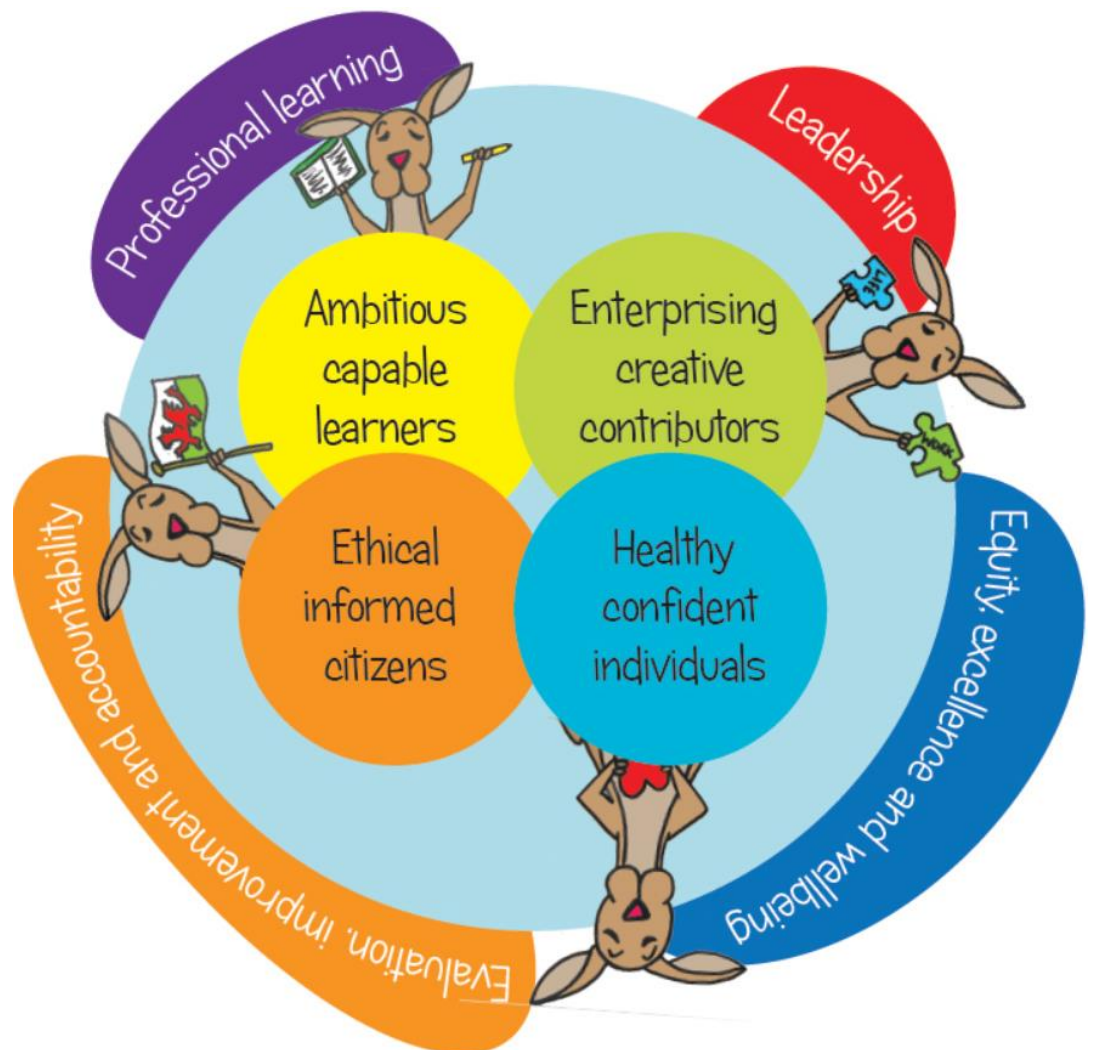


# North Gower Partnership Attendance Policy 2023-2024



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# Introduction

This policy provides guidance around school attendance for learners within the North Gower Partnership.

Attending school regularly is important for every child's future. Good attendance at school is associated with a higher educational achievement and improved job prospects. The significance of school attendance must not and cannot be underestimated. It is vital that children and young people have access to appropriate and effective learning opportunities and provision. Any barriers to learning need to be identified early and removed so that children and young people can achieve their full potential.

It is widely recognised that regular school attendance has a positive effect on children and young people and a strong impact on learner outcomes, standards and progression. Additionally, good attendance also has a positive effect on wellbeing, therefore establishing good attendance patterns from an early age is vital for social development.

The North Gower Partnership is committed to embedding the Curriculum for Wales in our schools. This is based on four purposes that demonstrate the breadth of the academic, wellbeing and social benefits that learners gain by attending school.

# Partnership Working

The North Gower Partnership works closely with pupils, parents/carers, Education Welfare Officer and other external agencies ensuring that:

1. Pupils have a right of access to an education appropriate to their individual needs
2. A balance of rights and responsibilities between children and pupils, parents, schools, other professionals and the wider community is maintained
3. Early assessment, identification and intervention are keys to safeguarding the welfare and interests of children and young people. Promoting positive behaviour and excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school and wider community.

The North Gower Partnership promotes positive behaviour and good attendance through its use of an appropriate curriculum which is tailored to the child's ability. Our schools create a learning community which benefits from the positive behaviour, regular attendance and well-being of its pupils and staff.

It is well established that factors such as poverty, additional learning needs and certain protected characteristics are associated with learners having a greater risk of absence from school and can exacerbate the challenges they already face. Within our partnership schools we have experience and expertise in supporting all groups of pupils.

# Absences

As a partnership we accept that on some occasions it may not be possible for a child to attend school for a number of individual reasons. An absence from school can be defined as either authorised or unauthorised.

An authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for the pupil to be absent from school, or where an explanation offered afterwards has been accepted by the school as satisfactory justification for absence.

Only schools, not parents/carers, can authorise an absence, and schools must consider whether the reason for absence is reasonable before doing so. Any absence that is not authorised by the school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. Our schools work with the Education Welfare Service to address unauthorised absence. In some cases this could lead to fixed penalty notices (FPN) or prosecution.

<b>100%</b>	0 days of learning missed - Amazing Attendance
<b>99%</b>	2 days of learning missed – Good Attendance
<b>97%</b>	5 days of learning missed – Average Attendance
<b>95%</b>	Local Authority minimum satisfactory attendance
<b>93%</b>	14 days of learning missed – Below Target Attendance
<b>90%</b>	20 days of learning missed – Considerably below Target Attendance

# Reporting absences

To report your child(ren) as being absent, contact must be made with the school with as much notice as possible on each day of the absence.

Parents/Carers will need to call the school and follow the appropriate option for reporting an absence. You will be required to leave a message on the answerphone should there be no answer.

Parents/Carers may also contact the school via email or the contact us section of each school website.

# Lateness

Pupils arriving late to any school premises need to report to the person that manages attendance. In primary schools this is usually the school office, and in secondary the designated Attendance Officer.

A late mark will be assigned which will then record the pupil as present on the school premises. This is a health and safety requirement.

Late marks are monitored by attendance officers, and relevant steps will be taken to improve persistent lateness.

# Holidays in Term Time

Parents/carers are not entitled to remove children from school to attend any pre-booked holidays. Parents/carers should be mindful of the impact that removing children from school will have on their learning and progress.

Requests for term time holidays will be considered individually and schools can invite parents to discuss any such proposals. Requests for term time holidays must be submitted at least two weeks before the holiday commences. Schools will only agree to absence for a family holiday or trip if the pupil's attendance for the previous term is at or above 95% or they believe there are special circumstances that warrant it.

If a school agrees an absence and the pupil goes on holiday for 10 days or less, absence is authorised. A school can only agree to absence of more than 10 school days in a school year if they believe there are exceptional circumstances. If a school does not agree absence and the pupil goes on the holiday or a trip, the absence will be unauthorised.

If parents keep a child away for longer than was agreed, any extra time is also recorded as unauthorised. If the school considers that there are exceptional circumstances why the pupil should be granted approval for a holiday of more than 10 days, the approval can be given and the absence would be authorised, at the discretion of the Head teacher.

Parents/Carers could possibly face prosecution for removing pupils from school without authorisation from the Head teacher.

## Early Collection of Pupils

Children should only be removed from school early in exceptional circumstances. Parents and carers need to be mindful that by removing your children early they risk missing valuable learning and friendship time.

Any early collections should be agreed with the school using the agreed application form. Please also be aware that schools may not be able to release a member of staff immediately to release your child and ask for your patience.

# Roles & Responsibilities

Ensuring regular school attendance is a demanding area of work that depends on establishing and utilising close working relationships between parents/carers, pupils, schools, the LA, Education Welfare Service (EWS) and other professionals working with children and young people in social, educational and health care settings.

A key element of any successful working relationship is a clear understanding of each person's role and responsibilities.

## Schools and Governing Bodies

Schools are responsible for supporting the attendance of their pupils and for responding to difficulties and issues which might lead to non-attendance.

Mainstream settings have a range of responsibilities for learner attendance. For example, they are legally required by way of the Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010, to maintain an accurate learner attendance register and to provide data on pupil absence to the local authority under the School Performance Information (Wales) Regulations 2011/1963 and The School Information (Wales) Regulations 2011/1944.

The North Gower Partnership communicates and engages with parents effectively to make sure they are fully aware of their attendance policy. This includes the steps taken to provide learners with engaging and relevant teaching and learning opportunities, and the support they will provide to meet learner wellbeing and mental health needs.

All strategies are developed as a partnership with learners and parents and show the importance and advantages of good attendance as well as the possible implications of absence.

School governors are well-informed about the school's attendance position and priorities, and its strategies for improvement. They receive sufficient training from their local authority to enable them to contribute to the overall strategy for improving attendance and feel confident to challenge where there is insufficient improvement.



## Parents/Carers

Parents/carers have a statutory responsibility for ensuring that their compulsory school-age children receive a suitable education appropriate to their age, ability and aptitude and to any additional learning needs they may have. This can be through regular attendance at school, agreed education provision other than at school, or by elective home education.

Therefore, learners should be supported to:

1. Attend school when parents/carers agree they are well enough to.
2. Tell their teacher or trusted adult when they are upset or unhappy.
3. Work with the school and their parents/carers to put a plan in place to increase attendance where necessary.
4. Older pupils should be punctual to all lessons they are required to attend.
5. Accept all offers of help.

## Responsibilities of the Local Authority

On behalf of the local authority, the Education Welfare Service (EWS) provides support for schools, learners and parents to ensure regular attendance and address problems relating to absence. The service liaises with other agencies and provides an important link between home and school, helping parents and teachers to work in partnership.

Swansea Local Authority makes arrangements to establish the identities of children in their area who are of compulsory school age but are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at school. The council has a duty to identify, as far as is possible, children who may be or who are missing education. Contacting parents immediately can prevent absences from becoming prolonged and has a safeguarding function.

Swansea Local Authority has a duty to ensure that a child for whom they are responsible is receiving a suitable education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise

# Tips & Support

## *5 Tips to Help Improve Attendance*

1. Help them get their school bag packed the night before and make sure their uniform is ready.
2. Get them to bed at a reasonable time.
3. Set the alarm clock early enough to allow plenty of time to get ready and have breakfast.
4. Remind them to set off for the bus or start walking early, **punctuality is important.**
5. Talk to your child about their learning experiences, if you have any concerns contact your school.

## *Further Support*

- Each school has a dedicated Attendance Officer who is available to support you with your child's attendance.
- Every school in Swansea has an allocated Education Welfare Officer who visits or contacts the school regularly.
- The School may contact you either by phone, letter or with a home visit to discuss the school's concerns and how the attendance or punctuality can be improved. If there is no improvement a referral to the EWO will be made.
- Parents can contact the Education Welfare Service via the school or via [EducationWelfareService@swansea.gov.uk](mailto:EducationWelfareService@swansea.gov.uk)

# Penalty Notice

The Welsh Government (WG) Education (Penalty Notice) (Wales) Regulations 2013 states that Local Authorities (LA's) are required by law to adhere to the Education Act 1996 section 444 to include penalty notices as one of the interventions to promote better school attendance.

Sections 444A and 444B of the Education Act 1996 provide that certain cases of unauthorised absences can be dealt with by way of a penalty notice. A penalty notice is a fine of up to £120 and may be issued to a parent / carer as a result of a child's regular non-attendance at school / educational provision.

The partnership adheres to the code of conduct for penalty notices as issued by Partneriaeth and agreed by the Local Authority, and therefore may request the local authority to issue a penalty notice in certain cases.