



# CS07 – Attendance



<b>Last Review Date</b>	November 2022	<b>Next Review Date</b>	November 2024
<b>Leader of Policy Review</b>	Deputy Headteacher, Assistant Headteacher		
<b>Associated Policies</b>	Assessment, Home School Partnership, ICT Fair Processing, Record Keeping Adopted from FCC Education and Youth Feb 22		

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Alun School is committed to ensuring that regular attendance at school is a priority which will in turn provide pupils with the best possible chances to succeed and to achieve their goals. Regular school attendance is essential for all children and young people. Failure to regularly attend can increase the risk of leaving school without any qualifications, and can also increase the likelihood of pupils being drawn into criminal and anti-social behaviour.

Alun School will work with Flintshire CC Inclusion Services and partner agencies who endeavour to work with parents, and pupils to ensure that all pupils receive appropriate support to enable them attend school regularly.

This attendance policy reflects the local authority's School Attendance expectations.

### **Aims**

This policy aims to ensure that attendance and punctuality remains a key focus for all including Governors, Teachers, Parents, Pupils and Partner Agencies. Alun School will work with Flintshire CC to ensure we:

- Offer a safe and friendly environment which welcomes children regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation 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 and information about the importance of regular school attendance.
- Keep accurate and up to date attendance data.
- Regularly scrutinise attendance data.
- Identify those pupils with irregular attendance at an early stage and work with partner agencies to address any issues that may stop pupils from attending school regularly.
- Ensure that all pupils are safe and ensure all schools follow the local authority's Children Missing Education (CME) guidance.
- Encourage schools to reward those pupils who have made significant progress in raising attendance levels.

This document is supported by the All Wales Attendance Framework.

<http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/pupilsupport/framework/?lang=en>

### **Legal Framework**

The law that requires regular school attendance is:

**The Education Act 1996. This Act and any amendments places a legal obligation on:**

- The Local Authority to provide services that enforce attendance.
- Schools to maintain an up to date and accurate register of pupil attendance and notify the Local Authority of a child's absence in accordance with local protocols (See Appendix).

**Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 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 Local Authority believes the child should attend school. A SAO 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 Flintshire County Council which allows Head Teachers to apply for a £60 FPN when they have recorded the following on the school register.

- Minimum of 10 unauthorised absences in the current term (These absences do not have to be consecutive).
- Minimum of 10 sessions of lateness after the close of registration.
- Parents/carers failing to engage with school/EWO but where prosecution has not yet been instigated.

The Headteacher must be able to demonstrate that all efforts to address the absences have been made and that the process has been administered robustly within the school before any decision is made to apply for a FPN. Evidence of Absences Letters 1, 2 and 3 must be submitted with all FPN applications. The Head Teacher must inform the parent/carer by letter that a request for a Fixed Penalty Notice will be made.

Support and advice with regard to FPN applications will be provided by a dedicated Education Support Officer within the EWO Service. All FPN's will be delivered by hand and all outcomes will be reported to the Headteacher.

The Senior Learning Advisor for Engagement will oversee the FPN process and ensure the application meets the requirements of FCC's Code of Conduct.

### **The decision to progress an application for an FPN is entirely that of the individual Headteacher.**

It is FCC policy to progress all unpaid FPN cases for Parental Prosecution (provided that Unauthorised Absences persist and that the case meets the legal threshold for a Parental Prosecution).

## **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 following their fifth birthday**.
- A young person ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last **Friday in June** of the school year in which they have achieved their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday.

'Parents' are defined in section 576 of the Education Act 1996 as:

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

Attendance is **everybody's concern** and the school will expect all stakeholders to play a part in improving attendance.

### **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 Challenge Advisors and Governors.
- To use discretion when receiving applications for holiday requests and to provide reasons to parents.
- To obtain regular attendance reports and for these to be shared Governors.
- To work closely with the Local Authority's Senior Learning Advisor- Engagement and the EWO Team Manager.
- To notify the Local Authority when a child is missing education and to follow the Local Authority's CME Policy.
- To ensure the schools' own Attendance Policy is up to date. To ensure this policy is readily available for parents and is displayed prominently on the school's website.
- To work with Supporting Improvement Advisors (SIA) and to provide evidence of attendance processes across the whole school.
- To set and review Attendance Targets in accordance with the WG All Wales Attendance Framework expectations.

### **Governing Body:**

- To approve the Attendance Policy and to ensure it is updated annually.
- To receive attendance reports from the Head Teacher on a regular basis.
- To ensure the Attendance Policy is shared with all relevant stakeholders.
- Ensure a Lead Governor for attendance matters is appointed.
- Attend meetings as and when required.

### **Senior Leadership Team:**

- Work with all staff responsible for attendance and punctuality.
- Scrutinise school attendance data on a regular basis and profile missing register marks.
- Regularly check registers have been marked at registration.
- Ensure all absences are recorded in line with the WG Guidance on School Attendance Codes document. <https://gov.wales/school-attendance-codes-guidance>
- Regularly update training on attendance for all relevant staff and provide guidance to supply/temporary staff.
- Monitor staff performance with regard to registration practices and address any deficits.
- Discuss potential initiatives to improve attendance with all staff and engage key staff in developing these initiatives.

### **Pastoral Leaders:**

- Ensure all pupil absences are recorded and notes from parents/guardians are received.
- Ensure that registers are completed on a daily basis.
- Work closely with the school's attendance officer.
- Work closely with the schools allocated EWO/ESO (See EWO/ESO Attendance flow chart) and ensure that a dedicated attendance meeting take place regularly to discuss cases.
- Contact parents/carers or guardians of those pupils who have not attended regularly.
- Ensure any truancy concerns are dealt with in line with school policy.
- Arrange letters are sent and meetings arranged with those parents whose children's attendance is identified as a concern.
- Regularly monitor patterns of irregular attendance and interview pupils.

- Provide rewards to those pupils with improved or excellent attendance.
- Discuss attendance related issues in school assembly on a regular basis and ensure pupils are aware of the fact that school have applied rewards and sanctions.

### **Class Teacher/Group Tutors:**

- To carry out the statutory role of completing attendance registers
- Ensure absences are accounted for through effective communication with home
- Follow up unaccounted reasons for absence and refer concerns to pastoral leaders as early as possible.
- Continue to raise the profile of attendance to all pupils as part of a whole school approach.
- Contact school Attendance Office with any queries/updates and ensure these are placed on SIMS system as a FLAG so that communication is clear across the school.

### **Pupils:**

- Attend regularly and on time unless unwell.
- Provide a note to school explaining reasons for absence and deliver this note to their group tutor
- Inform their tutor/pastoral leaders of any planned absences.
- Engage with school/house council to share any ideas that may improve individual or class attendance.

### **Parents/Guardians:**

- Must ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually.
- Must notify the school if their child is unable to attend on the first day of absence and regularly thereafter.
- Must keep the school updated of the parents/guardians contact details, including mobile numbers, email and new addresses.
- Work with school and partner agencies to address any issues of irregular attendance of their children.
- Work with their child in relation to homework and distance learning initiatives

### **Role of Attendance Officer:**

- To speak with parents on a daily basis to establish reasons for pupil's absence.
- To record absences daily in the register as and when required.
- To profile missing marks and to input reasons for absence on the SIMS system as a FLAG.
- Contact parents by Text/phone/email to inform them of absence and seek an explanation in a timely fashion every day.
- Work closely with EWO Service and support/pastoral staff in school.
- To work with SLT and Head Teacher closely.
- To ensure transfer of CTF of pupils is completed in a timely manner and pupils are not removed from roll unnecessarily
- Regularly monitor schools answerphone, inbox or text messaging system and update FLAG on SIMS to reflect the information.

### **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 must to be marked twice a day (once in the morning and once in the afternoon) to ensure pupils are safeguarded.

Registers and Registration Certificates must be accurate as they are required as evidence when EWO service takes legal action.

Schools Information Management System (SIMS) is used in schools across FCC to record all pupils' attendance.

By the end of the school week the school's overall attendance registers **MUST** be completed to ensure an overall attendance figure can 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 Head Teacher will determine if which absences are authorised/unauthorised.

Absences maybe 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.
- Agreed Flexi schooling
- Legitimate Dual Registration

Absences should remain unauthorised for the following reasons (Not Comprehensive):

- Truancy.
- Late after the close of registration.
- Staying at home for no legitimate reason – condoned absence.
- Shopping for school uniform.
- Birthdays.
- Holiday not agreed by the Head Teacher.

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.

Please see appendix 1 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.

Those parents of pupils who are persistently late will be contacted by the Group tutor/Pastoral Leader/Senior Leadership Team in accordance with processes described earlier. **All pupils who are late must sign in at the school's front office must enter through the main doors of the school to ensure they are accounted for.**

## **Medical absences**

Where a child is continually absent from school for medical reasons it will be necessary for the parent to provide medical evidence (e.g. certificate or letter from recognised medical service) to school. This will be requested by the school and may result in the pupil and family receiving appropriate support to enable the pupil to attend school regularly.

There may be times where a Reintegration PSP / Attendance Improvement Plan may be necessary which will be arranged in partnership with the family, pupil, relevant support service and school.

Any pupil that experiences long term absence for medical reasons can be considered for Home Tuition in accordance with the published FCC EOTAS Policy.

## **Holidays during term time**

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, Head Teachers have discretion to authorise a holiday of up to 10 days during term time. Any holiday in excess of 10 days should only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

All requests for holidays must be completed on the school holiday request form and completed by the parents/guardians. (Please see Appendix 2 for model form).

The Head Teacher will make the decision and should take account of the following contributory factors:

- Time of year.
- Length of time.
- Overall percentage of attendance.
- Impact on the child's learning.

## **School procedures**

Parents are expected to contact school on the first day of absence and to provide reasons for their child's absence. On the student's return, any notes explaining absence should be stored by the group tutor and kept on record.

If parents fail to notify school, then the school will make every effort to contact the parents and also other persons listed as a point of contact. The absence will be recorded as unauthorised if no contact is made. Failure to receive any contact on the third day of absence may result in the involvement of the EWO Service.

Referral to the EWO Service is by email direct to your allocated EWO to request support. The EWO will reply confirming the referral and email updates and outcomes to school directly. School should note updates on SIMS as a flag. EWO accountability is via dedicated service recording on Capita ONE system

## **Children Missing Education**

Schools have a duty to safeguard all pupils. The Education & Inspections Act 2006, requires the Local Authority to make arrangements to enable them to establish the identities of children residing within Flintshire who are not receiving an education. These may be pupils who have not attended school for an excessive amount of time without any contact or reason for the absence. The duty lies with the Local Authority to investigate further in accordance with the published FCC CME Policy.

Pupils should not be removed from the school register until the pupil has been admitted to another school/ PRU or until the CME document has been completed and recorded by the LA.

For further information please refer to the Child Missing in Education (CME) Policy. (Due for publication Jan 2022)

### **Schools Strategies to improve attendance**

FCC's aim is that all pupils achieve 100% attendance. However, there may be instances where pupils are unable to attend for genuine reasons. The EWO service categorises attendance concerns in the following way.

GREEN	98% - 100%
AMBER	92% - 98%
RED	below 92%
EWO REFERRAL	below 85%

### **Pupil Involvement**

Pupils could be nominated to become members of house council or school council and work with school staff to support improving attendance.

### **Schools Websites/Social Media**

The school's website/Social Media should provide parents, pupils, governors and the public with all the relevant attendance information. This should include the school's Attendance Policy, along with all other school policies and procedures. These should provide regular updates and reminders to support good school attendance.

### **The School Environment**

The school provides a happy, welcoming and organised environment to ensure all pupils enjoy learning. Classroom displays can be used to track form/class attendance each week and emphasise the school targets.

### **Staff Awareness**

All staff must be fully aware of the importance of regular school attendance. Pupils should be consistently reminded of the importance of regular school attendance during the school day. A holistic and consistent approach should be applied across the school to ensure that all staff reinforce the school ethos and reflect the culture of the school at all times. Regular training opportunities and reminders are scheduled in the school calendar.

### **Attendance Assemblies**

Celebrating high attendance is be a priority and a key strategy for maintaining high standards. Involving pupils in this process provides incentive, motivation and encouragement to students. Motivational assemblies can delivered formally or informally and may be led by school staff or representatives from prevention and support services.

### **Transition Process**

Transition from Year 6 to 7 can be a challenging time for many pupils. The transition process underlines the expectations with regard to school attendance and punctuality and equips parents with the information they need to support this. Cases where school attendance has been a concern are highlighted as part of transition arrangements with pastoral leaders and group tutors being aware of this information from the beginning.

The EWO service can be contacted/consulted for support. Early intervention at transition can be more effective than later engagements where school attendance matters are concerned



## **Parents' evening**

Parents' evenings are an opportunity to discuss attendance concerns as well as other school related matters. Parents can be signposted to support services for advice and guidance to ensure that they understand the benefits that result from regular school attendance.

## **School Sanctions**

Where an issue with attendance/punctuality is identified, a graduated series of interventions is deployed.

Sanctions are one element of a broad range of strategies/interventions. Specific sanctions include, but are not limited to:

- Removal of privileges
- School/pastoral detentions
- FPNs and/or legal processes as stated in this policy

## **Rewards**

Rewards can include but are not limited to the following:

- Individual and group certificate
- Badges/Pens etc
- Organised events
- Class/House Trophies
- 100% awards for the academic year for pupils.
- First In the queue for lunch
- Entries to prize draws etc

## **Additional Attendance Strategies**

### **Role of the Local Authority Education Welfare Service**

The Education Welfare Service is a statutory service which supports schools to ensure that all pupils attend school regularly. Schools have a designated EWO who will liaise with the school on a regular basis.

The EWO will meet/liaise with a senior member of staff (usually pastoral leaders) to discuss cases and to highlight concerns. Schools have the lead role on all matters with regard to their attendance register and all recording of attendance marks is entirely at the discretion of a Headteacher in accordance with published WG Coding Guidance.

<https://gov.wales/school-attendance-codes-guidance>

The EWO service has adopted a revised approach to the manner in which it supports schools. The EWO Service has created a dedicated Mission Statement and One Page Profile that underlines the manner in which the service now operates (See Appendix)

The EWO service now utilises current SIMS data to identify patterns and cases that may be of concern on a proactive basis. Regular school attendance data profiles are also conducted by the Senior Learning Advisor- Engagement to identify patterns and individuals that may require support. Parents have a legal duty to ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually under the Education Act 1996. Where parents fail to ensure the regular attendance of their child (or otherwise) they are potentially committing an offence and the EWO should to be informed at the earliest opportunity.

It is unfortunate, but on occasions recourse to statutory powers may be required. This may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) application or in the prosecution of parents/carers. It is FCC policy to prosecute all unpaid FPN cases. However the EWO services does not take this action lightly and will endeavour to work and support parents, schools and pupils to improve attendance levels until all of these avenues have been exhausted.

### **Role of School Improvement Advisors (SIA)**

Schools should work with their School Improvement Advisors who engages with school and advises/supports to promote the school improvement process. The SIA and the LA EWO Service can work closely together where this is possible to discuss those schools that may require additional support and where attendance is a concern.

### **Attendance Meetings**

Attendance Panels are a strategy used in Wales to address attendance matters. Attendance meetings will be called to address concerns about attendance. These may involve Senior Staff in a school (pastoral, SLT, attendance officer etc), EWO service, and parent/pupil. These panels can be utilised to examine progress and agree a plan for improving attendance.

### **Community Education Patrols (CEP)**

Community Education Patrols are a strategy employed under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 when hotspots are identified at VARM/ASB.

N Wales Police have the power to engage parents found with children during school hours. Any child found unaccompanied by an adult can be taken back to school or to a designated place of safety.

Community Education Patrols are employed as an occasional strategy that is dependent on the availability of resources and is intended to promote the benefits of regular school attendance/to promote partnership working.

Parents' and pupils' details are logged, along with the reasons for the pupil being away from school. Schools are emailed to inform them of the details obtained. (Not currently running within FCC)

### **First Day contact**

School should operate a first day contact process to confirm why a child is absent when no suitable explanation has been received. This process is deemed to be good practice and is an essential part of a robust safeguarding process within a school. Such pupils can then be referred to support services in accordance with the terms of this policy.

### **Data Collection**

School's attendance data are continually being tracked and monitored electronically both at an individual pupil level and as a whole school. This information is collated by the Local Authority and shared with the SLA Engagement and the EWO Manager on a regular basis.

Contact between the LA and school staff is continuous and allows checking and clarification of data. Such practice is intended to foster positive dialogues with schools in a collaborative manner at the earliest opportunity.

### **Monitoring and Reporting**

School should regularly prepare reports to the Governing Body, Senior Management and School Improvement Advisors to ensure that levels of attendance are clear and that attendance codes are accurate. Parents should also be notified through the school's regular communication channels stated in this policy.

**Appendix 1**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Statistical meaning</b>
/\	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
Y	Partial and forced closure	Not required to attend
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not required to attend
#	School closed to all pupils	Not required to attend

**Appendix 2**

**Holiday in term time request**

Section A To be completed by the Parent/Guardian at least 2 weeks in advance.

<b>Green</b>	100%	Not missing any lessons.
	99%	Missing about 10 lessons.
	98%	Missing about 20 lessons.
<b>Amber</b>	96%	Missing about 8 days of school. It will be difficult to catch up on the lost learning from about 40 lessons.
	95%	Missing about 2 weeks of school.
	93%	Missing 14 days of school. This is almost three weeks of Education lost
<b>Red</b>	< 92%	Missing more than 3 weeks of Education. A serious loss of learning that may have a detrimental effect on achievement.

Name of Child:	Class	dob	Address	Tel no.
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				

Holiday dates: (including possibility of late flight arrivals if possible)

From: ..... to .....

Destination .....

(NB – This is for child protection reasons ensuring all our children are safeguarded)

**Declaration:**

I understand that this holiday request may be authorised or not authorised and the Headteacher will use his/her discretion in making the decision based on my child’s circumstances. If the Headteacher does not authorise this holiday, this may lead to a request for a Fixed Penalty Notice to the Local Authority EWO Service which will be determined in line with the schools attendance policy. (Please ask for a copy at school or the schools website)

Parent/Guardian .....

Section B

To be completed by the Head Teacher within at least 1 week from the request.

Reasons for refusal to authorise absence

.....  
.....  
.....

Reasons for authorising .....

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

The Head Teacher has authorised/unauthorised (\* delete) the following holiday request for the reasons specified above.

Please see attached attendance registration certificate.

Signed .....