

Document Owner and Approval

Pencoed Comprehensive School is the owner of this document and is responsible for ensuring that this policy document is reviewed in line with School's policy review schedule.

A current version of this document is available to all members of staff on the shared drive – Policies and Risk Assessments – policies.

Signature: *A.S. Rea*

Date: 1.7.25

Change History Record

Version	Description of Change	Date of Policy Release
1		1.7.25
2		
3		

Introduction

Pencoed Comprehensive School recognises the importance of both school attendance and learner engagement for student success. This policy is designed to focus on fostering a sense of belonging, active engagement, and participation among our students, while also addressing attendance issues in line with the Welsh Government's "Belonging, Engaging, and Participating" guidance.

Cultivating a Sense of Belonging

Inclusive Environment: Pencoed Comprehensive School is an inclusive school community, committed to excellent, equity and wellbeing. We create an ethos where students feel valued, safe, secure and connected to the school community in line with our Safeguarding Policy.

Positive Relationships: Fostering positive relationships among students, teachers, and staff is a priority. These relationships enhance the sense of belonging and ensure students feel supported throughout their secondary education journey.

Aims

This policy aims to ensure that attendance and punctuality remains a key focus for all, including governors, teachers, parents, pupils and partner agencies. We will strive to:

- offer a safe and friendly environment which welcomes children regardless of race, gender or ability.
- raise standards and ensure all pupils reach their full potential, through a high level of school attendance and punctuality.
- ensure all stakeholders receive communication about information on the importance of regular school attendance.
- identify those pupils with irregular attendance at an early stage and to work with partner agencies to try and address any barriers that stop pupils from attending school regularly.
- keep accurate and up to date attendance data.
- ensure all pupils are safe, and for schools to follow the local authority's 'Children Missing Education' guidance.
- reward those pupils who have made significant progress in raising attendance levels.

This document is supported by the All Wales Attendance Framework. <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-03/all-wales-attendance-framework.pdf>

Legal Framework

The law outlining attendance is:

The Education Act 1996 which places a legal obligation on:

- the local authority to provide and enforce attendance;
- school to register attendance and notify the local authority of a child's absence.

Section 7 of the above act states that:

'The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient, full time education suitable to his/her age, aptitude and ability and to any special educational needs he/she may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'.

Section 444 further states that:

'The parent of a child of compulsory school age registered at school and failing to attend regularly is guilty of an offence punishable in law'.

School Attendance Orders (SAO):

Under the Education Act 1996 section 437- 443 a School Attendance Order applies when a parent of compulsory school age fails to prove that the child is receiving a suitable education and where the authority believes the child should attend school. A School Attendance Order may be used to direct a parent to send their child to a specified school, and should be used when a pupil is not on roll at any school.

The Education (Penalty Notice) Wales Regulations 2013 :

This legislation came into force in September 2014 and has given local authorities powers to issue fixed penalty notices. (FPN). A code of conduct has been agreed by Bridgend County Borough Council on the issuing of the FPN which includes the following criteria:

- Minimum of 10 unauthorised absences in the current term which do not have to be consecutive.
- Minimum of 10 sessions of lateness after the close of registration.
- Parents/carers who chose to take their children out of school on holiday during term time without authorisation from the Head teacher for a minimum of 10 unauthorised sessions.
- Pupil regularly coming into contact with the police during school hours without a justified reason.
- Parents/carers failing to engage with school/EWS but where prosecution has not been instigated.

Role of Head teacher:

- To be responsible for overall management and implementation of this policy.
- Work closely with the school's governing body.
- Set attendance targets with the Central South Consortium challenge advisors and governors, and take advice from the local authority if needed.

- To use discretion when receiving applications for holiday requests and to provide reasons to parents.
- Regular attendance reports shared and provided to governors.
- Work closely with the local authority's Lead EWO and nominated school EWO, and other support services.
- To notify the local authority when a 'child is missing education' and follow the local authority's CME procedures.
- Ensure policy is readily available for stakeholders including in the school, and on the school website.
- To work with CSC Challenge advisors and to provide a comprehensive plan in terms of attendance, including future plans.

Governing Body:

- Approve the policy and amend if necessary.
- Receive reports from the head teacher on a regular basis.
- Attend meetings as and when required.
- Ensure policy is shared with all relevant stakeholders.
Lead governor for attendance is appointed.

Senior Management Team:

- Work with all staff responsible for attendance and punctuality.
- To look at attendance data on a weekly basis, linking in with schools EWO.
- Regularly check registers.
- Ensure all absences are recorded in line with the guidance of codes document including those unauthorised absence and no reasons provided.
- Regular and updated training on attendance for all relevant staff, using the LA ICT SIMS team and Class Charts training provider.
- Raise issues of those staff not compliant with the completion of registers.
- Discuss any initiatives with all staff.

Progress and Wellbeing Leaders:

- Ensure all pupil absences are recorded, and notes received.
- Registers are completed on a daily basis.
- Work closely with the schools attendance clerk.
- Work closely with the schools EWO, each providing valid attendance data, those not achieving the threshold of 92%. To attend set and pre-arranged meetings with the EWO.
- Contact parents/guardians of those pupils who have not attended and not provided reasons for absence.
- Truancy concerns are dealt with.
- To arrange letters and meetings following the LA procedure for those parents whose children's attendance is posing a concern.

- To monitor patterns of irregular attendance.
- To provide rewards to those pupils with improved or excellent attendance.

Class Teacher/Wellbeing Coach:

- To carry out the statutory role of completing attendance registers twice a day, once in the morning and once in the afternoon.
- Ensure absences are accounted for by ways of a note provided by parents.
- Follow up unaccounted reasons for absence and concerns raised to the Progress and Wellbeing Leader.
- To continue to raise the profile of attendance to all pupils.
- Contact the attendance clerk with any queries.

Pupils:

- Attend regularly and on time unless unwell or received an authorised absence.
- Bring to school a parental signed note explaining reasons for a previous absence and give to their Wellbeing Coach.
- Inform teacher of planned absences.

Parents:

- To ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually.
- To notify the school if their child is unable to attend, on the first day of absence and every day thereafter.
- To keep the school updated on parents/guardians contact details, including mobile numbers and new addresses.
- To work with school and partner agencies to address any issues of irregular attendance of their children.
- To work with their child in relation to homework, not completing homework is not a reason for missing school.

Role of Attendance Clerk and Pastoral Support Officers:-

- To speak with parents on a daily basis to establish reasons for pupil's absence.
- To record absences daily, registers as and when required.
- To 'mop up' missing marks, providing reasons and inputting reasons on the red flag system on Class Charts.
- To send text messages to those parents who haven't contacted school, or by telephoning parents individually in order to establish reasons.
- To work closely with EWO and support staff in school.
- To work closely with Senior Staff and the Headteacher.
- To ensure transfer of CTF of pupils are completed in a timely manner and pupils are not removed from roll unnecessarily.

- To check messages, if necessary, either on the school's answerphone or text messaging system.

School Strategies to improve attendance

We aim that all pupils achieve 100% attendance, however there may be instances where pupils unfortunately are unwell.

The school operates a 'Attend to Achieve' process which provides parents with information of the links between attendance and attainment. This shows which category the child's attendance falls into when attendance is as follows:

Possible Learning Missed – Autumn Term		
Total possible days in school 75 days / 150 sessions (this does not include inset days)		
Purple	100%	Not Missing any lessons. Your child has the optimum chance to achieve well and is taking full advantage of every learning opportunity.
Green	99% 98% 97%	Missing 2 days / 4 sessions of school
Amber	96% 95% 93%	Missing approximately 5 days / 10 sessions of school
Red	92% and below	Missing 6 days / 12 sessions or more

NB: Where a child falls in between these categories they will be rounded up to the nearest whole figure.

Each parent will receive an 'Attend to Achieve letter' on a termly basis informing them of which category their child(ren) are currently in. This ensures that early intervention is received to pupils and families who are in need.

Breakfast Club

Our school has the privilege of offering a breakfast to all our pupils. Children having this opportunity allows them to have breakfast with friends and ensures they have had a meal at the start of the day which statistics shows helps concentration and positive attitudes.

Celebration Assemblies

These assemblies are further used to focus on attendance and to raise awareness of the importance of good attendance. Attendance per registration is highlighted and praised through weekly Progress and Wellbeing Leader assemblies. We celebrate pupils who have had excellent attendance after each term by displaying names, issuing certificates as well as additional rewards.

Keeping school registers

The school's register is a legal document and under The Education (pupil registration) (Wales) regulations 2010 the school is required to keep an accurate record of attendance. Registers need to be marked twice a day, once in the morning and once in the afternoon.

Registers may be needed in a court of law if deemed appropriate.

Schools Information Management system (SIMS) is used in all schools across BCBC to record all pupils attendance. Pencoed Comprehensive School completes registers on Class Charts which writes data back to SIMS.

By the end of the school week the schools overall attendance registers will be completed and an overall attendance figure will be calculated by the school.

Types of absences

It is important for parents to understand the definition of the different types of absences. They are classed as unauthorised absence and authorised absence.

The school's Headteacher can only decide on whether an absence should be classed in either one of these categories, parents cannot.

Absences may be authorised for the following reasons:

- Illness.
- Religious observance.
- Medical/Dental appointments during school hours.
- Fixed term and permanent exclusions.
- Holiday agreed by the head teacher.

Examples of what are classified as unauthorised absence are the following, however they are not limited: Absences may be unauthorised for the following reasons:

- Truancy.
- Late after the close of registration.
- Staying at home for no reason – condoned absence.
- Going shopping.
- Birthdays.
- Holiday not agreed by the Headteacher.

In addition there are several codes classed as a present mark which include the following:

- Late before the close of register.
- Educated off site, pupils attending vocational courses at college/pupils attending alternative provision agreed by school.
- Sporting activity.
- Educational visit.
- Traveller absence.

- Interview.
- Work experience.
- Where pupils are on roll at school and also at another education establishment.

Please see Appendix 2 which includes a breakdown of codes set by Welsh Government.

Punctuality

Punctuality is a legal requirement and pupils must attend on time. Persistent lateness has a detrimental effect on a child's learning and also disrupts other pupils within the class and throughout the school.

The school operates a 'Late' system run by Senior Staff, whereby pupils arriving in school after 8.40a.m. will have their names taken. This will trigger a sanction, which will usually take the form of a lunchtime detention. A parent notification will be sent via the Class Charts system, on the same day, informing them that their child was late and that a sanction will be imposed.

Pupils who arrive at school after registration has ended, must report to Pupil Reception.

Those parents of pupils who are persistently late will be contacted by the Progress and Wellbeing Leader/ EWO as necessary.

Medical absences

Where a child is continually absent from school on the grounds of medical reasons, it will be necessary for the parent to provide medical evidence to school. This will be initiated by the school and the EWO which will result in the pupil and family receiving the appropriate support in assisting in attending school regularly. There may be times where a reintegration plan may be necessary which will be a partnership agreement between the family, pupil, EWO and school.

Holidays during term time

'Schools can only agree to absence for a family holiday or trip if they believe there are special circumstances that warrant it.'

(WG guidance, 2023)

'Parents should not expect, or be led to expect, that schools will agree to family holidays during term time.'

(All Wales Attendance Framework, 2011)

Parents do not have an automatic right to withdraw pupils from school during the school term for a holiday. Under the Education (pupil registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010, Headteachers have discretion to authorise a holiday of up to 10 days during term time, over 10 days can only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

All requests for holidays must be completed on the school's holiday request form via the school website by the parents/guardians. The holiday form is available in the parent section at

https://pencoedcomp.wales/parents/#hol_form. Parents must request a paper copy from main reception if they are unable to access the school website.

The Progress and Wellbeing Leader will make the decision on holiday authorisation at the direction of the Headteacher.

Other than exceptional circumstances*, holidays will only be authorised for pupils in year 7, 8 and 9 if a pupil's attendance has been 95% or above in the previous term. Where a holiday request is made during the first term, this will only be authorised where the pupil's attendance has been over 95% for the previous academic year. If the holiday request is for a year 7 pupil during the first term, their attendance to date must be above 95% for the holiday to be authorised.

Research shows that missing out on just 17 days of school will cause a drop in grade across all subjects at GCSE level. Other than exceptional circumstances*, holidays will not be authorised for pupils in year 10, 11, 12 and 13 due to the impact on learning/importance of attendance throughout the year to complete GCSEs/A Levels.

* Exceptional circumstances are determined by the Headteacher. Where parents feel their request is an exceptional circumstance, and the holiday has been declined, they should email admin@pencoedcs.bridgend.cymru. The email subject must be 'FAO The Headteacher Exceptional Holiday Request'. The content of the email should include the full name and year group of the child(ren). The request must outline the dates of the holiday and the reason that it is an exceptional request.

Early Identification and Intervention

Pencoed Comprehensive School uses attendance data analysis through SIMS and Class Charts to identify patterns and trends in attendance, engagement, and participation. This data informs our strategies and ensures continuous improvement.

Should a pupil's attendance fall below a certain threshold, e.g. 92% in autumn 1, 93% in autumn 2 and 95% after the Christmas period, the school will issue a 'Letter 1' informing parents/carers that their child(ren)'s attendance needs to improve.

Should a pupil's punctuality fall below a certain threshold, **e.g 5 sessions** of lateness after the close of registration, the school will issue a 'Letter 1' informing parents/carers that their child(ren)'s punctuality needs to improve.

In addition, should the school continue to have concerns about your child(ren)'s attendance/punctuality, i.e. it does not improve, a 'Letter 2' will be sent home asking you to attend a meeting with the pupil's Progress and Wellbeing Leader. The purpose of the meeting is to explore ways in which the school could support, or actions parents/carers could take to improve their child(ren)'s attendance. Where parents/carers are unwilling to engage in these supportive meetings, an automatic referral to the Education Welfare Service (EWS) will take place and the school's Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will engage with the family. Following this meeting should the school continue to have concerns a referral to the Education Welfare Service (EWS) will take place and the school's Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will engage with the family.

The school's attendance procedures are outlined in **Appendix 1**.

Pastoral Support Plans: Where appropriate Progress and Wellbeing Leaders will develop and implement individualised support plans for students facing challenges in engagement and attendance, taking into account their unique needs.

Role of the Local Authority Education Welfare Service

The Education Welfare service is a statutory service which supports schools in ensuring all pupils attend school regularly. We have a designated EWO who visits the school on a regular basis, depending on need. The EWO will meet with each Progress and Wellbeing Leader fortnightly within school to discuss those pupils who have attendance of below 90%. The EWO will meet regularly with the senior member of staff who oversees attendance.

The school, in a joint discussion will then refer the pupil to the EWO following the procedure set out in this policy. Individual circumstances of each pupil will be considered.

Parents have a legal duty to ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually, or otherwise, under the Education Act 1996. Where parents fail to ensure the regular attendance of their child or otherwise are committing an offence and the EWO will need to be informed.

It is unfortunate on occasions but a punitive approach may be needed which may result in prosecution of parents. (Please see BCBC School Attendance Enforcement Policy September 2023)

However the EWS does not take this lightly and will endeavour to work with and support parents, schools and pupils to improve attendance levels.

Fixed Penalty Notices

The use of fixed penalty notices is outlined in the Bridgend County Borough Council Education Welfare Service School Attendance Enforcement Policy September 2023.

The Education (Penalty Notice) Wales Regulations 2013 which came into force in September 2014 have given local authorities new powers to issue fixed penalty notices (FPN). A Code of Conduct has been devised by BCBC regarding the issuing of a FPN. Under this code, the issuing of the FPNs will lie with the EWS in response to requests from headteachers and nominated deputies or police officers. It is anticipated that a FPN will be used to improve attendance and prevent unnecessary absences from school.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 gives discretion to the school to grant leave for the purposes of a holiday. The decision as to whether to authorise an absence for the purposes of a holiday is at the discretion of the headteacher.

Once an absence is unauthorised by the headteacher and the matter referred to the EWO, a FPN may be considered in the following circumstances:

- minimum of 10 unauthorised absences in the current term which do not have to be consecutive;

- minimum of 10 sessions of lateness after close of registration;
- parents/carers who chose to take their child/children on holiday during term time without authorisation from school for a minimum of 10 unauthorised sessions;
- pupil regularly coming to the attention of the police during school hours with justified reason;
- parents/carers have failed to engage with schools/EWS but where court sanctions have not been instigated; and
- where a penalty notice is requested from a school in response to a holiday related unauthorised absence, a minimum of 10 unauthorised holiday sessions will apply.

The EWS will work with schools to ensure that:

- notices are used consistently;
- relationships between schools and families are not compromised; and
- there is no conflict with any other intervention in place including where there are measures in respect of an offence when proceedings under Section 444(1) or Section 444(1a) of the Education Act 1996 are considered or have been commenced.

The EWS will take into account the following in considering whether a FPN can be issued:

- level of absence – unauthorised absences equating to below 95% attendance;
- any equalities considerations;
- Statement of Special Educational Needs;
- history of attendance
- level of parental engagement; and
- any adverse effect a fine will have on the welfare of the family.

A FPN will be issued where there are circumstances of unauthorised absences and when a FPN is felt appropriate taking into account the above. Only one FPN will be issued to a parent of a child in one academic year. Where there is more than one child with poor attendance within the same family, a FPN may be issued for each child in that family resulting in the parents receiving more than one notice within the same academic year.

There are no restrictions on the number of times a parent may receive a formal warning of a notice prior to receiving a FPN.

It will be discretionary to the EWS which person(s) will be issued with a FPN as per paragraph 3 above.

The EWS will respond to all requests from the headteacher to issue penalty notices within 10 days of receipt of all relevant information. When, having taken into account the above, the EWS will in appropriate circumstances:

- send a formal written warning to parents/carers notifying that they may receive a FPN and why (this does not apply in relation to holiday related unauthorised absence);
- 15 days monitoring period and to allow parents to respond;

- during the 15 day period the pupil must not have any unauthorised absences from school; and
- if at the end of the 15 days and all information has been considered to be appropriate a penalty notice will be issued.

A penalty notice is £60 if paid within 28 days of receipt of the notice, increasing to £120 if paid after 28 days. If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 42 days the local authority can prosecute parents/carers.

The penalty notice may only be revoked where it is proven that:

- the notice has been issued to the wrong person to an incorrect address;
- the notice did not conform to code of conduct;
- evidence demonstrates that the notice should not have been issued (for example, medical evidence is provided; and
- circumstances warrant its withdrawal.

Definitions

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 ends of the term dates are 31st March, 31st August and 31st December. A young person ceases to be compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they have their 16th birthday.

'Parents' section 576 of the Education Act 1996 includes:

- All natural parents whether married or not.
- Any person who although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a young person or child, and any person, who although not a natural parent has care of a child or young person.

Meanings:

'EWS' – Education Welfare Service

'EWO' – Education Welfare Officer

'CME' – Children missing education'

'CSCJES' – Central South Consortium Joint Education Service.

CTF - Common Transfer File – pupil file transferred to relevant school.

Collaboration and Partnerships

We believe in a collaborative approach. Pencoed Comprehensive School works closely with external agencies, parents, and other stakeholders to provide a holistic approach to addressing learner engagement, participation, and attendance challenges. External agency

support includes but is not limited to the Education Engagement Team, the Communications and Relationships Team and Early Help services.

The early help team consists of a variety of support services including family support workers, family engagement officers, counsellors, and youth workers. The early help team is designed to support families and pupils where a need has been identified. All officers are professionally trained and work with families, schools and agencies to ensure all parents and pupils receive the best possible support to enable them to have better opportunities in life.

Parents can also self - refer into the service directly via:

www.earlyhelp@bridgend.gov.uk or alternatively telephone on

01656 815420

Attendance Drives

Following the impact of COVID-19 all schools in Bridgend County Borough Council are striving to return to and exceed pre COVID-19 levels of attendance. Schools have adopted the #attendtoachieve approach (**See APPENDIX 3**). Pencoed Comprehensive School will work with parents and carers to ensure pupils attend to achieve for their learning, wellbeing, achievement and overall development.

Attendance Policy

Document Control

Reference: Attendance Policy

Version No: 1

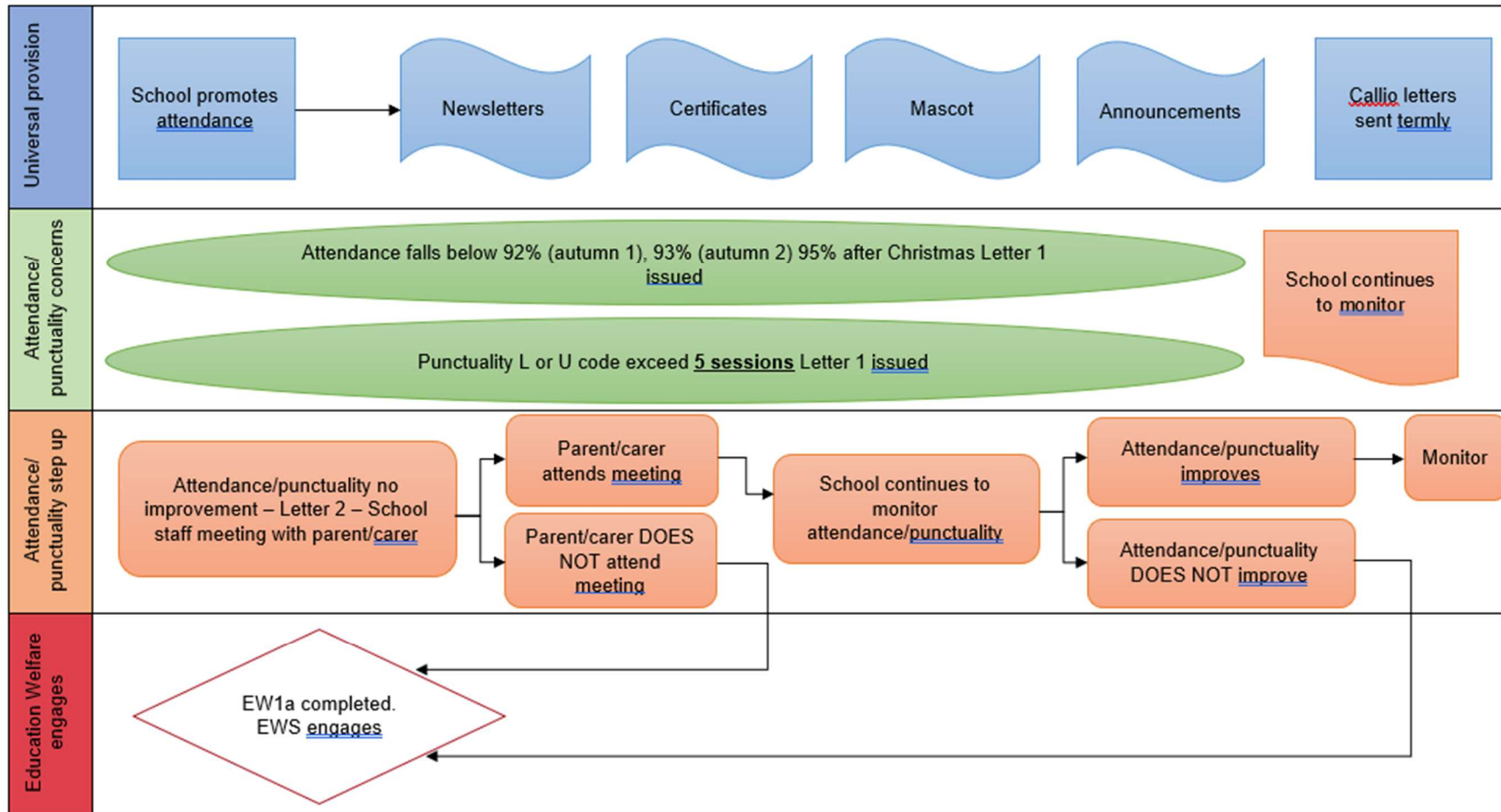
Version Date: 16.6.25

Review Date: 16.6.27

Page: 14 of

APPENDIX 1

Bridgend County Borough Council
Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr



APPENDIX 2

Code	Meaning	Statistical meaning
/\	Present at registration	Present
L	Late but arrived before register closed	Present
B	Educated off-site	Approved educational activity
D	Dual registered	Approved educational activity
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved educational activity
V	Educational trip or visit	Approved educational activity
J	Interview	Approved educational activity
W	Work experience (not work based learning)	Approved educational activity
C	Other authorised circumstances(not covered by another code)	Authorised absence
F	Agreed extended family holiday	Authorised absence
H	Agreed family holiday	Authorised absence
I	Illness	Authorised absence
M	Medical/dental appointment	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
E	Exclusion	Authorised absence
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
T	Traveller Absence	Authorised absence
N	No reason provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Other unauthorised absence(no explanation provided)	Unauthorised absence
G	Family Holiday (not agreed)	Unauthorised absence

U	Late arrival after the close of registration	Unauthorised absence
X	Un-timetabled sessions for non-compulsory school age	Not required to attend

APPENDIX 3

MISS SCHOOL, MISS OUT!

“Attending school every day is important for our learning, wellbeing, achievement, and overall development”

Research shows that missing out on just 17 days of school will cause a drop in grade across all subjects at GCSE level. The higher your school attendance rate, the higher you will achieve.

#attendtoachieve

Attend to achieve!

Make everyday count

Miss school, Miss out!

www.bridgend.gov.uk/residents/schools-and-education/school-attendance/

Cyngor Bwrdeistref Siro
 Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr
BRIDGEND
 County Borough Council

COLLI'R YSGOL COLLI MAS!

"Mae'n bwysig mynychu'r ysgol bob dydd er budd ein dysg, llesiant, cyflawniad a'n datblygiad cyffredinol"

Mae ymchwil yn dangos bod methu cyn lleied â 17 diwrnod o ysgol ar lefel TGAU yn gallu gostwng eich gradd derfynol ym mhob pwnc. Mae presenoldeb cyson yn helpu i sicrhau canlyniadau da.

#mynychwchilwyddo

Mynychwch i lwyddo

Ennweh yn siŵr bod pob diwrnod yn cyfrif.

Colli'r ysgol Colli mas!



www.bridgend.gov.uk/cy/preswylwyr/ysgolion-ac-addysg/presenoldeb-yn-yr-ysgol/

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