



YSGOL GYMRAEG YSTALYFERA-BRO DUR

Attendance Policy

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Introduction

An essential part of striving for excellence is through regular attendance at school, pupils who are absent from school lose valuable teaching and learning time, including valuable life skills. Therefore, we expect the highest attendance and punctuality from all our pupils, at all times.

Ysgol Gymraeg Ystalyfera Bro Dur is therefore committed to improving levels of school attendance and punctuality. We aim to do this by; promoting the value and importance of regular school attendance; reducing all forms of unjustified absenteeism, especially levels of persistent absenteeism, and we will be proactive in our challenge to strive for excellence for all our pupils. Good regular attendance is 95% and above, however, we are continuously working towards our goal of 100% attendance and punctuality.

We believe it is vital that children and young people have access to appropriate and effective learning opportunities and provision, which will enable a pupil to reach their full potential, and help the early identification of any barriers to learning.

A child's success at school can be affected by poor attendance. In addition, research shows that children who are not in school are more vulnerable and can be easily drawn into crime, anti-social behaviour and be exploited. Poor attendance can impact a young person wellbeing, become socially isolated and increase the likelihood of not being in education, employment or training after leaving school. Early assessment, identification and intervention are key to a young person's success.

Regular attendance at school supports the wider development of pupils such as social skills and a sense of belonging. The Curriculum for Wales is based on four purposes, which helps to develop the lifelong skills needed to become full and rounded members of the community. The significance of attendance at school must not be underestimated, Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council believes that: all children and young people have a right to access, an education appropriate to their individual needs, maintaining the balance of rights and responsibilities between children and young people, parents, schools, other professionals and the wider community.

Statutory Responsibilities

Under the Education Act (1996) Parents/Carers have the primary responsibility for ensuring their child(ren) of compulsory school age receive a suitable education, either by attendance at school or otherwise. Section 7, of the Act states: The parent/carer of every child of compulsory school age must ensure, their child receives an efficient, full-time education, suitable to his/her age, aptitude and ability and any additional needs he/she may have, this can be achieved by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Section 444 further states that:

If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at school, his parent/carer is guilty of an offence.

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

- The pupil was absent with leave (authorised absence).
- The pupil was medically ill or prevented from attending school by an unavoidable cause, to which we may ask for a letter from your GP/Consultant.
- The absence occurred on a day set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil or parents/carers belong.
- A limited defence is available to the parents of travelling children.

What does regular attendance at school mean? The Supreme Court has determined that the word 'regularly' in the context of section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 means 'in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school'.

In *Ysgol Gymraeg Ystalyfera Bro Dur*, this means that a pupil (your child) should attend school each day that the school is open unless their absences has been authorised by the Head teacher. This policy on attendance and punctuality therefore, sets out clear expectations with regard to attendance for their registered pupils and the actions, intervention and consequences that may follow should a pupil fail to attend school regularly.

The act also places a legal obligation on:

- The Local Authority to secure an efficient education, which is available to meet the needs of its population and to enforce attendance.
- Schools to mark the attendance register AM/PM each day and notify the Local Authority of a child's regular absence from school (Welsh Assembly circular 203/2016) and the Education (Pupil Registration) Amendment Regulations 2010. Or any welfare concerns relating to the absence.
- Under section 437 of the Education Act 1996, Local Authorities have a duty to ensure children and young people are receiving a suitable education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. Further information can be found in Section 4 of the 'Inclusion and Pupil Support' guidance document.
- Section 436A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 requires local authorities to make arrangements to enable them to establish (so far as it is possible to do so) the identities of children residing in their area who are not receiving a 'suitable education'. This legal requirement was integrated with the wide range of duties placed on Local Authorities, including the Children Act 2004 (sections 25-29).

Our role as a school – Ysgol Gymraeg Ystalyfera Bro Dur

Schools have to be open to pupils 380 sessions each academic year and are responsible for supporting the attendance of all their pupils and for responding in a timely manner to barriers, which may lead to non-attendance.

Schools are legally required to take an attendance register twice a day and are required to publish information relating to levels of attendance and absenteeism. When attendance at school starts to show signs of concern, such as being persistently absent, schools need to follow the All Wales Attendance Framework, in a proactive and timely manner. The allocated Education Welfare Officer will meet with schools regularly to offer professional advice and guidance. The Local Authority recommend, absence from school should be unauthorised once 'school letter two' has been issued, unless there is medical evidence supporting the absence, this will help prevent absences becoming entrenched.

We will be referring absences, of 10 days or more (in a school academic year) to their Education Welfare Officer, where all attempts to contact the parent/carer has failed. The Education Welfare Officer will make a 'Welfare Visit', to ascertain if everything is okay at home, and make appropriate referrals where deemed necessary including triggering the Children Missing from Education (CME) Protocol.

The importance of regular school attendance cannot be over/underestimated. Regular attendance is a pre-requisite to a good education and securing it must therefore be a high priority for schools, governors, LAs, parents and the pupils themselves. By failing to attend school regularly, pupils diminish the value of the education being provided for them.

It is important to ensure school attendance is seen as a priority for all, attendance at school is 'everyone business'. Excellent attendance is an essential factor of all schools. All schools should have a clear escalation of intervention, which place exemplary attendance at its heart. Tackling persistent absence is, of course, a prerequisite.

As a school we will be supporting effective attendance by:

- Demonstrating a strong attendance ethos;
- Be proactive in managing punctuality;
- Early identification of absences and reporting this to the parent/carers;
- Effective first day responses to absences;
- Regularly inform parents/carers of their child's attendance/absences
- Having an effective, non-bureaucratic system for monitoring attendance;
- Using attendance data and other information to improve school and pupil performance;
- Promoting the importance and legal requirements of regular attendance to pupils and parents;

- Holding multi-agency attendance panels;
- Intervening early when individual pupils give cause for concern;
- Have processes in place where a pupil can discuss any concerns they may have;
- Establish peer on peer mentors to help build positive relationships;
- Consider timetable options with the aim of obtaining pupil engagement;
- Timely and a consistent approach to following the All Wales Attendance Framework;
- Having support systems in place for vulnerable pupils;
- Creating a young person school committee for attendance ensuring pupil voice;
- Rewarding and celebrating good and improved attendance
- Ensuring those with greatest need received additional support.
- Consider attendance problems which could be link to any unidentified additional learning need.

Our systems for promoting attendance, recording attendance, absence and punctuality.

All children should be in school, on time, every day that school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Pupils at all three sites are expected to attend for the following times:

Ystalyfera Secondary	Ystalyfera Primary	Bro Dur
8.40 - 3.10	8.40 - 3.00	8.45 - 3.15

- Pupils will receive an attendance mark at 8.40/8.45 during the registration session
- Any pupil who arrives late will register at the main office
- We will contact all parents/guardians of absent pupils (by text) by 9.30am unless an explanation has been given. Pupils who are on the vulnerable pupil register will be contacted by phone call on the first day.
- Attendance officers will update the registers with the appropriate codes (authorised/unauthorised/not explained)
- On any second day of an unexplained absence and/or if there is another concern for a pupil, the school will contact parents / guardians via a phone call or welfare visit.
- A pupil will receive an attendance mark during each lesson/session during the school day.
- We will use Class Charts to record pupils' punctuality to lessons.
- We will reward pupils in a timely manner throughout the year for good attendance and/or increased attendance.

- We will contact parents by letter when pupil attendance drops below 85% (Authorised OR Unauthorised).
- When there is no improvement following the first communication, we will proceed by holding face-to-face meetings with parents followed by further written communication and referral to the Welfare Service
- After following the above processes, if attendance remains a concern, we will refer to the Welfare Service to consider further action e.g. fine.
- All staff understand that attendance and punctuality are everyone's responsibility.

Role of SLT Member with responsibility for attendance:

Monitoring and tracking groups of learners	
Track	Action
Groups of learners by year Boys Girls FSM	Meet with Year Heads / Department Leader within the Primary on a fortnightly basis to gather updates on the implementation of primary year / Department level. Collect reports on the groups identified. Support and advise in accordance with the steps below.
ALN learner groups	Meeting with the ALNCo on a weekly basis – a report on pupil attendance within the target group and a discussion on targets for improvement.
Pupils at risk of School rejection – under 75%	Meetings with EWO Targets per pupil Meetings with parents PSP's (see below)
School-wide Attendance	Fortnightly report to SLT meeting Data of the various groups Progress Challenges Strategies and interventions

Year Leader / Progress / Department responsibility within the primary:

Attendance under 90% - Tracking and execution process starts	
Track	Action
Adding pupil to class attendance under 90% in Class Charts	Letter 1a/b delivered to home
Head of Year/Primary Section Leader to monitor weekly by colouring in red/green	Inform Personal Tutor/Class Teacher that daily monitoring needs to be initiated.
Monitoring for 2 weeks	
Green pupil – continue to monitor	

Red pupil	(i) Speak to the pupil (ii) Letter 2 home
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Attendance under 85% - Tracking and operating process	
Track	Operate
Add the pupil to an attendance class under 85% in Class Charts	Phone call to home Letter 2 (add all absences will be unauthorised unless supported by NEW medical evidence)
Head of Year/Primary Section Leader to monitor weekly by colouring in red/green	Meet with the pupil and identify concerns. Note that they have 2 weeks to improve.
Monitoring for 2 weeks	Share the name with the office – ALL absences are now unauthorised.
Green pupil – continue to monitor	
Red pupil	Parent Meeting 1 Arrange a face-to-face meeting with parent and pupil (Line leader to attend as needed)

Parent Meeting 1: Parent and pupil (Line leader to attend as needed)	
Agenda	Operate
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attendance patterns 2. Challenges and support 3. Share attendance pamphlet 4. Target setting 	Complete paperwork containing the targets Parents to sign Pupil to sign
If a parent does not attend – second meeting within 5 days	
If there is no improvement after 2 weeks and 10 unauthorised absences then refer to Dorian Evans (EWO)	

Presence of vulnerable pupils	
Track	Operate
Heads of year/ Primary Safeguarding Lead to keep an up-to-date list of vulnerable year pupils.	Colouring pupils by vulnerability: Red – high risk pupils Yellow – medium risk Share the list with the office. Check weekly.
First day red pupil absence	Office If there is no explanation phone call before 10.30am Notify the HOY/Primary of the result.
Second day red pupil absence	Office If there is no explanation phone call before 10.30am Notify the HOY/ Primary of the result.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HOY/ Primary to take charge. Continue trying to connect • Trying to connect with other family members • Conduct/arrange a wellbeing visit • Contact the Child Protection Officer for SPOC/ 101
Absence of yellow pupil – 2 days ominous for no reason (no response to text messages). 3rd day	Office to call home. Notify the HOY/ Primary of the result.
Yellow pupil leave – 4th day	Office If there is no explanation phone call before 10.30am Notify the HOY/ Primary of the result. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HOY/ Primary to take charge. Continue trying to connect • Trying to connect with other family members • Conduct/arrange a wellbeing visit • Contact the Child Protection Officer for SPOC/ 101

Placing and maintaining a pupil on LDP / PSP	
Track	Operate
Pupil has received all support and been tracked for a period of time. Fine continues. Pupil at risk of School rejection.	Deputy Head / HOY / CADY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organising and holding a PSP meeting, agreeing targets and signing • Sharing the PSP with the County, Head of Year and EWO • Share schedule with Head of Year, EWO and reception
Week 2	Head of Year to call home. Negotiate the agreement. Check progress.
Week 4	Deputy Headteacher to call and arrange a review meeting for week 6.
Week 6	Meet to review progress, agree new targets and sign. If the plan works continue to monitor following the 6 week cycle.
If it doesn't work the following steps are followed.	
Week 8	Head of year to share with the non-working DH, DH to call and arrange another meeting.
Week 9	DH /HOY/ Leader within primary: Hold the above meeting for review. PSP will be removed and the pupil will move to the EWO and a threat of prosecution/fine. Noting there will be monitoring for another

	week.
Week of 10/11/12	If it doesn't still work - need to consider cancelling the PSP and the expectation will be the pupil back on a full-time schedule. Share with the County that does not work and cancelled. EWO to continue with next steps e.g. Punishment.

Responsibility of the office

Attendance codes	
Track	Operate
Tracy Fowler Lowri Dennard Rhian McCann	Collect a list of pupils who have received various letters and where they are on the flow charts. Both to ensure that the correct codes are used for various individuals.
EWO	Work monitoring.

Responsibility of the Pupil and Personal Tutor

Monitoring and tracking attendance	
Track	Operate
Weekly	Registration session to map attendance in the tracking brochure
Half termly	Registration session focusing on the impact of the loss of School on the loss of education. TP/Primary Class Teacher to present Holding a discussion Encourage personal responsibility.

Authorised Absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as an illness or other unavoidable causes (e.g. bereavement). Where possible, medical appointments should be booked outside of the school day, however if this is not possible then absences can be recorded as authorised if proof of the appointment is provided.

Parents should be aware that unless there is a valid medical reason backed with medical evidence such as a GP letter stating that your child should not return to school following such appointments, your child's absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. Repeated absences as a result of illness will also require GP/Consultant letter and if applicable a report if your child is to have continued to be authorised.

When the absence is authorised, we will use the appropriate code to record the absence. It is essential that there is consistency in the way that schools record

absences so that data provided to the Local Authority and Welsh Government is correct.

Absence from school will be authorised if it is for the following reasons:

- Sickness, unless medical evidence has been requested.
- Unavoidable medical/dental appointments (Medical evidence such as a consultant/GP letter may be requested).
- Days of religious observance, in line with those published yearly by Welsh Government.
- Exceptional family circumstances, such as bereavement.

Unauthorised Absences are those which the Local Authority does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave of absence' has been agreed by the school. These include:

Absence from school should not be authorised for the following reasons:

- Shopping
- Haircuts
- Missed bus.
- Sleeping late
- No uniform
- Looking after brothers or sisters
- Minding the home
- Birthdays
- Holidays during school time
- Parents keeping children of school unnecessarily, e.g. for company
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Repeat absences linked to illness without medical evidence

We acknowledge that sometimes children are reluctant to attend school; if there are any problems please speak to your school. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is inappropriate to conceal this absence or to put under pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and in fact will only make the situation worse. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parents.

Welfare Checks

The Education Welfare Service will attempt to ascertain the whereabouts of a child

once they have been absent without contact as outlined in this policy or, sooner, if there are safeguarding concerns. This is NOT a referral, the purpose of a visit is to check the welfare/safeguarding of pupils who may be vulnerable or if there has been poor contact with parents.

This is intended to be a short visit and a firm reminder to a parent to contact school with regard to absence. In a small number of cases, the Education Welfare Officer may ask for a member of school staff, known agencies connected to the family/young person or the Police to accompany them for safeguarding reasons. The Education Welfare Officer will follow all safeguarding, health and safety, lone working protocols.

Pupils return following a long-term absence.

Pupils returning to school after prolonged periods of absences need to feel supported and welcomed to ensure the return to school is successful. Schools can consider; Tailored praise and encouragement, time to catch up on their missed lessons to help build confidence in their learning, daily/weekly 'check in's' to discuss how the pupil is feeling, their progress, their wellbeing, contact the parents regularly to discuss progress and consider any targeted support that may be required

Role of the Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator (ALNCO) - Procedures and arrangements for children with statements/IDP who become non-attenders

Should a child with a statement/IDP experience difficulties attending school, you will need to liaise with your ALNCO, Local Authority ALN advisor or Educational Psychologist and include your Education Welfare Office. It may be appropriate to consider a review of the IDP/Placement.

If the young person is in the correct identified provision and as a school you can meet the needs identified, the All-Wales Attendance Framework must be followed to help prevent absences becoming entrenched.

If from the review meeting, it has been identified the young person needs another additional learning provision, the LA ALNST/EP service will provide support/advice and guidance.

Children Looked After (CLA)

The Council recognises that children looked after are a recognised group of pupils who are liable to underachieve and we are determined to address this situation. Officers within Neath Port Talbot Council will work together to ensure that the targets for improving the educational attainment of looked after children are met, which includes

regular attendance at school.

The CLA Education Officer has lead responsibility for ensuring that looked after children receive appropriate and co-ordinated educational support, who will liaise with the allocated social worker and, where relevant, the education welfare officer. All schools must nominate a designated teacher for children looked after. This teacher will have a key co-ordinating and monitoring role with regard to the attendance of looked after children at his or her school.

Safeguarding and Child Protection

All schools and the local authority have statutory duties to promote the safeguarding and wellbeing of all pupils. Absence from school is a potential safeguarding concern, tracking and monitoring attendance has a crucial safeguarding role. Attendance concerns can be a possible signal towards wellbeing concerns, concerns at home or exploitation, as mentioned in the 'Keeping Learners Safe' Guidance. The school should regularly review their data to identify and respond to those at risk. Safeguarding concerns should be reported to the schools designated safeguarding officer, the local authority education safeguarding lead and social services.

Below is a breakdown on the number of lessons missed linked to your child's percentage of attendance.

Attendance during one school year	Equals to number of days absent	Which is approximately this many weeks absent	Which means this number of lessons missed
95%	9 days	2 weeks	50 lessons
90%	19 days	4 weeks	100 lessons
85%	29 days	6 weeks	150 lessons
80%	38 days	8 weeks	200 lessons

Making a referral to the Education Welfare Service

The Education Welfare service plays a dual role; we provide a service to a school and as a mentor between home and school. Ysgol Gymraeg Ystalyfera Bro Dur's Education Welfare Officer is Mr Dorian Evans.

School must follow the All Wales Attendance Framework, before a referral can be

made to the service, they must outline all support offered to the pupil and parent/carer and actions taken to address the barriers to engagement. A significant proportion of the pupil's absence must be unauthorised before a referral will be accepted; all referrals are sent to the Manager, Education Welfare Service.

Referrals may be made when;-

- a pattern of irregular attendance has developed;
- a period of entrenched non-attendance has begun;
- communication by the school to the parents has met with little or no response;
- there is evidence of a lack of parental co-operation in ensuring a child's regular attendance;
- a pattern of post-registration truancy is persisting despite the school's efforts to prevent it;
- a parent withdraws a pupil from school having expressed an intention to educate him or her otherwise than at school (Elective Home Education);
- a pupil is withdrawn from school by the parents who are moving to another area and the school does not have a confirmed destination school/provider where the child will resume his or her education. Such pupils will be treated as "children missing education";
- a pattern of persistent lateness has continued after pastoral intervention;
- there are specific and identifiable welfare issues which are preventing a pupil from accessing education.

Role of Parent/Guardian

A definition of a parent is set out in section 576 of the Education Act 1996 and includes;

- **Any person, who, although not a parent, has parental responsibility (as defined in the Children Act 1989) for a child or young person and;**
- **Any person who has care of a child or young person.**

Under section 7 of the Education Act 1996, the law states, parent/carer is responsible for ensuring that their child of compulsory school age receives efficient full-time education that is suitable to their child's age, ability and aptitude and to any additional learning needs the child may have.

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

- take an active interest in their child's school life and work;
- attend parents' evenings and other school events;
- ensure that their child completes his/her homework
- ensure all gaming consoles/social media platforms are switched off at an appropriate time;

- Regular/appropriate bedtime routine;
- be aware of letters from school which their child brings home;
- ensure that their child arrives at school on time each day;
- ensure that their child only misses school for reasons which are unavoidable or justified, such as illness or days of religious observance;
- notify the school as soon as possible (on the first morning) of any absence and continue to report daily unless an arrangement has been made in advance with the school e.g. hospital treatment.
- not book family holidays during term-time;
- talk to the school/education welfare service if they are concerned that their child may be reluctant to attend.

Parents should be reminded that **it is only the school who may decide whether an absence is to be authorised or unauthorised**. A letter, email, telephone call or text message does not authorise an absence; only the school's acceptance of the explanation offered authorises the absence.

By enrolling your child in Ysgol Gymraeg Ystalyfera Bro Dur we assume that you agree and accept all the principles of this policy.

Governing Body

The role of the Governing Body in relation to attendance and punctuality is to support and challenge the school by asking questions about attendance data and school processes. Useful questions may be:

- How does the school use the data from the LA?
- Are we holding regular governor attendance meetings?
- How are authorised and unauthorised attendance examined?
- What does the school do to reward good and improving attendance?
- Are the strategies effective?
- Are all pupils attending school regularly?
- Does the school refer or ask for advice from the LA/EWO in a timely manner

The Role of the Local Authority

Local Authorities have a statutory duty to ensure all children, young people attend school or education other at school provision regularly and that young people are receiving a suitable, age ability and aptitude. They must also ensure arrangements to establish the identities of children residing in the area who are not registered at a

school and not receiving a suitable education. On behalf of the local authority, the Education Welfare Service provides support for schools, pupils and parents/carers to help address the barriers to engagement linking to attendance at school, working in partnership with other agencies where a need has been identified.

Education Welfare Service

The Education Welfare Service aim is to provide professional, quality support to schools, pupils, parent/carers. As a service, we support good regular attendance at schools with high standards of pupil welfare, we can also support schools create a culture to support and encourage attendance.

As a service we will use strategies to ensure that registered pupils of compulsory school age attend school regularly and punctually;

- as authorised representatives of the Council, we will monitoring attendance through the regular inspection of registers and liaison with school staff;
- support schools to develop a whole school approach to managing attendance, and addressing potential wellbeing and safeguarding concerns that could be affecting attendance at school and the young person punctuality;
- undertaking individual casework with non-attending pupils and their parents;
- refer and work with other agencies to provide an holistic approach;
- collate and interpret data on issues relating to attendance;
- Offer strategic advice, support and challenge to enable schools to develop improved systems and practices for managing attendance.
- Undertake house visits, which may be unannounced
- Work in partnership to provide a holistic support where needed
- Undertake welfare visits.
- We will investigate the reasons behind the school absence, offer information, guidance and interventions/strategies.

The main principle of this service is a belief that all children and young people have the right to their education and have equal opportunities regardless of their learning needs, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, disability, gender reassignment, religious beliefs or non-belief, language or nationality.

In addition to the above, the Education Welfare Service will work closely with the Police in order to ensure that Truancy Sweeps are carried out when necessary, this is to help prevent/minimise truancy from school. The dates/times will be agreed with the police and we will liaise with the schools in advance.

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Procedures on Punitive Measures

If a pupil who is registered at a school fails to attend that school regularly and attempts by the EWO and the school fail to ensure that the pupil returns to regular attendance

the Council will, ordinarily first consider issuing the parent with a fixed penalty notice (please refer to separate policy regarding Fixed Penalty Notices). Unless there are known mitigating circumstances, the Council will consider taking legal action by issuing a summons against the parents to appear before the Magistrates Court under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act. In deciding whether or not to take legal action, the EWO must be satisfied that:-

- there is sufficient evidence to provide a realistic prospect of conviction; it must consider what the defence case may be and how this is likely to affect the prosecution case;
- it is in the public interest to prosecute; in cases of any seriousness, a prosecution will usually take place unless there are public interest factors pointing against prosecution, which clearly outweigh those in favour;
- any action which it takes complies with the terms of the Human Rights Act.

If after legal action has been taken the pupil still fails to attend school regularly, the EWO will, if deemed appropriate, take further legal action.

Education Supervision Orders

Before initiating a prosecution under section 444 of the 1996 Education Act an EWO will consider whether it is appropriate to apply for an Education Supervision Order (ESO) under section 36 of the 1989 Children Act. The purpose of an ESO is to place a child who is not being properly educated under the supervision of the Local Authority. An ESO aims to ensure that the child receives full time education and that he or she and the parents receive intensive support, advice and guidance from a Supervising Officer who is required “*to advise, assist and befriend*”.

An application for an ESO will only be made when one or more of the following apply:-

- all other attempts to improve the pupil’s attendance have failed and prosecution of the parents is deemed inappropriate;
- the parents appear likely to co-operate with a structured programme of work prepared by the supervising officer;
- there is support from Social Services for the ESO;
- a Magistrates Court hearing has directed the Local Authority to apply for an ESO;
- the EWO is of the opinion that the order will have a significant impact upon the pupil’s non-attendance.

School Attendance orders

An EWO will serve a School Attendance Order (SAO) (under Sections 437-439 of the 1996 Education Act) on the parents of a child of compulsory school age if the parents have failed to demonstrate that the child is in receipt of suitable education and if the Local Authority believes that the child should attend school.

The SAO will specify the school which the child should attend. Should the parents fail to comply with the SAO the EWO will initiate legal proceedings under Section 443 of the 1996 Education Act, unless the parents can prove that the child is in receipt of

suitable education.

All legal action taken by EWOs will be monitored and reviewed.

Parenting Orders

EWOs will when necessary liaise with the Youth Offending Service and with Social Care staff when the courts, in relation to a non-attendance case, impose or recommend a Parenting Order. An EWO will act as the responsible officer for such an order.

Suspending Casework

Ideally an EWO will only close a case when a pupil returns to regular attendance or ceases to be of compulsory school age. There are some exceptional cases, in which the concerns are so severe that the work of the EWO is not appropriate, for example; medical evidence has been received. In these circumstances, the EWO will carefully consider whether it is appropriate to suspend further active casework

Suspending active casework will only be considered when all options and strategies have been tried and been found to have been unsuccessful. Should active casework be suspended this will only be done after full consultation between the EWO and the Manager of the Education Welfare Service.

In circumstances when active casework is suspended the situation will continue to be monitored and any necessary liaison/consultation with other services/agencies will take place. Active casework will recommence if there is a change in circumstances which suggests that further EWO casework may be appropriate.

FAQ

Family Holidays during term time

The Pupil Registration (Wales) Regulations 2010 gives schools discretionary power to grant ten days leave for the purpose of an annual family holiday during term time. In exceptional circumstances a school may authorise a holiday of more than ten days.

Parents do not have the automatic right to withdraw their child (ren) from school for a holiday, and in law, have to apply for permissions in advance. There is no guarantee your holiday will be authorised, and you may be faced with a 'Fixed Penalty Notice', if more than one holiday is taken during an academic year.

Extended Overseas Trips

The school should only agree to the absence, where schools have taken into full account the school & local authority attendance policy, the Attendance and Progression Framework by the Welsh Government and individual circumstances. Parents should be advised of the impact such a lengthy absence will have upon their child(ren) education and be encouraged, where possible to take their holiday to coincide with school closure and parents need to be encouraged to plan for trips during the 13 weeks available to them, when schools close.

An agreed date of return should be made with the school prior to the trip, failure to return on the agreed date, can result in your child(ren) being taken off roll and reported as a child missing from education.

Parents should be advised that their child's name will be removed from the school register if he/she has not returned to school 10 days after expected day of return. In these circumstances the parents would need to make an application for re-admission on their return to UK/Neath Port Talbot and you may not be guaranteed the school of their choice, if all available places within the school/year group are full. Therefore, a change of school would then be required. In these circumstances schools should make contact with the Education Welfare Service, prior to the removal from roll.

Emigration

If a child / family emigrate and the school are aware of the destination and there are no safeguarding concerns the child's name can be removed from the school roll with appropriate notification to the Headteacher and the Education Welfare Service. If there are concerns or destination remains unknown, please follow the Children Missing in Education & Safeguarding procedures.

In all cases, schools are expected to obtain as much information as possible, such as; new school details, new address and where applicable confirmation of travel to ensure effective safeguarding procedures are followed and a child does not go missing from education.

Religious Observance

Absences linked to religious observation, should be authorised, the dates linked to 'Western Christian Festivals and Holy Days' often fall in term-time and during the school days. The religious observation dates are available via the Welsh Government website each academic year, the dates of religious observations will be contained within the guidance. Only the dates within this guidance can be authorised using the 'R' code granting a leave absence.

Bullying

A young person may not attend school because they are afraid of/are being 'bullied' or experience a behaviour, which may frighten or alarm them. This emotional impact can increase truancy rates and encourage premature school dropouts.

In 2019 the Welsh Government launched Rights, Respect, Equality; statutory guidance which all schools/Local Authorities have to follow and use as a tool kit to tackling bullying. The work of the Education Welfare Service is ensure learners have access to appropriate education provision (Page 21 Rights, Respect, Equality; statutory guidance for Local Authorities) and the main area of support is attendance and school including advising on the welfare of the child or young person.

Schools should work with the young person and their parent/carer to resolve the issue of non-attendance at school and put measures in place to help engagement back into school.

Children Missing from Education (CME)

Children have the right to education under UK law, which is underpinned by the European Convention on Human Rights and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. All children missing education are vulnerable. If a school becomes aware of any of it pupils are moving from a Neath Port Talbot school to a new Local Authority area, the school must, obtain the new school and address (if applicable) from the parent/carer.

When this has been received the school must contact the new Local Authority to

confirm they have located the application for a new school place. Once this has been given in writing to the school, the school must contact the manager of the education welfare service who will confirm, the removal of the young person from the attendance register. If the receiving Local Authority has received no acknowledgement of the young person, the school must urgently refer the young person as CME to their EWO/manager of education welfare service.

“Schools must undertake immediate actions to try and identify the whereabouts of the child/children. A record of their efforts made to trace the child should be recorded using “Children Missing Education School Checklist”. This includes recording of First day calling, third day calling, a letter home regarding unauthorised absence and querying the status of the child and then if the parent has not made any contact with the school, notification to the relevant Education Welfare Officer to undertake a welfare check. This should be done after three working days of non-contact. If there are safeguarding concerns, the child protection policy should be followed”.

Young Carers

The Council recognises that a number of children may be late to or absent from school because of their responsibilities in relation to their caring responsibilities. Schools should respond sympathetically to the needs of young carers but should combine this with a recognition that these children are nevertheless fully entitled to participate in all educational activities. Flexibility in regard to a school start time can be granted to support the young person and their caring responsibilities.

Pregnant School Girls

When a school becomes aware that a pupil on their roll is pregnant, they should follow any concerns via their safeguarding protocol. The school must also make sure that the pupil is made aware of local services and how to access them.

The head teacher will ensure that the pupil is able to continue with their education and that teachers and other pupils deal with the pregnancy sensitively. A meeting should be arranged in school to complete a risk assessment, to develop a pre- and post-natal plan and look at what multi-agency support might be needed. This may include counselling if the young mum wants to talk about her situation and options. Awareness is needed of the reaction of other pupils to the pregnancy and the support structure that may be needed for the young mum regarding this. Childcare arrangements should form part of the meeting. The risk assessment will need to be reviewed every trimester.

It is good practice for schools to identify a designated person to have responsibility for school age parents so that they can oversee the young person’s educational and pastoral support needs. This could be the Designated Officer for Safeguarding in the

setting. The school should inform the school's Education Welfare Officer so that appropriate support can be put in place. The pregnant schoolgirl is expected to attend school as regularly and punctually as her pregnancy allows as she is still a child of compulsory school age. Where necessary the pupil should be allowed out of class to rest during the day. Pregnant schoolgirls and expectant young fathers are entitled to attend ante-natal classes. These absences should be authorised, and code 'C' must be used for registration purposes.

A schoolgirl who becomes pregnant is entitled to up to 18 weeks authorised absence to cover the time immediately before and after the birth. It would also be reasonable to authorise two weeks' paternity leave for the expectant father following the birth. Code 'C' must be used for registration purposes for both young mum and dad. The school should consider how they can best support the pupil's education during the period of maternity leave.

Traveller Children and Children from Ethnic Minorities

Staff from the Vulnerable Learners Service work closely with EWOs to develop an appropriate and consistent school attendance strategy for ethnic minority pupils.

Depending upon the needs of the school, support may be involved with school staff and other support services in the following strategies to support regular attendance of children from ethnic minorities:

- advice and support to mainstream staff on extended holidays to country of origin;
- teachers and EWOs' liaise between Traveller parents and schools to encourage admittance and attendance of primary and secondary age pupils;
- pupils at risk may receive specialist help from service support staff and be involved in a mentoring programme;
- EWOs' support children and parents in situations where racism is presenting a barrier to educational inclusion;
- EWOs' regularly make home visits to support children's attendance and ensure parents are aware of school procedures;



Service Children

The definition of a Service Child is one who has one or both parents currently serving in the armed forces; a child whose parent/s have served in the armed forces within the last six years (Veteran); or a child whose parent/s are currently serving as Reservists.

Information and tailored toolkits are available to help Service Children as they move into the region with their parents. Details can be found on the [SSCE Cymru :: Supporting Service Children in Education Wales website](#) . For further information/advice please contact the Vulnerable Learner Service, Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council, Neath Port Talbot Civic Centre, SA13 1PJ

Everyone (Local Authority, Governing Body's, School Staff, Parents, Children & Young People) has a responsibility to promote the attendance of all children and young people within the Neath Port Talbot Schools!

This policy will be reviewed annually.

	Name	Signature	Date
Chair of Governors	Mr Tudur Jones		November 2025
Head Teacher	Mrs Laurel Davies		November 2025

Review Date: November 2026