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Attendance and Engagement (Oct 2025)

Monmouthshire's Children, Learning, Skills and Economy
Directorate

Attendance and Engagement Policy (October 2025)

This policy sets out Monmouthshire Local Authority's approach and provision for learners with barriers to learning and additional learning needs.

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Contents

Purpose and Scope	5
Attendance	5
Why is good attendance important?	5
Roles and Responsibilities	6
Parents	6
School Governing Bodies	6
Local Authorities	7
Reasons for Absence and Contributing Factors	8
Principles and Approaches	9
Focus on Learner Wellbeing and Mental Health	10
Attendance Strategies, Policies and Practices	10
Leadership and the Role of Senior Staff and Governors	11
Safeguarding and Child Protection	11
Promoting effective attendance through robust target setting	12
Early Identification and learner support	12
Recording and analysing attendance	13
Attendance Registration	14
Missing marks	14
Effective and accurate registration coding	15
Absence – First day Response (FDR)	16
Lateness	17
Pastoral Support Plan (PSP)	17
Illness Coding	17
B/D Coding	18
Holidays in Term time and extended overseas trip	19
Study Leave	20
Study Leave	20
Incentives and rewards for attendance	21
Learners from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Communities	21
Deleting learners from the school roll and Children Missing Education (CME)	22
Elective Home Education (EHE)	25
Pupils who are Dual registered	25
Pupils registered at a mainstream school who also attend EOTAS setting (Not dual registered)	26
Part time timetables / Reduced hours timetabled within a Pastoral Support Plan (PSP)	26

Exclusions.....	30
Education provision for excluded learners.....	31
Supporting learners returning to school.....	32
Support for Emotional Based School Avoidance (EBSA).....	34
Supporting learners with healthcare needs.....	35
Rights, Respect and Equality (RRE) (Anti-bullying)	35
Child Employment, Performance Licensing and Work Experience	36
The Role of the Education Welfare Service	37
The role of the Education Welfare Service (EWS)	37
Referrals to the Education Welfare Service (EWS)	39
EWS response to referrals	41
Formal and Legal Absence Management	42
Fixed Penalty Notices.....	43
Other Interventions and Sanctions.....	43
Engagement	45
Engagement – A Key to improving attendance	45
Building positive relationships, culture and ethos	45
Trauma Informed Schools (TIS) and Community Focused Schools.....	46
Family Engagement and multi-agency support	46
Family Engagement Officers (FEOs) / Family Liaison Officers (FLOS) and similar staff	47
Learner voice and School Councils	48
Parent voice and parent Councils	48
Further advice, information, guidance and policy links	48

Purpose and Scope

This policy outlines our approach to secure and sustain high levels of attendance in maintained schools, PRU and EOTAS provision. The information contained in the policy is for schools, PRU and EOTAS providers, parents/carers and local authority officers.

The policy aims to outline suggested good practice in terms of improving attendance and signpost to further guidance and resources. It is a practical document that sets out the approaches and resources that can be used by schools, PRU and EOTAS providers to ensure high levels of learner engagement and attendance. These approaches and resources should be adopted and developed so that they align to the needs of learners and parents/carers.

NB: Where this policy states parents this refers to parents, carers or guardians

The definition of 'parent' is set out in section 576 of the Education Act 1996 and includes:

- all natural parents, whether they are married or not;
- any person who, although not a natural 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.

Attendance

Why is good attendance important?

Regular school attendance has a positive effect on children and young people and a strong impact on learner outcomes, standards, and progression. Regular attendance supports the development of literacy and numeracy skills, and the conceptual understanding needed for further study and success in the workplace.

Good attendance also has a positive effect on emotional and physical wellbeing. Establishing good attendance patterns from an early age is vital for social development. Regular absences can start a negative cycle, learners start to be absent for reasons such as bullying or not coping with schoolwork, with prolonged absence only likely to make the situation harder to resolve. Regularly attending school supports learners' wider development as full and rounded members of the community and society.

Attendance cannot be considered in isolation. The many interrelated and overlapping causes of absence and the varied nature of learner experience in school, the community and at home mean that whole school strategies and strong multi-agency working arrangements are required, designed to support learners. All learners and their parents should be made aware of who they can speak to if they are unhappy in school, and they should be encouraged to do so at the earliest possible time to prevent escalation.

Attending school is also crucial from a safeguarding perspective, ensuring that children are seen, safe and heard, and not exploited. Active follow-up of absence is a major element in their care and protection and is one of the main reasons why recording and monitoring attendance accurately is so important.

The Welsh Government currently defines the attendance of learners in Wales below 90% as being at persistent absent level (PA). This is a significant change to previous guidance where the PA level was defined as being below 80%.

Roles and Responsibilities – Attendance is everybody's business

In order to secure good attendance, it is essential to establish successful working relationships and develop a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities for all parties involved.

Parents

Parents have a statutory responsibility for ensuring that their **compulsory school-age** children receive a suitable education appropriate to their age, ability, and aptitude and to any additional learning needs they may have (see section 7 of the Education Act 1996). This can be fulfilled through regular attendance at school, agreed education provision other than at school (EOTAS) or by elective home education (EHE).

Compulsory school age - Under Section 8 of the Education Act 1996, children and young people should attend school from the start of the first term commencing after their fifth birthday. The end of term dates are 31 March, 31 August and 31 December. A young person ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they have their 16th birthday.

It should be recognised that for some children good attendance at school presents challenges which some parents may feel unable to deal with. Where this is the case, local authorities and other agencies must work together to ensure that parents receive the support they need to ensure their children achieve the best attendance they can.

School Governing Bodies

School settings have a wide range of responsibilities for learner attendance.

- Schools are legally required to maintain an accurate learner attendance register by way of the Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 and to provide data on learner absence to the local authority under the School Performance Information (Wales) Regulations 2011/1963 and The School Information (Wales) Regulations 2011/1944.

- Schools are expected to publish, or make available, an easily understood and regularly reviewed attendance strategy and policy. This should set out the principles underlying the
- school's approach to improving learner engagement and attendance, and how the school intends to develop a positive culture around attendance.
- Schools should communicate and engage with parents effectively to make sure they are fully aware of the attendance policy. This should include the steps they will take to provide learners with engaging and relevant teaching and learning opportunities, and the support they will provide to meet learner emotional and mental wellbeing.
- School attendance strategies should be developed in partnership with learners and parents and show the importance and advantages of good attendance as well as the possible implications of absence. Schools should work with parents to identify any possible reasons that could affect attendance and direct them to sources of support.
- School governors need to ensure that they are well-informed about the school's attendance position and priorities, and its strategies for improvement. There should be a named Governor for attendance on the Governing body.
- Pupil Referral Units (PRU) are legally a type of school. They fall within the scope of the Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 which place a duty on the proprietor of a school to keep accurate admission and attendance registers for learners registered at the school (on the admission register). The local authority which established and maintains the school is the "proprietor" upon whom the duty falls in relation to PRUs, but they will necessarily be reliant upon information gathered by staff in the PRU for this purpose.

Local Authorities

Local authorities are required, by way of section 436A of the Education Act 1996, to make arrangements to enable them to establish the identities (so far as it is possible to do so) of children in their area who are of compulsory school age but are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at school.

The local authority has a duty to identify, as far as is possible, children who may be, or who are, missing education (CME). This duty requires local authorities to monitor whether children within their area are receiving an education, and to monitor the quality of that education, when on roll at a mainstream school, PRU or who for those who are Electively Home Educated (EHE).

The Education Welfare Service (EWS), on behalf of the local authority, provides support for schools, learners, and parents to ensure regular attendance and address problems relating to absence. The service liaises with other agencies and provides an important link between home and school, helping parents and schools to work in partnership.

Reasons for Absence and Contributing Factors

Attendance issues are often a symptom of some underlying cause and should not be seen in isolation from a range of other factors including but not limited to, school and/or home related factors, physical ill health, wellbeing or mental health.

In the first instance, schools should consider whether there are school-related factors or worries that are affecting a learner's attendance, such as:

- experience of bullying or discrimination.
- unmet or unidentified additional learning needs or disability.
- anxieties about schoolwork or examinations.
- emotionally based school avoidance/anxiety (EBSA)

There are some groups or cohorts of learners that could potentially be more likely to experience barriers to full attendance.

For example, learners who are or have been:

- looked after (CLA)
- previously received a fixed term exclusion (FTE) or been permanently excluded (PEX)
- young carers (YC)
- from ethnic minority communities and children with English or Welsh as an additional language (EAL)
- Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller learners (GRT)
- children of transient parents
- asylum seekers, refugees, new migrants, and learners of migrant workers
- transgender, non-binary or gender-questioning learners
- in the youth justice system or with parents in the justice system
- experiencing long-term medical or mental health issues
- experienced trauma and/or had adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)
- children of service parents and armed forces parents
- at risk of forced marriage
- at risk of sexual exploitation, including children who have been trafficked
- Homeless and living in temporary accommodation, houses of multiple occupancy or bed and breakfasts with parents
- fleeing domestic violence (DV) or living in women's refuges
- privately fostered
- young parents and pregnant young women

- on the child protection register
- Children who are eligible for free school meals and from low-income households
- children experiencing severe period pain or other period related health issues

Other family circumstances may have adverse effects on learner's attendance at school, including:

- bereavement
- divorce, separation or parents in frequent conflict
- formation of a new family unit involving new partnerships
- stress resulting from housing, unemployment, low income, alcohol or drug abuse, or mental illness

Attendance issues can often also be linked to the impact of prior formal exclusions as well as broader inclusion issues such as the approaches to behaviour in schools, the use of internal sanctions or unmet or unaddressed ALN needs

Principles and Approaches

School attendance can be complex and should not be considered in isolation from many other aspects of education and learner wellbeing. Good support for learner emotional and mental wellbeing and an effective learning environment are intrinsically linked, and both should be promoted through a whole-school approach.

When working to promote and improve learner attendance and engagement the following approaches should be considered by schools and the local authority:

- A person/learner-centred approach, based on the rights of the child
- An Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) aware and trauma-informed school approaches
- A focus on learner wellbeing and mental health
- A strengths-based whole-school, whole-system approach
- Building positive relationships, culture and ethos
- Family engagement and multi-agency support
- Prevention and adopting sustainable ways of working
- Reducing the cost of the school day
- School approaches and strategies to address bullying and anti-racism (Rights, Respect & Equality)

Further information around this area can be found in the Welsh Government Belonging, Engaging and Participating guidance.

Focus on Learner Wellbeing and Mental Health

The local authority and schools acknowledge the importance of learner health and wellbeing, particularly emotional and mental wellbeing, in supporting all aspects of education and learning. Within Monmouthshire we aim to work following the Framework on embedding a whole-school approach to emotional and mental wellbeing (March 2021.)

This focus on learner wellbeing and mental health is particularly important in the context of improving engagement and attendance at school.

Poor attendance patterns are often related to learner mental health or wellbeing issues. Poor mental health in particular has been linked to poor school attendance, with anxiety often identified as a key factor. Behaviour is often a product of negative circumstances and past experiences can have an impact on attendance. In particular, increasing awareness of the impact that adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), have on learner health and wellbeing is crucial, and in these circumstances, there is a benefit of adopting trauma informed practices (TrACE) when supporting these learners.

Attendance Strategies, Policies and Practices

A school attendance strategy sets out the school's vision for engagement and attendance and the principles underlying its broad approach to improving engagement and attendance. It is a starting point for achieving an inclusive school ethos and should link to and complement other school strategies, including:

- Safeguarding and child protection
- Learner wellbeing and mental health
- Relationships and Behaviour
- Rights, Respect & Equality (anti-bullying)
- Tackling the impact of poverty.

Detailed attendance policy documents should specify the roles and responsibilities for learners, parents, staff and governors. It should also set out procedures for dealing with any attendance and absence issues that are likely to arise, as well as being a vehicle for planning interventions and support mechanisms for individual learners when they have difficulty in attending regularly for whatever reason.

It is important that parents and all school staff understand that they have a key role in improving learner engagement and attendance. Attendance is not something for the pastoral team and the education welfare service (EWS) only. Attendance is everyone's responsibility and a collaborate approach between schools, local authority teams and external agencies is essential.

The overall school attendance strategy should be published and easily accessible so that it can be understood by all, especially by learners and parents. It should explain how the school intends to communicate with learners and parents. Schools should make sure learners, and their parents understand and are fully aware of the strategy and policies and their role and responsibility in ensuring their children attend school.

The policy should set out the school's working partnership with the EWS and the circumstances under which it will start formal processes for dealing with regular absence, including referral to the EWS and the use of other formal measures.

Leadership and the Role of Senior Staff and Governors

The school's attendance strategy and policies and their effectiveness should be regularly reviewed and evaluated. Governors and senior leaders have a key role in developing, monitoring, and reviewing the attendance strategy and policies, and their implementation and impact.

Establishing and maintaining an inclusive whole-school ethos that is welcoming to all learners and celebrates diversity is the responsibility of the school leadership, areas for consideration could include:

- recognising attendance as an important area of school improvement
- having a clear vision for improving learner engagement and attendance
- conveying clear messages about how absence affects attainment, wellbeing, and wider outcomes
- making sure staff, learners and parents understand that absence from school is a potential safeguarding risk
- expecting good attendance and punctuality from all members of the school community
- designating an attendance lead on the senior leadership team and governing body
- ensuring staff and governors receive professional development and support to understand and implement attendance systems effectively
- considering and reflecting on data and trends; and on ensuring the full needs of each learner are emphasised in each individual case as part of a rights-centred approach
- providing governors with the information they need to have an accurate view of school attendance and to engage in escalation procedures where appropriate.

Safeguarding and Child Protection

All schools and education settings have statutory duties to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of learners. All staff members must be aware of and understand how to contact and raise concerns with the designated safeguarding person for the school.

Absence from school is a potential safeguarding risk and tracking and monitoring of attendance is a crucial element of the school's safeguarding role. Absence can signal concerns and wider wellbeing issues.

Keeping Learners Safe guidance states that:

- Education settings should use their attendance policy and practice to ensure they are in regular contact with parents if a child is absent from school without authorisation or if they have patterns of absence.
- If a child is absent without notification, it could also be without the knowledge of their parent or carer and could be an early sign that the child is missing from home or care. The education setting should ensure any absence is followed up quickly to ensure the child is safe and not missing from home or care.
- Schools should regularly review attendance data to identify and respond to children who are at risk. Schools should have first day absence reporting processes in place and processes for deciding whether welfare sightings are needed.
- Where a child is registered at a school and subsequently attends an alternative setting such as EOTAS the original school should assume responsibility for checking the child's attendance (at both settings) on a daily basis.

One of the specific circumstances in which data protection legislation allows the sharing of sensitive personal information without the consent of the child or parent is to safeguard children and protect them and others from harm. Staff should be trained to understand when information should be shared with other stakeholders and what information may be disclosed.

Promoting effective attendance through robust target setting

During 2020, the Welsh Government revoked the School Performance and Absence Targets (Wales) Regulations 2011 meaning schools were not required to set targets for future years or report on those previously set for 2019 to 2020 onwards. However, as part of their quality assurance processes, schools are advised to clarify their expectations for attendance. Expectations need to be carefully formulated and be based on previous trends and the projected effects of any new approaches to improving attendance. Schools should guard against possible unintended consequences of trying to achieve these expectations, such as placing undue pressure on learners to attend when not in their best interest or in inaccurate use of attendance codes.

Early identification and learner support

Prevention and early intervention are crucial in ensuring issues do not escalate or become entrenched. Attendance is often a symptom of an underlying issue and that successful approaches are rooted in working with the learner, parents and other agencies to identify and resolve these issues. As such, schools need to be able to identify and address early signs that there may be a problem as quickly as possible.

Schools already hold a range of useful information about learners' wellbeing e.g., all schools know which learners are eligible for free school meals (FSM) those who are looked-after (CLA,) and those with barriers to learning and additional learning needs (ALN.)

Recording and analysing attendance

Analysis of attendance data, if carried out effectively, can contribute significantly to wellbeing profiling and to enabling schools to identify worrying trends early, especially as attendance is a good general indicator of wellbeing. Analysis of attendance data should be combined with analysis of other wellbeing indicators collected by the school, such as those on learner behaviour, attitudes to learning, and on academic achievement and progress, along with other sources of information from form tutors, the learners themselves, parents and other family members, and pupil survey information. Taken together, this information gives a more complete picture that one source may provide. Many learners will require some extra support at some point during their education and schools need to identify appropriate and proportionate responses.

Accurate recording and analysis of attendance is essential to ensuring child protection and the safety of all learners.

An accurate and consistent registration system is also crucial if attendance and punctuality within a school are to be improved. Analysis of attendance data enables patterns of absence or lateness to be identified early for individual learners. Data reports for the following categories and/or cohorts should be used regularly by schools to support analysis strategic planning of interventions to improve attendance:

- Individual Learner
- Whole school
- Key stage
- Year Group
- Gender
- Vulnerability group
- Persistent absence
- Percentage level

This will allow schools to identify learners whose attendance is of concern and prioritise them for school-based interventions. If necessary, following a continued decline in attendance, discussions around these concerns can be in a formal basis with the Education Welfare Service in EWS consultation meetings.

School staff should be aware of when and to whom they should refer significant absence. Schools should regularly:

- Monitor and analyse attendance and punctuality patterns weekly and deliver interventions for learners identified as needing support.
- Look at patterns of attendance and punctuality within sessions to ensure learners are attending all timetabled provision.

- Use the data to provide regular attendance reports for staff and governors.
- Identify learners who need support and focus staff efforts on developing targeted actions for those learners.
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full year attendance data to identify patterns and trends.
- Benchmark the school's attendance data against available local and national data
- Devise whole-school strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data analysis.
- provide data and reports to support the work of the governing body.

The importance of accurate recording of attendance is key through the registration process in schools having accurate attendance data.

Attendance Registration

There are detailed requirements for schools regarding the recording of learner attendance set out in the Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010.

Schools are required by law to take an attendance register twice a day at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session.

The afternoon registration must take place at the start or during the afternoon session, not at the end of the morning session or during the break between sessions.

A consistent and legal approach to afternoon registration where a school has introduced split lunch arrangements is required - the afternoon registration should be taken following the **last school lunch period**.

Accurate and careful use of attendance codes is paramount to avoid possible safeguarding issues arising such as when learners attend education other than at school (EOTAS.) The attendance register will be requested as evidence in any prosecution for non-attendance. Any change to an original entry in a register must be clearly distinguishable.

Missing marks

There should not be any missing marks on a schools' attendance register for a morning or afternoon session. Missing marks could have a safeguarding impact. Schools should have arrangements in place to ensure that missing marks are monitored regularly to support a robust approach to safeguarding, it should be noted that maintaining an accurate registration certificate is a legal requirement. The monitoring of internal truancy processes should also be in place with follow up procedures.

Schools should have in place a system for marking pupils present in school where they may not be in their timetabled lesson but may be receiving intervention support with another member of staff on school site.

Effective and accurate registration coding

Schools should have quality assurance procedures in place for the recording of attendance and punctuality with a member of the senior management team responsible for overseeing issues relating to attendance and that a positive and honest whole-school culture exists around attendance. When recording attendance on school registers, schools should adhere to the Welsh Government definitions of the use of attendance codes.

Schools should discuss any queries they may have around coding with their allocated Education Welfare Officer (EWO) who can support alongside the guidance.

The EWS will also work with schools to discuss coding issues that may arise during the School EWS Consultation meetings.

Discussions could include:

- Investigations of use of certain codes.
- Variation in code use.
- Appropriate code use.
- Missing marks.
- Safeguarding – use of codes

The register must show whether a pupil is classified as being on one of the following categories:

- Present
- Engaged in approved educational activity off site (treated as present)
- Absent
- Not required to attend (typically because of school closure).

Where a pupil is of compulsory school age, the register must show whether any absence was authorised by the school or unauthorised.

Authorised absence – Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for the learner to be absent from school, or where an explanation offered afterwards has been accepted by the school as satisfactory justification for absence.

Schools should not pre-populate attendance codes but add a note to the SIMS system for the known absence date following a term time absence request if granted.

Only schools, and not parents, can authorise an absence, and schools must consider whether the reason for absence is reasonable before doing so. If schools are coding absences as authorised this will mean that schools are in agreement with the reasons for the absence and this coding would not support any referrals to the Education Welfare Service.

Unauthorised absence

Any absence that is not authorised by the school should be recorded as an unauthorised absence. School staff need not approve an absence if they are in doubt that the explanation is not a reasonable basis for missing school. It is for schools to judge whether the explanation given is satisfactory justification for the absence. Any further investigation should be handled sensitively but if questions remain or no satisfactory explanation is forthcoming, the absence must be treated as unauthorised.

Where schools are coding unauthorised absence, parents should be informed of this decision, whether the absence is due to a declined request for term time absence or other reason provided by parent. This is especially important where school is unauthorising absence based on a parent reporting illness as a reason for the absence.

Schools should have processes in place that set out how to approach all absences whether approved or not. Parents should make a request for any term time absence other than illness to the Headteacher, only the Headteacher can authorise absences during school time in exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should have a clear criterion for authorising any request for term time absence which takes into account prior and current attendance and engagement, and any familial vulnerability factors such as cultural reason and armed forces families to ensure parity of approach.

Schools should encourage parents to make every attempt to make routine appointments, such as dental check-ups after school or during the school holidays.

Absence – First Day Response (FDR)

Schools should emphasise parental responsibility for ensuring accurate attendance records by asking parents to inform them as soon as possible when their child will not be attending school on a particular day. Where a child is registered with a school and is attending another setting on the day of the absence, parents should inform both the school and the other setting their child is unable to attend.

The Local Authority expects that schools have a first day response process and follows up all absences to determine reasons for absence (if one has not already been provided by parents). Contacting parents immediately can prevent absences from becoming prolonged and has a safeguarding function, which is particularly important for vulnerable groups. By contacting parents, the school also makes them aware that their child is not in school and enables them to take steps to ensure their child's safety.

Schools need to ensure that the details for learners are regularly checked and updated with parents (Personal data collection). Schools need to inform parents if their FDR includes contacting other contacts provided by parents if parents cannot be reached by school in the attempts made to gain a reason for absence.

Lateness

The register should remain open for 30 minutes after the start of both, the morning and afternoon sessions. SIMS can be used to monitor the minutes late and a comment can be recorded for the time of arrival of a child who arrives late.

Parents play a significant role in promoting attendance and engagement by ensuring that their child arrives at school on time. Arriving late at school can be disruptive for the child, the teacher, and other learners in the class. If a learner is late for registration, then they will be coded with a late mark (L) in line with Welsh Government Guidance.

If a child arrives after the register closes (over 30 minutes) the child's absence should be recorded as an unauthorised absence for that session (U code.)

Pastoral Support Plan

School staff who complete registers and all attendance staff in schools should be aware of learners who with agreement through a reduced timetable or pastoral support plan (PSP) where the time of their arrival differs from the normal registration period the register code is appropriate to reflect this agreement.

Good practice would be to add a note SIMS to reflect the learner has an agreed plan in place and **time of arrival** in case of any emergency.

Where a Pupil may have absences due to a PSP these should be considered when determining if a referral to the EWS is necessary as the attendance for the learner will be impacted but with agreement.

If parents are having difficulty in getting their child to school, it is essential that they contact the child's Headteacher or appropriate school point of contact in the first instance.

Illness Coding

Schools should adhere to the NHS Wales information for infectious periods of illnesses, when considering coding illness absence. Welsh Government guidance shares that it is counterproductive for pupils to attend school when they are ill, for instance, because attending school could be more harmful to the learner and/or others than if they had stayed home.

It is good practice for schools to 'check-in' with learners if their absence continues for longer than 3 days for illness/ wellbeing and discuss a date of return to school. First day absence processes should continue.

It is advised that schools contact parents to provide medical evidence if the absences are:

- Continued
- there is a regular pattern emerging
- entrenched continuation of absences reported as illness by parent

Medical evidence may not be available for all cases of pupil absence and could be at a financial cost to parents and will not be available for every reported illness reason. School could consider asking parents for:

- Hospital letter of appointment
- Optician/Dental Appointment card
- GP appointment letter/Text confirmation

If an illness reason is provided by parent and the absence is unauthorised by the school, the school should inform the parent of the reason for this.

Where a learner is experiencing a condition, such as depression or acute anxiety, provision for schooling should be treated in the same way as for children who are unable to attend school due to a physical illness.

The Educational Welfare Service's main role is to improve school attendance, and the Education Welfare Service is able to take legal action where necessary. This however would not be an appropriate route in the case of EBSA and or school refusal as emphasis should be on putting in place the necessary support and planning reintegration into mainstream schooling dependent on the success of the support.

B / D Coding

Where a school uses a code which signifies that a child is present, (i.e. a B or a D code- either in school or engaged in an approved educational activity), then the statistical meaning of this code is that the child is present, engaged in provision, supervised in person by an appropriately qualified member of staff and is safe.

Where pupils have been identified as having medical, physical and emotional needs and have been accepted for EOTAS provision by the local authority, it is agreed that the coding of a B code can be used for any local authority offer of EOTAS delivered remotely as part of a local authority approach.

Schools need to ensure that they are confident that their pastoral support plans reflect supervision to quality assure any alternative provision and ensure there are appropriate safeguarding arrangements in place for learners who have bespoke packages of education. Where a learner has a Social Worker there should be a risk assessment element to the PSP in place.

Where pupils are being reintegrated or have a bespoke timetable, and they have a PSP in place, any sessions where they are not engaged in provision or are not supervised by an appropriately qualified member of staff should be coded using the **C code**. Schools should provide a full-time

Monmouthshire's Children, Learning, Skills and Economy Directorate

offer of education and in these sessions, work should be provided via hard copies or through other systems i.e. Google Classroom. Where pupils may be dual registered safeguarding lies with both schools and should be recorded on SIMS with the main school as Main and other school as Subsidiary.

Where pupils receive support from Monmouthshire's Dalen Newydd Support, they are on roll at the main school and should not be on roll at the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) because this is an outreach provision to support learner engagement in education in school and on a school site and are not dual registered.

Holidays in term time and extended overseas trip

Schools can only agree to absence for a family holiday or trip if they believe there are special and exceptional circumstances that warrant it. If a school agrees absence and the pupil goes on holiday or trip for 10 days or less, absence is authorised (use code H).

If parents keep a child away for longer than was agreed, any extra time is also recorded as unauthorised (Code G). If the school considers that there are exceptional circumstances to support why a learner should be granted approval for an overseas trip of more than 10 days, the approval can be given, and the absence could be authorised and recorded under Code F.

The use of a different code shows that an extended overseas trip should have a cultural justification other than for a holiday. In these cases, the school should explain the following to parents:

- advance application for term time absence must be made in line with school attendance policy
- the absence should be planned carefully with the school – leave and return date to be agreed
- the school will make the decision if the visit will be authorised or not
- where possible, extended visits should be made during school holidays
- outline the possible detrimental affect it could have on the learner's progress
- examination periods should be avoided
- explain the amount of schoolwork that would be missed and how the school can provide a study pack which the family could help the learner to complete
- explore the possible educational benefits of the visit but also the wellbeing benefits.

Requests for leave of absence for Children who are Looked After must be made by the Social Worker and **NOT** the Foster Carer, if such a request is received the school should immediately refer this case to the child's social worker and alert their Education Welfare Officer.

Holidays taken without the Headteacher's permission will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (G code.) If the Headteacher decides not to authorise the request for a holiday and the subsequent time off is 10 sessions (5 days), then potentially the school could request that a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued.

Study Leave

Study leave should only be used for students during mock and public examinations. Study leave should be recorded as authorised absence registration code S. Schools should not use code B to record study leave. Study leave is unsupervised time away from school (and was originally designed for learners to prepare for public examinations) and does not meet the legal definition of approved educational activity.

The decision to issue study leave or similar arrangement is at the discretion of the school's senior leaders. Where a school decides to issue such leave, it should do so sparingly, and it should normally **not exceed 15 days**.

While it may be a positive experience for some students, periods of study leave may not be in the best interest of students who do not have the skills or the attitude to make good use of unsupervised revision time and would be better off in school. Preparation for examinations should be a carefully planned experience for students.

Flexi-schooling

Flexi-schooling is an arrangement between parents of a child and the school where the child is registered in the normal way, but only attends the school on a flexible basis. The rest of the time the learner is educated at home but will continue to remain on the school roll.

Flexi-schooling is a permissible option, provided that the headteacher at the school concerned and, in many cases, the local authority, agree to the arrangement. There is no guaranteed right for parents to flexi-school. It is entirely at the discretion of the headteacher whether to agree. The local authority would advise schools to contact their allocated EWO/EWS if they receive any requests for flexi-schooling.

In considering such a request Headteachers should have a clear criterion for agreeing a flexi-school arrangement. Consideration should be given to the impact on the learner and how the school is able to monitor this arrangement within a PSP agreed with parents and the local authority.

Under the current All Wales School Attendance Framework, flexi-school learners are recorded under attendance **code 'C'** which counts as an 'authorised absence' from school.

Incentives and rewards for attendance

Many schools use incentives and rewards for learners as a way of encouraging good attendance, either as a class or individual level. Such schemes can also increase the profile of attendance with parents and the wider community. However, schools should be increasingly aware of possible unintended consequences of rewards that disincentivise learners whose attendance may, for no fault of their own, not be as high as their peers.

To counter this risk, schools for example, can continue prize giving for excellent and improved attendance but only after carefully discounting unavoidable absences from calculations and looking at pupils' individual cases.

Schools should consider any learner who may have a genuine reason for absence due to Health, ALN or a PSP etc. and remove any absences which are unavoidable when looking at attendance for rewards and ensure that they consider the Disability Discrimination and Equality Act in their processes.

Learners from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Communities

National data shows that attendance amongst Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners is generally lower than their peers. Families' attitudes to school and the importance they place on education and attending school within Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities vary enormously, as they do with all families.

There are a number of factors which could impact attendance, including (but not limited to)

- experiences of bullying and harassment,
- distrust within the community of the education system,
- and cultural expectations that a young person will take on the responsibilities of caring for family or engaging in the family business.

The unique position of Traveller families in relation to school attendance is recognised by Section 444(6) of the Education Act 1996. It provides a defence to conviction if the parent can demonstrate that:

- They are engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as requires them to travel from place to place
- the child has attended at a school as a registered learner as regularly as the nature of the trade or business permits; and/or
- where the child has attained the age of six years, has made at least 200 attendances (i.e. sessions or half days) during the preceding twelve months.

Monmouthshire's Children, Learning, Skills and Economy Directorate

The aim should always be to ensure that Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children and young people, in common with all other children and young people, attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible – attendance is at least 380 sessions, which equates to 190 days, during any school year. The 200 attendances stated above should not be regarded as the norm.

Schools may authorise absence of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children and young people where they are satisfied that a family migrates but gives reasonable indications that it has every intention of returning - consultation with the local Traveller Education Service, within the local authority can be made. This includes Gypsy and other Travellers, circus and fairground families leaving sites and winter quarters, with every expectation that they will return.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 introduced the power for schools to dually register a Traveller child when they are known to be attending another school. In such situations their attendance can now be recorded as attending an 'approved educational activity' or be dual registered.

The school of main attendance should take responsibility for setting up the appropriate communication systems with the other educational provider to ensure the child or young person is in attendance when they are supposed to be. For safeguarding and educational reasons, the responsibility for following up on unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner falls to each school during the time in which the learner is in situ. Where Traveller children are registered learners at a school and are known to be present either at a site (official or otherwise) or in a house and are not attending school, the absence should be investigated in the same way as that for any learner.

Deleting learners from the school roll and Children Missing Education (CME)

The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 set out the circumstances in which schools must and must not delete learners from their admissions register.

Regulation 8 prescribes the grounds on which the name of a pupil of compulsory school age must be deleted from the admission register. These are:

- the pupil is registered at the school in accordance with the requirements of a School Attendance Order and another school is substituted by the LEA for that named in the Order, or the Order is revoked
- the pupil has been registered at another school
- the school has received written notification from the parent that the pupil is receiving education otherwise than at school

Monmouthshire's Children, Learning, Skills and Economy Directorate

- the pupil has ceased to attend the school and no longer resides within a reasonable distance from the school; school should complete Appendix 1 of the Local Authority CME Policy.
- the pupil has been granted leave of absence exceeding 10 days for the purpose of a holiday and fails to attend school within 10 days immediately following, and the school is not satisfied that the absence is caused by sickness or any unavoidable cause
- the pupil is certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age
- the pupil has been continuously absent from the school for a period of not less than four weeks and both the proprietor of the school and the local education officer have failed, after reasonable enquiry, to locate the pupil
- the pupil has died
- the pupil will cease to be of compulsory school age before the school next meets and does not intend to continue at school
- in the case of a pupil at a school other than a maintained school, that they have ceased to be a pupil at that school
- Where the pupil is registered at a maintained school, that they have been permanently excluded from and the permanent exclusion of a pupil does not take effect until the governing body have discharged their duties under section 66 of the 1998 Act, and:
 - A) The relevant person has stated in writing that he or she does not intend to appeal under Section 67 of the 1998 Act
 - B) The time for bringing an appeal has expired and no appeal has been brought forward within that time; or
 - C) an appeal brought within that time has been determined or abandoned.
- where the pupil has been admitted to the school to receive nursery education and has not, on completing such education, transferred to a reception class at the school.

Regulation 9 sets out the circumstances, in cases where a pupil is registered at more than one school or PRU, in which a school must gain the permission of either the local authority or the proprietor of the other school at which the child is registered before deleting a pupil from the register.

Regulation 12 places a duty on schools to inform the local authority when a pupil is deleted from a register under regulations 8(1)(c), (d), (g), (i) or (m).

- Where a pupil is registered at more than one school, that the pupil has ceased to attend the school and the proprietor of any other school at which the pupil is registered has given consent to the deletion (regulation 8(1)(c)).
- The pupil has ceased to attend the school and the proprietor has received written notification from the parent that the pupil is receiving education otherwise than at school (regulation 8(1)(d)).

- The pupil is certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither the pupil nor the pupil's parent has indicated to the school the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age (regulation 8(1)(g)).
- That the pupil has been detained in pursuance of a final order made by a court or of an order of recall made by a court or the Secretary of State, that order being for a period of not less than 4 months, and the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will return to the school at the end of that period (regulation 8(1)(i)).
- Where the pupil is registered at a maintained school, that the pupil has been permanently excluded from the school (regulation 8(1)(m)).

School should only remove a pupil from their roll once they have established the name and address of the new school and when the pupil has started, confirming this information with the receiving school is important and discussed with the allocated EWO/CME EWO Lead.

School staff should be concerned if:

- parents or carers do not name the new school
- a pupil has 'disappeared' from the area without explanation
- a pupil has not returned to school within 10 school days of the agreed return date where a holiday or trip during term time has previously been approved

If schools are concerned, they should alert the Local Safeguarding Children's Board without delay. If they have no named contact, they should inform the local authority's designated child protection officer who can make a decision on whether to alert social services. Social services may, in turn, involve the police. If, however, schools have any reason to believe that a crime may have been committed, they should immediately contact the police. The local authority CME Policy should be followed.

Young offenders may only be deleted from the register when the period of custody is for at least four months and where the school has reasonable grounds for believing that they will not be returning to school at the end of that period (regulation 8(1)(i)). They will be recorded as an authorised absence until their name is deleted from the register. If an alternative approved educational activity is provided during the period of custody, the school may record the pupil as receiving approved educational activity against the sessions that are being offered.

Schools must make sure that all staff understand the legislation providing for learners to be deleted from the school roll. This is to ensure any required agreement is obtained prior to a pupil being deleted from a school roll and that the school informs the local authority, that a child has been deleted from the register.

Elective Home Education (EHE)

Schools must ensure the local authority is informed when parents have elected to educate their child at home (Elective Home Education - EHE). This will support local authorities fulfil their duty under Section 436A of the Education Act 1996, as amended by section 4 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, which places a duty on all local education authorities requiring that they make arrangements to enable them to establish (so far as it is possible to do so) the 'identities of children in their area who are not registered at a school and are not receiving a suitable education.

Schools should inform the local authority of the parent's decision within 10 days of the receipt of de-registration and share the parent's original letter/email and complete the school form from the Local Authorities EHE Policy.

The local authority would advise schools to contact parents and offer a meeting in school to discuss their decision and discuss if school can provide any additional support around the reason provided by parent.

Monmouthshire's EHE policy, school form provided to the local authority should include information around the learner's experience in school, barriers or any concerns and the support strategies school provided and the outcomes of these. Any supporting school documents will also be useful for the local authority.

Schools can share the Welsh Government EHE Handbook to parents who are considering EHE.

Pupils who are Dual Registered

Where a learner is registered at a mainstream school and at another school, such as an independent school or a PRU, the Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 require the child to be registered at both settings and in this case, they would be dual registered. Where there is no expectation that a learner will attend another school, they will be solely on the roll of the PRU.

Where a learner is dually registered at institution X and Y, institution X marks the pupil using - approved educational activity, code D - while they are attending institution Y and vice-versa.

Approved educational activity must be supervised by someone approved by the school or PRU.

It must also take place during the session for which the mark is recorded. Both institutions share responsibility for the learner.

Failure to attend either institution at the proper time without good reason is unauthorised absence.

Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the school where the learner is scheduled to be can notify the other school of any absences by individual learners so that both schools can record the learner absence using the relevant absence code.

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

Pupils registered at a mainstream school who also attend an EOTAS setting (Not dual registered)

Where a pupil is registered at a mainstream school and is in receipt of EOTAS provision, other than at a registered provider (Local Authority PRU), code B is used where the EOTAS provision is an approved educational activity.

Approved Educational Activity must be supervised by someone approved by the school and must take place during the session for which the mark is recorded.

Code B code should not be used for any period when there is no educational delivery by a staff member. as this could mask possible safeguarding concerns. This would include, for example, sessions where face-to-face teaching is not scheduled to take place for a child who is in receipt of local authority home tuition.

Where the school is authorising absence for a session the child is not required to attend, either via mainstream or EOTAS provision. In such cases code C should be used. For educational and safeguarding reasons, schools should ensure they have in place arrangements whereby the EOTAS provider can notify the school of any absences by individual pupils to enable the school to record the pupil as absent, using the relevant absence code.

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

Part time timetables/reduced hours timetabled within Pastoral Support Plans (PSP)

The Inclusion Service within the local authority monitor and analyses data for learners on part-time timetables /Pastoral Support plans (PSP.) and learners with a reduced hours element of education within a PSP.

Whilst part-time timetables, can help learners re-integrate into a school after a long absence or be a means of preventing greater absence, they have the overall effect of reducing time in school for learners and can have a negative impact on learner progress and wellbeing. In addition, part-time

timetables can place pressures on families and have the potential to further learner disengagement from education.

Part-time timetable arrangements should be recorded in a plan as a formal arrangement between the parents, the child, the school, the local authority and other relevant practitioners. This could include, for example, being documented in a reintegration plan following exclusion or a managed move arrangement. Reduced hours can also be recorded in a pastoral support plan or behaviour support plan (BSP), where the pupil has one. Monmouthshire have a Pastoral Support Plan template for schools which can be obtained from the Inclusion Team or EWS.

Part-time timetables should only be used in **exceptional circumstances as a short-term measure**, (generally no more than a six-week period), with the intention of returning to full time attendance at school sooner. Schools should ensure learners who are on a part-time timetable, receive a full education, where this is appropriate for individual learners. This could include for example, providing the learner with on-line or hard copy resources and work. Schools should ensure learners can access on-line work prior to putting in place arrangements of that nature for the continuation of full education attend school.

This duty is placed on local authorities under section 19A of the Education Act 1996 which states:

Each local authority in Wales must make arrangements for the provision of suitable education at school or otherwise than at school for children within the authority's area who –

- (a) are of compulsory school age, and
- (b) by reason of illness, exclusion from school or otherwise, may not receive suitable education for a period unless such arrangements are made for them.

Part-time timetables should never be used as a means of managing behavioural issues. All learners are entitled to a full-time education and access to the curriculum. In addition, schools are required to deliver the curriculum, other than where exceptions apply

Prior to pursuing a part-time timetable, parents and pupils and the Inclusion service within the local authority should be fully consulted. The EWS and Children's Services should also be informed if they are open cases to them.

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

- be satisfied that a part-time timetable is an appropriate intervention given the needs of the pupil. There must be a clear and evidenced rationale for considering a part-time timetable



- as an intervention aimed at supporting the learner to transition back into full-time education
- be satisfied that suitable arrangements would be in place to ensure the safeguarding and welfare of the learner during the period when they would otherwise have been expected to be in school. This includes, for example, gaining agreement from social services where a child has a social worker or is considered to be a child in need; and securing written agreement from the parents or carers about who is responsible for the welfare of the student for the sessions in question
- evaluate the support already implemented and consider the need for any additional support and intervention. This could include additional transition/reintegration support where a learner is, for example, returning to school after a long period of time due to being excluded from school to address any ongoing behaviours of challenge/support for emotional dysregulation.
- have a clear rationale for the proposed education arrangements, such as part-time attendance at school supplemented by work provided by the school or in some cases EOTAS provision to ensure the learner receives a full education.
- consult with the learner, their parents and the Inclusion service in the local authority to gain agreement to pursue a reduced timetable ensure, where a learner has an individual development plan (IDP), the number of hours of support set out in the IDP will be met so that schools, PRUs and local authorities continue to meet their statutory obligations.
- ensure a reduced timetable would not impact on travelling and transport arrangements in a way which would make it difficult for the learner to access the education arranged.
- ensure that arrangements for a reduced timetable would not adversely affect a pupil's access to free school meals.
- Consider what support the learner may need to ensure they are able to fully reintegrate into full-time mainstream education. This could include additional academic and/or well-being support on return to school. This may involve consulting with all practitioners involved in supporting the learner.

Once it has been agreed by the learner, their parents, the Inclusion team in the local authority and any other relevant practitioners that a learner should have a part-time timetable, the school must:

- set out the new arrangements in a written agreement signed by all parties.
- provide a detailed written action plan to the learner and their parent, with a named person responsible, clear objectives, targets and review dates and a date for the expected return to full-time education
- liaise throughout with the parents, gain parental approval and written permission
- liaise throughout with the local authority to gain agreement to the proposed plan,
- liaise throughout with all relevant agencies and provide them with a copy of the plan



- undertake a risk assessment regarding the safeguarding implications for the learner being out of school and arrange that the pupil is sighted virtually by a professional regularly when not undertaking education supervised by the school or arranged by the local authority
- establish robust arrangements for a named member of senior staff to monitor and review the plan on a weekly basis
- ensure effective communication with parents, carers and key professionals with regard to progressing towards the pupil's full re-integration into full-time education
- maintain a formal record of all learners on reduced timetables, including the date implemented and review dates and share this with the local authority and other relevant practitioners through the schools PSP tracker and share this with the local authority regularly.
- mediate risks of negatively impacting on the learner's engagement with education and sense of belonging to the school community whilst the learner has a reduced timetable. This might include regular check-ins with a named school practitioner when the learner attends school and ensuring their timetable includes opportunities to maintain relationships with peers outside of lessons
- ensure all school staff feel confident to support the needs of the learner when they return to full time education. This may include training, involvement from external agencies or colleague support.

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

Approved educational activity registration code B can only be used where a registered learner is being educated off-site at a supervised activity approved by the school and supervised by a member of school staff or approved agency support staff member. Schools should not use this code if learners are sent home for private study or study leave.

Exclusions

The Inclusion Service within Monmouthshire local authority monitor and analyse exclusion data for schools and seek to ensure that all exclusion comply with Welsh Government statutory guidance and linked non statutory guidance.

Exclusions which are not compliant with this statutory document would be potentially unlawful. Formal exclusions should be used only where there is no alternative but to exclude. A headteacher may only exclude in response to serious breaches of the school's behaviour policy and if allowing the learner to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the learner or others in the school.

Unlawful exclusion (sometimes referred to as informal or unofficial) refers to:

- Headteachers or other school staff sending learners home for disciplinary reasons, but not following the procedures required for formal exclusion even if done with the agreement of parents.
- learners being sent home for either short periods of time, or for longer, indefinite, periods which can sometimes result in the pupil not returning to school at all.

For example, where a learner is sent home for disciplinary reasons for part of a school day, the school may view this as a 'cooling off' period and not take action to exclude the learner formally. There is no basis in law for this and the relevant regulations do not state a minimum length of exclusion, so if a learner is sent home, even for short periods of time, this must be formally recorded as an exclusion.

In every instance where a learner is sent home for disciplinary reasons, headteachers must formally record and specify the length of the exclusion (for reporting purposes this should be recorded as a half day, whole day or lunchtime). They should ensure that:

- they are meeting their legal duty of care towards learners, and that parents are formally notified of the exclusion.
- child protection issues are taken into account, e.g. bearing in mind the learner's age and vulnerability, that a parent is at home and the learner is not placed at risk by, for example, being left to wander and not return home.
- that work is sent home, or alternative provision is arranged.

The local authority will work to identify instances of unlawful exclusions. This could include:

- providing opportunities for members of the public to inform the local authority of possible instances of unofficial exclusions.

- encouraging parents to report instances of unlawful exclusion to the LA. In addition, EWS should follow up informal intelligence from parents, learners, and home visits about learners out of school.

The Vulnerable Learner Lead in the Inclusion service within the local authority offers advice and guidance to schools, excluded learners and parents and attends the pupil disciplinary committee meeting (PDC) for permanent exclusions and some longer length fixed term exclusions.

Education provision for excluded learners

The school has an obligation to ensure education continues while the learner is still on the roll.

The name of a permanently excluded learner should remain on the school roll if and after the PDC hearing has upheld the exclusion until the appeals procedure is completed, or until the time for appeals has expired without an appeal being lodged. It may be removed earlier if the parents or learner give notice in writing that they do not intend to appeal. In all cases of more than a day's exclusion, work should be set and marked. Headteachers must arrange for work to be provided as soon as a learner is excluded for a fixed term.

Parents should arrange for the work to be collected and returned, and the school must ensure that it is marked, and that further work is set until the learner returns to school.

Letters to parents and/or learners informing them of the exclusion must include the arrangements for setting and marking work.

The governing body is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with these requirements. Headteachers should have a written policy on arrangements for receiving learners back into school after a fixed-term exclusion, which should include receipt of work completed during the exclusion. However, failure to complete work does not constitute a reason for refusing to allow the learner to return to school.

Where a headteacher is considering excluding a learner for more than 15 school days in any one term, whether permanently or for a fixed term, they should put in place plans to address the presenting issues and needs of the learner and secure their continuing education. The Welsh Government expects local authority and schools to work toward ensuring all learners excluded for more than three weeks receive full-time and appropriate education. Where, in exceptional cases, this is not possible owing to the circumstances of an individual learner, there should be in place plans for full-time, appropriate provision with regular reviews of progress.

Excluded learners should only be educated outside mainstream schools where there are significant problems that are better addressed in a different environment. Where this is the case, the Inclusion Panel will discuss the case and consider the most appropriate provision.

Part-time provision is often inadequate to meet the educational needs of excluded learners and to ensure continuity of education. It also leaves some of these learners unsupervised for significant periods of a normal school day. The Local authority, therefore, will aim for all learners to receive full-time education 15 days after being excluded, either at another school or, where necessary an alternative provision.

Where learners may have become so disengaged from education, or their current circumstances may be such, that a rapid reintroduction to full-time education is unlikely to prove successful a plan will be required to specifying how the move to full-time education is to be achieved. Full-time means that the amount of supervised education should mirror that provided by mainstream schools in the area. An average school week might amount to some 25 hours; so excluded learners should receive around five hours of supervised education or other activity a day. A full timetable for an excluded learner may, however, look significantly different from that provided in a mainstream school.

Supporting learners returning to school

Learners who are returning to school, particularly following lengthy periods of absence, need to feel that the school is glad to see them and is ready to make the transition back to full-time education as easy for them as possible.

To support these learners, schools should consider the following:

- Focus on developing positive relationships with key adults in school.
- Welcome learners back and provide tailored praise and encouragement when they attend and arrive on time.
- Provide catch-up support to build confidence and bridge missed work, for example through providing lunchtime and homework clubs, extra lesson resources, mentor support, small group work or one to one input.
- Have daily or weekly check-ins to discuss issues, review progress, and consider the impact of support.
- Contact parents regularly to discuss progress and emotional wellbeing, and the support available to help with costs such as for school uniform, trips, after-school clubs, IT, stationery or transport.
- Consider what additional targeted support for re-engagement might be needed, and consider establishing formal action plans, such as pastoral support plans (PSP)
- Children returning to school from being home educated may require a period of transition which may require a PSP.

Where a child has been excluded from school, The Education (Reintegration Interview) (Wales) Regulations 2010 prescribe the circumstances in which a headteacher must request the parents of an excluded pupil of compulsory school age attend an interview/reintegration meeting under section 102 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the procedure by which the meeting must be arranged.

The regulations provide that:

- the request for meetings applies to all fixed-term exclusions for primary-aged pupils; for secondary-aged pupils, only when fixed-term exclusions of six or more days have been applied will parents/carers be expected, but not required, to attend the meeting
- reintegration meetings need to take place within 15 school days of the last day of the exclusion period
- headteachers are required to inform the parents of all relevant details of the reintegration meeting
- schools have to offer reintegration meetings and a request for parents to attend a reintegration meeting is not required if the first day of exclusion is within the last 10 days of the school year or the pupil is expected to leave school for a reason unconnected with their behaviour before the end of the required 15-day period for the meeting.

Many schools carry out reintegration meetings for parents of excluded pupils as a matter of good practice, providing the headteacher (or any other person authorised by the headteacher) with the opportunity to discuss with parents how best the pupil can return to school and any further support they need to be successful.

Reintegration meetings represent an additional important element to ensure that parents actively engage with schools to address challenges. For that reason, it has been made compulsory for schools to request parents to attend reintegration meetings following fixed-term exclusions. While the regulations do not require schools to request pupils attend the reintegration meetings, schools should ensure that this is a core aspect of their practice.

Every attempt should be made to encourage learners to attend reintegration meetings or to ensure their views are adequately represented. If the learner attends the meeting, then schools will need to ensure that the meeting is conducted in a manner which enables the learner to be comfortable in offering their views. The meeting provides an opportunity to:

- Understand the causes underlying the behaviours that led to the exclusion and how to reduce risks associated with any re-occurrence of the behaviours.
- emphasise the importance of parents working with the school to take joint responsibility for their child's presenting need, including any behaviours of concern/challenge.

- discuss presenting needs so challenges can be addressed
- explore wider issues and any circumstances that may be at the root cause of the behavioural issues
- reach agreement on how the child's education should continue, how best they can be reintegrated and what measures could be put in place to prevent further issues arising

Schools should offer reintegration meetings. Parents will be expected, though not required, to attend them. If a parent does not attend this should not affect the learner's return to school: an exclusion cannot be extended because a parent did not attend a reintegration meeting.

Support for Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA)

EBSA is an umbrella term used for the experience of children and young people who have severe difficulty in attending school due to emotional factors, often resulting in prolonged absences from school. It refers to absence from school due to the specific emotional distress experienced around attending school. EBSA is the result of a complex variety of factors, and there will not be one single cause or factor. Although a quick return to school is important for positive outcomes for children and young people experiencing EBSA, it is important to take time to complete assessments and plan the return and the support carefully. A graduated approach to EBSA involves early identification, a whole-school approach, good communication and working with parents, and emphasises the importance of relationships in school.

Some supporting practices could include:

- allowing pupils to start school later and finish school earlier
- using different school entrances
- collection by a parent at lunchtime
- provision of a 'safe place' for learners who could not face crowded classrooms
- provision of extra support in class
- buddy systems – support in school from named learners
- gradual reintegration – including individually tailored part-time timetables (PSP)

Monmouthshire have a graduated approach to supporting learners who are experiencing EBSA. Monmouthshire have produced EBSA Guidance and Resources, including an EBSA Pathway, an EBSA Support Plan, good practice support guidelines for schools for attendance and wellbeing, and downloadable resources to meaningfully gain the voice of the child/young person. An 'Introduction to EBSA' training package has been part of the professional learning offer available to all schools/ settings since May 2021. This is available via the Inclusion Service and the training portal pages [Educational Psychology Service \(sharepoint.com\)](#).

Counselling may be beneficial for some children. Counsellors are independent of school, governing body and teaching staff and offer a confidential service to children and young people.

Where ESBA is diagnosed as a medical condition, such as depression or acute anxiety, provision for schooling should be treated in the same way as for children who are unable to attend school due to illness.

The Educational Welfare Service's main role is to improve school attendance, and the Education Welfare Service is able to take legal action where necessary. This however would not be an appropriate route in the case of school refusal as emphasis should be on putting in place the necessary support and planning reintegration into mainstream schooling dependent on the success of the support.

Supporting learners with healthcare needs

All learners with healthcare needs are entitled to a full education and should be supported so that they have full access to education, including trips and physical education. Governing bodies should ensure that arrangements are in place to support learners with healthcare needs and that school staff consult with relevant professionals, learners and parents to ensure the needs of the learner with healthcare needs are properly understood and supported.

Although EOTAS provision is intended to be a short-term arrangement to enable learners to maintain engagement with education and support a swift and successful return to school. However, where there are health care needs which may result in a prolonged absence period for learners. Where this is the case, and it is a barrier to accessing full time education, supported by evidence and intervention from health services, schools should discuss this with the Local Authority's Inclusion Service for advice about a possible referral. In this way, schools are able to explore the possibility of EOTAS support if the absences are likely to be significant.

Schools should contact the Inclusion Service within the local authority if they wish to discuss individual cases for further advice and guidance.

Rights, Respect and Equality (RRE) (Anti-bullying)

Bullying can be a significant factor in learners' absence from school. We know that learners with some protected characteristics are more likely to experience bullying and this can be a significant reason for absence. Schools are encouraged to actively check this with learners on a regular basis. Some RRE/bullying concerns may become a safeguarding issue, and, in these cases, the Local Authority Officer for Safeguarding in Education (LOSIE) should be made aware as soon as possible.

Schools should keep a record of any incidents and actions and share this with the Inclusion team within the local authority. Training, advice and guidance is provided to schools by the Inclusion team within the local authority.

Child Employment, Performance Licensing and Work Experience

Education Welfare Officers have specialised roles in relation to regulating Child Employment and Performance Licences.

A parent may apply for a Performance License which may require time away from school. If this is the case, the request needs the consideration and agreement of the Headteacher. If the school are concerned around any aspects of the application, they should speak to the Local Authority Lead EWO for this area. Further information can be found by following the link below:

ChaperonePerformanceLicensing@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Any learner of compulsory school age cannot participate in part-time work that may affect their health and safety or interfere with their education. They can start full-time employment when they leave school (on the last Friday in June of the year they turn 16). A work permit must be requested from the local authority and all learners, whether on roll at a school, PRU or EHE, will require a work permit licence.

Any requests for part-time work must be agreed by the headteacher in the first instance and formally authorised by the local authority. Applications forms may be held in schools for learners to obtain or gained from the local authority. Work Permit License requests should be forwarded to the schools allocated EWO for checking and approval by the employer/learner before the local authority EWS can issue a work permit licence to ensure all local authority and national policies are adhered to.

Schools should ensure they share any concerns or information they receive that a learner of statutory school age is working without a work permit license. Schools can also contact the EWS Lead Education Welfare Officer to check if a permit has been issued to ensure that there are no safeguarding concerns arising from unregulated employment.

The Role of the Education Welfare Service

The Role of the Education Welfare Service (EWS)

The local authority Education Welfare Service provides professional, quality support to schools, children, young people and parents and provides appropriate support to education settings, so that children and young people can benefit from the educational opportunities provided to them.

The EWS believes that children and young people have the right to equal opportunities and are committed to ensuring that all children and young people gain maximum benefit from education regardless of learning needs, ethnic origin, sex, sexual orientation, disability, gender reassignment, religious beliefs or non-belief, language or nationality.

Within Monmouthshire schools will have a named allocated Education Welfare Officer (EWO) usually on a cluster basis in the following 4 areas: Abergavenny, Caldicot, Chepstow, Monmouth. The EWO will visit schools regularly to hold EWS consultation meetings with Headteachers, Attendance leads or a nominated member of school staff.

The EWS explores the reasons behind school absence, offer information and guidance, undertake planned interventions, advise parents about specialist support services, and make referrals to appropriate services when required. The EWS works collaboratively with other agencies to support all children and young people with specific emphasis placed on safeguarding and child protection issues.

The EWS recognises that children and young people with additional learning needs and families who are vulnerable and or socio-economically disadvantaged may, at times, require extra support.

The role of the EWS is to:

- review attendance register returns under the Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 and any associated guidance.
- recognise the requirements of both the legislation and underlying principles related to data protection, access to personal files and pupil records under the GDPR.
- support the school to develop a whole school approach to managing attendance and addressing potential wellbeing and safeguarding issues that could be affecting school absence and poor punctuality.
- Support schools to develop systems, processes and monitoring arrangements
- refer and work with other agencies when appropriate to ensure a holistic approach to welfare and attendance issues.

- collate, interpret and present data on issues relating to attendance. During EWS Consultations EWOs can provide attendance reports on whole school attendance, individual pupil data, vulnerable groups and Equality act public sector equality duty data.
- provide advice and guidance to school staff on the management of SIMs.
- support schools in their development and review of their school attendance policies and assist in implementing strategies to raise attendance.
- link with relevant staff to plan intervention for learners with persistent absence.
- ensure a co-ordinated and consistent approach to referral, recording, reporting and case closing systems.
- provide advice on proven good practice.

Attendance is the overall responsibility of the whole school and the EWS will work in partnership with schools in securing and sustaining high levels of attendance.

The EWS undertakes proceedings on behalf of the local authority, in respect of parents who do not ensure their children's regular attendance at school or enrol them at school or education otherwise than at school.

The EWS will make relevant assessments in partnership with learners, parents, school staff and other relevant parties, concerning attendance at school or alternative educational provision.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence. The use of legal action against parents will be considered as part of a planned intervention to improve attendance. This can include the issuing of fixed penalty notices under section 444A of that Act.

The EWS must ensure accountability for issuing FPN's. The EWS will offer information to parents and learners about rights and responsibilities concerning attendance and the legal process, during any intervention with the family.

Within Monmouthshire EWOs also hold Lead role responsibilities for the following areas:

- Elective Home Education (EHE)
- Children Missing Education (CME)
- Multi Agency Risk assessment Conference (MARAC)
- Chaperone & Licensing
- Work Permits
- Entertainment Licensing & Body of persons Approval (BOPAs)

Schools can find further information in the Monmouthshire Attendance & engagement handbook.

Referrals to the Education Welfare Service (EWS)

During the EWS School consultations, pupil attendance data should be analysed. The knowledge and coding of the absences will be a factor contributing to whether a referral to the EWS is appropriate. Before accepting a referral, the EWS will look for evidence that the school has made every effort to exhaust the school-based actions and attendance processes to address the attendance issues.

Schools should have systems and support in place for learners below 100% attendance, the EWS will consider referrals for learners whose attendance has fallen below 80% attendance and all school supporting avenues have been exhausted as this is a significant raise in level of support as it can carry a legal route of prosecution.

Where there may be an emerging pattern of non-attendance and this falls below 90%, schools can make a request for involvement from a Family Liaison Officer within the EWS (if available) who can provide support in the following areas:

- Building relationships between families and schools.
- Undertake initial assessments of pupils' barriers to school and poor attendance.
- Attend joint home visits with school staff before referral to EWS.
- Home visit to support EWO for open cases to EWS.
- Support EWO with individual pupil support.
- Provide Family support & advice e.g. community training, activities, food banks etc.
- Individual pupil support working on MCC EBSA approach/ handbook.
- Support with Self-confidence/esteem, positive relationships.
- Meeting pupils in school who may have been absent for a long period to support.
- Support pupils receiving Inspire Outreach support for wellbeing visits/reintegration.
- Raise working cases to EWS panel for EWO involvement if not already referred.
- Attend CASP/CP meetings where necessary.

Referrals should be made when schools have followed and exhausted their attendance processes and have a graduated response for supportive measures and despite this there is:

- a pattern of irregular attendance and unauthorised absence below 80%.
- a period of entrenched non-attendance, below 80%.
- lack of parental co-operation in ensuring a child's regular attendance.
- a pattern of post-registration absence despite the school's efforts to prevent it.
- a pattern of persistent lateness after the close of the school register.
- a specific welfare issue which is preventing a pupil from accessing education.

Monmouthshire's Children, Learning, Skills and Economy Directorate

- a pupil withdrawn from school by the parents who are moving to another area and the school does not receive a request for the pupil's records from a school in the new area – CME process should also be followed.
- a parent withdrawing a child from school having expressed an intention to electively educate them at home but have not formally deregistered the pupil by advising the local authority of their intentions (where no-de-registration has been received in writing)
- Family Liaison Officer support for learners below 90% attendance

Following school process and discussion with the EWO in EWS consultation meetings a referral should be completed by school with the relevant information and supporting documents for discussion at the EWS Panel meeting which is held fortnightly.

The referral should include the following information:

- Learner information, including name, age, date of birth, year or class group, gender, ethnic origin, language other than English or Welsh, requirements of any religious affiliation, address if different to parents or carers.
- Parent/Carer information including date of birth – to include both parents who have PR if living separately.
- Assessment by school of learner, for example ability, academic history, areas of difficulty, and attendance details.
- Learners' relationship with staff and peers.
- Reasons for the referral – barriers to engagement/Attendance.
- Actions taken by school to resolve attendance difficulties, and the strategies implemented and the outcomes of these strategies.
- Past and present agency involvement engagement and outcomes.
- Any other relevant information relating to contributory factors and any other persons or agencies involved, providing their names and contact details and the support being provided.
- Supporting documentation of Attendance certificates, Pastoral Support plans, One Page Profiles etc. should be attached to the referral.
- Risk factors such as safeguarding or protection issues, aggression, or violence in family or by the learner.
- Any risks to EWS staff visiting the home due to lone working.
- Any other information pertinent to the case.

Any safeguarding concerns should immediately be referred to the school's lead designated safeguarding officer, the EWS are not an emergency service.

Referrals to the EWS should be sent to the main email address shown below, schools may also wish to copy in their allocated EWO. Referrals should be received the Friday before the panel meeting, referrals received after this time may not be discussed at the panel meeting but be placed on the agenda for the next panel meeting in 2 weeks.

MCC - Education Welfare Service EducationWelfareService@monmouthshire.gov.uk

The EWS response to referrals

Following the EWS panel discussion the school will be informed if the referral was accepted for EWS involvement.

A home visit by the EWO may be undertaken. The purpose of a home visit by the EWO varies from case to case depending on the circumstances of the work being undertaken. It is important that professionals understand the need for contact with young people in their homes and in the community. The EWO will carry out a dynamic risk assessment prior to visiting a home and adhere to the lone working policy.

Where ill health has been cited as a factor in the pupils' absence the EWO may need to confirm this by securing consent from parents to write to their GP, this may also be required if the EWO feels that the appropriate health support has not been sought by parent and absences continue. Parents are responsible for providing any medical evidence to schools and this may come at a cost to parents from the GP Surgery.

Where there may be emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA) concerns the EWS will enquire with the schools ALNCO whether a referral has been made to the Educational Psychologist and an appropriate plan of support developed.

Where there is children's services involvement the EWS will need to liaise with the designated social worker in order to determine areas of responsibility and to consider the possibility of a joint visit.

The EWO will need to discuss any perceived barriers to attendance raised by the learner and/or family regarding any difficulties that might prevent regular attendance with a relevant member of staff.

If the referral is declined the school will be informed of the discussion and provided with any supporting actions and information.

Each case is looked at individually within Monmouthshire and cases will be discussed and accepted if felt that there may be a level of support required but no formal legal action to be followed, to support the schools in providing additional support.

Schools can find further information on processes and timescales in the Monmouthshire Attendance & Engagement Handbook for use with this guidance.

Formal and Legal Absence Management

When the school has exhausted all reasonable avenues of support through their graduated response to attendance to improve the attendance of a learner, the school may refer the case to the EWS. This referral is a formal process involving the completion of a referral form which is discussed at an EWS panel meeting, held every two weeks.

It is a significant escalation in the school's procedures for dealing with absence usually when absence is persistent.

When such a referral is made to the EWS, all concerned should understand the significance of this step and that it can begin legal processes that may lead to statutory interventions or sanctions. Parents must be made aware of the referral through a formal meeting at school.

The Local Authority would need to follow the guidance as contained in Section 444 and 444A of the Education Act 1996 for formal absence management and follow the All Wales Attendance Framework.

Monmouthshire's EWOs meet with the local authority Legal department to discuss cases regularly and gain advice before issuing a First Warning Notice or put forward any prosecution case for non-attendance.

After issuing a Final Warning Notice and there is no improvement, the EWO would prepare a statement in relation to their involvement and actions and discuss with the legal department within the local authority, highlighting interventions and actions undertaken by **both the school and the EWO** as evidence towards a prosecution. The EWO would finalise the statement and request signed attendance certificates by the Headteacher. **Monmouthshire Legal Department will request a statement in support of a prosecution and the author of the statement may be required to attend the Magistrates Court to give evidence. Dates of unavailability will be required from the witness when listing a trial date which could fall in a school holiday period.**

It is vitally important that registers are accurate, and coding reflects the child's engagement with any provision provided as schools could be called to give evidence.

Fixed Penalty Notices

Welsh Government Guidance Fixed Penalty - Notices, Circular 116/2013, outlines the process for issuing fixed penalty notices. The guidance requires each Local Authority to develop a Code of Conduct for the imposition of Fixed Penalty Notices. Monmouthshire has developed a Code of Conduct with regional partners, and this, alongside the Local Authority Attendance Policy enables schools to request the imposition of a Fixed Penalty Notice.

When the local authority Education Welfare Service, working with the school, has fully explored the reasons for regular non-attendance, and exhausted all reasonable intervention and support mechanisms with little success, the use of other statutory interventions and sanctions will be considered. Fixed penalty notices are one option that can be used, where the threshold for prosecution has been reached.

However, fixed penalty notices should be used as part of a package of intervention and support strategies to improve attendance and when all efforts to engage the family have been tried and failed in having an impact. As a result, such fines are only used in extreme cases.

The Role of the Local Authority

- Local authorities are responsible for the administration of the fixed penalty notice scheme and must issue and follow a local code of conduct to ensure consistency across the local authority.
- The local authority should take care to ensure that notices are properly issued, and only issued when it is willing to prosecute, which it should normally do if/when the penalty is not paid.
- Specific criteria for issuing a fixed penalty notice are set out in the Local Code of Conduct.

The Role of the School

At the outset of any process leading to issuing a penalty notice, the school should consider:

- whether it will be effective in helping to get the learner back sustainably to school or alternative provision.
- provide parent with a formal written notification explaining the actions that may be taken
- ensure the parent understands the consequences of failing to ensure their child's regular attendance, and that it could result in a penalty or prosecution.
- warn the parent of the possibility of a penalty notice being issued
- allow time (typically 15 school days following the warning letter) for the parent to improve the situation before issuing the penalty notice or commencing proceedings.

A penalty notice may be a suitable intervention in circumstances where the parent is judged capable of securing their child's regular attendance but is not willing to take responsibility for doing so, for example where the parent has not engaged with any supportive measures proposed.

Other Interventions and Sanctions

The school governing body and the Local Authority can suggest using Parenting agreements in various situations including in the case of regular non-attendance.

Parenting agreements are intended to be used as a supportive strategy to help parents make sure their children attend school regularly. They are a useful way to focus on underlying issues and in building constructive relationships with families. They are not a punitive measure, and it would be important to use them in conjunction with further strategies in supporting families, this could include a Pastoral Support Plan (PSP.) Entering a parenting agreement is voluntary for both parties. If a parent refuse or fails to meet the requirements alternative courses of action should be considered.

Education supervision orders (ESO) and parenting orders are other mechanisms that can be used to help secure regular attendance. The local authority can consider applying to court for an education supervision order or they can prosecute parents for failing to ensure their child attends regularly at school or alternative provision.

As a result of a successful prosecution, a court may make a parenting order or impose a fine. These options clearly represent a significant escalation in dealing with absence and are not taken lightly.

The local authority and schools should work with parents and learners as far as possible to encourage attendance and provide any necessary additional support, before taking forward any prosecution. Schools and the local authority Education Welfare Service should consider each case individually.

Engagement

Engagement – A key to improving attendance

All schools should have an Attendance Policy which is reviewed annually by the governing body. They should also have a robust attendance strategy in place for improving and securing high levels of attendance over time. This needs to recognise that improving engagement and attendance will need frequent re-emphasis of the benefits of good attendance and consistent and effective communication with learners and parents. This should encompass the school's wish to understand and help, as well as set clear expectations.

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

- Building positive relationships when children first start school.
- Promoting a sense of belonging for all learners, especially for those with specific vulnerabilities or who have protected characteristics
- Home visits to provide an opportunity to meet parents in a more relaxed setting and to share information about the importance of good attendance. This also allows the school to have an understanding of the individual context of children and families within the school as well as explore parental attitudes to school and education more generally.
- Providing clear guidance and information on attendance and the school's expectations.
- Allowing parents and learners to feedback their views on attendance and to be involved in co-constructing the policy and the approaches that school adopt.

Building positive relationships, culture and ethos

Learners should feel a sense of connection to school and to their engagement with learning, if this is not fully embedded it can be an underlying factor in poor attendance or absence. Improving learner engagement requires schools to develop positive relationships and an inclusive, welcoming ethos and culture. A positive school ethos and culture is also essential to developing positive learner behaviour in the classroom, around the school and in the wider community.

A Learners' sense of belonging and self-worth depends on the extent to which they feel staff care about them, listen to their views and take time to get to know them. Positive relationships between staff and learners are a key factor in whether learners want to attend school. A personalised, empathetic and flexible approach that is tailored to each learner and recognises their individuality is most likely to succeed. For example, Estyn reports that 18 simple actions, such as teachers smiling and greeting learners by name and engaging in positive conversation at the start of the school day, help learners feel cared for and more likely to engage in school.

Trauma Informed Schools (TIS) and Community Focused schools

Engaging with parents and families is a crucial feature of effective community focused schools. Successful Community Focused Schools ensure families are made to feel welcomed, listened to and valued. Their needs, and those of their children, are understood and catered for and they are treated with dignity and respect, irrespective of the challenges they face.

A Community Focused School aims to develop:

- **Family engagement:** Creating meaningful opportunities for families and carers to be involved in school life and decision making and to be engaged in children's learning.
- **Community engagement:** Encouraging schools to draw upon and utilise links with community groups and organisations and offer support and opportunities to community members.
- **Multi-agency engagement:** Developing partnerships with wider services and interventions to remove any barriers to learning.

Monmouthshire advocate Trauma Informed practice as part of a universal, whole-school, preventative approach supporting school communities to become trauma informed and mentally healthy places for all. Being Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) aware and trauma-informed is recognised as good practice by the Welsh Government. Monmouthshire will continue to roll out training and support to all our schools and settings around Trauma Informed/ relational practice.

Family Engagement and multi-agency Support

Family engagement is a key element of the 'community-focused schools' approach, which sees improving attendance not in isolation but as part of a broader strategy for helping learners achieve their best. This approach underpins and strengthens all other ways of improving engagement and attendance.

Parents and families also play a significant role in attendance on a practical level. For younger learners in particular, attendance is strongly dependent on parental and family attitudes, not least as they often depend on them to get physically to school. For older learners, their parents are well placed to provide important insights into reasons for learner absence. Schools should actively provide opportunities for parent voice and to help remove barriers to attendance, including recognising the possibility of parental difficulties, stresses or trauma.

Parents and families exert considerable influence on learners' views in general, on their attitudes to learning and their connection or engagement with school. Therefore, establishing positive and trusting relationships with parents and families is a key strategic element in improving learner engagement with school life, and in turn in improving their attendance and participation.

The goal is to meaningfully involve parents and families in the school community to help them understand the benefits of education and the need for good attendance at school, as well as helping them know how best to negotiate the education options available to their child.

School should work with parents and families to encourage them to:

- take an active interest in their child's school life and work
- attend parents' evenings and other school events when possible
- be aware of school communications, including letters their child brings home
- make sure their child arrives at school on time each day
- ensure that their child only misses school for reasons which are unavoidable or agreed and understood by the school
- notify the school of any absence as soon as possible, preferably on the first morning
- confirm this in writing when the child returns to school
- avoid booking family holidays during term-time
- talk to the school if they are concerned that their child may be reluctant to go to school.

Family Engagement Officers (FEOs)/Family Liaison Officers (FLOs) and similar staff

Many schools employ dedicated non-teaching staff such as Family Engagement Officers, Family Liaison Officer or Attendance Officers to lead their family engagement activities and to help build relationships between schools and families, especially with those families who find it challenging to engage.

The work of these lead practitioners should be coupled with and complement the work of EWS, especially where attendance is low. A joint approach between the school and EWS should ensure a rounded view of the learner and the family.

EWS Family Liaison Officers can provide specific and targeted support for learners and their families where attendance is an emerging concern, is declining and despite school support and intervention, is below 90%. Where this is the case, schools should make a referral to the EWS for support from a FLO.

Schools can access further information around this area of support in the Monmouthshire Handbook to support Attendance & Engagement.

Learner Voice and School Councils

Schools should have in place mechanisms for capturing learner voice and that reflect and cater for all learners needs and evolving maturity.

Schools may also find the ESTYN good practice guide for examples of how to identify and improve pupil participation useful.

Parent voice and parent councils

A supportive approach to improving engagement and attendance is more likely to be effective if parents feels that their concerns and views are listened to and acted upon. Schools can explore the different ways that parent voice is heard and holds face-to-face communication to determine the most effective of establishing and opening good channels of communication between school and families.

Further advice, information, guidance and policy links

As with any policy, things may change over a period of time. Where this occurs, we will ensure that the policy and relevant links are updated as necessary and add any further guidance or information to this document that may be useful for schools.

If you require any further information, please contact your allocated **Education Welfare Officer** in the first instance.

The links to related policies and guidance throughout this policy are up to date at the time of issue.

- [Belonging, engaging and participating: Guidance on improving learner engagement and attendance \(gov.wales\)](#)
- [all-wales-attendance-framework.pdf \(gov.wales\)](#)
- [guidance-on-school-attendance-codes.pdf \(gov.wales\)](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2010 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Exclusion from schools and pupil referral units \(PRU\) | GOV.WALES](#)
- [guidance-inclusion-and-pupil-support_0.pdf \(gov.wales\)](#)
- [Guidance on penalty notices for regular non-attendance at schools \(gov.wales\)](#)
- [Framework on embedding a whole-school approach to emotional and mental wellbeing | GOV.WALES](#)
- [Thematic survey report \(gov.wales\)](#)
- [Thematic survey report - communication with parents \(gov.wales\)](#)
- [Knowing your children – supporting pupils with adverse childhood experiences \(ACES\) \(gov.wales\)](#)
- [Supporting learners with healthcare needs | GOV.WALES](#)
- [Keeping learners safe | GOV.WALES](#)
- [Community Focused Schools \[HTML\] | GOV.WALES](#)
- [Children and young people's national participation standards | GOV.WALES](#)

- <https://knowledgehub.cymru/resources/national-principles-for-public-engagement-in-wales>
- [Rights, respect, equality: guidance for parents and carers | GOV.WALES](#)
- [Rights, respect, equality: guide for young people | GOV.WALES](#)
- [Rights, respect, equality: guidance for schools | GOV.WALES](#)
- [Rights, respect, equality: guidance for local authorities | GOV.WALES](#)
- [Bullying: guide for children | GOV.WALES](#)
- [Celebrate and participate: Education guidance to support Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children and young people | GOV.WALES](#)
- [Home education: handbook for home educators | GOV.WALES](#)
- [Summary of legislation - Hwb \(gov.wales\)](#)
- [Reducing restrictive practices framework | GOV.WALES](#)
- [Healthy and happy – school impact on pupils' health and wellbeing \(gov.wales\)](#)

This policy is supported by the Monmouthshire Attendance & Engagement Handbook for schools produced by Monmouthshire Education Welfare Service which links directly to the current guidance and available for schools.

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