughout the year. Remember to include the dates, times, etc.
- **Annual report:** Inform parents that a report of each child's academic and personal development is provided to parents each year. An acknowledgement slip is attached, and parents are welcome to request a meeting with the teacher if they wish to discuss the report. Remember to include the date when reports are sent out and how to request a meeting with the teacher.
- **Newsletter:** Inform parents that the newsletter is produced by the parent teacher association to communicate with its members about its activities and school life and events. The Head Teacher approves the content and can also contribute content. Remember to include the dates when these newsletters will be sent to parents and how parents whose first language is not English can access these newsletters in their own language.
- **Notes home:** Inform parents that notes home for younger children are handed directly to the parent. All other notes are given to the children or recorded in the child's diary. Additional information can be written here – for example, parents are required to sign the journal and comments are welcomed.
- **Parent requested meeting:** Inform parents that the procedure to follow if they need to meet with the class teacher, learning support/resource teacher or Head Teacher is included in the welcome booklet. Parents are also made aware of this procedure on an information night.
- **Open days:** Inform parents that the arrangements for enrolment, class open days, displays, etc. will be communicated through notes or letters home, the school, website or the notice board.
- **Home-school agreement:** Inform all new parents that they will receive a copy of the home-school agreement, which they are asked to sign. The agreement outlines the responsibilities of parents, the children and the school, which all parties are expected to honour.

COMMUNICATION:

Parenting

- **Parent support facilitator:** Inform parents that this member of staff provides support on areas including behaviour and attendance. Remember to include the name of the member of staff and when he/she is available.
- **Parent workshops:** Involve parents in activities and workshops to promote their involvement in their children's learning, and also lifelong learning for both children and adults (e.g. sports/fun/craft activities at mums' nights and dads' nights, family learning events such as healthy lifestyles and child safety).
- **Parenting and family support:** Inform parents of the signpost services providing information about holiday activities, child care, local community events, parenting courses, e-safety, and services providing support and encouragement for families suffering difficulties/crises or barriers to involvement. Make this service accessible and approachable to parents to voice their concerns, issues and opinions.
- **Parenting programmes:** Involve parents in the parenting programme to help them develop skills such as communication, routines, having fun with their child, etc. Remember to inform when and where it will be held.

STEP 4: Parenting

In this section include information and ideas for parents to help create a positive learning environment at home as well as the best ways of supporting the school and their child's education. To the left are a few examples of what you can include.

PARENTING:

Children's Learning

STEP 5: Children's Learning

In this section include information and training for parents to help with their child's education on issues such as homework. Alongside are a few examples of what you can include.

- **Parent teacher meetings:** Inform parents that these take place on an annual basis. Additional meetings can be facilitated throughout the year. Remember to include the dates, times, etc.
- **Annual report:** Inform parents that a report of each child's academic and personal development is provided once a year. An acknowledgement slip is attached, and parents may request a meeting with their child's teacher if they wish to discuss the report. Remember to include the date when reports are sent out.
- **Home-school reading record book:** Inform parents of the home-school reading record book. This can also include a homework diary in which parents are encouraged to make comments. Parents can talk with teachers briefly before and after school on an informal basis on most days. If more time is needed, then an appointment can be made for a more appropriate time. Remember to include how parents can make an appointment.
- **Formal discussion:** Inform parents that there are opportunities to have a formal discussion with their children's teacher each term. Teachers value these opportunities to celebrate pupils' successes, review learning targets, listen to parents' views and review Individual Education/Behaviour Plans where relevant.
- **Home-school communication books:** Inform parents that these books provide communication between home and school, detailing specific daily updates and requirements from both settings.
- **Assemblies:** Invite parents to class/school assemblies so that the children can share their work.
- **Curriculum workshops:** Involve parents in curriculum workshops to help them to support their child/children's learning.

CHILDREN'S LEARNING:

Volunteering

- **Reading in class:** Provide opportunities for parents to help with reading in class.
- **Parent welcome pack:** Give parents the opportunity to help compile a welcome pack for new parents – a pack for parents, written by parents. Remember to let them know how they can get involved.
- **School fact card:** Encourage parents to help design a 'School fact card' for families to put up at home. The fact card can include important information such as the school phone number, website, term times, etc.
- **School trips:** Inform parents of school trips throughout the academic year and provide information about how they can volunteer to participate.
- **Classroom parents:** Inform parents about 'classroom parents' who help coordinate a variety of classroom events. Remember to list some examples of events and let them know how they can get involved.
- **Talks and demonstrations:** Where possible, invite parents to visit classes and groups of children to give demonstrations or talks on subjects in which they are experts. Examples might include a grandparent who is an expert gardener, another who worked as a coalminer, another who was an evacuee in the Second World War, etc.
- **Parent teacher association:** Encourage parents to join the PTA to help raise money for the school. Remember to state how they can apply.

STEP 6: Volunteering

In this section create opportunities for parents to volunteer through participation in supportive roles, activities and events in school. Opposite are a few examples of what you can include.

VOLUNTEERING:

Decision Making

STEP 7: Decision Making

In this section include opportunities for parents to become involved in educational advocacy and decision making on issues that affect their children's education such as creating and implementing new school policies. To the right are examples of what you can include.

- **Annual parent questionnaire:** Inform parents that an annual questionnaire will be sent out to seek their input and guidance on parent policies and guidance.
- **Parent feedback:** Inform parents that their feedback and consultation on key issues, policies and events in school are important to the school. Remember to inform parents where they can submit their feedback (e.g. school website, suggestion box, questionnaires).
- **Parent surveys and parent forums:** Provide parents with opportunities to give their views by involving them in the creation of parent surveys and parent forums.
- **Pupil-centred approach:** When individual pupils have discipline problems, allow their parents an opportunity to work with staff to help create a plan to deal with the problem.
- **Governing body:** Provide opportunities for parents to become a member of the governing body. Remember to inform them how to apply.

DECISION MAKING:

Community Involvement

- **Coordinated involvement programme:** Inform parents of community to school programmes (e.g. pupil art shows, plays held at community facilities).
- **DVD information:** Provide the opportunity for parents and pupils to produce a DVD about the school to make available to new parents. They could also produce a DVD about how families and community members can get involved with education. Remember to let them know how they can get involved and also how to obtain a copy of the finished DVD.
- **Community projects:** Involve parents and their children in community service projects (e.g. litter picking campaigns, Comic Relief).
- **Family resource or youth services centres:** Inform parents of other useful services available within the community.

STEP 8: Community Involvement

In this section create links with community support groups, agencies and initiatives to help strengthen family and school partnerships. To the left are a few examples of what you can include in this section.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT:

STEP 9: Monitoring and Review

In this section inform parents how the policy will be reviewed and by whom. To the right is an example of what you can include in this section.

Monitoring and Review

The Head Teacher, who reports to governors about the effectiveness of the policy, monitors this policy on a day-to-day basis. This parent involvement policy is the governors' responsibility and the School Improvement Committee reviews its effectiveness annually. They do so through discussion with the Head Teacher.

Signed: (Head Teacher)

Signed: (Governor)