Policy & Guidance on Attendance

Author	Linda Perkins
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Contents

1.0 The Policy Context

Regular attendance is a prerequisite to a good education and securing it must therefore be a high priority for schools, educated otherwise than at school (EOTAS) provisions, governors, Local Authority (LA), parents and carers, children and young people. By failing to attend school or allocated provision regularly, pupils diminish the value of the education provided for them.

Regular attendance can only be successfully promoted when the whole school/EOTAS provision, teaching and non-teaching staff, are willing to regularly reinforce the importance of school attendance. Please refer to the Attendance Good Practice Guide for Schools document.

An attendance policy is one that requires commitment from all staff employed within the school/EOTAS provision, together with governors, parents and carers, pupils and the community in which the school is located.

1.1   National Context

Attendance within the context of the School Effectiveness Framework is a key to a whole school improvement issue and has direct influence on attainment and standards. The framework describes the key characteristics required to build on existing good practice and through collaborative working, improve children and young people's learning and well-being throughout Wales.

1.1.1 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 behavior and well-being of all pupils.
http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/pupilsupport/inclusion pupilsupportguidance/?lang=en

1.1.2 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. An electronic version of the document is available at:
http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/publications/110308section3en.pdf

1.2   Local Context

Caerphilly County Borough Council (CCBC) is committed to implementing the School Effectiveness Framework 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 educational standards and attainment.

1.2.1   The policy supports the council's Well-being objectives, Engagement and Progression Framework, the Inclusion Strategy and the Education Improvement Plan.

1.2.2   The policy contributes to the goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2016 and has been directly influenced by the laws and guidance provided by the Education Act 1996, the Children Act 1989 and 2004, SEN Code of Practice for Wales 2004, the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and the Criminal Justice and Court service Act 2000 together with the following key related statutes and documents:

- The All Wales Attendance Framework;
- The All Wales Child Protection Procedures 2008;
- The Education (Pupil Registration)(Wales) Regulations 2010;
- The Education (School day and School Year) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2012;
- The Education (Penalty Notices)(Wales) regulations 2013;
- The National Assembly for Wales Circular 203/2016, Inclusion and Pupil Support;
- The National Model for Regional Working;
- Equalities Act 2010;
- Respecting others: anti-bullying guidance;
- Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010;
- Right of the Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011;
- School Effectiveness Framework;
- School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013;
- Statutory Guidance 002/2017 to help prevent children and young people from missing education;
- The Welsh Government's guidance 202/2016, Schools causing concern;
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child (the right to an education).

Links to some of the Welsh Government (WG) documents referred to throughout this guidance can be found via the web links as listed in Appendix 1**.**

1.3   The Legal Context

1.3.1   Under section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents are responsible for making sure that their child of compulsory school age (5-16), receives efficient full time education, suitable to the child's age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs (SEN) the child may have. This can be regular attendance at school or educated otherwise by the LA; the law also permits parents to educate their child at home.

1.3.2 The Education Act and associated regulations places a legal obligation on the LA, to enforce attendance and ensure that schools comply with robust registration practices and that they notify their respective LA, in cases of persistent and unauthorised absences, without reasonable justification.

2.0   Aims

2.1   The aims of the policy are to:

- Provide schools/EOTAS provisions with the necessary guidance to develop and implement a whole school attendance strategy and to deal with matters of irregular or poor attendance prior to referral to the Education Welfare Service (EWS);
- Improve attendance and educational attainment;
- Develop efficient and effective early intervention and support strategies for the more vulnerable pupils, particularly children and young people with additional learning needs (ALN), Looked After Children or young offenders;
- Encourage schools/EOTAS provisions to work collaboratively with a range of partners to support and promote the welfare and well being of children and young people;
- Ensure that the LA's role in dealing with non-attendance is effectively implemented in schools/EOTAS provisions;
- Provide guidance in relation to the use of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) as a measure to improving attendance and safeguarding.

2.1.2 The Attendance Self Evaluation Toolkit document will support the whole school improvement agenda, by highlighting areas to consider in terms of initiatives to escalate attendance.

3.0   Principles

3.1   The LA and providers of EOTAS are committed to ensuring that all children and young people gain maximum benefit from their education, regardless of ethnic origin, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, gender reassignment, religious beliefs or non-belief, language, nationality, responsibility for any dependents or any other reason which cannot be shown to be justified, by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

3.1.2 The LA is also committed to the fundamental principle, that early intervention strategies and partnership working, is crucial in ensuring the protection and well being of all children and young people.

4.0 Process and implementation

Positive behaviour and regular attendance at school or otherwise are pre-requisites to achieving an improvement in attainment. The LA Policy and Guidance will assist schools to develop an effective whole school attendance policy.

5.0 Links to Other Strategies

5.1 The Attendance policy links closely with the following key strategies/ policies and objectives:-

- Well-being objectives;
- Public Service Board's (PSB) wellbeing-plan;
- Healthy Schools agenda;
- Behaviour Strategy;
- Education Improvement Plan;
- The South East Wales, Education Achievement Service (EAS)
- Engagement and Progression Framework;
- Special Educational Needs (SEN) policy;
- The Welsh Education Strategic Plan (WESP)

5.1.2 Young People with SEN are among the vulnerable groups in danger of becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training). The LA operates a local Engagement and Progression framework with its partner organisations to reduce NEETs through targeted support.

6.0 Partnership

6.1 A Policy needs collective support, actively involving governors, staff, parents and carers, pupils and the extended community to develop and revise a school-specific policy.

6.1.2 The LA works in collaboration with the Welsh Government (WG), schools and EOTAS provisions, external agencies and the voluntary sector, to assist with strategies to resolve poor attendance problems.

7.0 Listening to Learners

7.1 An attendance policy should make it clear that promoting positive attendance and behaviour is the responsibility of the school/ EOTAS provision and community as a whole.

7.1.2 The Well-being plan endorses that learners are listened to and treated with respect and are offered a comprehensive range of education and learning opportunities.

7.1.3 Where appropriate, children and young people should be encouraged to participate in decision making processes relating to learning opportunities being made available to them and feel confident that their views will be listened to and valued.

8.0   Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

8.1   The LA monitors attendance through the following process:

- Benchmarking against national and local performance indicators;
- Collection and robust analysing of attendance data on a regular basis to identify areas that would benefit from specific support;
- The attendance self-evaluation process;
- Regular inspection of schools attendance registers;
- ESTYN reports;
- Regular pre-arranged meetings between designated link staff and Education Welfare Officer (EWO);
- Meetings with link staff from EOTAS provisions;
- Links with colleagues from other areas within the LEI, eg, Behaviour Support Officers, Educational Psychologists, ALN officers;
- Collaborative working with the Youth Service;
- Challenge through the Education Intervention Board (EIB) meetings for schools causing concern or identified as requiring intense support;
- Links with the Education Achievement Service (EAS), in order to identify schools who would benefit from an individual action plan;
- Annual evaluation review and target setting with Head Teacher or school's lead professional responsible for behaviour and attendance and the Education Achievement Service (EAS).

8.1.2 The Education Welfare Service (EWS) will be evaluated annually through the service improvement plan.

9.0   Privacy Notices

Information received by the EWS, together with any additional information received from schools, pupils, parents/cares or other organisations, will be recorded and processed by the LA in accordance with the legal obligations placed on CCBC and our duties under the Education Act 1996, Education and Inspections Act 2006 and The Children Act 1989.

Further information on how the information will be processed and used is available in the form of a full privacy notice and can be found at www.caerphilly.gov.uk

Appendix 1 – Links to Welsh Government Documents

All Welsh Government documents referred to throughout this document can be found via the below links:

- All Wales Attendance Framework and strategies for schools to improve attendance and manage lateness

http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/publications/110308section3en.pdf

- Children Missing Education (CME)

http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/missingeducation/?lang=en

- Inclusion and Pupil Support document, Welsh Government Circular No: 203/2016;

http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/pupilsupport/inclusionpupilsupportguidance/?lang=en

- Section 4 of the Inclusion and Pupil Support, Summary on attendance 4(i) Guidance on Registration Practices and codes.
- WG Guidance on School Attendance Codes 2010, that contains information on the revised school attendance codes and legislative changes in relation to Pupil Registration;

http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/pupilsupport/inclusionpupilsupportguidance/section4/?lang=en

Attendance Data Collection – Question and answer
http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/160405-attendance-collection-faq-en.pdf
The section also usefully provides technical notes to support schools with their annual attendance data collection.

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (Wales) Regulations 2013
- The Education (School Day and School Year) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2012
- The Education (School Performance and Unauthorised Absence Targets) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2006.

http://www.legislation.gov.uk

- WG guidance on penalty notices for regular non-attendance at school

http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/publications/130925-guidance-regular-non-attendance-en.pdf

- Keeping Learners Safe

http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/publications/150114-keeping-learners-safe.pdf

- South East Wales Safeguarding Children Board
- All Wales protocol missing children
- Safeguarding children from sexual exploitation
- Safeguarding children who may have been trafficked

http://www.sewsc.org.uk/

Attendance Good Practice Guide for Schools

Author	Linda Perkins
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1.0 Introduction

Attendance is now increasingly regarded as a measure of the quality of the education offered by a school.
There is currently no national target for attendance however the Welsh Government (WG) and Local Authority (LA) would expect to see year on year improvements. The LA targets are given below.

	Primary	**Secondary**
2016/17	94.6%	93.3%
2017/18	95.1%	94.2%
2018/19	95.2%	94.3%
2019/20	95.3%	94.4%

This document seeks to set out policy and practice guidance to assist with achieving a whole school approach to promoting regular attendance, provide examples of strategies that can be employed to improve school attendance and manage lateness and should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- All Wales Attendance Framework that includes strategies for schools to improve attendance and manage lateness;
- The Inclusion and Pupil Support, Welsh Government's guidance no: 203/2016;
  (Section 4 (1); Guidance on Registration Practices and codes);
- WG Guidance on School Attendance Codes 2010;
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010;
- The Education (School Day and School Year) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2012;
- The Local Code of Conduct that relates to Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN).

Each learning setting requires a policy for its own circumstance, which should indicate how they promote attendance and outline the strategies adopted to tackle poor attendance, as well as promoting high standards of behaviour, in order to prevent exclusion.

2.0 Designing an effective school attendance policy

An attendance policy is one that requires commitment from all staff employed within the school/EOTAS provision and will only be achieved successfully when agreed as the responsibility of the Governing body, whole school staff, parents, carers, pupils and the wider school community.

2.1 The Policy should:

- Give high priority to attendance and punctuality;
- Ensure compliance with all statutory requirements;
- Ensure that clear information is regularly communicated to parents ,carers and pupils;
- Include procedures for robust analysis of attendance data;
- Contain clear procedures to identify and follow up all absences, lateness and post-registration truancy;
- Include a summary of effective and early intervention strategies for pupils that fall below schools attendance target to avoid absences becoming persistent (more than 20%) and address, persistent lateness and re-integration plans;
- Be alert to critical times in the academic year calendar (e.g. Key Stage 2/3 transfer).
- Provide for a clear and unambiguous hierarchy of sanctions including FPN's;
- Include information on a rewards system for good and improved attendance;
- Provide for effective links with the Education Welfare Service;
- Be monitored and reviewed annually.

Please also refer to the Model Attendance Policy which should be used in conjunction with the Local Authority's Guidance on Attendance and other key relative documents.

3.0 Managing Attendance – effective practice

- Have a clear attendance strategy;
- Good leadership; identify a key senior member of staff with overall responsibility for attendance;
- The use of self-evaluation (Appendix 1) will highlight any areas that need attention in order to escalate attendance;
- Involve Governors; it's the responsibility of the Governing body to monitor overall attendance;
- Effective use of SIMS, the electronic attendance registration system;
- Robust monitoring of data; include a traffic light system or attendance monitoring model such as 'Callio', to identify and track pupils with high levels and persistent absences, patterns and trends and the link to attainment ;
- Have a first day response system in place for both morning and afternoon absences;
- Prompt follow-up action in cases of non-attendance, specifically pupils who fall into the vulnerable group category;

- Implement early intervention strategies for example report cards, contracts and attendance panels;
- Establish procedures for reintegrating persistent or long-term absentees, including pupils with significant medical concerns;
- Have proper support systems in place for pupils with high level of absenteeism or other forms of non-attendance or related issues;
- Make effective use of the incentive and rewards scheme;
- Consider target setting for individual pupils, classes, year groups etc., apart from a whole school target;
- Introduce successful alternative curriculum both in and out of the school;
- Make explicit to parents and carers their responsibilities and the importance of continuity of learning, particularly in relation to leave of absence during term-time;
- Promote attendance throughout all key stages via various means:- parents evenings, notice boards, posters; newsletters / school brochure and social media;
- Take steps to create a culture which encourages attendance, addressing school based causes of poor attendance such as curriculum issues, bullying or discrimination of any kind;
- Endeavor to keep pupils on site during the day and implement keep safe/safeguarding plans for those who are known to be regular truants. An example of a suitable keep-safe plan is shown in Appendix 2;
- Provide for regular structured meetings between relevant school/EOTAS staff and the EWO or EOTAS link;
- Make use and regard to LA & WG guidance on school attendance and the various sanctions available, including the issue of FPN's and prosecution.

3.1 Family Engagement/Liaison Officers/Attendance and Wellbeing Officers

Making use of PDG or cluster finding to develop specific roles such as a Family Liaison Officers, Family Engagement Officers or Attendance and Wellbeing Officers, can have a measurable impact on attendance and outcomes for learners.

Schools who have developed these roles can evidence that by identifying and providing appropriate support to pupils and their families, particularly where a range of factors are proving to be barriers to attending school, has escalated attendance and improved educational experiences to help pupils' achieve their full potential.

3.2 To promote social inclusion and regular attendance the LA, in partnership with Schools and EOTAS providers will:

- Support schools through the attendance self evaluation process, which will evaluate procedures around policy and priorities and advise/ support development of strategies to escalate attendance;
- Robustly analyse attendance data to assist and enable schools to appropriately prioritise and target support, specifically for pupils deemed to be vulnerable;

- Appropriately re-align EWS support to schools/EOTAS provisions;
- Work closely with partner agencies and other departments within the LA's education department in order to address behaviour and attendance issues, as part of the monitoring and review process;
- Liaise with the Education Achievement Service (EAS) in order to identify schools who would benefit from Individual action plans and support with setting rigorous and challenging but achievable attendance targets for schools;
- Promote the use of the managed move protocol for hard to place pupils, in order that all children and young people have access to appropriate education.
- Link appropriate cases with the looked after children (LAC) support officers;
- In collaboration with the Police and British Transport Police (BTP), make use of Truancy Initiative protocols in place and run regular Truancy operations throughout the Borough.

4.0 Responding to non-attendance

The school/EOTAS provider should make every effort to resolve an attendance issue prior to referring to the EWS. Procedures for responding to non-attendance are given in Figure 1.

Figure 1 – Responding to non-attendance
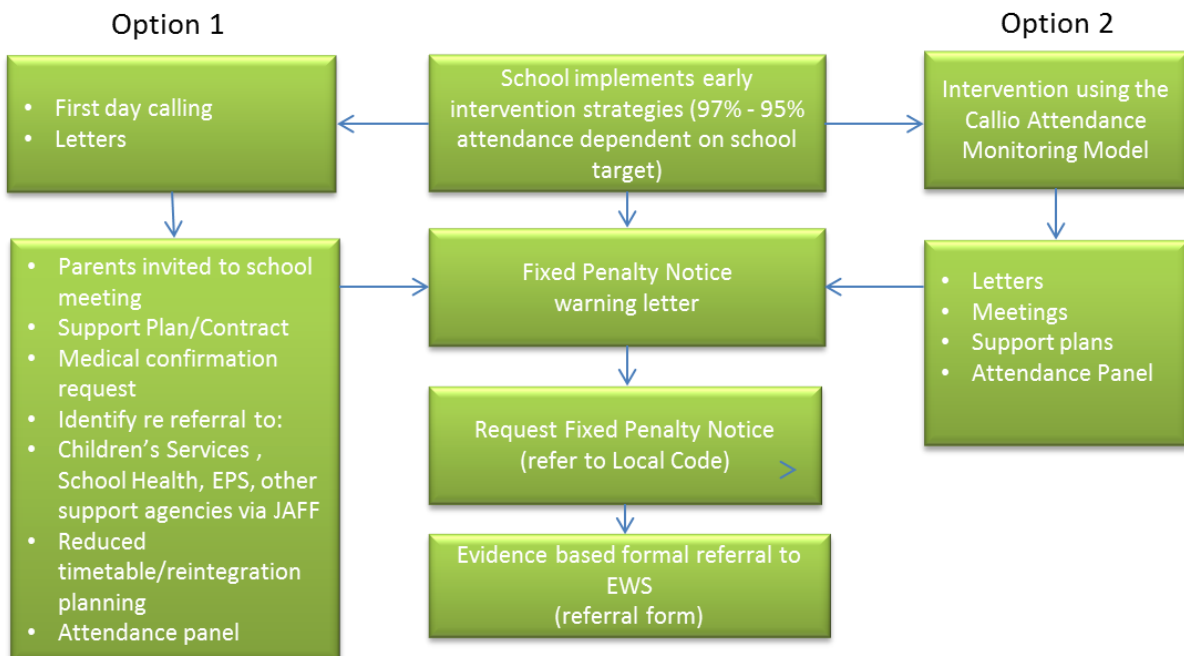
Referrals should be made using the appropriate Education Welfare Service Referral Form (Appendix 3) when:-

- Early intervention strategies have failed;
- A pattern of irregular attendance has developed;
- Absences are persistent (CCBC's threshold is below 85% attendance);
- A pattern of post-registration truancy is persisting, despite efforts to prevent it;
- A pattern of persistent lateness (after the close of the school register) has developed;
- Parents or carers withdraws a pupil from school having expressed an intention to electively home educate (EHE) but have not formally deregistered the pupil by advising the LA or school of their intentions;
- Parents or carers who have moved out of the area and a request for the pupil's records have not been received from a school in the new area. (Refer also to the Welsh Government's guidance, to help prevent children from missing education).

4.1 Responding to non-attendance – vulnerable groups

Particular attention should be paid to children who fall into the vulnerable group category, where there is potential for trafficking, sexual exploitation and forced marriage.

First day calling procedures should prioritise children or young people subject to child protection plans, or who are looked after (LAC).

Pupils who fail to attend school and are deemed missing, or fail to return to school within 10 days of the end of an authorised extended leave of absence, particularly if they have been on a holiday to the family's country of origin, should always be referred to the Education Welfare Service using the appropriate form (Appendix 3).

N.B: If there are specific and identifiable welfare issues, preventing any pupil from accessing education, or specific child protection concerns, these should be referred directly to the school's Child Protection designate and a referral made to Children Services on the relevant Multi agency referral form (MARF). The form and referrer's assessment record that should accompany the referral can be found on The Regional Safeguarding Children Board web site, via the below link.
http://www.sewsc.org.uk/
http://www.sewsc.org.uk/professionals/reporting-concerns/

The Framework for safeguarding, guidance on roles and responsibilities and responding to safeguarding concerns, can be found in the Welsh Government's guidance document, *keeping learners safe*.

http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/publications/150114-keeping-learners-safe.pdf

5.0 Privacy Notices

Information received by the EWS, together with any additional information received from schools, pupils, parents/cares or other organisations, will be recorded and processed by the LA in accordance with the legal obligations placed on CCBC and our duties under the Education Act 1996, Education and Inspections Act 2006 and The Children Act 1989.

Further information on how the information will be processed and used is available in the form of a full privacy notice and can be found at www.caerphilly.gov.uk

Appendix 1 – Self-Evaluation

Self Evaluation
Attendance

School:		Date:		
Challenge Advisor:				
Attendance	**2014/15**	**2015/16**		**2016/17**
Attendance				
Quartile:				
% of FSM:				
Benchmark group:				
	2016/17	**2017/18**		**2018/19**
Targets:				
If Estyn were to visit the school today, what judgement would they give on your attendance?	**Excellent** Very strong, sustained performance and practice	**Good** Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement	**Adequate: needs improvement** Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement	**Unsatisfactory: Needs urgent improvement** Important weaknesses outweigh strengths

Policy		What further Action is required	By whom & when	Progress
Is the Attendance Policy updated to reflect any changes in legislation include attendance targets and ratified?	Y/N			
Is the Attendance Policy applied consistently at a cluster level?	Y/N			
Is attendance reflected in other policies eg, Safeguarding Policy?	Y/N			
Are all policies available to Governors, parents and carers?	Y/N			

Strategic Planning, Managing and Improving Attendance		Summary and Impact	What further action is required, by whom & when	Progress
How does data inform strategic actions for school improvement planning?				
What strategies/ initiatives are currently being used for improving attendance and punctuality and are these embedded throughout the school?	Y/N			
What processes are in place for monitoring attendance and punctuality of all learners?				
Is there a balance of support and challenge in terms of attendance and punctuality?	Y/N			
The importance of attendance should be embedded within the culture of the school. Are all pupils mentored following an absence by all members of school, including subject tutors?	Y/N			
Are all pupils aware of: • Their own attendance and or target? • School target for attendance?	Y/N			

Strategic Planning, Managing and Improving Attendance		Summary and Impact	What further action is required, by whom & when	Progress
Is attendance part of induction for NQTs or new staff to the school?	Y/N			
What is the school's current policy when a pupil's attendance becomes a cause for concern?				
What processes are in place to follow up and track pupils to prevent absences becoming persistent? (below 85% attendance)				
Do you have agreed criteria for implementing early intervention strategies? E.g. • Formal discussion with pupils; • Parents; • Attendance/parenting contract; • Individual learning Plan	Y/N			
Are there regular meetings between the Attendance Lead for the school and the Education Welfare Service (EWS)?	Y/N			
Are you keeping a chronology of events that inform formal	Y/N			

Strategic Planning, Managing and Improving Attendance		Summary and Impact	What further action is required, by whom & when	Progress
referrals to the EWS?				
Does the attendance policy give clear guidance on authorisation of holidays during term time? • What is the benchmark for authorisation? • How has this been relayed to parents? • What were the numbers of days lost last year?	Y/N			
Does the attendance policy make specific reference to Children Missing Education (CME)	Y/N			
Has the school introduced attendance panels? (these also form part of the 'Callio' attendance monitoring model)	Y/N			
What are the school's re-integration strategies for persistent or long term absentees?				
Do you reward good and improved attendance?	Y/N			

Strategic Planning, Managing and Improving Attendance	Summary and Impact	What further action is required, by whom & when	Progress
Describe your transition arrangements between all Key stages? • What information is shared? • What strategies are in place for identified poor attendees? • Other issues?			

SIMS and Registration Practices		What further Action is required	By whom & when	Progress
Does all staff apply attendance codes consistently and accurately?	Y/N			
Are reasons for absences accurately recorded in the SIMS comments reporting facility?	Y/N			
Do your current procedures ensure that supply staff implements your school's policy for managing attendance?	Y/N			
Does an identified member of SMT have responsibility for challenging parents and carers for late arrivals?	Y/N			
Does an identified member of SMT have responsibility for attendance to avoid absences becoming persistent?	Y/N			
Does school promote to parents the importance of attendance as part of the induction into nursery?	Y/N			

Monitoring and Evaluating		Summary and Impact	What further action is required, by whom & when	Progress
Who in the school is taking the lead for evaluating attendance?	Y/N			
Is attendance data for vulnerable groups analysed and reported discretely?	Y/N			
What specific evaluation is undertaken to identify key reasons for absences?				
Which days of the week, half term or term have the lowest attendance? What are the factors that influence these?				
(Secondary schools only) What sanctions are in place for post registration truancy? School should consider a specific keep-safe plan for identified individuals.				
Are attendance and the impact on attainment specifically analysed and monitored?	Y/N			
Do you have intervention support for poor attendees in terms of literacy and numeracy?	Y/N			

Communication		Summary & Impact	What further action is required, by whom & when	Progress
Listening to Learners: Have you undertaken a survey around the views of pupils on attendance? What action has been taken based on the outcome of this and what has been the impact?	Y/N			
Have you consulted the school council on improving attendance initiatives and how are they effectively communicated to their peers/classes?	Y/N			
Parents & Carers: Have you undertaken a survey around the views of parents and carers on attendance? What action has been taken based on the outcome of this and what has been the impact?	Y/N			
How is the importance of attendance being promoted?				
How is good practice shared with other schools?				

Can school identify the impact training has been on: • Clerk; • Class teachers; • Governing body	Y/N			
What other information would school find useful?				

Appendix 2 – Truancy Keep Safe Plan

Pupil Name: **Date of Birth**:

Overview:

<NAME> regularly truants from lessons at <SCHOOL> School. Parents have been made aware of the situation and have helped support <SCHOOL> in changing <NAME>'s behaviour. <NAME>'s regular truanting has now become a safeguarding issue and is at a level of significant concern. During the time he /she is not in lessons, he/she may be at risk of significant harm to himself or others.

<NAME>'s frequent truanting has been categorised as a 'significant safeguard concern' due to the following reasons:

Significant risk factors	Please tick as appropriate
Anti Social Behaviour within the school grounds	
Anti Social Behaviour within the local community	
Possible Substance Misuse	
Known Substance Misuse (High/Med/Low)	
Self Harm risk	
Associated with inappropriate peers	
Youth Offending Behaviour	
Vulnerable to inappropriate attention	

<SCHOOL> **School Protocol:** <SCHOOL> school has a standard protocol for staff to report a missing pupil to our Main office if they are absent for a lesson. If a pupil deemed to be of a 'significant safeguard concern' is reported as absent from a lesson the school will immediately attempt to notify the parents to make them aware that their child is missing. This may lead to a further phone call to confirm a late arrival but we will still notify the parent in the first instance due to a potential concern of risk to the pupil.

Where possible and with consent, the child's personal mobile will be shared with the Head of Year/Learning, so pupils can be contacted directly to ascertain they are safe and encourage them to return to school. (Name of Pupil)'s mobile number is:

If the pupil continues to truant and increase the safeguard concern further consideration of a referral to Children's Services and/or the Police will be made.

It is very important that we are able to make contact with a parent if their child is of a significant safeguard concern. Please ensure school is advised on any changes to contact details including mobile or land line telephone numbers.

All parties sign below to confirm they are aware of the information above.

Pupil Signature: Head of Learning Signature:

Parent Signature: Safeguarding Officer:

Date:

Appendix 3 – Education Welfare Service Referral Form

Caerphilly County Borough Council
Education Welfare Service
educationwelfare@caerphilly.gov.uk

Referral Date:

Name of Pupil :		School :	
Date of Birth :	Gender :	Reg :	Year :
UPN :	Medical Conditions :		
Address :			
Parent/carer / Guardian / Carer:			
Contact tel. No.			

Doctor/Surgery Details	Tel.No.

Special Needs Category :	Free School Meals :

Child Protection Register:	LAC:

Siblings in school:

Reason for Referral	Attendance	Welfare

Other Agencies involved		
Name of Agency	Contact Name	Telephone number

School based intervention:

Please state details of all intervention prior to referral and or, attach a chronology of events along with an up to date attendance certificate (and comments report if used).

The EWS will aim to respond within 5 days of receiving a referral and provide feedback within 10 days.

N.B: If there are specific and identifiable welfare or safeguarding issues that may be preventing any pupil from accessing education, these should be referred directly to the school's designate for safeguarding and a referral made to Children Services on the relevant Multi agency referral form (MARF).

Referrer/School contact	
Signature	
Designation	
Date	

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Model Attendance Policy for Schools

Author	Linda Perkins
Consultees	SMT
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1.0 Mission Statement

(Name of school) is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.

We will provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcomed and are committed to the fundamental principle that early intervention and partnership working is crucial in ensuring the attendance, protection and well-being of all children and young people.

The school will follow the All Wales Child Protection procedures and local protocols in relation to specific and identifiable welfare issues that prevent a child or young pupil from accessing education, or where there are safeguarding concerns.

For a pupil to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all pupils. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers, the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

School attendance is subject to education law and guidance and this school attendance policy is written to reflect this legislation and the guidance produced by the Welsh Government (WG).

The legislation makes provision for a school day which is to be divided into two sessions with a lunch break in the middle and to be available for at least 190 days in any school year.

The school will review its strategies for improving attendance on an annual basis to ensure that it is achieving its set goals and targets as identified by the Governors, Local Authority (LA) and the Education Achievement Service (EAS).

This policy will contain the procedures that the school will use to work towards meeting its attendance targets.

2.0 Promoting attendance

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents or carers and pupils.

We will ensure that our pupils and their parents or carers, are made aware of the importance of good attendance and how this will benefit them; we will use a variety of strategies to intervene at an early stage to encourage improved attendance of individual learners. Examples may include the 'Callio' attendance monitoring model, Individual pupil support plans /contracts and the Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) Scheme.

School information will contain details of the specific strategies we will use and how we will work with parents and carers and our expectations of what they will need to do to ensure all our pupils' achieve good attendance.

3.0 Leave of absence/holidays in term time

Leave of absence during term time will be discouraged. Parents and carers do not have the automatic right to withdraw their children from school for an annual holiday and will be reminded of the effect that absence can have on a pupil's potential achievement.

Parents and carers must apply in advance for permission for their child to have leave of absence (Appendix 1). The school will consider any application for leave of absence, taking into account factors such as the length and purpose of the leave requirement, time of year of the proposed trip, impact on continuity of learning, circumstances of the family and the pupil's attendance history. School may also ask to meet with parents/carers to discuss their request before a decision is made.

When parents and carers fail to abide by the decision of the school, either by taking holidays that have not been agreed, keep the child away from school or alternative provision arranged by school or the LA, in excess of the period agreed, or fail to apply for permission, the absence should be treated as unauthorised.

4.0 Extended overseas trips

The Head Teacher may only agree to an extended leave of absence for more than 10 days in exceptional circumstances. Examples of these include:

- Parent working abroad for a fixed, medium term period;
- Family are returning to country of origin;
- Parent returning from active tour of duty.

When making judgements about extended absence for pupils from minority ethnic families, school will ensure that a full account has been taken, not only of the Statutory Regulations and WG guidance, but also of the situation of minority ethnic families in general and the particular circumstances relating to each individual case. It is important that we can demonstrate an understanding of the parents' perspective, even though we may not be able to comply with a request for absence.

5.0 School procedures

Any pupil who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period will have their absence recorded as being authorised; unauthorised, or as an approved educational activity (an arranged LA provision or school organised provision or events). Only the Head Teacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise an absence.

If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence will be recorded in the first instance as unexplained (code N) and promptly followed up by the school, as part of its early intervention and safeguarding strategies.

The coding for any absences will be in accordance with the guidance provided by the WG, as in the table below.

6.0 The registration system

The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Un-timetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

7.0 Lateness

Morning registration will take place at the start of school at ……am. The school will set the time the registers will remain open, taking into consideration WG guidance. Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence (code U), unless there is an acceptable explanation; some examples of these could be: transport arranged by the LA or school was delayed or an arrangement as part of a support package to young carers or re-integration/part time timetable planning.

In cases for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an **early** morning medical appointment, we can mark the pupil as arriving late (L), provided that written evidence of the appointment time is provided and the time arriving at school is recorded. For medical absences outside of this timeframe, the appropriate medical absence (code M) must be entered.

Pupils arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be coded as late (L).

Afternoon registration will be at……..pm and any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as absent, unless there is an acceptable explanation; Pupils arriving after the start of afternoon registration period will be coded as late.

Parents and carers are reminded that The LA may issue a FPN for persistent lateness after the close of the register, in accordance with the Local Code of Conduct, if in excess of 10 sessions. More information on the FPN scheme can be found at www.caerphilly.gov.uk

8.0 First day absence

Parents and carers are reminded that it is their responsibility to advise school on any day their child is unable to attend. However, for safeguarding purposes, we will endeavour to ascertain the specific reason for non- attendance as soon as possible on the first day of absence, after both morning and afternoon registration. This may include a telephone call or texting service. Once the specific information is received, the register will be amended to reflect the appropriate absence code as in Figure 1 above.

Priority will be given to children who are deemed to be particularly vulnerable, eg. those known to child protection/safeguarding services or are looked after (LAC). The locality children services team will be notified of unexplained absences of more than two days of a pupil on the child protection register, or one day following the week-end.

9.0 Third day absence

On the third day of absence and if school has not received an adequate explanation, a letter will be sent to the parent or carer requesting this information. The absences will remain unauthorised, until an adequate explanation is received. We will make use of all numbers held as additional contact details for each pupil. In exceptional circumstances, school may refer to the Education Welfare Service (EWS). However, should there be any concerns around well-being or safeguarding, a referral will be made to Children's Services.

10.0 Absence notes

Notes received from parents explaining absence will be kept for an academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil, that may require further investigation, then the notes will be retained in line with education retention schedule; only the Head Teacher or their representative can authorise an absence and that further information such as a letter from a GP or Consultant may be required to support reasons given for absence.

11.0 Continuing and frequent absence

Within the school it is the responsibility of the class teacher/registration tutor or attendance officer to be aware of and bring attention to the Head Teacher (or person to whom they have delegated responsibility for attendance), any emerging attendance concerns.

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, school will attempt to resolve the problem as soon as possible to avoid a referral being made to the Education Welfare Service (EWS).

The school acknowledge that for some pupils, a range of personal and / or complex circumstances can impact negatively on attendance. We will therefore aim to work with the pupil, family and partner agencies to help address any issues identified.

For unauthorised absences of 10 sessions or more in a rolling 12 week period (there are two sessions in a day, morning and afternoon) and following the issue of a warning letter and a period of monitoring, the school can request that the LA issue a FPN in accordance with the Local Code of Conduct.

12.0 Persistent absence

Welsh Government defines persistent absence as pupils whose absence level is more than 20% (80% attendance). Pupils with emerging attendance issues will be subject to an action plan to support their return to full attendance.

The action plan may be as part of the 'Callio' attendance monitoring model and will include engagement with relevant agencies that can support the pupil's attendance and could include the schools Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

13.0 Absence related to discrimination

A pupil's absence from school may be due to bullying, which can take many forms and can be direct (either physical or verbal) or indirect, for example, ignoring a pupil or not talking to them. Some of this bullying may be discriminatory.

It is against the law for a school, governing body or the LA not to take action where this type of bullying takes place between pupils and as a school, we are required to monitor and report on discriminatory incidents each term. Should the reason for a pupil's absence be related to any of the above issues, we must take action to deal with the situation.

14.0 Return from an absence

The school will ensure that appropriate action is taken for all pupils on return from an absence. This will include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other pupils.

15.0 Attendance awards

The school will use various awards system to reward pupils who have good or improving attendance.

Any reward system must be meaningful to the children. The timing of rewards needs to be taken into account to ensure that the children can make the link between their attendance and any rewards.

16.0 Categorisation of absences

All pupils who are on role but not present in the school must be recorded within one of these categories.

- Authorised Absence
- Unauthorised Absence
- Approved Educational Activity

16.1 Unauthorised absence

This is for those pupils where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason.

16.2 Authorised absence

This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid; only the Head Teacher can authorise an absence. Apart from leave of absence for a holiday, these absences will include for example, sessions off where the Head Teacher has agreed with the LA, to issue a licence for the child or young person to take part in a specific entertainment performance or filming.

16.3 Approved educational activity

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off the school site but with the approval of the school and or the LA.

This would include:

- Work experience placements
- Field trips and educational visits
- Sporting activities
- Link courses or approved education at another venue
- Education arranged by the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS).

17.0 Education Other Than At School (EOTAS)

The provision where the pupil is expected to attend is responsible for accurately recording the pupil's attendance and chasing up non-attendance.

Arrangements are in place to identify pupils who are absent from providers of EOTAS, in order that the school where the pupil is registered can reflect any absences and apply the appropriate code.

18.0 Retention of records

Attendance regulations stipulate that attendance records should be retained for at least three years; however it is good practice to extend this period in line with the education record retention schedule.

19.0 Inspection of registers

The LA will formally inspect registers on a regular basis, to ensure there is compliance with legislation. It should be noted that registers are legal documents and it is an offence not to maintain accurate records.

20.0 Attendance targets

Each year the Head Teacher and governing body, will set absence targets and submit to the Local Authority by no later than 31st December in every school year.

The school and Governing body will make use of the attendance data available from the LA and EAS when setting its targets.

Our school targets are:

2017/2018:
2018/2019:
2019/2020:

21.0 Action Plan

The school will use the information as identified through the self evaluation toolkit (Appendix 2), in order to complete an action plan that will highlight what strategies we will use, to achieve our attendance targets.

22.0 Legislation and Guidance

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable:
(a)   To his age, ability and aptitude and
(b)   To any special needs he may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term 'parent' means natural parents and includes any person who has parental responsibility or has day to day care of the child.

Section 444 1, 1(a) and (ZA) contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school or alternative provision arranged by the Local Authority.

The Education (Penalty Notices) (Wales) Regulations 2013 set out the framework for the operation of the Fixed Penalty Notice scheme.

The Equalities Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011.

22.1. Registers and admission arrangements

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010;
- The Education (School Day and School Year) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2006.

22.2. Attendance targets

- The Education (School Performance and Unauthorised Absence Targets) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2006.

23.0 Guidance documents relating to attendance

- All Wales Child Protection Procedures;
- All Wales Missing Child;
- Caerphilly Local Authority, Policy and Guidance on Attendance;
- Keeping Learners safe;
- The All Wales Attendance Framework;
- Local Code of Conduct relating to the Fixed Penalty Notice scheme;
- Statutory Guidance to help prevent children and young people from missing education (CME);
- Welsh Government guidance document 203/2016 Inclusion and Pupil Support;
- Welsh Government guidance document 215/2017: Supporting learners with healthcare needs;
- Welsh Government Guidance on penalty notices for regular non-attendance at school;
- Welsh Government Guidance on attendance codes (2010).

Further guidance on school attendance and support to learners, can be found by visiting: http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/?lang=en

Appendix 1 – Leave of Absence Request Form

Dear Parent / Carer

Leave of absence during term time will be discouraged. Parents and carers do not have the automatic right to withdraw their children from school for an annual holiday and will be reminded of the effect that absence can have on a pupil's potential achievement.

The school will consider any application for leave of absence, taking into account factors such as the time of year and overall attendance pattern of the pupil.

Parents and carers are advised that A Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) may be issued by the Local Authority when there are more than 5 days unauthorised absences in a term. For more detailed information please refer to The Local Authority's Local Code of Conduct.

Attendance at the end of the year	Days missed from school
100%	0
99.5%	1
97.4%	5
95%	10
90%	19
87%	24
85%	28
80%	38
75%	47
70%	57
60%	76
50%	95
40%	114

✂--

HOLIDAY ABSENCE REQUEST

Name of pupil: Class:

First day of absence [ ][ ][ ]   Last day of absence [ ][ ][ ]

Reason for leave of absence during term time:

_____

_____

Contact telephone number: _____

Signed: _____ Date:___ _____

   (Parent / Carer)

For School Use Only	Absence authorised YES ❏ NO ❏
Current attendance (%):	
Previous year's attendance (%):	*Signed:* _____
Reason if NOT authorised:	_____

Appendix 2 – Self Evaluation Toolkit

Self Evaluation
Attendance

School:		Date:		
Challenge Advisor:				
Attendance	**2014/15**	**2015/16**		**2016/17**
Attendance				
Quartile:				
% of FSM:				
Benchmark group:				
	2016/17	**2017/18**		**2018/19**
Targets:				
If Estyn were to visit the school today, what judgement would they give on your attendance?	**Excellent** Very strong, sustained performance and practice	**Good** Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement	**Adequate: needs improvement** Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement	**Unsatisfactory: Needs urgent improvement** Important weaknesses outweigh strengths

Policy		What further Action is required	By whom & when	Progress
Is the Attendance Policy updated to reflect any changes in legislation include attendance targets and ratified?	Y/N			
Is the Attendance Policy applied consistently at a cluster level?	Y/N			
Is attendance reflected in other policies e.g. Safeguarding Policy?	Y/N			
Are all policies available to Governors, parents and carers?	Y/N			

Strategic Planning, Managing and Improving Attendance		Summary and Impact	What further action is required, by whom & when	Progress
How does data inform strategic actions for school improvement planning?				
What strategies/ initiatives are currently being used for improving attendance and punctuality and are these embedded throughout the school?	Y/N			
What processes are in place for monitoring attendance and punctuality of all learners?				
Is there a balance of support and challenge in terms of attendance and punctuality?	Y/N			
The importance of attendance should be embedded within the culture of the school. Are all pupils mentored following an absence by all members of school, including subject tutors?	Y/N			
Are all pupils aware of: • Their own attendance and or target? • School target for attendance?	Y/N			

Strategic Planning, Managing and Improving Attendance		Summary and Impact	What further action is required, by whom & when	Progress
Is attendance part of induction for NQTs or new staff to the school?	Y/N			
What is the school's current policy when a pupil's attendance becomes a cause for concern?				
What processes are in place to follow up and track pupils to prevent absences becoming persistent? (below 85% attendance)				
Do you have agreed criteria for implementing early intervention strategies? E.g. • Formal discussion with pupils; • Parents; • Attendance/parenting contract; • Individual learning Plan	Y/N			
Are there regular meetings between the Attendance Lead for the school and the Education Welfare Service (EWS)?	Y/N			
Are you keeping a chronology of events that inform formal referrals to the EWS?	Y/N			

Strategic Planning, Managing and Improving Attendance		Summary and Impact	What further action is required, by whom & when	Progress
Does the attendance policy give clear guidance on authorisation of holidays during term time? • What is the benchmark for authorisation? • How has this been relayed to parents? • What were the numbers of days lost last year?	Y/N			
Does the attendance policy make specific reference to Children Missing Education (CME)	Y/N			
Has the school introduced attendance panels? (these also form part of the 'Callio' attendance monitoring model)	Y/N			
What are the school's re-integration strategies for persistent or long term absentees?				
Do you reward good and improved attendance?	Y/N			

Strategic Planning, Managing and Improving Attendance	Summary and Impact	What further action is required, by whom & when	Progress
Describe your transition arrangements between all Key stages? • What information is shared? • What strategies are in place for identified poor attendees? • Other issues?			

SIMS and Registration Practices		What further Action is required	By whom & when	Progress
Does all staff apply attendance codes consistently and accurately?	Y/N			
Are reasons for absences accurately recorded in the SIMS comments reporting facility?	Y/N			
Do your current procedures ensure that supply staff implements your school's policy for managing attendance?	Y/N			
Does an identified member of SMT have responsibility for challenging parents and carers for late arrivals?	Y/N			

Does an identified member of SMT have responsibility for attendance to avoid absences becoming persistent?	Y/N		
Does school promote to parents the importance of attendance as part of the induction into nursery?	Y/N		

Monitoring and Evaluating	Summary and Impact	What further action is required, by whom & when	Progress
Who in the school is taking the lead for evaluating attendance?	Y/N		
Is attendance data for vulnerable groups analysed and reported discretely?	Y/N		
What specific evaluation is undertaken to identify key reasons for absences?			
Which days of the week, half term or term have the lowest attendance? What are the factors that influence these?			
(Secondary schools only) What sanctions are in place for post registration truancy? School should consider a specific keep-safe plan for			

		Summary & Impact	What further action is required, by whom & when	Progress
identified individuals.				
Are attendance and the impact on attainment specifically analysed and monitored?	Y/N			
Do you have intervention support for poor attendees in terms of literacy and numeracy?	Y/N			
Communication		**Summary & Impact**	**What further action is required, by whom & when**	**Progress**
Listening to Learners: Have you undertaken a survey around the views of pupils on attendance? What action has been taken based on the outcome of this and what has been the impact?	Y/N			
Have you consulted the school council on improving attendance initiatives and how are they effectively communicated to their peers/classes?	Y/N			
Parents & Carers: Have you undertaken a survey around the views of parents and carers on attendance? What action has been taken based on the outcome of this and what has been the impact?	Y/N			

How is the importance of attendance being promoted?			
How is good practice shared with other schools?			
Can school identify the impact training has been on: • Clerk; • Class teachers; • Governing body	Y/N		
What other information would school find useful?			