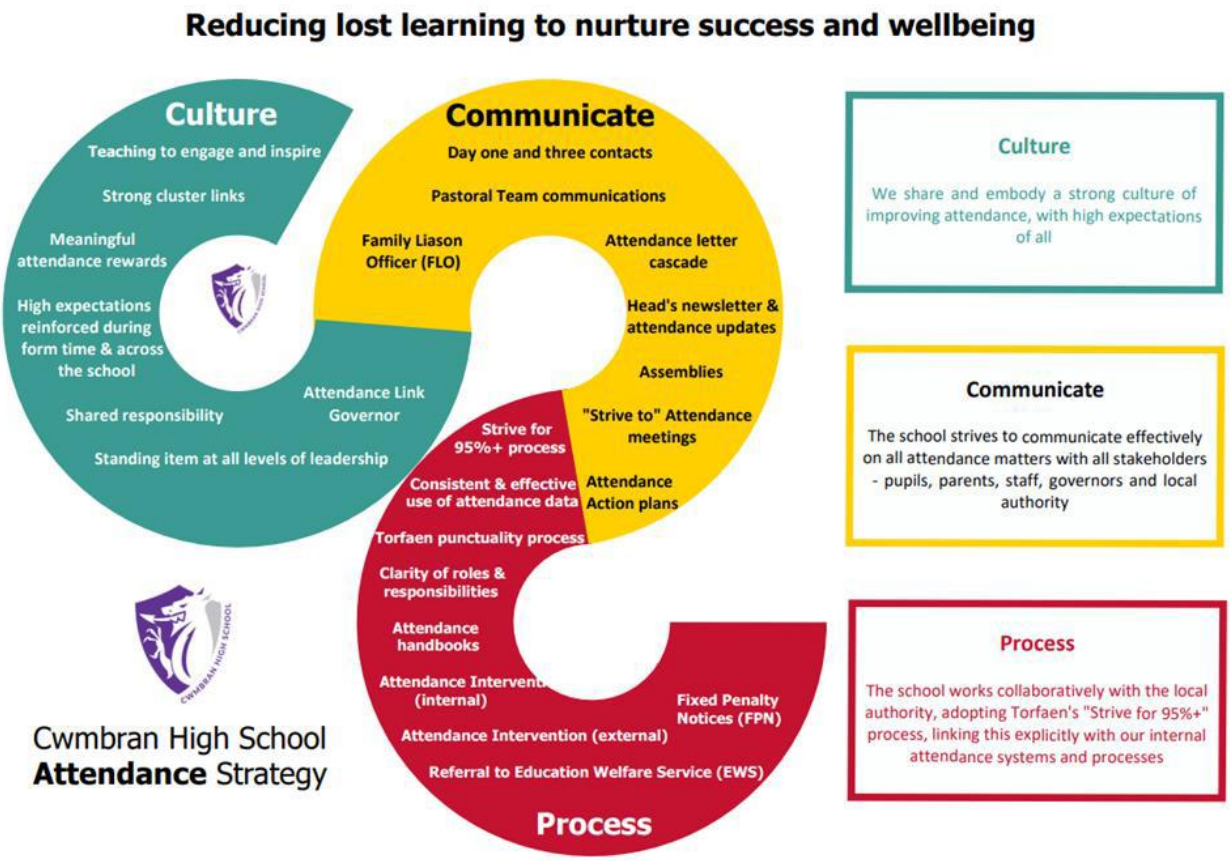
Cluster Attendance Policy



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Staff Lead:	Ms Nicola Martin

Torfaen County Borough Council – Education Welfare Service

Traffic Lights Attendance Scheme – Improving Attendance Pathways

School Step 1: School makes robust first day response consistently. Daily telephone calls and texts. Day 3 contact to take place or day two if it is a Friday or day one if there is safeguarding concerns

School Step 2: School sends out first letter **(step 1 letter)** if attendance is below threshold (unless genuine reason established)

Concerns regarding pupil remain

Reasons acceptable no further action

School Step 3: School sends out second letter **(step 2 letter)** if there is insufficient improvement in attendance and invite parents/carers to a meeting. School staff can also carry out appropriate home visits

School Step 4: Attendance Improvement meeting with parents/carers. Complete an Attendance Action Plan **(AAP)** and make appropriate referrals to other agencies and arrange a review date

Parents provide medical evidence & genuine reason for absence established

School Step 5: Review meeting. If Parents DNA meeting then school to re-arrange a second meeting, however if attendance has not improved sufficiently then refer to EWS. **(EWS Referral form).** Schools send referral with attendance action plan (AAP) notes attached. School inform parents of referral to LA by sending the EWO letter

Improvement: no further action but monitor during preventative work. Send out improvement letter

LA Step 6: Referral accepted. Case opened on the basis of evidence and school steps 1-6 being completed

LA Step 7: LA supports strategies to improve attendance:

- Arrange a meeting with parents/carers/pupil
- Home visits where applicable
- Signposting to other agencies

LA Step 8: No improvement

LA Step 9: Legal action considered

Pupil back in school; monitor for four weeks if improved close case on the ROC. During the next four weeks the case can be reopened to the EWS. If improvement in attendance is consistent over a period of 8 weeks the case is closed to the EWS and referred back to the school for monitoring and the school must start the Strive process again before referring to the EWS

Statutory Duty of Schools

The Education Act 1996 Section 7 requires parents or carers to ensure their child receives efficient, full-time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Schools are responsible for recording pupil attendance twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and once at the start of the afternoon session. An entry must be made on the attendance register for all pupils of compulsory school age who are on the school's admission roll.

Vision

This policy applies across the Cwmbran Cluster. While some procedures are secondary-specific, all schools will adapt procedures appropriately for primary settings to ensure consistency, clarity, and age-appropriate implementation.

All Cwmbran Cluster schools aim to provide an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach their full potential in line with our school moto 'Our future is in our hands, Learn…Enjoy…Achieve…' For our pupils to gain the greatest benefit from their education, it is vital that they attend every day, on time, unless the absence is unavoidable. As such, we promote and encourage 100% attendance for all our pupils.

It is essential that we all work together to ensure that all our pupils attend regularly, and we recognise that parents/carers have a crucial role to play. As such, there is a need to establish strong home school links and good communication to emphasise the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

We will work collaboratively with pupils, parents/carers, the Education Welfare Service, other services and agencies to identify and investigate issues, seeking appropriate support to resolve any problems impacting attendance, promptly and effectively.

Aims and Principles

This policy recognises that some pupils experience additional barriers to attendance, including pupils with Additional Learning Needs (ALN), medical needs, or anxiety-based school avoidance. Schools will work proactively with families and external agencies to provide reasonable adjustments, phased returns, and tailored support where appropriate.

Parents/carers are legally responsible for ensuring that a child of compulsory school age attends school regularly. All Cwmbran Cluster schools will:

- Work towards ensuring that all pupils feel supported and valued
- Send a clear message that if a pupil is absent, they will be missed
- Include attendance as a key priority of our school improvement plan
- Consult with all members of the community and Education Welfare Service in developing and maintaining the Cluster Attendance Policy
- Encourage parents/carers to be actively involved in promoting their child's attendance
- Provide regular information to parents/carers and pupils informing them of attendance rates and related issues
- Promote positive staff attitudes to pupils returning following an absence
- Ensure regular evaluation of our Attendance Policy and procedures by Senior Leaders and the School Governors
- Be consistent and robust in monitoring, and evaluation procedures will be in place.

PROCEDURES: RECORDING ATTENDANCE

Recording Attendance:

Registration

Morning registration will take place at 9:00am and afternoon registration at 1:10pm .

Registration is completed by class teachers using SIMS lesson monitor. The teacher will mark the pupil as present, late or absent using the appropriate codes. If a valid reason is known, other codes may be used to indicate authorised/unauthorised absence, which will be recorded by the person supervising that pupil.

Lateness

If a pupil is late to school, they will be required to enter the building through the Pupil Reception area and sign in. They will be recorded as late on the register by the designated Attendance Officer.

Pupils who are persistently late will initially be supported by school via 'The Punctuality Pathway'. If a pupil continues to arrive late despite school-based support, they may be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

If punctuality does not improve, parents will be invited to attend a formal meeting at the school.

ABSENCES

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason, for example, medical reasons which unavoidably fall in school time or emergencies. Every effort must be made to make appointments after school hours.

Unauthorised absences are those which we do not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to sanctions and/or legal proceedings. Examples of unauthorised absence include:

- the parent/carer hasn't contacted the school with a valid reason for their child's absence
- when the parents/carers are unwell
- when other siblings are unwell
- the school has not received the requested medical proof of illness
- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school after registration has closed
- looking after other children
- birthdays
- day trips and unauthorised holidays in term time

In most cases, decisions regarding authorised or unauthorised absence rest with the Headteacher or nominated Deputy Headteacher. However, in certain circumstances (e.g. bereavement or clearly

evidenced medical reasons), appropriate coding may be applied by designated staff in line with agreed procedures. Term-time holiday requests remain the responsibility of the Headteacher.

Where a pupil has had 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence during a term then school may request that a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) be issued by the Local Authority. Prior to that, the school will advise parents by letter, that this is the case and the pupil will be monitored to ensure that there are no further unauthorised absences.

First Day Contact

Parents/carers whose child is absent are required to contact the school via GroupEd or phone 01633 624170 before 8.35am. If no contact has been made by the parent/carer on the first day of absence the Attendance Officer or Family Liaison Officer will contact home to ascertain a valid reason. If no contact can be made within 3 days the Attendance Officer or Family Liaison Office will escalate to the Education Welfare Officer to call to the home in person.

Where a child is designated as 'looked after' or there is involvement from Social Services, first-day contact will be made by the Education Welfare Service or the allocated Social Worker, and the next steps will be agreed between the relevant parties.

Religious Observance

The school will authorise absence to take part in any day set aside exclusively for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong, including religious festivals. Parents/carers are required to inform the school in advance.

Illness

Absences due to illness should be reported before 8.35am on the first day of absences and on each subsequent day of absence. If a parent/carer knows their child will be absent for a certain period (i.e. due to a broken leg/tonsillitis) then we will authorise the absence for a slightly longer period of time but request regular updates from the parent.

If a pupil has low attendance due to illness, we may request that medical evidence is provided before authorising any further absences due to illness. If no medical evidence is provided the absence will remain unauthorised and the formal monitoring process may be considered.

Long Term Sickness

If the pupil is returning to school after an absence of longer than two weeks, the school may make provision to allow the pupil to ease back into the school system. In the event of a pupil returning after a long-term absence then a Pastoral Support Programme (PSP) / re-integration plan will be implemented with agreement from the parents/carers. The PSP will include all members of the school staff and will be designed to be as supportive of the pupil as possible.

Medical Appointments

All appointments are requested to be made outside of the school day wherever possible but if an appointment has to be made during the school day, we expect the pupil to be in before and/or after the appointment, depending on the time. Evidence of the medical appointment will be requested.

Holidays

All parents/carers must complete a holiday form; however, the school **do not** authorise holidays. Holidays during term time are marked as an unauthorised G code, however exceptional the circumstances. Exceptional circumstances would be authorised at the discretion of the Headteacher. Additionally, the child's current attendance and previous attendance record will be taken into consideration.

Unauthorised holidays may result in the school requesting that a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) be issued by the Local Authority**.**

MONITORING ATTENDANCE

Cwmbran Cluster will operate a staged approach to monitoring attendance. The Torfaen County Borough Council staged response process (STRIVE) will be applied to all pupils whose attendance falls below 90%.
See Page 1 – **Traffic Lights Attendance Scheme – Improving Attendance Pathways**

We aim that all pupils achieve 100% attendance; however, there may be instances where pupils are unwell or have other legitimate reasons for school absence.

Like many other schools in Torfaen County Borough Council, Cwmbran Cluster operates a process which provides parents with information about the links between attendance and attainment. It also communicates to parents the current picture of their child's attendance.

Every parent/carer will receive an initial letter during the Autumn term to explain the system. Following that, they will receive regular correspondence informing them of their child's attendance. This ensures that early intervention is implemented.

School Website and Social Media

The school's website will hold information about the use of the attendance policy and strategies so it is accessible for parents/carers, pupils, governors and the public.

The school will use GroupEd and our website to communicate messages about attendance, attainment and future success to promote healthy attendance habits.

Attendance Panels

Attendance Action Plans (AAPs) may be implemented at an early stage by teaching, pastoral, or administrative staff, either face-to-face or via telephone with parents/carers. Attendance Panels are a more formal stage of intervention and are convened when concerns persist despite earlier support.

School will hold attendance panels if the school is concerned about the attendance of your child, you will be invited to this panel to discuss the issues causing the poor attendance. At this meeting, you will be asked to sign an Attendance Action Plan (AAP) which will address the issues. This AAP will contain an individual attendance strategy which will be reviewed every four weeks. If the panel deem no improvement has been made within the agreed review period, a referral to the Education Welfare Service and other agencies could be made. Prosecution will be the last resort after all else has failed to improve attendance.

Penalty Notices and Prosecution for Non-Attendance

It is a legal requirement that your child attends school regularly. As the parent/carer you have a legal responsibility to ensure their attendance. The Education Welfare Service has the statutory duty to enforce this. The Education Welfare Service can prosecute parents/carers in the Magistrates Court for non-attendance at a

registered school or non-attendance at an agreed Education Provision. It is also a legal requirement that a pupil attends on time. The parents/carers are responsible for ensuring that their child attends on time; the Education Welfare Service can issue a fixed penalty notice for a pupil's persistent lateness after the register closes.

Where a pupil has had 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence, and unauthorised holidays during a term then school may request that a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) be issued by the Local Authority.

The law empowers designated Local Authority (LA) Officers to issue Fixed Penalty Notices to the parents of children who have unauthorised absence from school within the Torfaen County Borough Council. The rules governing the implementation of these powers and the factors that should be taken into account when issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice are outlined In:

- The Education Act 1996;
- The Education & Inspections Act 2006;
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (Wales) Regulations 2013 SEWC is responsible for developing a protocol with which all the partner agencies named in legislation will work.

This policy is to be used in conjunction with the Local Code of Conduct Education Fixed Penalty Notices - Torfaen
School Fixed Penalty Notices | Torfaen County Borough Council
Local Code of Conduct - Education Fixed Penalty Notices (torfaen.gov.uk)

Rewards and Recognition for Good and Most Improved Attendance

The cluster will recognise and celebrate good and improved attendance through certificates, assemblies, newsletters, and age-appropriate incentives. Improvement as well as sustained high attendance will be acknowledged.

Useful contacts

Ms K Smith	Headteacher
Ms N Martin	Attendance Officer
Miss T Goodland	Family and Community Engagement Officer
Mrs C Watkins	Cluster Educational Welfare Officer