

THE EDUCATION WELFARE SERVICE

**SCHOOL ATTENDANCE IS
EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY**

The young person has a responsibility:

- > To go to school
- > To arrive on time
- > To register attendance AM and PM
- > To engage with learning and
- > To tell an adult if there is something that is not going well for you.

The parent has a responsibility:

- > To encourage and check child/young person goes to school.
- > To maintain contact with school about attendance
- > To seek advice and support including medical if pupils are not attending school without delay.

The school attendance officer has a responsibility:

- > To identify and monitor those vulnerable pupils with poor attendance
- > To offer support to improve attendance including the offer of a Families First Assessment
- > To ensure professionals involved are made aware of daily/weekly attendance and
- > To liaise with staff and support services working with pupils

The class teacher has a responsibility:

- > Needs to know the valuable pupils and check they are attending each day and
- > To report non-attendance to the pastoral team and to work with them to facilitate improvements.

The designated safeguarding lead or senior leadership team has a responsibility:

- > To update key staff with changes to vulnerable pupil list and information of those supporting each pupil
- > Ensure all those professionals involved to be invited to child in need and TAF meetings.

The social worker/Families First worker has a responsibility:

- > To know the attendance of children you are working with.
- > To follow up with parent/child non-attendance how it can improve.
- > To seek support from the education welfare service

Blaenau Gwent Education Welfare service has a responsibility:

- > To support schools/parents/social workers/families first to improve school attendance.
- > To review and identify strategies to improve attendance and
- > To ensure that the local authority's statutory duties regarding school attendance are followed.

Why is attendance so poor?

- > Ask the school for a registration certificate
- > Look at the reasons for absences they authorised or are they unauthorised?
- > Look at the patterns of attendance, is it before or after a holiday, is it the same day every week?
- > Are there missing marks?
- > Is the correct code being used?

Who can help in school?

- > The attendance officer
- > Head of year in secondary school or deputy head teacher in primary schools
- > Pastoral staff
- > Designated safeguarding lead.
- > Education welfare officer
- > Additional learning needs coordinator.
- > Youth worker

Who can help in the local authority?

- > The Education Welfare Service
- > Families First
- > Inclusion Service
- > Educational psychology
- > Additional learning needs team
- > Youth Service

Things that help improve attendance:

- > Do not schedule medical appointments in term time hospital appointments are an exception.
- > Do not take holidays in term time.
- > Make sure parents know when school holidays and inset days are.
- > Encourage parents to think before keeping their children off school - would they stay off work for the same illness - and to send them when back they are OK even if it is a Friday
- > Encourage pupils and parents to talk with the school about how to make school a better experience.
- > Include attendance in all plans and discussions with the family.

If any of the following are considered or mentioned, then the correct local authority team needs to be consulted:

- > New school place, parents need to contact the admissions team. Consider this carefully, it is not always the right pathway for your child.
- > Managed moves speak with the inclusion team.
- > Fixed term/permanent exclusion speak with the inclusion team.
- > Reduced/partial timetables speak to the school EWO. They should be very short term and agreed by the parents and monitored regularly with the local authority informed.
- > Breakfast clubs after school clubs - ask school.
- > Home education -speak with the inclusion team.
- > Medical needs, seek the guidance of the school ALNCO and school EWO.

Key messages:

- > Every school day counts.
- > Schools are safe spaces/protective factors.
- > They act as respite time for parents experiencing crisis.
- > Attendance often can be a problem early in a child's school career - the impact of this is immense.
- > Everyone involved with the pupil should encourage good attendance from nursery classes through to the end of statutory school age at the end of year 11.

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