

School Attendance Policy



For and on behalf of the

Board of Governors:

Cllr. Stephen Price

Headteacher:

Mr. Ashley Bennett

Date:

Tuesday 8th April 2025

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Price'.

1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence.
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Acting early to address patterns of absence.
- The school will give a high priority to conveying to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance.
- If there are problems that affect a pupil's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents and pupils to resolve those problems as quickly and effectively as possible. We will adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the pupils to full attendance at all times.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the All Wales Attendance Framework. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Inclusion and Pupil Support Guidance 27/2006
- Revised behaviour and attendance action plan (2011)
- Welsh Government - All Wales Attendance Analysis Framework (2012)
- National Assembly for Wales' Children and Young People Committee's Inquiry into Behaviour and Attendance in Schools (2013) and Welsh Governments response
- Welsh Governments Guidance on penalty notices for regular non-attendance at school 2013
- National review of behaviour and attendance (NBAR) (2008) and resulting NBAR Action plan
- Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010
- Education Act 1996
- Keeping Learners Safe Guidance 2021

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Whole School

A Whole School Attendance Policy is one that requires commitment from all staff employed within the School, together with governors, parents, pupils and the officers of the Local Authority.

A Whole School Approach to attendance relates to a wide range of other school issues including punctuality, behaviour, mental health, emotionally based school refusal, additional learning needs behaviour management, anti-bullying schemes, equal opportunities, rewards and incentives, re-integration of absentees, curricular differentiation, school-home relationships and the role of the Education Social Work Service and Social Inclusion Service (see section 9).

Our school wants to encourage and promote good attendance in as many ways and for as many of our learners as possible, taking into account the balance of appropriate measures to address the needs of those children who find it difficult to attend in certain circumstances e.g. medical issues, young carers, gypsy/traveller families, emotional based school avoidance (EBSA). With this in mind early intervention with learners who experience poor school attendance is vital. We will be vigilant to early indicators and employ a thorough assessment that includes a plan of do and review cycle, placing the child at the heart of the intervention.

Our school has a framework on which to build our individual Whole School Attendance Policy which is highlighted within this policy.

3.2 The Local Authority

Will provide a collaboration of support, guidance, and consultancy to all schools, focusing resources on those schools with the most identifiable needs.

Develop a range of performance indicators and subsequent setting of realistic yet challenging targets using the Core Data Set.

Provision at school level to support individual pupils who experience difficulties in attending school regularly, assessing and working with parents/carers and other agencies to achieve improvement and commitment to the pupils' education (where there is an SLA in place).

Provision of assessing and providing/recommending equitable support to parents, balancing assistance with insistence to ensure that all parents meet their legal responsibilities in relation to school attendance.

Development of effective multi-agency working practices at school level in order to facilitate early intervention and sustained and improving levels of attainment of pupils.

Developing the policy and practice for promoting school attendance, Conwy Education Services will recognise the national context and central government priorities and balance this with the need to respond to the local context and particular priorities in Conwy.

Has the responsibility of enabling pupils and parents/carers who experience difficulty in maintaining regular or punctual attendance at school, and to enforce attendance where appropriate through legal proceedings. In Conwy, these tasks are undertaken by the Educational Social Work Service, although other services will regularly offer significant input in the process.

The Local Authority lead officer with responsibility for the development of school attendance policy and practice is the Education Social Work Service Manager, with input as necessary from the Senior Leadership Team.

3.3 The Governing Body

The Governing Body is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Head-teacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

3.4 The Head-teacher

The Head-teacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school.
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to Governors.
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils.
- Authorises the issuing of FPN warning letters and FPN's by the Local Authority.
- Agrees to any applications made by LA in respect of Education Supervision Orders.
- Ensures accurate signed attendance certificates and data for any parental prosecutions.

- Obligated under the Education Pupil registration (Wales) Regulation 2010 to notify the LA of pupil absence.
- Ensures there are established processes and procedures in place to improve attendance and enough time is allocated to allow staff to deal with the complexities of non-school attendance related matters.

3.5 Secretary / Family Liaison Officer

Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level.

- Reports concerns about attendance to the head-teacher.
- Works with the ESW to tackle persistent absence.
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues.
- Advises the head-teacher when the threshold for a fixed penalty notice warning letter has been reached and monitors pupil attendance following the issuing of the fixed penalty warning letter.

3.6 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

3.7 School Secretary

The school secretary is expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

3.8 Parents/Carers

- Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring that their child attends the School regularly, punctually, properly dressed and equipped and in a fit condition to learn.
- Parents/carers are responsible for informing the school by letter, telephone, or a personal visit of the reason for any absence on the first morning of that absence.
- Parents/Carers can expect the school to keep them fully informed of their child's progress.
- Parents/Carers to be aware of letters from school which the child brings home.
- Parents/Carers to attend Parents evening and other events.
- Parents/Carers to ensure that their child has a good school routine.
- Parents/Carers to ensure that their child completes his/her homework if given.
- Parents/carers to avoid booking holidays during term time, unless it is regarded by the head-teacher as exceptional circumstances.
- Contact the school promptly if they have any concerns that their child is reluctant to attend school, and work with the school to address any issues at an early stage

3.9 Learners

- Learners will ensure that they attend school regularly and on time.
- Learners will attend all lessons punctually.
- Learners will be listened to and respected.
- Learners will have individual records of attendance/punctuality acknowledged by the school.
- Learners will be treated as individuals and their voice heard when addressing issues of non-school attendance and a plan of action to support them implemented.

Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for copy of the Welsh Government attendance codes.

Learners must arrive in school by 8:55am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9:00am and will be kept open until 9:10am. Any arrivals to school between 9:10am and 9:30am will be classed as 'late'. Any learner arriving after 9:30am times will be recorded as unauthorised.

The register for the second session will be taken at 1:00pm and will be kept open until 1:10pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The learner's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9:30am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

Parents/Carers can inform the school of any unplanned absence by telephoning the school office or sending an email to the school office email address.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

Where absence is authorised, the school will remain vigilant to emerging patterns of non-attendance and seek to address reasons as a priority

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Parents/Carers can inform the school of any planned absence by telephoning the school office or sending an email to the school office email address.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code (L).
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code (U).

A learner's punctuality for school is a legal requirement (Inclusion & Pupil Support Welsh Government Circular 47/2006) and the parents/carers of a pupil who is persistently late after registration closes are guilty of an offence under the Education Act 1996 and could be prosecuted in the Magistrates Court, or issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice for the unauthorised absences.

A careful balance needs to be struck between being too punitive and too accepting of a pupil's lateness. Once the reasons for lateness have been established, the school, parents and pupils need to work in partnership to resolve difficulties. Where the home situation makes it difficult for the pupil to arrive on time, the school may need to refer the case to the Education Social Work Service or Social Services for further investigation.

4.5 Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, again through phonecalls and dojo messages.
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

4.6 Reporting to parents

A summary of pupil attendance is shared with parents in an interim report (termly), with a full attendance certificate included in the end of term reports in the summer term.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The head-teacher will only grant a leave of absence to learners during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

'Exceptional circumstances' can be situations such as parent working abroad for a fixed, medium-term period; Family are returning to country of origin; Parent returning from active tour of duty.

A leave of absence is granted at the head-teacher's discretion.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance - where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes - this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

5.2 Holidays in term time

See *appendix 2* for policy in relation to holidays in term-time, extended overseas visits and policy for Children Looked After.

5.3 Reducing persistent absence

Welsh Government defines persistent absence as pupils whose absence level is more than 10% (less than 90% attendance). These pupils will be subject to an action plan (*appendix 4*) to support their return to full attendance. This plan may include a referral to the Education Welfare Service for additional support for the pupil and their family.

If the pupil and family do not engage with the action plan, court action may be taken against the main parent(s) or carer(s) via the Education Welfare Service.

5.4 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a head-teacher, local authority officer or the police, in Conwy these are issued by Education Services.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

Under Section 136 of the Education Act, 1996, (Ref.3), parents of children of compulsory school age are required to ensure that their children receive suitable full-time education, whether by regular school attendance or otherwise. In most cases, children become registered pupils at a school. Parents/carers therefore hold the prime responsibility for ensuring that their children attend school regularly and punctually, and that they are ready and able to learn both physically and emotionally. It is also parents' responsibility to inform schools of a child's absence as soon as possible and to provide further information as required as previously cited. For the purposes of education legislation the definition of parent/carer is set out in Section 576 of the Education Act 1996. 'Parent means all natural parents/carers, whether they are married or not; it includes any person who although not a parent, has parental responsibility (as defined in the Children Act 1989) for a child or young person, and any person who although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person. Having care of a child or young person means that a person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child, is considered to be a parent in education law.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

The school promotes good attendance and punctuality through strategies such as:

- All members of staff encouraging good attendance and punctuality with all children.
- Rewards for good attendance and punctuality.
- Nurturing activities to encourage good attendance i.e. nurture breakfast; milkshakes; looking after the school rabbits; school dog at the gate etc

(see appendix 3 for more examples)

- Regular communication with parents where their child's attendance is becoming a concern
- Family learning opportunities - to allow parents in to school to engage in fun activities with their child.
- Use an attendance support plan (*appendix 4*) for any reintegration plan.

7. Attendance monitoring

The school secretary and Headteacher at our school monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

The local authority will formally check the school registers on a termly basis to ensure there is compliance with the national legislation. It should be noted that registers are legal documents, and it is an offence not to maintain accurate records.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the WG's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the Governing Body.

Computer registers are preserved as electronic back-up copies. 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.

8. Policy Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or Welsh Government is updated, and as a minimum every three years. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

Our school hold a great deal of information about attendance which will be used for strategic planning and effective liaison with the ESW Service to manage attendance issues more effectively. We use weekly sampling of data for specific sessions which are helpful in highlighting regular patterns of non-attendance and may reveal for example, an association with certain subjects, teachers or teaching groups. Such analysis can draw attention to the deterioration or improvement in the attendance of individual learners and helps us to target intervention more selectively and help establish the causes of absence before they become entrenched.

The school will also undertake an annual audit of its attendance data, a key feature of which enables us to record key actions and areas for improvement. The audit forms part of the work of the LA to address areas identified within the School Improvement Plan and the support it will receive in this process.

The audit tool addresses; (*see appendix 5*)

- Analysing attendance data
- Examining existing procedures
- Inspecting attendance-related documentation
- Assessing communication with parents
- Considering strategies used to promote attendance
- Evaluating the response to Local Authority enquiries
- Identify training needs in the school

9. Links with other policies, procedures and protocols

This policy links to the following documents:

- School Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- School Behaviour Policy
- School Anti Bullying Policy
- School Attendance Procedure
- School Attendance Policy: Coronavirus Addendum
- LA Attendance Protocol
- EBSA protocol
- Additional Learning Needs
- Equal opportunities
- Elective Home Educating
- Looked After Children
- Children Missing Education

9.1 - CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION

All agencies have a clear role to play in helping to trace children who go missing from schools in Conwy or who go missing from schools from other authorities, and who may have moved into Conwy

Parents/carers can support the smooth transition of their children's education provision between Conwy and other Local Authorities, where a move is required for any reason, by notifying the child's registered school.

Schools are expected to follow corresponding procedures in relation to those learners who are removed from school by their parents without a named-school destination being provided and confirmed and following the CME (children missing education) procedures.

9.2 - SAFEGUARDING

We take safeguarding as paramount in our school. Please see separate safeguarding policy. There is a clear link with safeguarding and attendance which requires us to know where our learners are at any time during the school day. This therefore requires accurate recording of attendance registers, communication from parents and outside providers to clarify where any non-attenders may be. We will follow robust safeguarding processes in ensuring this takes place and responding to any advice, support, guidance and recording mechanisms as necessary.

9.3 - ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION

Parents or carers have the primary responsibility for ensuring that their child receives a suitable education and some choose to discharge this duty by electing to home educate.

Schools must ensure that they receive the request to home educate in writing from the parents or a person with parental responsibility. On receipt of this notification, a copy must be sent by the school to the local Authority within 10 working days on the EHE referral form. If a child has a Statement of Special Educational Needs they cannot be removed from the school roll without the consent of the Local Authority Statementing Officer.

Parents will need to provide evidence to the Local Authority as to how they propose to undertake EHE.

For further information please refer to Conwy Education Services guidance on educating your child at home.

9.4 - BULLYING/ANTIBULLYING STRATEGIES

Many learners do not attend because they are afraid of bullying or behaviour which may frighten or alarm them. Our school will consider this possibility when investigating individual cases of poor attendance and will promptly address the problem by adopting procedures and practices in a whole-school approach to bullying following the Welsh Government's Rights, Respect, Equality Guidance

9.5 - Children Looked After

Our School alongside the Local Authority is committed to securing the best possible educational outcomes for Children Looked After (CLA). It believes that regular, punctual, uninterrupted attendance at school is vital to help ensure that Children Looked After are able to make the most of the educational opportunities which are available to them.

Appendix 1

KEY TO ATTENDANCE CODES (currently under review)

The recommended codes are grouped under the following 5 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)	present
D	Dual registered (ie present at another school)	approved educational activity
P	Approved sporting activity	approved educational activity
V	Educational visit or trip	approved educational activity
J	Interview	approved educational activity
W	Work Experience (not work based training)	approved educational activity
C	Other authorised circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	authorised absence
F	Agreed extended family holiday	authorised absence
H	Agreed family holiday	authorised absence
I	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 descriptions)	unauthorised absence
G Family holiday (not agreed or sessions in excess of agreement)	unauthorised absence
U Late and arrived after the register closed	unauthorised absence
X Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school- age pupils	not required to attend
Y Partial and forced closure	not required to attend
Z Pupil not on roll yet	not required to attend
# School closed to all pupils	not required to attend

Appendix 2

FAMILY HOLIDAY DURING TERM-TIME

Welsh Assembly guidance states:

"In term-time parents do not have an automatic right to withdraw pupils for holidays and authorisation remains at the discretion of the Head Teacher, but this holiday must not exceed 10 days in any academic year". Exceptional circumstances remain at the discretion of the Head (The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010.

Exceptional circumstances remain at the discretion of the Head Teacher as school know their pupils and families, and are better placed to make those judgements. If the Head Teacher's decision is not to agree the request, then the holiday will be an unauthorised absence (G).

A suggested list of exceptional circumstances could be:-

- Those families of serving armed forces personnel
- Parents of a child experiencing a life limiting illness
- Family that has suffered acute trauma
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family
- Any other circumstance that is viewed as exceptional (if an event can reasonably be scheduled outside of term time then it would not be normal to authorise absence)

Local Authority leaflets on taking holidays during term time are very clear regarding these requests, and this information should be relayed to parents regularly.

As good practice however, Conwy Education Services would like every holiday request to be viewed as exceptional, as this would give the parents a clear message that taking their child out of school during term time should be discouraged.

The following list shows how taking time off during term time can impact on attainment and could be given to parents as an example (this would depend on how your school day is structured):-

1 day missed = 6 lessons lost

1 week missed = 30 lessons lost

2 weeks holiday during term time = 60 lessons lost

90% = 20 days off school per year/120 lessons

85% = 30 days/180 lessons

80% = 35 days/210 lessons

In law, parents have to apply for permission in advance, to withdraw pupils from school for a holiday. Such permission is granted in accordance with arrangements made by the governing body. All requests for holiday leave should be in writing, ideally **four** weeks before the holiday,

and the application should be made by parent/parents with day-to-day care of the child even if they are not actually going on holiday themselves.

Welsh Government guidelines clearly state that the reference to exceptional circumstances means that the parent must make out a strong case for taking the child away for a holiday during term time. Schools should carefully explore with parents why such exceptional leave of absence is necessary. Where such absences are sanctioned, they should be counted as an **authorised** absence. Where parents fail to abide by the agreement reached with the school and keep a child away from school in excess of the period agreed or, where parents fail to apply for permission, the extra time taken should be treated as an **unauthorised** absence.

The following factors should also be considered when assessing requests - no one factor should be regarded as conclusive:

- The time of year of proposed trip
- The length and purpose of the holiday
- The duration of the holiday and its impact on continuity of learning
- The circumstances of the family and the wishes of parents
- The overall attendance pattern of the child (% of attendance will also determine whether it is to be considered)

Parents should not expect, or be led to expect, that schools will agree to family holidays during term-time. Schools should reinforce this fact on a regular basis with parents. An unambiguous and explicit statement about taking holidays in term-time should be included in all Conwy schools' prospectuses and Handbooks for parents. In the case of ethnic minority parents special care should be taken to ensure that the regulations are fully explained and understood. Interpreters should be used if necessary.

EXTENDED OVERSEAS TRIPS

When making judgements about extended absence for pupils from ethnic minority or over sea? families, schools must take account of Welsh Government guidelines on holidays during term time. It is important that schools show an understanding of the parents' perspective even though they may not be able to give permission to extend absence.

Schools should take account of the following:

- A visit involving family overseas has an entirely different significance from the normal associations with 'holiday' which is the category recognised by the Welsh Government
- Visit may be very important in terms of children's identity and self-esteem as they grow up
- Parents may feel that the visit outweighs the importance of their child's uninterrupted attendance a school - maintaining family links may involve greater significance and greater pressure in some societies than it does in many western societies
- The reason for parents making a visit may be family illness, bereavement etc.

However, schools should explain to parents that:

- As far as possible, advanced permission must be agreed (**4 weeks**)
- The absence should be planned carefully with the school
- Where possible, extended visits should be made during school holidays particularly July/August
- If visits must be taken during term time, absence should not exceed two weeks (10 school days) unless under exceptional circumstances agreed by the Head Teacher
- Holidays during examination time should be avoided at all costs
- Pupils who miss six weeks or more of school, fall behind in their schoolwork by a full term
- Some pupils never catch up and will under-perform in their examinations
- Their child's name may be removed from the register if he/she has not returned to school within 20 days of the expected return date and no explanation has been given

If extended absence is agreed, schools should consider:

- The potential educational value of the visit i.e. preparing a study pack; asking the pupil to make notes/observations during the holiday in relation to a current or forthcoming class topic; asking the child to gather memorabilia/souvenirs with other pupils
- The amount of school work missed and how to help the pupil catch up on his/return to school

Guidance on taking holidays in term-time for Children Looked After

Social Care and Education Department Staff

Approved at		SMG		
Date		Minute No		
Version	Description of Reason for Change	Author	Authorisation	Date Issued
01	Original Issue	EJ / SP		13/07/16
02	Amendments after meeting with HoS	SG		18/12/17

Purpose

The Children Act 1989 (as amended by the Children Act 2004), as well as the Social Services & Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014, places a statutory duty on Local Authorities to promote the educational achievement of 'Looked After Children'.

This guidance looks at the processes and considerations which should be followed when considering taking a 'Looked After Child' on holiday during term-time.

Scope

This guidance applies to all 'Looked After Children' and their Parents / Carers who wish to take them on holiday during term-time.

Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of all Staff members / Foster Carers to be aware of this guidance, in relation to taking 'Looked After Children' on holiday during term-time.

Abbreviations

CLA

Children Looked After

Equalities

The Equalities Policy must be applied to ensure there is no discrimination on the basis of: Race and Ethnicity; Disability; Age; Gender; Sexual Orientation; Religion and Belief; Welsh Language or Human Rights; Pregnancy and Maternity; Gender Re-assignment and Marriage and Civil Partnership.

Related Documents:

[Children Act 1989](#)

[Children Act 2004](#)

[Social Services & Well-Being \(Wales\) Act 2014](#)

The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulation 2010

Inclusion & Pupil Support Circular 47/2006

[Education Act 1996](#)

[Isle of Wight Council \(Appellant\) v Platt \(Respondent\) \[2017\] UKSC 28](#)

1.1 Local Authorities have a duty to safeguard and to promote the welfare of the Children they 'Look After'. They also have a particular duty to promote the educational achievement of these Children, regardless of where they live.

1.2 Prior to coming in to the Care of the Local Authority, many 'Looked After Children' may have missed significant amounts of schooling, or may not have been in a situation where they have been able to prioritise and focus upon developing their education.

1.3 Research has shown that many Young People leave the Care system with very poor educational outcomes and are much more likely to not be in Education, Employment or Training (NEET).

1.4 The Minister for Education & Skills has made the following statement with regard to families taking holidays during term time:

'The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulation 2010 states that Head-Teachers have a discretionary power to authorise leave for a family holiday during term-time where parents seek permission. Except for exceptional circumstances, no more than 10 days leave should be granted for this purpose'.

1.5 "Parents should not normally take pupils on holiday in term-time". (Inclusion & Pupil Support Circular 47/2006).

1.6 Each request for a holiday absence should be considered individually and take into account the following:

- The pupils' age;
- The timing of the proposed holiday;
- The views of those with Parental Responsibility;
- The overall attendance of the pupil;
- The pupil's stage of education and progress.

1.7 **Schools should use their discretion sparingly.** Absences authorised under this discretion should be kept to a minimum, and ten school days should **not** be regarded as the norm.

1.8 The above information aims to ensure consistency across the Local Authority and to reinforce the principle that in term-time Parents / Carers do **not** have an automatic right to withdraw pupils for holidays and this remains at the discretion of the Head Teacher, and that any absence for holiday must **not** exceed 10 days in any academic year.

1.9 Taking into account the National principles as described above, and in order to ensure that the educational needs of 'Looked After Children' are promoted; Conwy County Borough Council - as Corporate Parents - will only in **very** exceptional circumstances agree an application for any Child or Young Person 'Looked After' being absent from school due to holiday during term-time.

1.10 Any fair and equitable decision supporting an application for holiday absence from school must include relevant information from the designated LAC Teacher, as well as the Child's Social Worker and the Foster Carer's Supervising Social Workers or Residential Worker. Where appropriate the Child's Parents should also be consulted. The reason and circumstances of the request for leave will then be considered by the Head-Teacher of the relevant School.

1.11 Pupils are granted leave of absence only at the discretion of the Head-Teacher and in the case of a 'Looked After Child', with the consent of the Local Authority as Corporate Parents. Taking a holiday during term-time seriously affects a Child's attendance and in turn their attainment. School Attendance should be a priority.

1.12 In total there are 175 non-school days a year. This gives Families the opportunity to:

- Spend time together;
- Go on family visits and days out;
- Go on holiday;
- Go shopping;
- Attend routine appointments.

1.13 The recent judgement by the Supreme Court, in the case of [Isle of Wight Council \(Appellant\) v Platt \(Respondent\) \[2017\] UKSC 28](#) should also be considered, where Parents / Carers opt to take Children / Young People out of school on holiday, during term-time, **without** authorisation.

1.14 Lady Hale observed:

"It is not just that there is a clear statistical link between school attendance and educational achievement. It is more the disruptive effect of unauthorised absences. These disrupt the education of the individual child. Work missed has to be made up, requiring extra work by the teacher who has already covered and marked subject matter

with other pupils. Having to make up for one pupil's absence may also disrupt the work of others pupils. Group learning will be diminished by the absence of individual members of the group. Most of all, if one pupil can be taken out whenever it suits the parents, then so can others. Different pupils may be taken out at different times, thus increasing the disruptive effect exponentially".

1.15 In light of the Court's ruling, school non-attendance as a consequence of an unauthorised holiday amounts to a s.444(1) offence regardless of the duration of the absence. The legal position under the Education Act 1996 is therefore the same as under earlier legislation so that a day's holiday may be enough to justify the imposition of a civil penalty, or even the institution of criminal proceedings where a parent refuses to pay the penalty.

2.0 Conwy's Process

2.1 Foster Carers to discuss prospective holiday with Child's Social Worker and Supervising Social Worker from the Fostering Team, in order to specify why it is necessary to take the proposed holiday in term-time.

2.2 Decision to be made regarding whether the proposed holiday is viable, considering the Pupils' current attendance, educational progress and additional learning needs.

2.3 Decision to be made regarding whether to formally, in writing, request permission from the relevant school's Head-Teacher, for the Pupil to have time off school, in term-time, to go on holiday.

2.4 The Head-Teacher to respond formally, in writing, to the request made.

2.5 The Head-Teacher's response to be shared with the Child's Social Worker and the Supervising Social Worker from the Fostering Team.

Appendix 3 STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

The school's commitment to achieving high levels of attendance should be explicit and clear to pupils, staff and parents. This is achieved by;

- Learners are to be constantly reminded of the importance and value of good attendance and punctuality.
- All staff are aware of correct registration codes for late arrivals which are consistently utilised
- We ensure that the classroom experience is positive and enriching
- All staff are trained on the appropriate use of registration codes - this training should be undertaken regularly
- The curriculum will be monitored and developed flexibly to meet the needs of all learners
- Look at alternative curriculum for learners who are hard to engage
- Attendance statistics and individual lesson attendance statistics will be collected and used to inform pastoral and curriculum practices and identify patterns of absence and problem areas.
- Identify pupils at risk of poor attendance before they transfer to another class, group or school and devise ways of supporting them.
- Include attendance targets in the induction programme for all new staff and in particular for newly qualified teachers.
- Discuss individual attendance targets with all learners
- Parents will be kept regularly and fully informed of all concerns around attendance and punctuality.
- Learners whose attendance falls beneath 90% will be set targets for improvement.
- The school will write to parents of learners whose attendance is a cause for concern every half term
- Parents, learners and staff need to be regularly reminded of the types of absence that are recognised as authorised and unauthorised displayed in the school foyer.
- Regular, structured meetings will be held with the school's ESW/EWO in order to identify and support those pupils whose attendance/punctuality is causing concern.
- Engage School Council/pupils views regarding the importance of regular attendance and how this can be improved
- Strengthen links with outside agencies that assist in supporting families
- Comply with pupil registration regulations with families that withdraw pupils to educate at home, and when removing pupils from the school roll
- Evaluate strategies to improve attendance in a robust manner and evaluate their effectiveness
- Use the school web-site to promote the school's performance in school attendance weekly.
- Use the media to promote good attendance at your school

- Work closely with the governing body of the school and provide updates in governor meetings relating to attendance.
- Use the Attendance Audit to evaluate your school systems yearly.
- Use reward systems to celebrate success for pupils and inform parents
- Ensure all schools staff are alert to and trained on identifying issues around bullying, safeguarding and the needs of vulnerable groups (i.e. Young Carers, Looked after Children, Gypsy Travellers, Safeguarding issues including those pupils on the Child Protection Register, or Children in Need of Support)
- Ensuring staff do not promote other methods of educating learners when this would not be conducive or indeed ethical to do so eg (encouraging EHE)
- Utilising Education Services School Attendance Self Evaluation Audit Tool that looks at areas such as :-

- ✚ Strategic Management
- ✚ The Attendance Policy
- ✚ Managing Attendance
- ✚ Collection and Analysis of Data
- ✚ Communication
- ✚ Safeguarding

Appendix 4

Attendance Support Plan (ASP)

Date of meeting	Name	Date of Birth	
School	Year group/class	Attendance %	Punctuality
What are the specific issues impacting upon school attendance in each of the following areas?			
School	Home	Community	
Strengths			
Record actions/services to address specific issues identified above. Record by whom and by when. Build on strengths. Record also if support offered but declined with reasons and if no service available to meet identified need			
School	Home	Community	
Signature of school staff	Signature of parent/carer	Signature of pupil	
Date of review meeting			

Appendix 5

School Attendance Self Evaluation Audit Tool

This self-evaluation checklist is an important tool to help identify areas for improvement within school, to assist with targets and to prioritise actions for improvement in attendance.

It will be important to offer a range of interventions and strategies to improve engagement and enable sustained improvements.

Please allocate a colour - Red, Amber, or Green to each of the following questions and statements.

Green = Goods, standards achieved

Amber = Satisfactory standard, requiring further work

Red = Inadequate and immediate action required

Please add relevant comments in the Actions / Areas for improvement section.

Your cooperation in completing this form will assist the Education Social Work Service to assess and review school's capacity to improve their overall attendance in a structured and sustainable manner.

School	
Pupil Numbers	
Staff Member completing form	
Designation	
Date	

Performance	Attendance		Free School Meals	
	Target %	Actual %	FSM %	Quartile
Academic Year				
2024-2025				
Current Attendance				

Strategic Management

				Actions / Areas for Improvement
Do you have a nominated governor with a specific attendance remit				
Does the school have a designated Senior Leadership Team / Senior Management Team member of staff responsible for attendance? Please provide name:-				
Does the attendance lead ensure early Identification of intervention and support For pupils with attendance issues ?				
Is there dedicated time and resources allocated for attendance ?				
How well does the attendance lead ensure consistent application of the policy's principles throughout school ?				
How well does the attendance lead oversee the accuracy of the recording of attendance and registration practices? Is this regularly audited ?				
Does the attendance lead monitor, analyse and address key issues identified?				
Does the attendance lead analyse and challenge levels of Authorised Absences ?				
Does the attendance lead analyse and Challenge "N" no reason provided and Missing Marks ?				
Does the lead ensure all relevant staff with registration responsibilities are trained and have their practice monitored to ensure high standards of practice?				
Are all staff with registration responsibilities aware of the attendance codes?				
Are all staff with registration responsibilities able to challenge "N" marks and Missing Marks				
Are supply staff inducted & well prepared with regards to attendance and registration practices ?				

Managing Attendance

				Actions / Areas for Improvement
Do you have Service Level Agreements between your secondary / primary clusters ?				
Are there regular meetings with the Education Welfare Service to identify and agree interventions / pupil support ?				
Is there an escalation of interventions which are used systematically and the impact of these interventions widely know ?				
Is effective pupil tracking in place to identify any pupil whose attendance begins to slip ? How is it used ?				
How effectively does school ensure they know the whereabouts of all pupils every day for safeguarding purposes ?				
Do you have differentiated responsibilities amongst school staff for dealing with pupils with different attendance levels - ie Form Tutors dealing with 92% + HOY / Deputy Head targeting 87 - 91 % etc. ?				
Does school offer an appropriate balance of support and challenge to Parents / Carers?				
Does school have reintegration strategies for those returning from long term absences in which all appropriate staff participate ?				
Do school robustly implement Children Missing Education procedures -i.e. School checklist, referral to Education Welfare Service which can help limit absences on pupil records ?				
Is school supported appropriately by external agencies ? Are there any gaps in support required ?				

Collection and Analysis of data

				Actions / Areas for Improvement
Do Governors and Senior Leadership Team / Senior Management Team review attendance data on a regular basis and across identified groups ?				
Are attendance related issues discussed weekly by Senior Leadership Team / Senior Management Team, the governing body and school council ?				
Is school data analysed to inform reasons for absence, profile of persistent absence, identification of vulnerable groups and links to standards?				
Do you plan interventions based on these findings?				
Does Senior Leadership Team /Senior Management Team review and resolve levels of code "N" No reason provided and Missing Marks				
Does Senior Leadership Team / Senior Management Team review and resolve levels of Authorised Absences				
Is the correlation between exclusions and impact in attendance investigated ?				
Are patterns of attendance from feeder primary schools pupil analysed and preventative strategies put in place in advance for support at transition phase?				

The Attendance Policy

				Actions / Areas for Improvement
Is the school's policy up to date, good quality and regularly reviewed?				Please attach copy
Does the school policy/strategy for improving attendance identify the roles of staff and procedures to be followed ?				
Do all staff know, understand and consistently apply the policy across school				
Is attendance fully integrated into other policy area e.g. safeguarding ?				
How clear are policies & procedures for working with Parent / Carers, Education Welfare Officer /Education Social Worker and outside agencies ?				
Does the policy include school's policy on holidays in term time?				
Is the attendance policy and practices monitored rigorously and is impact measured ? How ?				
Do governors oversee this monitoring process ? Is the effectiveness of interventions monitored regularly ?				

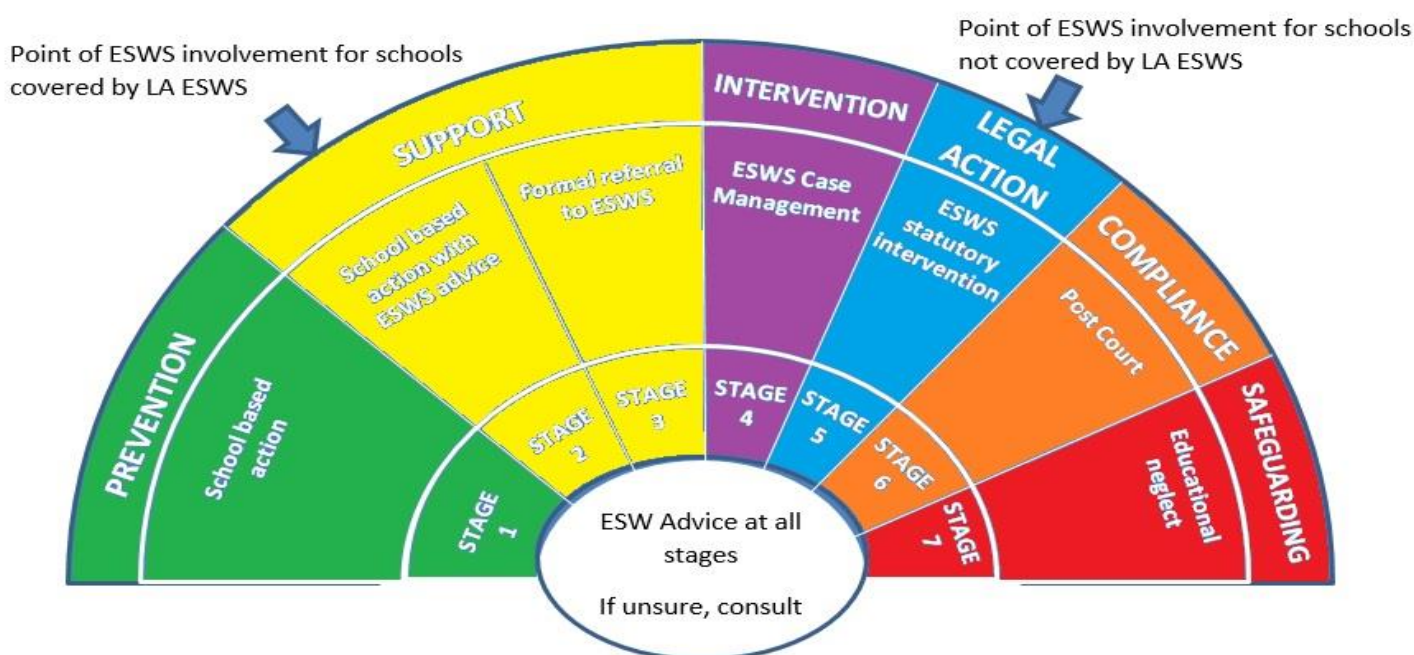
Communication

				Actions / Areas for Improvement
Are pupils aware of their individual level of attendance and the target they need to achieve ? How is this set ad communicated to pupils and their parent/carers ?				
Are pupils, parent/carers regularly reminded of the importance of good attendance, the links with attainment, Via -newsletters, at parents evenings, home / school agreements etc. ?				
Does the school plan the promotion of attendance throughout the year ?				
Is there an awards / rewards system for good attendance in place ?				
Are pupils consulted about the nature of rewards to ensure that they are relevant and motivating ?				

PROCEDURE FOR LA ESWS INTERVENTION

September 2025

ATTENDANCE CONTINUUM



PREVENTION: STAGE 1

SCHOOL-BASED ACTION

SCHOOL ROLE - ALL SCHOOLS

WHERE A SCHOOL IS COVERED BY ESWS, ESWS MAY ASSIST IN A CONSULTATIVE CAPACITY

- Maintain attendance registers.
- Accurate recording and coding of session absence.
- Communication with parents with regards to authorised and unauthorised absences.
- Set annual targets to reduce absence/increase attendance.
- Publication of school Attendance Policy and ensuring consistent application of the policy
- Complete the Attendance donut on the school's management review tool.
- Regular analysis of attendance data.
- First day of absence parental contact (telephone/text/e-mail/letter).
- After three days of unexplained absence, send a second letter requesting information as to the absence.
- Invite parents into school for a meeting assess any emerging problems and develop an action plan, e.g. curriculum modification, ALN investigations, bullying issues referral onto other agencies or professionals
- Letters and meetings as per school attendance policy (thresholds for these interventions vary according to school).
- After ten days of unexplained absence refer to the schools Attendance Officer (not buy back) or ESWS (buy back) using the prescribed referral form with all documented evidence on what has been tried by school.
- An individual learner's reintegration plan should be adopted where a learner is returning to school after any absence longer than two weeks. In the event of a learner returned after a long-term absence then an Individual Reintegration Programme (IRP) will be implemented. The IRP will include all members of the school staff and will be designed to be as supportive of the learner as possible to ensure a smooth transition back into school.
- Named Governor responsible for termly attendance report.
- Key senior member of staff with responsibility for attendance.
- School based Attendance lead to oversee the accuracy of the recording of attendance and registration practices and ensure compliance to the registration codes and to challenge and audit regularly.
- Ensure staff are trained in regards to registration responsibilities and their practice is monitored to ensure high standards.
- Whole school attendance incentives if appropriate e.g. certificates, competitions, reminders in newsletters, etc.
- Early identification of pupils in need of support around their attendance.
- Together with parents/carers and pupils to identify underlying causes of non-attendance e.g. medical needs, bullying, social problems, disaffection, lateness, ALN, behaviour issues, parenting, EBSA. Any reasons for absence identified or provided by parent to be recorded on sims (flag). To provide support/refer to other agencies who can support as appropriate (in-line with Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014), note this applies to the family as a whole not just the pupil.

SUPPORT: STAGE 2

SUPPORTED SCHOOL-BASED ACTION

ESWS ROLE FOR SCHOOLS COVERED BY ESWS ONLY, SCHOOL ROLE FOR THOSE NOT

- Half-termly attendance checks undertaken by ESWS and sent via e-mail (see appendix 1 for format template).
- ESWS can assist the school in a consultative capacity, either by offering advice to the school or by attending a meeting with the family arranged by the school (letter 2 meetings) to address attendance.
- ESWS will identify cases where FPNWL and FPN threshold met, consult with school and issue where appropriate.
- ESWS will provide an overview attendance report to identify areas of good practice, areas for improvement and suggestions as to how overall attendance can be improved.
- ESWS will meet regularly throughout academic year with attendance lead to consult and advise on whole school attendance protocol and issues/trends as they arise.
- ESWS will meet regularly with attendance lead to regularly monitor and address individual/group attendance/welfare concerns.

Practice Notes

It is expected that the school attendance lead will respond (ideally via e-mail) within 5 school days to any queries or requests for information by ESWS.

At this level, no formal referral is made to the ESWS but any school arranged meetings attended or FPNWL's issued will be recorded for statistical purposes as work undertaken. As a matter of good practice to anticipate future intervention, a form will be completed detailing the child's name and agreed plan/actions for each school arranged meeting attended by the ESWS and any significant specific advice given will be recorded on the half-termly attendance checks e-mail.

School can either choose for letters to be sent automatically for cases who have been identified as having met the threshold for an FPNWL or to be consulted regarding these cases before they are issued. Where consultation is required it will be assumed that the FPNWL's are to be issued if there has been no communication otherwise from the school within 5 school days.

ESWS will always consult with the school before FPN is requested for those identified in the attendance checks and not an open case to the ESWS. However, if the process is followed correctly, in cases the issue is general unauthorised absence (not unauthorised holiday), the threshold for stage 3 will be reached consistently with when the FPN threshold is met.

Situations whereby cases appear to be drifting with little or no evidence of actions which would be consistent with the stages above being taken by the school between half-termly checks (e.g. pupils identified by ESWS as requiring meeting between school and parents identified in half-term one and this has not been acted upon or reasonable explanation given by the next attendance check) will be brought to the attention of the ESWS Manager whom may contact the school directly to highlight the implication this may have upon the family in terms of fair opportunity to address the attendance issue before the situation reaches the stage where legal action is being considered and plan is time-limited.

SUPPORT: STAGE 3 REFERRAL

ESWS ROLE FOR SCHOOLS COVERED BY ESWS ONLY, SCHOOL ROLE FOR THOSE NOT

Each referral will be considered on an individual basis. Acceptance of the referral and actions to be taken will be based on a number of factors, and not solely on a set target figure of attendance. All referrals should be made on the ESWS referral form (see appendix 2). The referral form contains factual evidence which is essential in determining what action will be taken by the ESWS. It is essential that dates, times and outcomes of contacts with parents are accurately reflected on the referral form. In order to ensure the health and safety of the ESWS any details of concern of known risk factors associated with the pupil and the pupil's parents and family or the geographical location of the home must also be detailed on the ESWS referral form.

Where a referral is received by the ESWS, the ESWS will use a referral screening tool (see appendix 3) to determine a course of action. The referral screening tool may also serve as a checklist for schools to use when considering a referral to the ESWS. The ESWS will not accept a referral for intervention at stage 3 unless all required evidence is provided.

The ESWS will respond via e-mail to the referring school within 2 school days of the referral being received. The referral will either be accepted or rejected and advice given on actions required by the school before referral will be accepted (this will also be incorporated in the half-termly ESW attendance checks e-mail).

Where a referral is accepted by the ESWS at stage 3, actions may include solely or a combination of:-

1. Simple assessment using 'Assess, Plan, Do, Review' principle (see appendix 4). This may be completed solely or via a combination of: home visit, writing to parents/carers, contacting parents/carers by telephone or e-mail (within limitations of LA policy), liaison with other agencies, discussion with school.
2. An action plan if necessary will be devised and shared with the expectation that the recommendations made within the plan are completed by relevant parties. Any outstanding actions will delay the process being progressed.
3. Issuing a fixed penalty notice.
4. Following missing child protocol.
5. Follow EBSA process.

The school should continue to undertake stage 1 processes following referral to ESWS.

If parental engagement with stage 3 is deemed by the ESWS to be unsatisfactory e.g. non engagement with simple assessment, consideration will be given to escalating case to stage 4 and/or issuing a fixed penalty notice.

Stage 3 lasts 4 school weeks following the completion of the simple assessment, at which point the situation is reviewed by the ESWS.

Referrer, parents and other agencies with current involvement (subject to parental consent) will be informed in writing within 5 school days of the case review decision.

Where a decision is made to close the case to ESWS, the expectation would be for the schools to repeat the stage 2 process in terms of meeting with parents. The suggested threshold for this is 5 days

unauthorised absence following closure to the ESWS. Consideration will be given to escalating cases which are referred for the second time in a 12 month period straight to Stage 4.

Practice Notes

Where a referral is accepted at stage 3, the ESWS will:-

1. *Instigate the appropriate/chosen action within 5 school days e.g. letter sent re: home visit as an alternative to FPN and offering support.*
2. *Provide a written response in the form of an e-mail to the school/referrer within 15 school days of the referral with an update and where possible the outcome of the action taken, and the date the case will be reviewed (4 school weeks).*
3. *Undertake a simple assessment and provide an opportunity to engage before issuing a fixed penalty notice (see appendix 6), the exception to this where 2 unauthorised holidays of 10 sessions or more have been taken in a 12 month period.*
4. *Inform the parents of their obligations in respect of school attendance and identify factors impacting on their capacity to ensure their obligations fulfilled.*
5. *Provide advice to families and sign-post them to support available to address any identified needs.*
6. *Record any unmet needs i.e. where a need is identified but there is no support available to address that need.*

The review may be undertaken based solely on or as a combination of the information available via sims, consultation with family, consultation with school, consultation with other agencies. Possible outcomes of the review include:-

1. *Case closed to ESWS (no unauthorised absences following simple assessment or threshold no longer met e.g. due to medical evidence being provided).*
2. *FPN issued (2-10 sessions unauthorised absences following simple assessment). In these cases, the situation will be reviewed again 4 weeks following FPN being issued.*

Case escalated to stage 4 (where there have been 11+ sessions unauthorised absence since simple assessment and/or there appears to be reason to pursue an Education Supervision Order).

INTERVENTION: STAGE 4

CASE MANAGEMENT

ESWS ROLE FOR SCHOOLS COVERED BY ESWS ONLY, SCHOOL ROLE FOR THOSE NOT

At stage 4, consideration will be given to a number of complementary strategies. These may include a combination of:-

1. Home visit, arranged via formal letter outlining legal action which may be taken should attendance not improve.
2. Comprehensive assessment (see appendix 5), to include an action plan which will advise school as to measures/strategies that can be made to help improve school attendance. Any delay in implementing suggested strategies are likely to delay the pupil reintegration plan.
3. Intensive monitoring of individual pupil's attendance.
4. A time limited programme with the family which aims to address/support areas of concern/issues identified in the comprehensive assessment. The programme is limited to 6 weeks or the time the service can be offered via another service, whichever comes first. It is also dependant on the skills base and experience required to carry-out the intervention.

The programme may include:-

- a. Issues identified in the comprehensive assessment which a referral has been made to another agency to address but is not available to commence within 2 weeks of the comprehensive assessment e.g. parenting advice/support, self-help CBT, confidence building, anger management, etc.
- b. Practical support e.g. escort service, practical parenting support such as morning visits, etc.
5. Referral to other agencies/services.
6. Call Multi-agency Meeting.
7. Issuing of FPN.
8. Attendance panel meeting (pre-court meeting) with family, Head Teacher, member of Governing Body and chaired via ESWS.

Stage 4 lasts 6 school weeks following the completion of the comprehensive assessment. The ESWS will review the child's attendance/progress after 6 weeks. If there is no evidence that the parents and/or pupil have responded to the intervention at stage 4, consideration will be given to escalating case to stage 5.

If parental engagement with stage 4 is deemed by the ESWS to be unsatisfactory e.g. non engagement with comprehensive assessment, final warning letter will be issued. If still no improvement and/or parental engagement within 2 weeks of the letter being issued, consideration will be given to escalating case to stage 5.

Practice Notes

Where stage 4 is reached, the ESWS will:-

1. Send home visit letter with date for comprehensive assessment within 5 school days of decision to escalate to stage 4.
2. Endeavour to ensure the home visit is completed within 10 school days of the decision to escalate to stage 4, limitations to this include cancellations and parental non-engagement.

3. *Provide a copy of the plan which is derived from the comprehensive assessment via e-mail to the school/referrer within 15 school days the plan being completed, along with the date the plan will be reviewed (6 weeks from completion of assessment).*
4. *Before decision to issue a final warning letter, schools should consider a School Attendance Panel meeting which is a formal meeting including Governor responsible for attendance, with a clear action plan of improvement and minutes of meeting taken for future evidence gathering purposes.*
5. *Consider issuing final warning letter (see appendix 9) both 2 weeks and 4 weeks following completion of comprehensive assessment. A copy of this letter will be sent to the Headteacher.*
6. *If no improvement in attendance within a given timescale is achieved the ESW and ESW Manager/Supervisor will meet to undertake a case review to consider the appropriateness of moving to Step 5 - Formal Statutory Action. They will then instigate a Pre-Court meeting. If the child's attendance fails to improve, parent/carers and their child will be invited to a Pre-Court Meeting to which a school representative and any others involved with the family or child may also be invited. Parents/carers may have a legal representative at this meeting. If a parent/carer fails to attend this meeting without an acceptable reason or behaves unreasonably or aggressively and does not cooperate, court paperwork will automatically be issued and the parent/carer's non-attendance at the meeting used as evidence of a lack of engagement*

Any cases which reach Stage 4 will be brought to the attention of the ESWS and discussed in formal supervision.

Where schools that are covered by LA ESWS have not followed the process and/or no referral has been received and the pupil's overall attendance is 20% or more unauthorised, ESWS intervention will commence at stage 4. This will follow the process of ESWS attempts to support the school to implement the preventative stages (see above) and a formal request to the school for intervention from ESWS Manager. The ESWS will only accept referrals from schools covered by the ESWS at stage 4 when the preventative interventions have not been undertaken in cases where the pupil's overall unauthorised attendance is 20% or more and it is the second term or after.

LEGAL ACTION: STAGE 5

STATUTORY INTERVENTION

ESWS ROLE - ALL SCHOOLS

Where a school is not covered by the LA ESWS, a comprehensive assessment will be carried out by the ESWS (as outlined in stage 4 above) prior to the making a decision regarding legal action. The ESWS may delegate the school to carry-out points 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 (see above) if they form part of the plan following comprehensive assessment by ESWS.

Where stage 5 is reached, the ESWS will:-

1. Write to the parents to inform them of the decision to proceed to legal action, copy to be sent to Headteacher.
2. Gain formal consent from ESWS Manager to proceed with legal action and what form this will take i.e. prosecution or ESO.
3. Complete electronic court file and send to legal for allocation (for prosecution cases) or consult with legal for ESO cases.
4. Prepare a statement and exhibits relevant to the case, including supporting documentation from other agencies.
5. Obtain signed certificate of attendance from the Headteacher.
6. Attend court as necessary and feedback the outcome to all relevant parties
7. Prepare an invoice and issue to schools not covered by the ESWS for work carried up to this stage.

Practice Notes

Where there is a need to implement legal action, the ESWS will consider the following:-

1. *Prior to implementing action under Section 444 Education Act 1996, the ESWS is required to give consideration of the suitability of the case for placing before the Family Court with regard to an Education Supervision Order under Section 26 of the Children Act 1989.*
2. *Is there evidence of 20% unauthorised absence over a minimum period of 6 weeks which has not already been spent i.e. was not covered by a previously paid FPN?*
3. *Consideration of the offence category based on a portfolio of evidence provided by the schools, attendance officers and ESWs i.e. have the parents been prosecuted for non-school attendance previously and/or is there evidence to suggest that the parents 'intended' not to ensure child's regular attendance at school?*
4. *Are there any other circumstances that mitigate against prosecuting at this time?*
5. *Is it in the public interest to proceed?*
6. *Once most appropriate decision has been made, inform parents and school.*
7. *Prepare documentation for the legal proceedings and seek legal advice as appropriate.*
8. *Local Authority EWS/EWO will attend court and present evidence as required in legislation.*

Feedback to all parties as to the outcome of court proceedings and monitor and review situation.

COMPLIANCE: STAGE 6

POST COURT

EDUCATION SUPERVISION ORDER

For schools covered by LA ESWs, the ESWs will act as supervising officer for the ESO for the duration of the Order (12 months), this includes day to day case management and regular case reviews to ensure compliance with directions made.

With the exception of compliance with directions, the supervising officer role will be delegated to the school where the LA ESWs do not cover the school.

Case will remain open to ESWs for the duration of the Order regardless of attendance level, but as stated above the level of involvement is dependent on whether school is covered by LA ESWs or not.

The ESWs will consider renewal of ESO or closure of the case when the order is near expiry.

Possible outcomes of persistent failure to comply with directions made include:-

1. Legal action under Section 444 Education Act 1996,
2. Returning to Court for further directions relating to the care of the child e.g. section 37 report,
3. Referral to SSD.

PROSECUTION

For schools covered by LA ESWs, the ESWs will continue to monitor and support as appropriate.

Further legal action e.g. parental prosecution under Section 444a Education Act 1996 will be considered when unauthorised absence level falls within the legal action threshold following prosecution.

For schools not covered by LA ESWs, the case will be closed to the ESWs following conclusion of the proceedings. The school will be responsible for monitoring the case and referring to ESWs for further legal action should attendance fall within the legal action threshold following prosecution.

In the event that a Parenting Order is made by the Court, the ESWs will supervise the Order in terms of ensuring compliance for the 12 months duration of the Order. The ESWs may consider further legal action should the parent fail to comply with the terms of the Parenting Order e.g. Section 444a Education Act 1996 proceedings.

SAFEGUARDING: STAGE 7

EDUCATIONAL NEGLECT POLICY

This policy has been developed with the aim of the policy to establish a common understanding and a consistent threshold for intervention in cases where educational neglect of children is an ongoing concern.

Neglect would be met over a period of 12 months when:-

- School attendance is less than 75%
- Parent continues to fail to ensure appropriate education for their child
- Parent fails to attend most school and LA meeting and engage with support offered
- Parent is unable to provide substantiated reasons for most absences from school
- And where there has been a previous legal intervention.

Please see educational neglect policy for full details.

Where a school not covered by the LA ESWS has a case where they believe the criteria for the educational neglect policy is met, a referral should be made to the ESWS.

Appendix 7

Attendance Facts

- If a Child has 100% attendance in school, they will be able to make the best of all the opportunities available to them;
- Children who have very good attendance are more likely to gain 5 or more A-C GCSEs or equivalent qualifications;
- 91.1% attendance equates to missing 17 days of school in one year. Missing 17 days a year also means dropping 1 GCSE grade (on average);
- Children with poor attendance are less likely to gain 5 A* - C GCSEs;
- 82.1% attendance equates to missing 34 days of school in one year;
- Poor attendance will have a serious impact on education, work ethic and life chances;
- A Child who ends the school year with only 90% attendance will have missed four complete weeks of school;
- 90% over 5 years at secondary school equates to half a school year;
- Under 92% Missing more than 3 weeks of education;
- 95% Missing in excess of two weeks of education;