



# NEWBRIDGE – ON- WYE CHURCH-IN-WALES SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION (“CME”) POLICY

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Updated by instruction of Governing Body July 2021

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## 1 Policy Rationale

- Poor attendance is destructive of educational achievement, undermines the well-being of pupils and may discourage staff
- The School is committed to maintaining high levels of attendance and further improvements in attendance standards as a direct stimulus to raising pupils' opportunities and achievement.
- Powys County Council has a statutory duty to ensure that a child for whom they are responsible is receiving suitable education and, if the child is a registered pupil at a school, this means attending the school regularly and on time.
- The School shares with PCC responsibility for encouraging good attendance and improving poor attendance.



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- The School is required by law to maintain specific records and to produce specified information on the attendance or non-attendance of pupils.
  - The Children Missing from Education (“CME”) Policy addresses situations where a child’s absence is cause for concern or the child’s parent / carer may or may appear to have caused or permitted the child not to attend school.

### 2...The Legal Responsibility of Parents / Carers

2.1 The Parent / Carer of a child of school age is responsible for ensuring

- (1) that the child regularly attends a school is full-time educated at home
- (2) that once admitted, the child attends the school punctually (in other words not later than the time set for the beginning of every school day) and is not withdrawn from school during the school day unless there is a lawful excuse for absence
- (3) that if the child changes schools, the school which they are leaving is informed where they are going and when.

(see Education Act 1996 sections 7 and 444 and regulations)

2.2 In practice Parents/Carers can do a great deal to support the regular and punctual attendance of their children. Parents/Carers are expected to do the following, and the School appreciates that most parents/carers do so:

- a) take an active interest in their child’s school life and work;
- b) attend parents’ evenings and other school events, if possible;
- c) ensure that their child completes his/her homework and goes to bed at an appropriate time;
- d) be aware of emails from school or of letters from school which their child brings home;
- e) ensure that their child arrives at school on time each day; regularly, on time, properly dressed and in a fit condition to learn.
- f) ensure that their child only misses school for reasons which are unavoidable or justified, such as illness or days of religious observance;
- g) always notify the school of any absence as soon as possible - preferably on the first morning;
- h) tell the School, preferably in writing when the child will return to school after an absence

2.3 Even if the child fails to attend, no offence is committed by the parent / carer if:

- the pupil was absent with leave (authorised absence);
- the pupil was ill or prevented from attending by an unavoidable cause;



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- the absence occurred on a day set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil/ parent belongs;
  - the school is not within the prescribed walking distance of the child’s home and suitable transport arrangements have not been made by the LA.. (The law relating to walking distance effectively is defined as two miles for pupils under eight and three miles for all other pupils. Distance will be measured by nearest available walking route.)

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

- sickness or unavoidable medical or dental appointments;
- days of religious observance;
- exceptional family circumstances (eg bereavement),

2.5 Absence from school will not be authorised for reasons such as :

- shopping;
- haircuts;
- missed bus;
- overslept;
- no uniform;
- looking after brothers, sisters or unwell parents;
- minding the house;
- birthdays;
- holidays / day trips taken in term time.

Parents / carers are asked to make all medical and dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible.

### 3. Practice and Procedures

3.1 Clear systems and procedures should govern the response to all pupil absence. The School will follow the ‘Procedures for Non- Attendance’ flowchart agreed by PCC.

3.2 The School categorises a child’s attendance level against progress or lack of it as shown below

95-100% attendance	Best chance of success	Your child is taking full advantage of every learning opportunity.
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90-95% attendance	At least 2 weeks of learning missed	Satisfactory. Your child may have to spend time catching up with work.
85-90% attendance	At least 4 weeks of learning missed	Your child may be at risk of underachieving and may need extra support from you to catch up with work.
80-85% attendance	At least 5 ½ weeks of learning missed	Your child’s poor attendance has a significant impact on learning.
Below 80% attendance	At least 7½ weeks of learning missed	Your child is missing out on a broad and balanced education. You are at risk of prosecution.

### 3.3 The School encourages good attendance and punctuality by;

- creating a caring and nurturing environment in which pupils feel safe and appreciated as young adults;
- ensuring that attendance and punctuality are recognised within the whole school reward system (e.g. through good attendance certificates)
- developing positive relationships with parents/carers and external agencies working with the family / pupil;
- monitoring and evaluating the early intervention strategies adopted by the school;
- working closely with multi-agency colleagues and the Education Welfare Service to improve attendance and punctuality;
- monitoring attendance data and trends and reporting this information termly to the Governing Body.

### 3.4 Specific actions

- The School will initially make its policy on attendance clear to parents/carers and pupils at any meeting prior to admission.
- The School will communicate the importance of attendance to parents/carers and pupils through assemblies, the school prospectus, newsletters and the school website.
- If no explanation is received from the parent/carer of an absent pupil on the first morning of the absence, school staff will attempt to contact the parent/carer (usually by telephone) to investigate the reason for the absence. If the school is not able to contact the family then this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (Code “N” -- no reason yet provided for absence).
- Details of the absence are recorded, if later received, and discussed with the Head Teacher and a decision will be made with regards to authorisation as soon as possible.



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The Head Teacher may ask the Education Inclusion Service for advice with regards to this, but the decision to authorise any absence remains with the school.

- If the pupil is registered as a Child in Need or on the Child Protection register and absent from school without reason, then it will be necessary for the School to contact Social Services as soon as possible.
- If an absence remains unexplained for 3 consecutive days, the School will try to make arrangements for a representative or an LA officer to visit the home.
- When a pupil returns to school from an absence, but no explanation is offered, a letter will be sent to the parent/carers.
- Ultimately, if an attendance matter cannot be resolved by the School and the appropriate steps have been followed (as outlined in the ‘Procedures for Non Attendance’ document), then a referral will be made to PCC EWS for further investigation.

### **4. Penalty Charge Notices**

4.1 If a child’s non-attendance meets the key criteria (see para 4.3 below), their parent / carer may be served with a Penalty Charge Notice

4.2 A request to PCC for a Penalty Charge Notice in relation to poor attendance at school can be made by the school, the police or from within the PCC itself.

4.3 The key criteria for issuing Penalty Charge Notices are as follows:

- when a pupil has a minimum of 10 sessions (five school days) that have been lost due to unauthorised absences during the current term and this brings the overall pupil’s attendance to below 90% in the school year (these absences do not have to be consecutive);
- unauthorised absences of at least 10 sessions (5 school days) due to holidays in term-time if the absences take the overall pupil’s attendance to below 90% in the school year to date (these absences do not have to be consecutive);
- persistent late arrival at school i.e. after the register has closed (Code ‘U’ as in the Codes Guidance Document 2010). “Persistent” for the purpose of this document means at least 10 sessions of late arrival within a term; these do not need to be consecutive but should bring the overall pupil’s attendance to under 90% in the school year to date;

4.4 The detailed evidence of a pupil’s attendance will be recorded in the Register - for instance normally only schools can decide (on the evidence in their Registers) whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised. Our School marks the daily register with the Codes set out in Appendix 1, e.g.

- Code ‘H’ --- the School has agreed to a child being absent on holiday,
- Code ‘G’ --- authorisation refused for holiday in term time OR period of authorized absence has expired,



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- Code ‘F’ ---- agreed Extension to family holiday

4.5 Penalty Charge Notices are an early intervention tool, but should only be requested / issued after assessing the circumstances Penalty Charge Notices will only be issued by post and never as an instant action.

4.6 For further information on Penalty Charge Notices please refer to the Code of Conduct which can be found on:

<http://www.powys.gov.uk/en/schools-students/school-attendance-welfare/>

<http://www.powys.gov.uk/cy/ysgolion-a-myfyrwyr/school-attendance-welfare/>

## 5 Registration of Attendance

5.1 The Register is a legal document and staff are required to keep it accurately, for instance it may be required as evidence in court in a prosecution for non-attendance. It will also be used for end-of-term reports, records of achievement and reference requests, and information for other schools, LAs and external agencies.

5.2 The School will follow these procedures:-

- Staff marking the Register will use the recognised symbols / marks as per Appendix 1 below
- No pupil should be marked present unless actually in attendance at the School or other agreed educational activity.
- The Register should not have missing marks.
- When a pupil arrives late but the Register is still open, the pupil should be marked as late but counted as present for the session.
- When a pupil misses registration, they should be marked as an unauthorised absence, unless relevant information (e.g. a medical letter or phone call from parent) is received and sufficient to justify absence
- Pupils should not have access to the Register.
- Only the Head Teacher can authorise that a pupil be removed from the Register – this can only be done with the agreement of PCC.
- In addition to twice-daily registration, a class register is taken for every lesson throughout the day. These are checked by staff to identify possible truancy and any pupil found to have missed a lesson.

### Lateness

5.3 A pupil's punctuality is a legal requirement and the parent/carer of a pupil who is persistently late is guilty of an offence, The law treats persistent lateness in the same way as



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irregular attendance and parents/carers can be prosecuted if persistent late arrival is not resolved.

### **Holidays**

5.4 Head Teachers have the discretionary power to grant leave for the purpose of a family holiday or trips. However, the ERW Consortium originally firmly advised that any holidays or day trips in term time should not be authorised,. The School will follow guidance from PCC / ERW. In general, absence during term- time will not be authorised simply on the basis of a family holiday.

## **6. Children Missing from Education (CME)**

6.1 The reason for a first day absence is usually resolved but enquiry may cause the Head Teacher to believe that the child is missing from education. As part of their Safeguarding responsibilities, all schools have to work with their Local Authority in tracing and dealing with Children Missing from Education (“CME”) This policy summarises our School’s obligations and procedures in the event of a pupil ceasing to attend the School with no or inadequate explanation.

6.2 The national definition of a Child Missing from Education is:

“children of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll, and who are not receiving a suitable education otherwise than being at school (for example, at home, privately, or in alternative provision) and who have been out of any educational provision for a substantial period of time, usually agreed as four weeks or more. “

6.3 There are a number of well-recognised reasons why children may have difficulty attending school regularly or engaging with education.. Children from particular backgrounds or groups often have complex needs or have experienced specific life events that make them more at risk, This includes children who

- are within the youth justice system
- live in women’s refuges
- are from homeless families perhaps living in temporary accommodation or bed and breakfast
- are from families fleeing domestic violence
- have long- term medical or emotional problems
- are young carers
- have parents with mental health problems
- have parents with learning difficulties
- are affected by substance misuse
- were previously educated in the Independent sector and have been excluded or withdrawn



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- have been withdrawn by their parents for elective home education but are not receiving a suitable education
- are CLA (“Children Looked After”) by the Local Authority; are privately fostered; or go missing from care
- are unaccompanied asylum-seeking children
- are on the Child Protection register
- have been bullied
- are from asylum seeking or refugee families
- are from Gypsy, Traveller or Roma background
- are from families who may be highly mobile for e.g. have parents in the armed forces
- are taken on extended holidays or heritage visits by their families
- are young parents and pregnant young women.

### **Role of the Parent/Carer**

6.4 Parents/carers have a duty to seek to register their child at school as soon as they reach school age or move into an area. Parents/carers must inform school should they wish to remove a child and provide details of the new school, the new area, or if they elect to undertake home education. They have a duty to ensure that their child attends school at all times unless there is a legitimate reason to be absent and the School must be informed of the reason for non-attendance on or before the first day of absence.

### **Role of the School**

6.5 Our School reminds parents/carers regularly of the importance of notifying the School of any planned family moves or events and providing a forwarding address to the School if they are moving in or from the area.

6.6 CME is a safeguarding issue, but primarily the responsibility of the Head Teacher and Governing Body. We recognise the importance of our procedures for monitoring, control and management of attendance and location of each of our pupils. Our School follows the procedures in the Powys Attendance Policy and Policy for Extended Holidays.

### **The first day of non-attendance**

6.7 Our School undertakes daily monitoring of attendance. We take all reasonable steps to contact and alert parents immediately if a pupil fails to attend and to establish the reason for non-attendance. If there is no explanation or there appears to be no good reason for non-attendance, the Head Teacher as Designated Person for Safeguarding / Child Protection must be informed, She will, depending on the circumstances, make further enquiries and / or ensure that a referral form is sent to the CME Officer and that the Education Welfare Service (EWS) is contacted within 10 school days of non-attendance.





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6.8 If the non-attending pupil is

(i) a Child Looked After by the Local Authority (“CLA”), or  
(ii) on the Child Protection register and disappears without warning,  
the School will immediately notify the Safeguarding Officer and EWS Team directly on the first day of absence.

If a pupil has a Statement of Special Educational Need (SEN), the Statutory Assessment Team will also be notified.

### **If a family is moving, but a new school is NOT identified**

6.9 In the event of a parent/carer informing our School that they are moving away without identifying a new school, our School will

- (1) upload the pupil information after 20 school days using a Common Transfer File (CTF) onto the secure School 2 School (S2S) website using the code XXXXXXXX (destination unknown).
- (2) inform the EWS Team (the EWS Team will then inform the Powys CME Officer and Admissions Team and will inform the EWS in the receiving local authority).

### **If a family is moving, and a new school IS identified**

6.10 In the event of a pupil moving to a known school, our School will record the leaving date on our Management Information System (“MIS”) and will create and send a CTF of the pupil’s records to the identified new school within 15 days via S2S.

### **If the School is informed that a parent is going to undertake elective home education.**

6.11 In the event of parents/carers informing the School in writing that they are removing their child to educate him/her at home, the Head Teacher will

- (1) inform the Powys Home Education Officer and the EWS Team within 10 days of the pupil being deleted from the register
- (2) record the date and reason for removal.

The HE Officer will arrange to contact the parents/carers to provide an information pack and forms for them to complete to secure support from Local Authority Officers.

6.12 Although pupils with Statements of SEN / ALN can be home-educated, the Local Authority is responsible for ensuring that the education received is suitable in liaison with the Statementing Officer and annual reviews. The statement stays in force and the Local Authority must ensure that parents can meet the special educational needs described in the Statement.

### **The School’s responsibilities once a child has been referred.**

6.13 When a school refers a child to PCC (via the CME referral form and notification to the EWS Team), it must keep the child on roll for a further 20 days pending investigation by PCC (via the PCC EWS Team). Possible outcomes include

- (1) the child is located and remains on roll. In accordance with good practice the School and PCC will carefully monitor the child for one term to ensure that there is no repetition of the issues that resulted in the child previously going ‘missing’.
- (2) the child started a new school, but parents / carers failed to inform the old school



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(3) the child is not located, has been referred to appropriate agencies and is still ‘missing’.

6.14 Even if the investigation exceeds 20 days, schools should never remove a pupil from school roll until all avenues have been exhausted and the Local Authority (via the EWS Team) has advised in writing that it is appropriate to do so.

6.15 Once the EWS Team has advised the school to remove the child’s name from the register, the school must ensure that the CTF Transfer File is coded XXXXXXXX (destination unknown) and uploaded onto S2S. (The records are stored in a secure area of S2S known as the ‘Lost Pupil Database’. Schools should not submit the CTF to the Lost Pupil Database without the agreement of the EWS Team.)

**7. Equality**

In implementing and reviewing this policy, procedures and related policies, the School will avoid unlawful discrimination and will seek to apply the policies and procedures consistently to all pupils, parent/carers, and others irrespective of age, disability, race or ethnic background, gender (sex), gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, or sexual orientation.

The School will comply with all relevant equalities legislation and will promote equality in all aspects of school life.

**8. Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Head Teacher is responsible for monitoring attendance and the application of this policy and (together with the Attendance Governor) for evaluating and reporting to the Governing Body on its effectiveness.

**Registration Codes**

**Appendix**

/	Present (AM)
\	Present (PM)
B	Off Site Education
C	Other Authorised Circumstances



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D	Dual Registered i.e Present at another school or PRU
E	Excluded (No alternative provision made)
F	[ Agreed extension to family holiday ]
G	Family holiday (Not agreed)
H	[ Family Holiday (Agreed) ]
I	Illness
J	Interview
L	Late (Before the registers closed)
M	Medical / Dental Appointment
N	No reason yet provided for absence
O	Unauthorised Absence (Not covered by other code)
P	Approved Sporting Activity
R	Religious Observance
S	Study Leave
T	Traveller Absence
U	Late (after registers closed)
V	Educational Visit or Trip
W	Work experience
Y	Partial or Enforced closure
X	Non-compulsory school age absence
#	School closed to all pupils
Z	Pupils not on roll yet

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