



T: 01495 355001

E: committee.services@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

Our Ref./Ein Cyf.
Your Ref./Eich Cyf.
Contact:/Cysylltwch â: Democratic Services

THIS IS A MEETING WHICH THE PUBLIC ARE ENTITLED TO ATTEND

19th October 2022

Dear Sir/Madam

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Executive Committee will be held in Via MS Teams (if you wish to view this meeting please contact committee.services@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk) on Wednesday, 26th October, 2022 at 11.00 am.

Yours faithfully

Damien McCann
Interim Chief Executive

AGENDA

Pages

1. SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION

You are welcome to use Welsh at the meeting, a minimum notice period of 3 working days is required should you wish to do so. A simultaneous translation will be provided if requested.

2. APOLOGIES

To receive.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

To receive.

GENERAL MATTERS

4. CONFERENCES, COURSES, INVITATIONS AND EVENTS 5 - 6

To consider.

MINUTES

5. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 7 - 14

To consider the decisions of the Executive Committee held on 21st September, 2022.

CORPORATE SERVICES & PERFORMANCE PORTFOLIO

6. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME – 7TH DECEMBER 2022 15 - 18

To receive the report.

7. SICKNESS ABSENCE PERFORMANCE 2021/22 19 - 28

To consider the report of the Head of Organisational Development.

8. THE ANNUAL LETTER OF THE PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES 2021/2022 29 - 38

To consider the report of the Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance.

PEOPLE & EDUCATION PORTFOLIO

9. STATUTORY MAINTAINED SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT 39 - 100

To consider the report of the Corporate Director Education.

10. REVIEW OF INCLUSION/ALN STRATEGIES, POLICIES AND PRACTICES 101 - 430

To consider the report of the Corporate Director

Education.

11. **IMPROVING SCHOOLS PROGRAMME** 431 - 480

To consider the report of the Corporate Director Education.

PLACE & ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO

12. **REVIEW OF HIGHWAY CAPITAL WORKS PROGRAMME 2017 – 2022** 481 - 492

To consider the report of the Head of Community Services.

JOINT PORTFOLIO - PEOPLE & SOCIAL SERVICES/PEOPLE & EDUCATION

13. **CORPORATE SAFEGUARDING PERFORMANCE REPORT, INCLUDING INFORMATION FOR SOCIAL SERVICES 1ST APRIL TO 30TH JUNE 2022 AND EDUCATION SUMMER TERM–2022** 493 - 548

To consider the report of the Corporate Director Education and the Interim Corporate Director Social Services.

To: Councillor S. Thomas
Councillor H. Cunningham
Councillor S. Edmunds
Councillor J. C. Morgan
Councillor H. Trollope

All other Members (for information)
Interim Chief Executive
Chief Officers

This page is intentionally left blank

Agenda Item 4

Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: N/A

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: N/A

Committee: **Executive Committee**

Date of meeting: **26th October, 2022**

Report Subject: **Conferences, Courses, Events and Invitations**

Portfolio Holder: **General Matters**

Report Submitted by: **Democratic Services**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
X	x	X				02/03/2022		

1. Purpose of the Report

To present a list of conferences, courses, events and invitations for consideration and determination by the Executive.

2. Scope of the Report

2.1 Wales and the Battle of Britain Historical Exhibition Monday, 10 October 2022 at 2:00pm

To approve the attendance of Councillor D. Bevan, Armed Forces Champion.

Annual Briefing, HMS CAMBRIA
Thursday 20th October 2022.

To approve the attendance of Councillor D. Bevan, Armed Forces Champion.

GAVO Awards
25th October, 2022

To approve the attendance of Councillor C. Smith, Presiding Member.

3. **Options for Consideration**

3.1 To seek approval for attendance for the events outlined in the report.

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE LEADER AND MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE

SUBJECT: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – 21ST SEPTEMBER, 2022

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER

PRESENT: Leader/
Executive Member - Corporate Overview & Performance
Councillor S. Thomas

Deputy Leader/
Executive Member – Place & Environment
Councillor H. Cunningham

Executive Member – Place & Regeneration
Councillor J.C. Morgan

Executive Member – People & Education
Councillor S. Edmunds

WITH: Interim Chief Executive
Corporate Director Education
Interim Corporate Director Social Services
Chief Officer Resources
Head of Regeneration
Head of Governance and Partnership
Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance
Service Manager Development and Estates
Team Leader Estates
Press Officer

DECISIONS UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>
No. 1	<u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u> It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.
No. 2	<u>APOLOGIES</u> The following apologies for absence were received:- Councillor H. Trollope, Executive Member – People & Social Services Chief Officer Commercial
No. 3	<u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u> There were no declarations of interest or dispensations raised.
	<u>MINUTES</u>
No. 4	<u>EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE</u> Consideration was given to the Minutes of the Executive Committee held on 13 th July, 2022. RESOLVED that the Minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.

	<p><u>GENERAL MATTERS</u></p>
No. 5	<p><u>CONFERENCES, COURSES, EVENTS AND INVITATIONS</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the following:-</p> <p><u>Gwent Police Cadets Pass Out Parade and Awards Ceremony</u> <u>8th August, 2022</u></p> <p>RESOLVED that Councillor C. Smith, Presiding Member be approved to attend.</p> <p><u>Leadership Programme for Councillors in Wales 2022/2023</u> <u>14th – 15th January, 2023 - Module 1</u> <u>11th – 12th February, 2023 - Module 2</u> <u>4th – 5th March, 2023 - Module 3</u></p> <p>RESOLVED that the following Members be approved to attend:-</p> <p>Councillor T. Smith, Chair of the People Scrutiny Committee; and Councillor S. Edmunds, Executive Member People & Education</p>
	<p><u>CORPORATE AND PERFORMANCE PORTFOLIO</u></p>
No. 6	<p><u>PROPOSED EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2022-23</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Democratic & Scrutiny Officer.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Forward Work Programme for Executive Committee for 2022/23 be approved.</p>

GRANTS TO ORGANISATIONS

Consideration was given to report of the Chief Officer Resources. The following grants to organisation were received following the publication of the report:-

ABERTILLERY**Abertillery & Six Bells Ward – Councillor K. Chaplin**

1.	Abertillery Museum	£100
2.	Ebenezer Baptist Church	£100
3.	The Scout Association	£100
4.	Falcon Martial Arts	£100
5.	Pant y Pwdyn Allotments	£100

Abertillery & Six Bells Ward – Councillor J. Holt

1.	Pant y Pwdyn Allotments	£100
----	-------------------------	------

Cwmtillery Ward – Councillors M. Day & J. Wilkins

1.	Abertillery Excelsiors	£250
2.	Abertillery BG RFC	£250
3.	Abertillery Bowls	£200
4.	Abertillery Netball	£200
5.	Abertillery Belles FC	£250
6.	Abertillery Museum	£100
7.	Abertillery Piranhas	£150
8.	Penref Tyleri	£150
9.	Abertillery Cricket Club	£100
10.	Six Bells Bowls	£100
11.	Falcon Martial Arts	£100
12.	Six Bells Tennis Club	£100
13.	Old Tylerian RFC	£150
14.	Blaentillery Allotments	£100
15.	Abertillery Scouts	£100
16.	Blaenau Gwent Food Bank	£140
17.	Royal British Legion Abertillery Branch	£100

Llanhilleth Ward - Councillor N. Parsons

1.	Llanhilleth RFC	£200
2.	Sofrydd Social Club	£100

	<p><u>Llanhilleth Ward - Councillor H. Cunningham</u></p> <p>1. Aberbeeg Tenants & Residents Association £250</p> <p>2. Llanhilleth Miners Institute £250</p> <p>3. Sofrydd Social Club £150</p> <p><u>BRYNMAWR</u></p> <p><u>Brynmawr Ward - Councillor J. Gardner</u></p> <p>1. Falcon Martial Arts £350</p> <p><u>Brynmawr Ward – Councillor J. Hill</u></p> <p>1. Abertillery Piranhas £150</p> <p><u>EBBW VALE</u></p> <p><u>Ebbw Vale South Ward - Councillor S. Edmunds</u></p> <p>1. Ebbw Valley Brass £200</p> <p><u>Cwm Ward - Councillors D. Bevan & G. Humphries</u></p> <p>1. New Cwm Institute £200</p> <p>2. Cwm Carnival Committee £200</p> <p>RESOLVED accordingly.</p> <p>FURTHER RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and the information contained therein be noted.</p>
	<p><u>PEOPLE AND EDUCATION PORTFOLIO</u></p>
<p>No. 8</p>	<p><u>HOME TO SCHOOL AND POST 16 TRANSPORT POLICY REVIEW 2023 – 2024</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Corporate Director of Education.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted, and the Executive approved the Home to School and Post 16 Transport Policy 2023/24 as detailed in Appendix 1 (Option 1).</p>

	<p align="center"><u>PEOPLE AND SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO</u></p>
<p>No. 9</p>	<p><u>PROPOSAL TO EXPLORE AND DEVELOP A BUSINESS CASE FOR CHILDREN’S RESIDENTIAL PROVISION IN BLAENAU GWENT</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Interim Corporate Director of Social Services.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and that the Executive agreed to the development of a business case to deliver local authority residential placements for children looked after; and to enter into a collaborative arrangement with a neighbouring authority for them to provide the management, staffing and oversight required to provide quality residential care for our children looked after. This would reduce our reliance on private childcare providers, provide care closer to home for our children looked after and remove the profit element included within the current charges made by private providers. (Option 1)</p>
<p>No. 10</p>	<p><u>PLAY SUFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT 2022-2025</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Services Manager Children’s Services.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted, and the Executive noted the Play Sufficiency Assessment report and associated documents and agree the key priorities/actions. (Option 1)</p>
<p>No. 11</p>	<p><u>CHILDCARE SUFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT 2022</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Services Manager Children’s Services.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted, and the Executive approved the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment and Action Plan 2022 be submitted to Welsh Government. (Option 1)</p>

	<u>MONITORING ITEMS</u>
	<u>CORPORATE AND PERFORMANCE PORTFOLIO</u>
No. 12	<p><u>REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING - 2022/2023, FORECAST OUTTURN TO 31ST MARCH 2023 (AS AT 30TH JUNE 2022)</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Chief Officer Resources.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • approved the budget virements, detailed in paragraph 5.1.14 & Appendix 4, in excess of £250,000 in line with the constitution; and • note the application of reserves.
No. 13	<p><u>CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING, FORECAST FOR 2022/2023 FINANCIAL YEAR (AS AT 30 JUNE 2022)</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Chief Officer Resources.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive agreed:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the continued support to the appropriate financial control procedures agreed by Council; and • noted the budgetary control and monitoring procedures in place within the Capital & Corporate Team, to safeguard Authority funding.
	<u>PEOPLE AND EDUCATION PORTFOLIO</u>
No. 14	<p><u>SUMMARY SELF-EVALUATION REPORT 2022</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Corporate Director of Education.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted, and the Executive agreed the report as presented, whilst also acknowledging that effective self-evaluation was an on-going process. (Option 1)</p>

PLACE AND REGENERATION PORTFOLIO

No. 15 **LAND AT RASSAU**

Having regard to the views expressed by the Proper Officer regarding the public interest test, that on balance the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information and that the report should be exempt.

RESOLVED that the public be excluded whilst this item of business is transacted as it is likely there would be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 14, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended).

Consideration was given to report of the Head of Regeneration.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the information which contained details relating to the business/financial affairs of persons other than the Authority be agreed. (Option 1)

Agenda Item 6

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 12.10.22

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 13.10.22

Committee: **Executive Committee**

Date of meeting: **26th October 2022**

Report Subject: **Forward Work Programme – 7th December 2022**

Portfolio Holder: **All Portfolio Holders**

Report Submitted by: **Scrutiny and Democratic Officer**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
X	x	11.10.22				26.10.22		

1. **Purpose of the Report**
 - 1.1 To present the Executive Forward Work Programme for the Meeting on 7th December 2022.
2. **Scope and Background**
 - 2.1 The Executive Work Programme is a key aspect of the Council's planning and governance arrangements and supports the requirements of the Constitution.
 - 2.2 The topics set out in the Work Programme link to the strategic work of the Council as identified by the Council's Corporate Plan, corporate documents and supporting business plans.
 - 2.3 All Scrutiny Committees and the Council Forward Work Programmes have been aligned to the Executive Forward Work Programme.
 - 2.4 As the document is fluid there is flexibility to allow for regular review between the Chair and the Committee.
3. **Options for Recommendation**
 - 3.1 **Option 1**
To agree the Forward Work Programme as presented for the Meeting on 7th December 2022.
 - 3.2 **Option 2**
To suggest any amendments prior to agreeing the Forward Work Programme.

This page is intentionally left blank

Executive Committee Forward Work Programme

Executive Meeting Date: Wednesday 7th December 2022

Report Submission Deadline Date to Liz Thomas: Tuesday 15th November 2022

*Reports received after this date will be included on the next agenda of Executive

Report Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Scrutiny Meeting Date	Council Meeting Date
Portfolio: Leader / Corporate and Performance Services				
Grants to Organisations	Approval To agree the Grants to Organisations.	Rhian Hayden	N/A	N/A
Shared Resource Service (SRS)	Performance Monitoring For Members consideration.	Bernadette Elias	Partnership – 22.11.22	
Portfolio: Place and Regeneration				
Tredegar Place Making Plan	Decision To agree the proposals for placemaking in Tredegar.	Ellie Fry	Place Scrutiny Committee – 08.11.22	N/A
Portfolio: People and Social Services				
Director of Social Services Quarter 1 and 2 update	Performance Monitoring Members to receive the quarterly update of the Director of Social Services Annual report.	Tanya Evans	People - 29.11.22	N/A
Portfolio: People and Education				
Director of Education Quarter 1 and 2 update	Performance Monitoring Members to receive the quarterly update of the Director of Education Annual report.	Lynn Phillips	People - 29.11.22	N/A
Aneurin Leisure Trust Performance and Monitoring	Performance Monitoring Members to consider the content of the six monthly ALT performance report and to discuss areas for future monitoring arrangements.	Lynn Phillips	Partnership – 22.11.22	N/A

This page is intentionally left blank

Agenda Item 7

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 12.10.22

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 13.10.22

Committee: **Executive Committee**
Date of meeting: **26th October 2022**
Report Subject: **Sickness Absence Performance 2021/22**
Portfolio Holder: **Councillor Steve Thomas, Leader / Executive Member**
Report Submitted by: **Andrea J Prosser, Head of Organisational Development**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Governance & Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
07.09.22	08.09.22	11.10.22			23.09.22	26.10.22		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Elected Members with the opportunity to scrutinise and challenge sickness absence performance for 2021/22, recognise the positive attendance of the majority of the workforce and the continued actions to support improvement in attendance.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 Staff health and wellbeing is critical in delivering Council priorities and sickness absence is a key performance indicator reflected in the quarterly Finance and Performance report. Improving attendance remains a key priority and is identified as a corporate risk for the Council acknowledging that high levels of sickness absence have a detrimental impact on the ability of the Council to deliver services.

- 2.2 During 2021/22 sickness levels remained high increasing from the previous year as the Council continued to respond to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and return to business as usual. Whilst sickness levels increased it is important to recognise the commitment of staff during this period with a large majority of the workforce having little or no sickness absence.

- 2.3 The Council has in place a range of wellbeing support for staff and strategies to manage attendance in the workplace which include:

- Health and wellbeing initiatives
- Extensive range of flexible working and leave arrangements.
- Stress management policy and toolkit
- Health, Safety and Welfare Corporate Group
- Attendance Management Policy, with support and training for managers.
- Regular discussion and learning nationally and regionally
- Dashboard of sickness absence data for managers
- Performance data provided to the Corporate Leadership Team, Heads of Service and Elected Members on a quarterly basis.
- Sickness performance considered on management teams, team meetings and as part of manager's annual performance coaching.

2.4 **Employee Health and Wellbeing**

- 2.4.1 Employee wellbeing is intrinsically linked to levels of attendance. Wellbeing is more than an avoidance of becoming physically sick it includes physical, mental, and social health.
- 2.4.2 The Council has an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) which provides a range of services including counselling, advice, and information. The Council actively promotes the services on offer for employees and managers. During 2021/22 the overall usage was up by almost 3% on the previous annual reporting period, with 40% of the contacts to the 24/7 telephone line, 48% individual counselling, 11% information specialists and 1% online counselling.
- 2.4.3 Advice and support to managers and employees from the Occupational Health Service is also integral in the management of sickness and employee health and wellbeing. The service assists with early interventions particularly in cases of stress and anxiety, supports the management of absence including the more complex or serious cases and provides advice to support employee's returning to work. During 2021/22 there were 477 management referrals to the service.
- 2.4.4 A weekly wellbeing bulletin for staff 'Wellbeing Wednesday' is published which provides a range of wellbeing information and resources including special editions to address key issues and topics such as the cost-of-living crisis.
- 2.4.5 Working in partnership with the Trade Unions the Council offers mental health awareness training which supports staff understand and identify colleagues who may be at risk of, or are experiencing, mental health issues.
- 2.4.6 The Council has recently introduced an employer supported volunteering policy which supports and encourages employees to volunteer in the community to improve skills, personal development, health, and wellbeing and also have a positive effect on the Council's ability to recruit and retain employees.

2.5 **Employee Engagement**

- 2.5.1 The Council recognises the critical need to communicate and engage staff through a range of mechanisms:
- Regular 121s / performance coaching / team meetings
 - Newsletters / wellbeing bulletin / managers brief
 - A dedicated engagement and consultation framework with trade unions
 - Staff surveys
 - Dedicated engagement sessions to support transformational change including Transitional leadership and managing an agile workforce

2.6 **Workforce Strategy 2021-26**

- 2.6.1 The Workforce Strategy 2021-26 has a focus on wellbeing which will play a significant role in supporting attendance at work. The year one action plan of the Strategy focused on the transition from responding to the pandemic to a future working model which became operational in September 2021. Agile working offers a modern model of working across the Council providing greater flexibility and work-life balance for employees positively impacting health and wellbeing and attendance at work.

2.6.2 Whilst it is acknowledged that COVID-19 will not disappear, the long-term impacts of the pandemic will continue to impact these include Long Covid, NHS treatment waiting times which could lead to prolonged periods of sickness absence and increasing levels of diagnosis where employees may not have accessed treatment during the period of the pandemic. Currently there are 20 employees on long term sickness absence that are awaiting treatment on the NHS. It has also become clear that individual personal and career aspirations have changed during this time and a continuing priority will be to manage the capacity of the workforce to ensure that services are delivered.

2.7 Ongoing Measures to support improvements in attendance

2.7.1 Strategies to address the impact of Covid and sickness absence

- Each directorate is developing a workforce plan that will sit under the Council's Workforce Strategy which will consider the future workforce needs of services to meet changing demand and deliver on priorities.
- Work nationally and regionally through the relevant networks to raise issues impacting Local Government and to consider and develop strategies to address for the future.
- Review of Agile Working commencing September 2022.
- Staff engagement through a staff survey and workshops.

2.7.2 Understanding the data

- Continue to measure the impact of Covid on sickness absence to manage the ongoing impacts.
- Performance targets set for 2022/23 (Council 10 days per fte).
- Further development of ITrent to improve sickness recording and reporting.
- Workforce profiles providing service workforce data and management information to help managers to plan and lead service performance and improvement issued annually to directorates and schools.

2.7.3 Management of sickness absence

- Recognition of good attendance through one to one and team meetings.
- Continued management and support by managers in managing sickness absence in line with Council Policy.
- Directorates with the support of Organisational Development to review the top 20 long term sickness absence cases and hotspots.
- Communication with the workforce on the impact of sickness and the support available for employees.
- Signposting of employees to self-access the Covid and flu immunisations.

2.7.4 Attendance Management Policy

- The policy remains a key aspect of the Council's approach to the management of attendance at work and is reviewed periodically to ensure that it remains fit for purpose and takes account of any learning. It is in the final stages of being updated following a recent review. This approach is replicated across Wales; however, one local authority has taken the decision to move away from this approach and adopt a focus primarily on wellbeing. The impact of this approach on attendance rates will be reviewed to understand if it is an approach that the Council could consider in managing attendance in the future.

3. Options for Recommendation

3.1 This report was considered by the Corporate Overview and Performance Scrutiny Committee on 23rd September 2022. The committee supported Option 2.

3.2 Option 1

The Executive consider the sickness absence performance information and the ongoing actions to support improved attendance within the Council and identify any further areas for improvement to drive forward performance improvement.

3.3 Option 2

The Executive agree the report and the ongoing actions to support improvement in attendance.

4. Evidence of how this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan

The management of attendance is a critical strand in managing the capacity of the workforce to deliver services to the community of Blaenau Gwent and achieve the priorities laid out in the Council's strategic planning documents.

5. Implications Against Each Option

5.1 Impact on Budget (short- and long-term impact)

There are direct and indirect costs of sickness absence which are a key driver in the Council's approach to effectively improve attendance at work.

5.2 Risk including Mitigating Actions

The high levels of sickness absence do present a risk in terms of the impact on front line service delivery and continuity through lost time and staffing changes. In addition, the financial implications associated with sickness absence directly impact on the Council's budget. Mitigating actions are detailed within the report.

5.3 Legal

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

5.4 Human Resources

The staffing implications are detailed within the content of the report.

6. Supporting Evidence

6.1 Performance Information and Data

6.1.1 44% of staff within the Council had no sickness absence during 2021/22. Table 1 appended provides a breakdown by directorate.

6.1.2 The overall outturn figure for the Council is 16.74 days (per full time equivalent (FTE) employee) (14.20 days excluding Covid) which is an increase from the previous year and exceeds the 10-day target. When comparing the overall outturn with the previous year, there has been an increase of 5.07 days from 11.67 days. (4.22 days increase from 9.98 days when excluding COVID-19 sickness).

- 6.1.3 Covid-19 continued to have an impact during 2021/22, with the most significant impact on short term sickness absence occurring in the last quarter of the year. COVID-19 accounted for 2.54 days of the Council’s overall absence rate and has likely affected a large number of employees. In some cases, staff who tested positive were able to continue to work from home which has had a positive impact on absence levels.
- 6.1.4 Over the last five years the Council has had sustained levels of absence of over 11 days per employee. Since 2017/18 the Council has experienced increasing levels of absence up to 16.74 days at its highest in 2021/22, with the only exception being 2020/21 which saw a reduction in levels to 11.67 days. Table 2 details the outturn and trend for the Council and directorates.
- 6.1.5 68% of all absence in the Council is classed as long term (over 4 weeks), with short term absence accounting for 32%. There has been a slight shift from previous years with a 6% increase in the level of short-term absence. Table 3 details the breakdown by directorate.
- 6.1.6 The top 5 reasons for long term absence in the Council equate to over 76% of all long-term absences with mental health (stress, anxiety, and depression) being the top cause at 38%. Covid-19 accounted for over 30% of all short-term absence. Table 4 sets out the top five causes of long and short term absences.
- 6.1.7 Table 5 appended details the number of formal warnings, dismissals, and ill health retirements during 2021/22 and demonstrates a return to pre-pandemic figures.
- 6.1.8 A breakdown of sickness absence by service area is appended at Table 6 the key headlines are detailed below:

- 3 services have come within in target, of which 2 have seen a reduction from the previous year and 1 has had more sickness.

Service	21/22	20/21	
Governance & Partnerships	6.67	8.14	↓
Legal & Corporate Compliance	7.64	3.82	↑
Public Protection	4.44	9.11	↓

- 12 services have exceeded the target, 8 of which have seen an increase in sickness levels from the previous year, 2 have seen a reduction and there is no comparative data for 2 service areas due to changes in structure.

Service	21/22	20/21	
Commercial Services	8.22	5.34	↑
Resources	8.28	6.29	↑
Regeneration & Development	12.41	5.56	↑
Community Services	19.73	11.57	↑
Adult Services (Excluding Provider Servs)	22.63	12.84	↑
Provider Services	39.14	39.25	↓
Children’s Services	14.16	14.68	↓
School Based Staff (excluding Teachers)	21.31	12.03	↑
Teachers	12.42	6.45	↑
Education Transformation	9.80	No	
School Improvement & Inclusion	6.15	3.87	↑
Young People & Partnerships	7.58	No	

- 6.1.9 The All-Wales comparative data for 2020/21 and 2021/22 is appended at Table 7. This data has been anonymised as the 21/22 information has not been published. In 2021/22 of those Councils that have provided their data the Council reports the highest days lost. It is important to recognise when making comparisons that some Councils have retained services in-house while others who have outsourced which when considering certain front-line services would have a direct impact on sickness levels.
- 6.1.10 Available data for 2022/23 indicates an increase in sickness absence in the first quarter (outturn 4.27 days) in comparison to the same period in 2021/22 (outturn 3.23 days).
- 6.2 **Expected outcome for the public**
Information included within the report will provide opportunity for the public to scrutinise the Council's performance and provide accountability across the Council.
- 6.3 **Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)**
The Trade Unions believe it is everyone's interest to reduce sickness absence levels to an acceptable level and continues to work positively with the Council to achieve this. The trade unions are keen for the Council to review the position of the Council in 2022/23 that has moved away from attendance management to focus on wellbeing.
- 6.4 **Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)**
Options detailed in this report contribute directly to enabling the workforce for the future.
- 6.5 **Preventative focus**
The Workforce Strategy and Council's policies and practice focus on prevention.
- 6.6 **Collaboration / partnership working**
There are regular discussions with the All-Wales Human Resources Directors Network and regionally in terms of good practice or emerging practice in reducing sickness absence.
- 6.7 **Integration (across service areas)**
N/A
- 6.8 **Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions**
N/A
- 6.9 **Integrated Impact Assessment**
N/A
7. **Monitoring Arrangements**
- 7.1 Sickness absence statistics are reported to the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) and Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly basis and an annual performance report is presented to Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee. Annual workforce profiles are provided and discussed with Managers and Headteachers.
- Background Documents /Electronic Links**
Appendix 1 - performance data

Table 1 - Attendance at Work

Directorate	% Staff by directorate with no sickness	% Staff by directorate with sickness
Corporate Services	58	42
Education	54	46
Schools	38	62
Regeneration & Community Services	50	50
Social Services	39	61
BGCBC	44	56

Table 2 – Sickness Days Lost Per Full Time Equivalent Employee

Council - Days Lost per FTE					
2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22 All Sickness	2021/22 Excluding Covid
11.23	12.66	13.91	11.67	16.74	14.20

Directorate - Days Lost per FTE							
Directorate (Historical)	2017/18	Directorate	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2021/22 Excluding Covid
Resources	7.38	Corporate Services	8.29	8.81	5.67	7.95	7.23 ↑
Corporate Services	6.65						
Education	6.11	Education	6.94	8.07	4.13	7.10	5.36 ↑
School based (Teachers)	9.07	School based (Teachers)	12.20	11.57	6.45	12.42	9.74 ↑
School based (excluding Teachers)	9.71	School based (excluding Teachers)	10.64	13.98	12.03	21.31	16.93 ↑
Environment	19.19	Regeneration & Community Services	11.21	16.15	10.20	17.04	14.54 ↑
Social Services	13.60	Social Services	18.19	17.81	22.98	24.32	22.05 ↑

Table 3 - Short / long term sickness absence by Directorate.

Directorate	2021/22 Short Term %	2021/22 Long Term %
Corporate Services	38	62
Education	48	52
School based Teachers	38	62
School based (excluding Teachers)	42	58
Regeneration & Community Services	32	68
Social Services	20	80
BGCBC	32	68

Table 4 – Sickness Absence Reasons – Top 5**Long term**

Rank 2021/22	Category	% of long term sickness
1	Psychiatric / Mental Health	38.17%
2	Musculoskeletal & Injuries	24.59%
4	Gastro-intestinal	5.50%
5	Cancer	4.40%
3	Neurological	4.22%

Short Term

Rank 2021/22	Category	% of short term sickness
1	Covid 19	30.86%
2	Gastro-intestinal	17.35%
3	Infectious disease	13.39%
4	Musculoskeletal & Injuries	7.52%
5	Neurological	6.19%

Table 5 - Number of formal warnings, dismissals, and ill health retirements

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Number of formal warnings issued	22	4	20
Dismissals	6	0	7
Number of ill health retirements	8	2	6

Table 6 – Sickness Absence breakdown by Service

Attendance Management - Number of days lost per full time equivalent employee											
Service Area	Qtr 1 Outturn	Qtr 1 Outturn (excl. COVID19)	Qtr 2 Outturn	Qtr 2 Outturn (excl. COVID19)	Qtr 3 Outturn	Qtr 3 Outturn (excl. COVID19)	Qtr 4 Outturn	Qtr 4 Outturn (excl. COVID19)	Annual Target	Outturn 2020/21	Outturn 2020/21 (excl. COVID19)
Corporate Services Directorate											
Commercial Services - Organisational Development / Social Care Workforce Development /Business Support	1.20	1.20	3.64	3.56	6.46	6.26	8.27	7.67	8	5.94	5.73
Commercial Services - Benefits / Communications, Marketing & Customer Access /Procurement / Strategy Transformation & Culture	0.71	0.71	2.22	1.97	4.54	3.89	8.17	7.01	8	4.33	3.65
Commercial Services Total	0.98	0.98	3.01	2.85	5.58	5.18	8.22	7.37	8	5.34	4.96
Resources	1.57	1.57	2.96	2.96	6.90	6.82	8.28	7.94	8	6.29	6.23
Governance & Partnerships	0.19	0.19	2.65	2.65	4.78	4.78	6.67	6.35	8	8.14	8.24
Legal & Corporate Compliance	0.63	0.63	1.17	0.63	7.17	6.54	7.64	6.58	8	3.82	3.82
Senior Management	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	8	0.00	0.00
Corporate Services Total	1.00	1.00	2.87	2.74	5.73	5.41	7.95	7.23	8	5.67	5.38
Regeneration & Community Services Directorate											
Regeneration & Development	3.99	3.99	8.47	8.27	10.48	10.04	12.41	11.65	6.5	5.56	4.32
Community Services	3.78	3.75	8.00	7.52	13.48	11.88	19.73	16.55	11	11.57	9.89
Public Protection	1.40	1.40	3.31	3.26	4.12	3.89	4.44	4.02	9	9.11	8.87
Senior Management	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0	0.00	0.00
Regeneration & Community Services Total	3.60	3.58	7.64	7.25	12.09	10.82	17.04	14.54		10.20	8.74
Social Services Directorate											
Adult Services (excluding Provider Services)	3.99	3.99	9.56	9.56	15.99	15.66	22.63	21.41	11	12.84	11.91
Provider Services	7.70	7.50	16.56	15.94	27.76	26.40	39.14	35.82	22	39.25	32.19
Children's Services	3.21	2.94	6.74	6.33	9.90	9.30	14.16	12.22	11	14.68	12.28
Senior Management	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0	0.00	0.00
Social Services Total	4.93	4.73	10.66	10.26	17.17	16.36	24.32	22.05		22.98	19.23
Education Directorate											
School based staff (excluding Teachers)	3.96	3.90	7.77	7.09	14.47	12.27	21.31	16.93	8.5	12.03	10.18
Teachers	2.40	2.40	3.98	3.68	7.81	6.56	12.42	9.74	8.5	6.45	5.67
Schools Total	3.13	3.10	5.72	5.24	10.88	9.19	16.55	13.08	8.5	9.03	7.75
Education Transformation & Business Change	0.00	0.00	3.80	0.00	9.00	0.00	9.80	0.00	6		
School Improvement & Inclusion	0.00	0.00	4.29	4.29	6.04	6.04	6.15	5.87	6	3.87	3.54
Young People & Partnerships	1.19	1.19	1.19	1.19	4.64	3.96	7.58	6.22	6		
Senior Management	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	6	0.00	0.00
Corporate Education Total	0.69	0.69	3.30	2.73	5.30	4.10	7.10	5.36	6	4.13	3.40
Education Totals	2.99	2.96	5.58	5.10	10.55	8.89	15.98	12.61		8.75	7.50
Corporate Totals	3.23	3.17	6.67	6.28	11.53	10.34	16.74	14.20	10.00	11.67	9.98

Table 7 - All Wales Comparative Data

Local Authority	2020/21* Published Data	2021/22* Unpublished Data	Movement Year on Year
1	6.8	N/A	
2	7.7	N/A	
3	7.7	N/A	
4	8.8	N/A	
5	9.6	N/A	
6	11.0	N/A	
7	8.4	7.92	0.48↓
8	8.6	9.84	1.24↑
9	6.5	9.90	3.40↑
10	7.1	9.96	2.86↑
11	6.3	10.07	3.77↑
12	7.9	10.50	2.60↑
13	8.0	11.05	3.05↑
14	8.6	11.34	2.74↑
15	7.7	11.41	3.71↑
16	9.3	11.74	2.44↑
17	9.2	12.36	3.16↑
18	8.1	13.28	5.18↑
19	10.0	14.12	4.12↑
Blaenau Gwent	11.67	16.74	5.07↑

*2 Authorities did not report

This page is intentionally left blank

Agenda Item 8

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 12.10.22

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 13.10.22

Committee: **Executive Committee**

Date of meeting: **26th October 2022**

Report Subject: **The Annual Letter of The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales 2021/2022**

Portfolio Holder: **Leader/ Executive Member Corporate Services**

Report Submitted by: **Andrea Jones Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
	08/09/2022	11.10.22	21/09/2022			26/10/2022		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The report is to inform Members and Officers of the Council's performance with regard to complaints to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) prepares an annual letter which provides the number of service and code of conduct complaints for each Council in Wales and compares the Council's performance with that of the average council in Wales.
- 2.2 In 2019, the National Assembly for Wales (now Senedd Cymru Welsh Parliament) passed the Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Act 2019. The Ombudsman in Wales is now the first office in the UK to have full and operational powers to drive systemic improvement of public services through investigations on our 'own initiative' and the Complaints Standards role.
- 2.3 Since April 2019, the Complaints Standards Authority (CSA) have continued its work with public bodies in Wales. They have introduced a model complaints policy that has been adopted by local authorities and health boards in Wales and delivered 140 training sessions. Local Authorities have also submitted data regarding complaints to the CSA.
- 2.4 For the first time in the last year, the CSA has published information on complaints handling by Local Authorities which has been a key achievement for this work. The data for 2021/2022 showed:
- Over 15,000 complaints were recorded by Local Authorities
 - 4.88 for every 1000 residents.
 - Nearly half (46%) of these complaints were upheld
 - About 75% were investigated within 20 working days
 - About 8% of all complaints closed ended up being referred to PSOW

- 2.5 The overall number of complaints received by the Ombudsman relating to local authorities across Wales has increased by 47% compared to 2020/21 figures and are now well above pre-pandemic levels. It is likely that complaints to the Ombudsman were suppressed during the pandemic, and they are starting to see the expected 'rebound' effect.
- 2.6 During this period, the Ombudsman intervened in (upheld, settled or resolved at an early stage) a similar proportion of complaints about public bodies, 18%, when compared with recent years. Intervention rates (where they investigated complaints) for Local Authorities also remained at a similar level – 14% compared to 13% in recent years.
- 2.7 The Ombudsman also received a high number of Code of Conduct complaints last year, relating to both Principal Councils and Town and Community Council. A record number (20) were referred to either the Adjudication Panel for Wales or Local Standards Committee, due to evidence of a breach of the code.
- 2.8 The number of complaints to the Ombudsman for Blaenau Gwent during 2021/2022 was 13 with no complaints requiring intervention. This is a reduction from 15 complaints with 1 intervention received in 2020/2021.
- 2.9 The number of Code of Conduct Complaints made to the Ombudsman in relation to this Council is 4. This is an increase from 3 in 2020/2021.
- 2.10 The number of Code of Conduct Complaints made to the Ombudsman in relation to Town/Community Council is 6. This is an increase from 5 in 2020/2021.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 **Option 1**

The Executive is informed of the Council's performance with regard to complaints made to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales, and that the report has been referred to the Governance and Audit Committee for assurance that the process for the monitoring of complaints is robust and the performance information provided reflects these practices.

3.2 **Option 2**

To seek further clarification on any areas within the report and/or to highlight any areas of interest or concern that need to be considered in future monitoring and reporting of complaints.

4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

- 4.1 There is a legislative requirement to provide information on the number of complaints the Council received in order for the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales to prepare an annual letter.

4.2 The monitoring of complaints and compliments is a key performance indicator within the Council's Corporate Plan, under the Well-being Theme, 'Efficient Council'.

4.3 From the Well-being Plan the monitoring of complaints links into 'A resilient Wales' as it provides an opportunity for citizens to take an active and empowered role. The Council is required to present the Annual Letter to members.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 ***Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)***

The Ombudsman in certain circumstances may award compensation to the complainant. In such circumstances, the compensation will be paid by the relevant department/service area.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

Complaints are investigated in accordance with the Councils Corporate Complaints Policy.

5.3 ***Legal***

There are no legal implications associated with this report.

5.4 ***Human Resources***

There are no human resource implications associated with this report.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

See appendix 1:

Section A: Complaints received and investigated with the local authority average adjusted by population

Section B: Complaints received by subject

Section C: Complaint outcomes

Section D: Cases with PSOW intervention

Section E: Code of Conduct complaints.

Section F: Town/Community Council Code of Conduct complaints

6.2 ***Expected outcome for the public***

This report is positive information to share with the public and is evidence that the Council's Corporate Complaints Policy is working effectively to resolve complaints at an early stage, and few complainants are seeking independent redress.

6.3 ***Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)***

By providing a complaints process, the Council is enabling active participation of the public and partners to identify areas of concern that need to be addressed.

6.4 ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***

The Public Service Ombudsman (Wales) Act 2019 was introduced to give the Ombudsman new powers aimed at:

- Improving access to their office
- Allowing the Ombudsman to undertake own initiative investigations when required in the public interest
- Ensuring that complaints data from across Wales may be used to drive improvement in public services for citizens in Wales

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

The complaints process enables the Council to rectify processes that have been highlighted within a complaint. This in turn supports the Council to prevent similar complaints being provided.

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

As part of the report prepared by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales comparisons are made across all Council's across Wales.

6.7 ***Integration (across service areas)***

The Complaints process is undertaken across all sections of the Council in order to provide a full picture across the Council.

6.8 ***Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions***

N/A

6.9 ***Integrated Impact Assessment***

An Integrated Impact Assessment is not required for the performance monitoring of complaints, however, if a complaint requires consideration of the Equalities Act an EqIA would be undertaken for the specific complaint.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 The Public Service Ombudsman for Wales annual reports are presented to the Corporate Leadership Team, Governance and Audit Committee and Executive Committee on an annual basis.

Complaints monitoring is undertaken across the Council and a separate report will be presented to Governance and Audit Committee twice a year providing information on the number of stage 1 and 2 complaints received and their outcomes.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- Appendix 1

Factsheet

Appendix A - Complaints Received

Local Authority	Complaints Received	Received per 1000 residents
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council	14	0.20
Bridgend County Borough Council	55	0.37
Caerphilly County Borough Council	60	0.33
Cardiff Council*	182	0.50
Carmarthenshire County Council	54	0.29
Ceredigion County Council	52	0.72
Conwy County Borough Council	27	0.23
Denbighshire County Council	34	0.36
Flintshire County Council	99	0.63
Gwynedd Council	39	0.31
Isle of Anglesey County Council	29	0.41
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council	27	0.45
Monmouthshire County Council	20	0.21
Neath Port Talbot Council	45	0.31
Newport City Council	40	0.26
Pembrokeshire County Council	39	0.31
Powys County Council	55	0.42
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council	51	0.21
Swansea Council	71	0.29
Torfaen County Borough Council	18	0.19
Vale of Glamorgan Council	61	0.46
Wrexham County Borough Council	71	0.52
Total	1143	0.36

* inc 17 Rent Smart Wales

Appendix B - Received by Subject

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council	Complaints Received	% Share
Adult Social Services	2	14%
Benefits Administration	0	0%
Children's Social Services	3	21%
Community Facilities, Recreation and Leisure	0	0%
Complaints Handling	0	0%
Covid19	0	0%
Education	1	7%
Environment and Environmental Health	2	14%
Finance and Taxation	2	14%
Housing	0	0%
Licensing	0	0%
Planning and Building Control	2	14%
Roads and Transport	0	0%
Various Other	2	14%
Total	14	

Appendix C - Complaint Outcomes
 (* denotes intervention)

	Out of Jurisdiction	Premature	Other cases closed after initial consideration	Early Resolution/ voluntary settlement*	Discontinued	Other Reports- Not Upheld	Other Reports Upheld*	Public Interest Report*	Total
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council	4 31%	4 31%	5 38%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	13
% Share									

Appendix D - Cases with PSOW Intervention

	No. of interventions	No. of closures	% of interventions
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council	0	13	0%
Bridgend County Borough Council	7	54	13%
Caerphilly County Borough Council	7	58	12%
Cardiff Council	45	159	28%
Cardiff Council - Rent Smart Wales	1	16	6%
Carmarthenshire County Council	7	49	14%
Ceredigion County Council	13	46	28%
Conwy County Borough Council	2	24	8%
Denbighshire County Council	4	33	12%
Flintshire County Council	15	94	16%
Gwynedd Council	6	41	15%
Isle of Anglesey County Council	3	28	11%
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council	2	26	8%
Monmouthshire County Council	2	21	10%
Neath Port Talbot Council	5	45	11%
Newport City Council	4	36	11%
Pembrokeshire County Council	2	40	5%
Powys County Council	7	55	13%
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council	3	45	7%
Swansea Council	10	76	13%
Torfaen County Borough Council	2	20	10%
Vale of Glamorgan Council	9	62	15%
Wrexham County Borough Council	4	67	6%
Total	160	1108	14%

Appendix E - Code of Conduct Complaints

County/County Borough Councils	Discontinued	No evidence of breach	No action necessary	Refer to Adjudication Panel	Refer to Standards Committee	Withdrawn	Total
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council	1	3	0	0	0	0	4

Appendix F - Town/Community Council Code of Complaints

Town/Community Council	Discontinued	No evidence of breach	No action necessary	Refer to Adjudication Panel	Refer to Standards Committee	Withdrawn	Total
Aberthillery & Llanhilleth Community Council	2	3	0	1	0	0	6
Brynmawr Town Council	-	-	-	-	-	-	0

Information Sheet

Appendix A shows the number of complaints received by PSOW for all Local Authorities in 2021/2022. These complaints are contextualised by the number of people each health board reportedly serves.

Appendix B shows the categorisation of each complaint received, and what proportion of received complaints represents for the Local Authority.

Appendix C shows outcomes of the complaints which PSOW closed for the Local Authority in 2021/2022. This table shows both the volume, and the proportion that each outcome represents for the Local Authority.

Appendix D shows Intervention Rates for all Local Authorities in 2021/2022. An intervention is categorised by either an upheld complaint (either public interest or non-public interest), an early resolution, or a voluntary settlement.

Appendix E shows the outcomes of Code Of Conduct complaints closed by PSOW related to Local Authority in 2021/2022. This table shows both the volume, and the proportion that each outcome represents for the Local Authority.

Appendix F shows the outcomes of Code of Conduct complaints closed by PSOW related to Town and Community Councils in the Local Authority's area. This table shows both the volume, and the proportion that each outcome represents for each Town or Community Council.

Agenda Item 9

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 12.10.22

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 13.10.22

Committee: **Executive Committee**

Date of meeting: **26th October 2022**

Report Subject: **Statutory Maintained Schools Partnership Agreement**

Portfolio Holder: **Cllr Sue Edmunds, Executive Member for People and Education**

Report Submitted by: **Lynn Phillips, Corporate Director Education**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Governance & Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
		11.10.22			14.10.22	26.10.22		Headteacher Working Group Chair of Governors meeting

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Members with an opportunity to contribute to the development of the Statutory Maintained Schools Partnership Agreement that sets out the way the Local Authority (LA) works with schools and their respective governing bodies to improve the collaborative working arrangements.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 The Council has a statutory duty under the Maintained Schools (Partnership Agreement) (Wales) Regulations 2007 for the Local Authority to enter into a Partnership Agreement with the Governing Body of each school they maintain.

- 2.2 The Partnership Agreement includes those statutory functions, which must be included, and these are outlined below:

- how the LA will promote high standards and support schools in particular those giving cause for concern, in special measures or requiring significant improvement and the factors that the LA will take into account in identifying schools giving cause for concern;
- the support that the LA will provide for governing bodies where the authority has exercised its powers of intervention or suspended the right to a delegated budget, and in instances where an inspection of a school causes concern or the authority appoints additional governors;
- responsibility of the LA to provide governors with support;
- the reports which the governing body provides to the LA on the discharge of its functions;
- the responsibility of the school and the LA for health and safety matters and their respective duties to employees and other persons in respect of these matters;

- the responsibility of the school and LA for the control of school premises and their maintenance and repairs and how the governing body may exercise its powers to provide community facilities; and,
- the LA duties regarding the defrayment of expenses of maintaining schools.

2.3 The draft Partnership Agreement is attached as Appendix 1 for Members' consideration.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 This report has been approved by Education DMT. The document is presently being commented on by Headteachers and Governing Bodies. The report will also be considered by the Partnership Scrutiny Committee on 14th October 2022, and any feedback will be reported verbally to the Executive Committee.

Option 1: To consider and accept the information in the report and appendices.

Option 2: To consider the information contained in the report and appendices and provide comments to further the development of the Statutory Partnership Agreement and in doing so, influence the way in which the LA works with schools and Governing bodies.

4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

4.1 The proposed document complies with the requirements of the Maintained Schools (Partnership Agreements) (Wales) Regulations 2007

4.2 The content of the proposed Statutory Partnership document is aligned to the objectives in the Blaenau Gwent Wellbeing Plan, which aims for everyone to have the best start in life. Through this plan it seeks to ensure that the education provision is appropriate and able to meet the needs of children and young people within Blaenau Gwent's schools.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 ***Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)***

There are no direct financial implications associated with this report.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

The LA's current Statutory Partnership Agreement came to an end in 2021 and there is a need to secure a new agreement with partners.

Should a revised Partnership Agreement not be agreed there is a risk that the roles and responsibilities of the partners will not be clearly defined, resulting in a lack of clarity on respective responsibilities that may inhibit the required improvements in educational standards and non-compliance with

the Maintained Schools (Partnership Agreements) (Wales) Regulation 2007.

5.3 **Legal**

A Partnership Agreement is defined in the Education Act 2002 as an agreement about how an LA and the governing body of a school will act to discharge their functions in relation to the school. If an LA is unable to reach agreement with a governing body, it can draw up a statement setting out how the LA and the governing body will discharge their functions. There is a requirement that Local Authorities must enter into Partnership Agreement with the governing body of each school they maintain. The Maintained Schools (Partnership Agreements) (Wales) Regulations 2007 sets out the relevant provisions.

5.4 **Human Resources**

There are no direct human resource implications associated with this report.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

All Governing Bodies of Maintained Schools have previously adopted the current Statutory Partnership Agreement.

6.2 **Expected outcome for the public**

6.3 **Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)**

The engagement activities planned will underpin the development of the Partnership Agreement and as such the engagement with People Scrutiny is a key piece of this work in ensuring that those stakeholders with an interest are actively involved in shaping the document.

6.4 **Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)**

The draft Partnership Agreement is aligned to the principles contained in the Vision for Education.

6.5 **Preventative focus**

The draft Partnership Agreement is set within the context of the Vision for Education which places the child at the centre, ensuring that early identification of pupils needs leading to timely targeted intervention being central to securing a preventative approach is recognised and fully supported.

6.6 **Collaboration / partnership working**

The draft Partnership Agreement sets out the respective roles and responsibilities for each of the partners.

6.7 **Integration (across service areas)**

The draft Partnership Agreement sets out the roles and responsibilities of the respective partners and identifies how schools will work with others in an integrated way but focused on pupils at the centre.

6.8 ***Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions***

There are no decarbonisation or carbon emission issues arising from this report

6.9 ***Integrated Impact Assessment***

An EQIA for the Partnership Agreement has been undertaken and no adverse impact has been identified.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 The revised draft Partnership Agreement is a statutory document which is the cornerstone of a suite of documents between the Local Authority and their schools. The adoption of the final document will be monitored through the termly policy adoption updates received from the Education Achievement Service. (EAS)

Background Documents / Electronic Links

- Appendix 1 – Partnership Agreement

Maintained Schools Partnership Agreement September 2022 To August 2025

Review Date September 2023

CONTENTS

	Page
1 Introduction and Vision	5
1.1 The Regulations	
1.2 Our Vision for Education and Purpose	
1.3 The Agreement	
1.4 Duties of the Partners	
1.5 Categories of Schools	
2. Achieving Excellence	10
2.1 Performance Summary	
2.2 Pupil Progress	
• Support for Pupil Progress	
2.3 Attendance	
• Support for Improving Attendance	
2.4 Exclusions	
• Support for Reducing Exclusions	
• Targets for Learner Participation	
2.5 Pupil Transition Arrangements	
• Support for Transition- Nursery to Primary	
• Support for Transition- Primary to Secondary	
• Support for Transition- KS3 to KS4	
• Support for Transition- KS 4 to Post 16	
2.6 Provision for Pupils with Additional Learning Needs	
• Support for Pupils with ALN	
3. Securing Wellbeing	21
3.1 Commitment to Secure Wellbeing	
• Support for Wellbeing	
3.2 Commitment to Safeguarding	
• Accountabilities for Safeguarding	
4 Partnership for Improvement	26
4.1 Collaboration to Deliver our Vision and Purpose	
• Support for Building Collaborative Networks	
5 Ensuring Delivery	27
5.1 Monitoring Challenge, Support and Intervention	
• Support for School Standards	
5.2 Identifying and responding to Schools Causing Concern	
• Support the Council will offer to schools giving cause for concern	
• Responsibilities for Schools presenting as a Cause for Concern	

6. Managing Resources

32

6.1 Finance

- School budgets with surplus balances
- School budgets with deficit balances
- Responsibilities for School Finance

6.2 Premises and Buildings

- Responsibilities for Premises
- Responsibilities for School Facilities and Maintenance

6.3 Providing, Maintaining and using Data

6.4 Staff Development to Achieve School Improvement

- Responsibilities for Staff Development

6.5 Governing Body Training, Support and Reports

- Responsibilities for Governor Support and Training
- Responsibilities for Governing Body Reports

6.6 School Staff Appointments, Redundancies, Complaints and Disciplinary Matters

- Responsibilities for Recruitment and Selection
- Council's Role Redundancies
- Responsibilities for Appointments and Managing Redundancy
- Responsibilities for Managing Staff Attendance
- Responsibilities for Complaints and Disciplinary matters.

6.7 Health and Safety (to include health, safety, welfare and fire safety)

- Responsibilities for Health and Safety

7 Communication and Consultation

49

- Corporate Director of Education and Headteachers' Meetings
- School Budget Forum
- Membership
- Admission Forum
- Other Meetings likely to include Schools
- Communication with Schools from the Council
- Full Public Consultation Documents
- Policy Adoption
- Written, email and telephone correspondence with schools
- Council Staff and Visits to Schools
- Monitoring of Statutory Functions
- Formal Complaints
- Public Relations
- Senedd Member and Member of Parliament Visits and Invitations

8.	Revision of the Partnership Agreement	56
	Appendix 1 - Partnership Agreement - Statutory and Non-Statutory Functions	57

I. Introduction and Vision

1.1 The Maintained Schools (Partnership Agreements) (Wales) Regulations 2007

Section 197 of the Education Act 2002 requires local authorities to enter into a partnership agreement with the governing body of each school maintained by the Council (LA). The agreement details how the Council and the governing body of a maintained school will discharge their functions in relation to a school. The regulations impose duties upon all Councils and governing bodies of schools maintained by them to enter into Partnership Agreements.

The purpose of this Partnership Agreement is to facilitate the Council's vision and purpose for education. The agreement provides clarity about respective roles and responsibilities to enhance and sustain partnership working between the Council and its schools to raise standards and improve wellbeing. Should the parties be unable to agree a Partnership Agreement, the Council will draw up a statement setting out how the governing body and Council are to discharge their respective functions.

The Partnership Agreement as recommended by Welsh Government comprises several statutory and non-statutory functions. For ease of reference, the statutory functions are summarised at Appendix 1.

At the time of writing the world is responding to a pandemic of unprecedented scale. This document is written with this context, noting that many regulations are presently suspended in the light of the current circumstances, including performance reporting and school categorisation.

1.2 Purpose and Vision for Education

The Education Directorate's purpose is to deliver 'Better Schools. Better Communities and Better Citizens'. This is supported by a vision for education that was developed following extensive consultation with Headteachers, Governors and partners, the Council has agreed a vision for education as follows:-

'To secure excellent achievement and wellbeing through a partnership, school-led, self-improving, school to school, system approach'

The vision will be delivered through, effective and progressive partnership arrangements between the Council and its schools characterised by:-

- a primary focus on improving teaching and learning; improving progression and continuity between schools and reducing variation within and between schools,
- a collective commitment to secure wellbeing and reduce the impact of pupil deprivation and disadvantage,
- schools working collaboratively to support and challenge each other to achieve ambitious outcomes for all learners,
- school leaders, governors and the Local Authority sharing collective responsibility for the continuous improvement of schools.

This Partnership Agreement has been developed and reviewed by the Council following discussions with schools.

Organisational arrangements to support improved outcomes for learners are subject to regular review and refinement. However, the two agencies which underpin educational improvement are the Council as the democratically elected body with statutory powers for education and local schools with the obligation for delivery. These agencies are the parties to this Partnership Agreement.

At a regional level, Blaenau Gwent is part of the South East Wales Consortium (SEWC). In line with the requirements of the National Model for regional working the Education Achievement Service (EAS) is commissioned to deliver school improvement services. This Partnership Agreement reflects a shared understanding that initiatives will continue to be developed locally, through the EAS, in response to Welsh Government Regulations. This agreement also details the functions undertaken by the EAS on behalf of Blaenau Gwent Council, and the Council's expectations of the EAS.

This Partnership Agreement embodies the principles outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and seeks to embed the principles outlined in the March 2017 publication by the Children's Commissioner "The Right Way".

<https://www.childcomwales.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/The-Right-Way.pdf>

In addition to the Local Authority functions defined as part of this agreement, there are a range of local authority services which are provided through service level agreements (SLA's) to schools. These services are optional for schools and are not detailed as part of this agreement. The only SLA obligation reflected in this agreement is the obligation for the Council to produce a schedule detailing the range and terms of any SLA offer and for schools to provide a clear response.

1.3 The Agreement

This agreement sets out how Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council (the Council) and maintained School Governing Bodies will carry out their respective functions in relation to schools. The purpose of the agreement is to sustain and enhance partnership working between the Council and its schools in order to raise standards, improve wellbeing and deliver the Council's vision for education.

The Governing Body of a maintained school is responsible for the conduct and standards of the school. The Council shares responsibility for standards in schools, for school improvement (including the use of statutory powers of intervention), for the organisation of schools and for the overall provision of education services in Blaenau Gwent.

This Partnership Agreement applies to all maintained schools. Governing Bodies of Voluntary Aided and Foundation Schools will have additional responsibilities in relation to governance, admissions, staffing and buildings and will also have a relationship with a Diocese or Trust. These are reflected within the document.

1.4 The Essential Duties of the Partners.

Each maintained school is under the direction of its Governing Body

Partnership Responsibilities

COUNCIL	GOVERNING BODIES IN CONSULTATION WITH THE SCHOOLS SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM (SLT)	GOVERNING BODIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic management of education; • School improvement and tackling low achievement through:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Monitoring performance, , challenge, intervention and support; ○ Contribution to school improvement and management of national strategies; • Statutory functions in respect of Additional Learning Needs ; • Education welfare and education of excluded pupils and other pupils unable to attend school; • Statutory duty to provide Counselling for 11–18-year-olds including provision for year 6 pupils; • Provision of Youth Service; • Co-ordinate the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework • Access; • Strategic Planning of School Places – sufficiency, suitability and condition; • Strategic capital investment. 	<p>The Governing Body in consultation with the school's SLT should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree the aims and values of the school; • Agree policies relating to the aims, purpose and practices of the school; • Consider and approve the School Development / Improvement Plans; • Ensure that the appropriate Curriculum is taught and that there are sufficient staff to teach it; • Monitor and review the schools progress; • Ensure individual pupils' needs are met, including additional needs; • Approve and monitor the expenditure of the budget of the school, taking corrective action as necessary; • Recruit and select staff and ensure effective arrangements for the management of staff; • Provide parents with information about the school; • Produce action plans for improvement following school inspections; • Establish and maintain positive links with the local business community and the wider community 	<p>Governing bodies of all schools must exercise their function with a view to fulfilling a strategic role in running the school.</p> <p>This includes a clear understanding of their statutory obligations as Governors to set and work toward a coherent School Development /Improvement Plan.</p> <p>The strategic framework should be established by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting aims and objectives for the school; • Adopting policies for achieving those aims and objectives; • Setting targets for achieving those aims and objectives. <p>Individual Governors have a responsibility to ensure that they have an understanding of the legislation and the role of the Governing Body and governors.</p> <p>The Governing Body should be ready to explain its actions and decisions to anyone who has a legitimate interest in the school</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strategic Financial management (capital and revenue).• Engagement with SEWC to ensure effective direction of EAS to help raise standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote the effectiveness of the governing body• Support the day-to-day operational decisions taken by the Headteacher.	
--	--	--

1.5 Categories of School and Respective Functions of the Governing Body.

The responsibilities of individual Governing Bodies for staffing, admissions and premises vary dependent upon the category of school as follows:-

Note -Throughout this agreement, whilst the school obligations detailed are the responsibility of the Governing Body to monitor and secure, it is acknowledged that the delivery process will require close and effective working between the Governing Body, Headteacher and the school Senior Leadership Team.

	Staffing	Admissions	School Premises and Capital
COMMUNITY AND COMMUNITY SPECIAL	For schools with delegated budgets, the governing body is accountable for staff recruitment, pay, discipline and dismissal. Some obligations remain with the Council e.g. statutory redundancy pay.	Council	Premises owned by Council. Capital funding provided by Council.
VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED	As Community and Community Special Schools	Council	Premises held on trust by a foundation. Capital funding provided by Council.
FOUNDATION	Staff employed by governing body.	Governing Body	Premises held on trust by a foundation. Capital funding provided by Council.
VOLUNTARY AIDED	Staff employed by governing body.	Governing Body	Premises held on trust by a foundation. Capital funding provided by Council and or WG.

2. Achieving Excellence

2.1 Performance Summary - Agreeing Targets

Presently, there is no expectation upon school to produce targets. However, The Council may at a future date issue an addendum to the Partnership Agreement.

2.2 Pupil Progress

Historically there are a number of statutory performance indicators determined by the Welsh Government that must be reported on each year. These underpin the core functions of the Council to promote standards, continuous improvement and best practice. In addition, the Council has a number of local indicators used to monitor performance. However, presently the regulations relating to this have been suspended and the Council may issue an Addendum to this document at a future date.

The table below summaries the respective responsibilities of each partner.

Responsibilities for Pupil Progress

Council	Governing Body
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote standards, continuous improvement, best practice across all school, challenging underperformance where appropriate;• Facilitate training for governors and school staff on raising attainment and sharing good practice;• Promote school to school working and support, including Cluster Improvement Plans.• Through EAS, provide differentiated support, challenge and intervention to schools for raising attainment in line with the Council's policy and vision.• Monitor and work with partners to reduce the number of young people becoming NEET (Not in Education, employment or training) leaving Year 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continuously monitor, discuss and analyses performance to review targets for improvement;• Ensure consistent focus on delivery of agreed school based targets.• Ensure that key personnel attend relevant timely professional development activities;• Publish school performance data via the school prospectus and Governors annual report to parents in line with statutory requirements,• Ensure that individual pupil data is shared with relevant school based staff using the appropriate electronic system in a timely manner.• Engage with school networks for improvement and actively contribute to the Cluster Improvement Plan.

2.3 Attendance

Schools and the Council will monitor attendance levels to improve pupil attendance. In discussion with schools, the Council will also monitor exclusion levels.

Responsibilities for Improving Attendance

COUNCIL	GOVERNING BODY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor and discuss attendance data with schools to secure improvements to attendance levels; • Monitor discuss and analyses attendance data for schools on the Councils agreed electronic system; • Undertake register inspections in schools; • Provide advice to schools on attendance data and children missing education processes; • Facilitate training for governors and school staff on improving attendance; • Provide support, guidance and intervention for schools to improve attendance; • Implement statutory changes to the law e.g. fixed penalty notices; • To process requests for a transfer between schools in accordance with the timeframes prescribed in the School Admission Code; • To promote the need for and benefits of regular school attendance through the use of a BG marketing and publicity campaign; • To implement local authority guidance on emotionally based school avoidance. EPS will develop training packages for schools around this area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the Council to ensure that governors have an understanding of attendance processes, legislation and their responsibilities by attending relevant training. • Monitor, discuss and analyses attendance data to support targeted interventions to raise attendance at a school level; • Implement Council and national policies in accordance with the prescribed timeframes. • To ensure that a pupil who transfers schools is enrolled without delay following admission following the admission notification from the Council. • To ensure that the council is notified promptly of all children that move out of the local authority without a destination school.

2.4 Exclusions

Schools and the Council will monitor exclusion levels, providing support and guidance of local and national responsibilities. For permanently excluded pupils the Council will work collaboratively with schools to ensure that suitable appropriate provision is provided.

Responsibilities for Reducing Exclusions

COUNCIL	GOVERNING BODY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide training, advice and support on the correct use of the exclusion process and the promotion of alternative strategies to exclusion, including managed move meetings; • Support schools for the reduction of exclusions; • Support schools in carrying out managed moves as a recognised strategy for managing behavior • Support governing bodies in their consideration of exclusions and provide further support once the decision is made to exclude; • Collate and report exclusions statistics as required to the Welsh Government • Work with schools to better support early identification of children and young people with challenging needs and provide holistic support through safer schools approaches • Ensure that the hard to place protocol is followed for pupils returning to school following a permanent exclusion. • Work with school leadership teams where high levels of exclusions are identified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the Council to ensure that governors have a correct understanding of the use of exclusions and the procedures involved through relevant training. • Ensure that exclusions data is monitored regularly informed by school targets, and school arrangements to minimise exclusions are monitored effectively • Ensure that all incidents of exclusions are recorded immediately on the school's database and report all exclusions within one day to the Council's lead officer for Exclusions; • Ensure that accurate information is transferred to a pupil's new school via the agreed transfer system in accordance with relevant guidelines and timeframes set.

Targets For Learner Participation

As a result of the Pandemic and the relaxation of the requirement to set targets this section has been removed. However, the LA may issue an addendum should the position change.

2.5 Pupil Transition Arrangements

There is a transition policy in place to support children moving from pre-school provision into school nurseries. Staff from the pre-school setting and a representative from the relevant school will attend scheduled termly transition cluster meetings the half term before the child transitions to school to share information and documentation. These cluster meetings also offer the opportunity for pre-school settings to share information and documentation for children moving from Early Education place (3-4 year old provision) at that setting into an Early Education place at school.

Where a child has an Additional Learning Need, nursery school staff are invited to a Person Centered Planning meeting with the childcare setting and other involved professionals in the half term prior to transition and settling in visits are arranged.

Transition between Childcare settings and Foundation Phase settings for the purpose of Welsh Government's Childcare Offer

The Welsh Government Childcare Offer has been implemented in Blaenau Gwent since September 2017, The Offer for eligible parents is to have 30 hours of combined Early Education and childcare per/week The offer is available to parents of children from the term after their 3rd birthday, up until the September following their 4th birthday, up to 5 terms.. The responsibility of how and where the entitlement of the additional free childcare is taken lies with parents. Information on registered providers is offered by the Family Information Service and parents contract with the settings of their choice.

The key to successful and smooth transition between the Early Education placement and childcare setting and vice versa, for the purpose of the Childcare Offer, is maintaining good relationships between staff of both settings and the children. Strong relationships between settings will promote the children's wellbeing as it will ensure that children develop strong, secure attachments in both elements of their care and education and also receive consistently high levels of support at all times.

Responsibilities for Transition from Nursery to Primary

COUNCIL	GOVERNING BODY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish the Admissions Policy for Nursery and Statutory Education; • Facilitate the Blaenau Gwent Admissions Forum; • Administer the published Admissions arrangements, in line with the School Admissions Code (2013); • Publish and advise parents who have been refused a place, of their legal right to appeal and present the case for refusal at Appeals Panel hearings; • For community maintained schools, process school admission requests in accordance with the Council's admission policy within the required timeframes detailed within the Council's Policy; • Share admission/ pupil data and transfer information with schools; • Administer in-year transfers in line with the Council's Policy, ensuring the relevant processing timescales and requirements are met; • Provide training for Foundation Phase pedagogy and philosophy; • Provide skills progression documents for use by pre – school settings and schools to help providers evaluate progress of children; • Provide specialist support, advice and guidance to pre-school settings and schools for pupils with additional learning needs; • Provide a bespoke support package to registered providers to ensure all settings are given up to date personalised and professional development for practitioners relevant to their needs; and, Provide training, support and demonstrations for parents on a number of parent programmes to promote Basic Skills e.g. Language and Play and Numbers and Play. 	<p>Community Maintained schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide the Admissions team with up-to-date information on pupil movement out of the County Borough; • To provide the Admissions team with supporting information in line with admission appeals, whereby the team are arguing on behalf of the school; • To ensure the school develops best practice in transition • Provide information about the child, including interests and areas for development, to the relevant school; • Use pupil portfolios, if appropriate to individualise each pupils progress, including like and dislikes. • Monitor carefully transition between home and setting and between different settings to support everyone involved; • Liaise with registered Early Years nursery or preschool provider to secure Foundation Phase entitlement and clear transition plan; • Set up visits to build up personal relationships; • Invite parents to events; • Provide parents with information pack; • Establish links with feeder playgroups/flying start/ non-maintained settings; • Promote self-confidence and positive attitudes to learning in all children; <p>In addition to the above Governors of Foundation, Voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools must:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide timely admission information to the Council

Responsibilities for Transition from Primary to Secondary

COUNCIL	GOVERNING BODY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish the Admissions Policy for Nursery and Statutory Education; • Facilitate the Blaenau Gwent Admissions Forum and strategic support for voluntary aided and foundation arrangements; • Strategic management of school places; • Administer the published Admissions arrangements, in line with the School Admissions Code (2013); • Publish and advise parents who have been refused a place, of their legal right to appeal and present the case for refusal at Appeals Panel hearings; • For community maintained schools, process school admission requests in accordance with the Council's admission policy within the required timeframes detailed within the Council's Policy; • Share admission/ pupil data and transfer information with schools; Administer in-year transfers in line with the Council's Policy, ensuring the relevant processing timescales and requirements are met; • Work with clusters of schools to develop, monitor and review transition plans and practice to ensure transition is managed effectively; • Facilitate the transfer of performance, attendance and other appropriate information in order that secondary schools meet the needs of learners; • Support and develop curricular initiatives which create continuity of experiences for learners moving across phases and via the EAS professional learning offer to enable schools to access a range of programmes to support effective teaching and learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide the Admissions team with up-to-date information on pupil movement out of County Borough; • To provide the Admissions team with supporting information in line with admission appeals, • Produce a transition plan in accordance with Welsh Government guidance; • Identify and develop cluster based models for transition as part of the School Development Planning process; • Ensure continuity and progression in the delivery and planning of the curriculum across key stages; • Ensure proper availability and use of pupil transfer data; • Identify and target specific support at those pupils considered to be vulnerable. • Ensure parents/carers are fully informed of the transfer process; • Monitor and evaluate the impact if improved transition arrangements on learners' progress and standards.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide targeted support through agreed plans in partnership the commissioned EAS where there are significant challenges in raising standards;• Use data tools such as the NEET Early Identification Tool to identify learners needing support and where appropriate provide additional support via Youth Service.	
---	--

Responsibilities for Transition from Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4.

COUNCIL	GOVERNING BODY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through the EAS, work with schools, and other relevant agencies to coordinate the production of an options menu of 14-16 opportunities; • Support and develop curricular activities which create continuity of experiences for learners moving across phases and offer advice support to individual needs and priorities; and, • Provide targeted support where there are significant challenges in raising standards. • Use data tools such as the NEET Early Identification Tool to identify learners needing support and where appropriate provide additional support via Youth Service. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make available a full options menu of qualifications and learning opportunities in line with statutory requirements; • Ensure effective arrangements to involve parents in discussion of options • Encourage the planning of an individual learning pathway for each pupil entering year 10 and have mechanisms in place to support and amend this pathway choice; • Ensure continuity and progression in the delivery and planning of curriculum across key stages; and, • Identify and target specific support at those pupils considered to be vulnerable.

Responsibilities for Transition from Key Stage 4 to Post 16 Provision.

COUNCIL	GOVERNING BODY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with schools, the FE sector and other relevant agencies to coordinate the production of a post 16 prospectus of opportunities on an annual basis; • Facilitate the Post 16 Partnership Board to enable positive transitions from school to Post 16 provision and to ensure appropriate curriculum choices are available. • Facilitate the Raising Aspirations Group to promote a preventative agenda to reduce levels of NEET; • Co-ordinate and implement the 6 key areas of the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework (YEPF) which include Early Identification, Brokerage, Provision, Tracking, Employment and Skills and Accountability; • Work with post 16 providers including Coleg Gwent, Work Based learning providers (ACT and ITEC), Careers Wales and Regeneration's Shared Apprenticeship Scheme and STEM programme through the Post 16 Partnership Board and the Raising Aspirations Group to address identified gaps in provision and curriculum choice; • Provide links to updated post 16 opportunities and support for young people pre and post 16; • Use the Careers Wales 5-tiered system to identify learners needing additional support and co-ordinate support through the NEETs Practitioner Forum and Vulnerable Learner's Group; • Promote relationships between the school, careers' service and the pupil that is central to maintaining in education or 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make available access for pupils in years 10 and 11 to independent careers advice and guidance. This should include collective information sessions on post 16 opportunities as part of delivered curriculum and one to one interviews with careers professionals at the request of the pupil; • Arrange access for all pupils to Careers Wales Online through school IT systems and local authority; • Arrange access for all pupils in year 10 and 11 to the full options menu at post 16 across the authority area which includes information on possible access routes to the FE sector and training providers; • Provide access to a trained Learning Coach for pupils as a source of guidance and learning support; • Encourage the planning of an individual learning pathway from each pupil from year 10 onwards and have mechanisms in place to support and amend the pathway choice; • Liaise with relevant agencies and the voluntary sector in identifying year 10 and 11 pupils unlikely to continue in education or training post 16 prior to the end of formal education and adopt strategies that forge links between these pupils and these groups; • Promote access to HE and FE institutions, training providers and employers through programmes of visits, careers fairs etc. and strive to provide pupils with the maximum amount of information on post 16 opportunities; • Work with other schools to share resources and improve access to post 16 opportunities.

<p>training particularly for those learners who are likely to reject formal learning post 16;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage post 16 providers to offer access to ongoing support and coaching for young people with the aim of improving retention or providing direction into better matched provision. 	
--	--

2.6 Provision for Pupils with Additional Learning Needs

The Council will support schools in their statutory duty by providing advice and support, in line with the Additional Learning Needs Education Tribunal (ALNET) Bill 2018.

The Council has a responsibility to ensure that resources are being used effectively. It will work closely with schools in monitoring provision made for children with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and ensuring full accountability for all resources.

The Council recognises that for some children with complex or profound needs, supplementary provision may be required either through a Statement of SEN or Individual Development Plans. Statements are for those with the most complex needs and these children are a small proportion of the totality of children with ALN. As the Welsh ALN legislation changes the obligations for pupils with additional or special needs, the Council will work in partnership with schools to ensure clear advice, training in new accountabilities, access to appropriate provision and professional support.

In partnership with schools, the Council will seek to evaluate the effectiveness of the impact of interventions in improving outcomes and wellbeing of pupils with ALN Opportunities for cluster-based initiatives to share resources and build capacity to enable school to school support will be pursued, developed and evaluated.

Responsibilities for Pupils with ALN

COUNCIL	GOVERNING BODY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council will provide a clear policy framework for schools and will manage the support and placement of those pupils whose needs cannot be met in mainstream school; • The Council will agree arrangements to meet the needs of pupils with Additional Learning Needs. This will include appropriate strategies policies and professional learning to support schools; • The Council will provide advice and training to Schools on Welsh Government ALN policy, legislative change and Blaenau Gwent policies; • The Council will fulfil its statutory obligations regarding the outcomes of Education Tribunal Wales (ETW) appeals and secure appropriate provision. <p>The Council will promote:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access for all pupils to a broad and balanced curriculum which embraces the national agenda; • Challenging educational experiences of a high quality; • Defined teaching objectives with intended outcomes for each child, based on the early assessment of need; • A differentiated curriculum and in-class support ensuring that pupils receive high quality universal provision and targeted support; • Collaborative partnership working with other agencies; • Effective opportunities for parents to support their children with additional learning needs; and, • Cluster and school network-based solutions to build capacity and ALN provision; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce an ALN policy (statutory duty) and have due regard for the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice for Wales; • Meet their statutory responsibilities for Additional Learning Needs as identified through the ALNET Bill 2018; • Report to parents on the effectiveness of their ALN policy via the annual report to parents; • Ensure that the schools has an Additional Learning Needs Coordinator (ALNco) who is aware of his/her duties and performs these accordingly; • Work collaboratively to secure effective partnership with other agencies and relevant stakeholders to provide inclusive and supportive environments which cater for individual children and young people's needs and offer them equal opportunity to reach their potential; • Operate a system for monitoring, evaluating and recording the progress of each child which is made available to all teachers who teach the child; • Ensure that any additional resource made available to the school to support pupils with complex additional learning needs is used effectively. • Explore cluster-based opportunities to share resources and enhance provision for pupils with ALN.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access to services provided through the EAS and Pen-y- Cwm Inclusive Practice Services (IPS). | |
|---|--|

3. Securing Wellbeing

3.1 Commitment to Secure Wellbeing and Whole School Approaches

Blaenau Gwent Council and all schools have signed up to a vision statement for education which includes a collective commitment to secure wellbeing.

Blaenau Gwent Council and schools recognise that the inclusion of a commitment to secure wellbeing as a core element of our vision statement for education represents a significant challenge. We accept that wellbeing and pupil progress are inextricably linked. In partnership with schools, the Council will seek to evaluate the effectiveness of the impact of approaches and interventions to promote children and young people's well-being.

The Blaenau Gwent aspiration for well-being is that:

“all children and young people are purposefully engaged in education which is appropriate to their needs and age. We want our children and young people to flourish and achieve positive outcomes for themselves, their families and our community. We want our children and our young people to be healthy, confident and capable and ready to learn throughout their lives. We want our children to be enterprising, creative contributors who are ready to play a full part in life and work”.

The following accountabilities have been drafted to reflect progress to date in developing our response to the many challenges involved in promoting, evaluating and monitoring wellbeing. However, a key accountability of the Council and governing body will be to continue to work together to identify, develop and implement the improvements necessary to secure wellbeing. Part of this commitment is fulfilled through the work of the Public Service Board Partners on improving the wellbeing of children and the importance that this is afforded in the assessment that the Board produces which is part of the agreement and collaborative commitment of the 5 ways of working as identified in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Responsibilities for Wellbeing

Council	Governing Body
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop, in partnership with schools, a comprehensive strategy and advice to schools on measures to promote good wellbeing. <p>The Council will work with schools to create a Good Practice Guide for schools that will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • capture the extent of what is already being done to promote well-being across all aspects of school life; • analyse the quality of provision that is intended to promote well-being at a universal whole-school level as well as identify what is in place to support vulnerable groups and individuals; • Evaluate improvements in learner well-being using a range of qualitative and quantitative measures; • Regularly review arrangements to promote wellbeing in partnership with schools; • Provide bespoke wrap around services as required to support wellbeing e.g. Youth Service, Counselling Service, Families First, Healthy Schools and Educational Psychology Service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To work with the Council to develop policies and advice to establish arrangements to promote wellbeing • Ensure the school develops best practice to promote well-being • Secure effective partnership with parents and carers • Work with partners, agencies and wider stakeholders to secure effective practice in promoting well-being. • Identify and target specific support for pupils who are considered vulnerable • Operate a system which monitor and evaluates the impact of approaches and interventions to promote well-being • Work with the Council and school networks to develop initiatives to promote wellbeing.

3.2 Commitment to Safeguarding

All education providers must ensure that they have effective systems in place to Keep Learners Safe (KLS). This will be achieved by:

- creating a safe learning environment;
- identifying where there are child welfare concerns and taking action to address them, where appropriate, in partnership with other agencies; and,
- the development of children’s understanding, awareness and resilience through the curriculum.

The following accountabilities have been drafted to reflect the requirements that are set out in the Welsh Government Guidance “Keeping Learners Safe” 283/2022 March 2022 [Keeping Learners Safe \(gov.wales\)](https://gov.wales/keeping-learners-safe)

Council	Governing Body
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that an appropriate senior officer is designated to have lead responsibility for discharging its safeguarding duties in education, with a particular focus on child protection <p>The Council has three levels of responsibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strategic • support and • operational responsibilities <p><u>Strategic responsibilities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all partners allocate resources to support the work of the regional safeguarding board, Gwent Safeguarding; • senior officers represent the authority on Gwent Safeguarding and that the authority makes an effective contribution to planning coordinated services to meet the needs of children; • work with other agencies to put in place and support effective partnership working • resources are allocated to enable the authority and maintained schools to discharge their responsibilities for safeguarding children satisfactorily; • effective liaison with the appropriate diocesan authorities in respect of arrangements for aided schools in the area; • monitor the compliance of maintained schools with KLS guidance, and bring any deficiencies to the attention of the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governing bodies are accountable for ensuring effective policies and procedures are in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in accordance with this guidance, and monitoring its compliance with them. • Appoint a designated governor for safeguarding • Ensure that all staff, governors and volunteers complete the mandatory safeguarding training and refresher training • Ensure that DBS and relevant EWC registrations are in place in line with Policy for both staff and volunteers • Governing bodies must ensure that their organisation has effective safeguarding policies and procedures that are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In accordance with local authority guidance, locally agreed interagency procedures and national minimum standards. ○ inclusive of services that extend beyond the school day ○ reviewed at least annually ○ made available to parents or carers on request ○ provided in a format appropriate to the understanding of children, particularly where schools cater for children with additional needs • operate safe recruitment procedures in line with local authority and KLS guidance

governing body of the school, advising upon the action needed to remedy them;

- resolve inter-agency problems as soon as they are identified;
- play a full part in child practice reviews, review and revise procedures where appropriate and disseminate information about relevant findings. Facilitate the Safer Schools Partnership Board;
- Continue to support the ongoing implementation and further development of My Concern software;
- Undertake quality assurance processes across all LGES settings to ensure that safeguarding arrangements are robust and fit for purpose.

Support Responsibilities

- ensure that safeguarding training is delivered to all staff and available for governors.
- Safeguarding training which meets Gwent Safeguarding standards in interagency working is available to all relevant staff with responsibility for child protection.
- Maintain a record known as the safeguarding matrix to include KLS minimum data for schools and other data for all LGES settings.
- Provide model policies for child protection for schools in line with relevant guidance.
- Oversee the management of allegations of abuse and liaise with relevant agencies.
- Meet with schools Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSP's) on a termly basis.

Operational

- Follow Blaenau Gwent Safe recruitment guidance,
- safeguard and promote the welfare of children who have not been allocated a school place, or are excluded from school, including those being educated in out of county settings, alternative provision or via the home tuition service,
- seek to build effective relationships with home educators that function to

- Ensure the governing body reviews the schools policies and procedures annually and provide a copy of the self-evaluation to the Safeguarding in Education Manager during the first half of the autumn term
- Provide clear guidance to temporary staff and staff and volunteers providing guidance cover during short term absence on safeguarding arrangements
- Ensure that any deficiencies in child protection are rectified
- Observe the statutory child protection processes and procedures
- Review the safeguarding data on a termly basis to ensure compliance with safeguarding requirements to include training safe recruitment and policy adoption
- Provide termly updates or upon request on the safeguarding matrix, RPI data and race, rights equality (bullying returns) in line with agreed timescales. This should include nil returns as well.

safeguard the educational interests and welfare of children and young people,

- have in place arrangements for overseeing allegations of abuse against members of staff in the authority, schools and FE institutions in line with Safeguarding in Education: Handling Allegations of Abuse against School Staff (009/2014). For schools, the Welsh Government has issued guidance Disciplinary and Dismissal Procedures for School Staff). (002/202020) which includes a model policy,
- work with schools and partner agencies to ensure that allegations are dealt with quickly, fairly and consistently, and that appropriate referrals are made to the DBS and EWC,
- ensure that the authority's staff who work with children (including any staff carrying out functions on behalf of the authority) receive training that equips them to carry out their responsibilities for child protection effectively.

4. Partnership for Improvement

4.1 Collaboration to Deliver our Vision

The Council, its schools and the EAS are committed to working together to provide the highest standards of education in Blaenau Gwent. This entails developing new initiatives, reducing dependencies, demonstrating resilience and building upon our successes through partnership and innovation.

Responsibilities for Building Collaborative Networks

COUNCIL	GOVERNING BODY
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engage with EAS to collaborate, share resources and identify best practice.• Advocate and support initiatives which promote school to school working to build capacity within Blaenau Gwent and reduce dependency.• Promote and support school-based collaborations and sharing of resources.• Monitor, support and challenge School Improvement Plans.• Provide additional opportunities for linking schools with post 16 providers through the Raising Aspirations Group and Learning for Wellbeing Partnership.• Create and utilise Forums and Headteacher working groups to implement the Recovery and Renewal action plan and LGES self- evaluation processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support Headteacher and SLT proposals for collaborative working.• Regularly consider school initiatives to promote school to school support.• Consider SLT proposals to share resources and talent where this increases capacity and impact and reduce dependency.• Invite and explore opportunities to establish lead practitioner schools / departments as part of the school improvement model.• Positively challenge the SLT to create and champion cluster working and involvement in self-improving networks.• The Governing Body need to promote their understanding of the national drive in achieving a self-improving system across the education community.• Consider Cluster based Governor Collaborations.

5. Ensuring Delivery

5.1 Monitoring, Challenge, Support and Intervention.

The Council has a statutory role in monitoring the quality of education provision and standards of performance in all educational establishments. In 2012, the Council commissioned the Education Achievement Service (EAS) to deliver these functions to schools on their behalf. Whilst the EAS has no statutory responsibilities, it undertakes a broad range of school improvement activities on behalf of the statutorily accountable Council and is commissioned and funded in part by the Council to contribute to the raising of standards wellbeing in accordance with the Council's vision. The EAS produces, in collaboration with the Local Authority a business plan and an annex with specific priorities pertaining to Blaenau Gwent on an annual basis. The plan is agreed by the Council. However, since the publication of the last Partnership Agreement many of the national accountability frameworks including school categorisation have been removed.

The Council, through the EAS will support schools' self- evaluation and improvement through a differentiated and bespoke programme, which includes Professional Discussion sessions ,Team Around the School approaches and formal intervention arrangements. The EAS and Council, working in partnership with schools, play a key role in monitoring the quality of education provision and standards of performance and in providing support necessary to improve the school and achieve the Council's vision for Education. This process will be school led and will feature school to school support and cluster collaboration where this adds value.

However, the Council has a statutory responsibility for intervening where necessary; when the school presents as a cause for concern, where there are concerns about school standards and/or leadership, or where urgent health and safety issues are apparent. The School Standards Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 details the eight grounds for intervention.

Where the Council is satisfied that one or more of Grounds 1 to 6 exist, the authority may give a warning notice to the governing body of the school which the governing body has a statutory duty to accept. Further where ground 7 or 8 applies the Council has the power to intervene in order to bring about the required improvement.

The use of these statutory powers is applied in exceptional circumstances. Moreover, the Council's statutory role of monitoring will be effectively discharged through professional dialogue, close partnership work with the school, the commissioned EAS, and in the case of schools with a religious character, the relevant Diocesan Director of Education.

Responsibilities for School Standards

COUNCIL	GOVERNING BODY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council will agree strategic priorities that will be included in the Education Improvement Plan (EIP) and EAS Business Plan; • Monitoring of progress towards agreed targets; • Evaluation of school documentation as appropriate to the monitoring activity; • Evaluation of a range of reports from agencies such as Estyn and audit reports as and when required; • Commissioning whole school reviews in collaboration with the school/ Governing Body to identify a baseline and / or review areas requiring improvement and provide support • Agreeing a programme of Council commissioned targeted support in individual schools which is proportionate to success; • Promoting a programme of professional development for practitioners and school leaders this is the professional Learning Offer from the EAS; • Implement the agreed Regional Schools Causing Concern Policy • Promote school to school improvement networks and initiatives which reduce dependence on Council and EAS support - see above comment linked to building capacity and resilience • Ensure that the WASPI agreement that is in place with the EAS facilitates the safe and lawful sharing of school data. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop effective self – evaluation and monitoring processes as a means of identifying strengths and areas of improvement; • Discuss and evaluate aspects of school provision with Officers and Improvement Partners; • Plan in detail the actions required to address areas in need of improvement, implement and monitor the action plan; • Monitor, review and update the School Improvement plan on a regular basis to reflect the self-evaluation process; • Provide timely data for relevant audiences/ meetings. • Attend meetings at the request of the Corporate Director; • Evaluate the performance of all staff, including induction arrangements for newly qualified teachers; • To provide in an electronic format all policies and key documents in a timely manner to the Council in accordance with the list published by Estyn. • Consider and develop proposals which enhance opportunities for school-to-school support and collaboration where this enables the sharing of good practice and effective deployment of resources. • Encourage school participation in the cluster improvement plan and other self-development networks which reduce dependence on Council and EAS support.

5.2 Identifying and Responding to Schools Causing Concern.

The Council has a duty of care for all its schools and will provide support for its schools relative to their need. This will necessitate a differentiated programme of support, delivered in partnership with the school and EAS and supportive of identified needs. This work is commissioned through the EAS.

The Council and EAS are mindful of the criteria provided by Estyn through the inspection framework relating to schools causing concern and of its duties as described in legislation for schools in need of significant improvement and schools requiring special measures and the specific arrangements for managing schools causing concern.

Support the Council will offer to schools giving cause for concern.

The Council has agreed a regional EAS Schools Causing Concern Policy which details the arrangements governing the Council's work with schools causing concern and this forms part of the response i.e. Team Around the School (TAS) approach. This is aligned to the Welsh Government statutory guidance for schools and local authorities in respect of schools causing concern.

As such, the full implementation and close monitoring of, the School's Intervention Plan (or support plan, or Post Inspection Action Plan dependent upon the circumstances and category of support required) is a central feature of the work that the school, the Council and EAS will undertake to secure the required improvement. Intervention Plans are required when the school is judged to be a school that is presenting as a cause for concern (SCC/TAS) and significant improvement or special measures are required either as recognised by Estyn or by the Council and EAS. The intervention plan is agreed by the Local Authority and is monitored through regular meetings with the Headteacher, Chair of Governors, PSIP and Corporate Director of Education (or his representative) as well as by the Executive Member for Education in the Council.

The regionally agreed policy for Schools Causing Concern guides operational activity and support for schools presenting as in need of support.

When a school is identified by Estyn and needing Special Measures, a Multi agency approach will be implemented to ensure that the school makes progress at a sufficient pace to ensure that it is removed from a category.

Responsibilities are set out below:

Responsibilities for Schools presenting as a Cause for Concern:

COUNCIL	GOVERNING BODY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure all schools fully understand the nature and extent of support they will receive in order for them to improve. Support may be through a Multi-Agency for Schools in Special Measures or a Team Around the School approach. Regional policies will guide all activity in this area of work. • Assist the school's Governing Body and Headteacher in drawing up the action plan and approve the action plan prior to its submission to Estyn. This may be a Post Inspection Action Plan, an Intervention Plan or a Support Plan as appropriate. • These plans will set out the nature and extent of support to be provided by the EAS, the LA and other providers. It will include the LAs plans of support for the school. It will detail the monitoring schedule which will be for every half term. • The SIP will produce a progress report on behalf of the LA prior to any Estyn re-visit • The SIP will update the Plans and provide up-dated progress report to the Director of Education • The Corporate Director of Education or his representative will work closely with the SIP to coordinate LA based support such as Finance, HR, Governor Support, premises and ALN. • The Multi Agency Meeting or TAS will monitor the progress made in addressing the concerns raised for individual schools. • The Council may consider using its powers of intervention in order to improve the school. Should this be the case, the Council will advise the school in writing that statutory powers to address the needs of a school causing concern are to be invoked, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with LA and EAS to produce an effective improvement plan which will be reported to the full Governing Body. • Explore options to build capacity including school to school support or the sharing of resources in accordance with the Council's vision. • Establish a rigorous monitoring system to ensure that the action plan is operational with the agreed timescales and the school makes the required progress. • Provide regular updates in line with the Plan to the LA on progress made, identifying any barriers to the successful implementation of actions to achieve the desired outcomes. • The Chair of Governors and Headteacher will attend regular meetings to evidence progress that is being made. • Should the Council issue either a Pre-Warning Notice or a Warning Notice to Improve to the Governing Body of a school and implement certain interventions, the Governing Body will comply with the conditions as set out in the Pre/ Warning Notice. • The Chair of Governors shall make all school Governors aware of the Pre / Warning Letter and its full contents. The Chair of Governors will make all school Governors aware of the interventions that the Council is invoking. The Governing Body shall comply with all interventions as listed.

explaining reasons and actions. As appropriate the Council may use a Pre-Warning Notice to formally notify the school of its intentions should the required improvements not be made within the timescale prescribed by the LA.

- Should statutory powers of Council intervention be implemented, the Council will monitor progress half termly via the agreed process. The Council will lift the conditions pertinent to the Warning Notice when the required improvements have been made by the school. The Council will inform the school and Governing Body in writing when the Warning Notice letter is to be lifted.
- The Corporate Director of Education shall meet all school Governors to fully explain the contents of the Pre/Warning Letter to Improve

6. Managing Resources

6.1 Finance

The Council's Scheme for Financing Schools provides details of the underlying principles for the local management of schools. The document covers the financial and managerial responsibilities of governing bodies and the Council in accordance with the School Funding (Wales) Regulations 2010.

Section 4 of the scheme confirms how surplus and deficit budgets are dealt with. The details behind the specific guidance outline in the Scheme for financing schools, including financial regulations and standing orders, form part of this partnership agreement to ensure the Council and its schools work closely to identify and resolve any emerging financial problems/ issues.

School Budgets with Surplus Balances

Officers from Corporate Resources work closely with any school holding a balance which is in excess of the maximum detailed within the Scheme for Financing Schools, which is presently 5% of the school budget share. This involves each school with an excessive balance receiving a formal letter requesting plans of the intended use of the surplus.

Once approved, plans are monitored through the year by the Director of Education, Director of Finance and Chief Accountant. Failure to comply with the direction to spend could result in the claw back of the excess balance. The capped figures for claw back are:

- Primary £50,000
- Secondary and Special School £100,000
- Middle £150,000

Following the claw back of any funds from a school the Chief Finance Officer and Corporate Director for Education will consult the Schools Budget Forum as to how the funds should be spent and will then allocate funds with effect from the end of the financial year.

Ever since the Covid 19 pandemic started schools have not been asked to submit plans for spending excessive balances. This is because of the financial uncertainty that has existed as a result of the pandemic."

School Budgets with Deficit Balances

The Governing Body must set a budget by 31st May each year. Where a school is unable to set or balance a budget, the Council will work closely with the governing body and Headteacher to provide appropriate advice, guidance and support to ensure that it is able to plan appropriately to bring the budget back in balance. This support may come from a range of professionals including Finance, HR and or School Improvement. Whilst this Partnership Agreement is viewed as fundamental to successfully managing difficult budget situations, legal responsibility for the management of the schools budget remains with the governing body, in accordance with the Education Reform Act 1988.

Circumstances might occur when a governing body finds itself in a situation where despite the advice and support referred to above, it is still unable to balance its budget. In these instances the governing body is required to submit an agreed

Budget Recovery Plan for approval by the Corporate Director of Education and Chief Finance Officer. Should this occur the Council will continue to work closely with the school to enable them to bring the budget back to balance. Should the budget remain in deficit the Council will consider the use of alternative measures such as warning notices and in extreme cases, the withdrawal of delegation.

Responsibilities for School Finance

Council	Governing Body
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce, maintain and update a Scheme for School Financial Management. • Undertake Section 151 responsibilities to ensure financial probity in all financial matters at school level. • Establish appropriate arrangements to monitor school finances and transactions. • Ensure arrangement to train governors in their financial management accountabilities. • Trigger interventions in accordance with the relevant Scheme in response to any breach of that Scheme or the Council's Financial Regulations. • Approve and monitor as necessary School budget recovery plans. • Provide a schedule and costs for optional services provided under Service Level Agreements. • Through SIP visits and electronic systems, monitor and evaluate the impact of grant spend on pupil outcomes and wellbeing. • Keep governors informed of school performance and school performance priorities across the LA. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure compliance with the Council's Scheme for School Financial Management and Financial Regulations. • Agree, minute and set a balanced budget for the school by 31 May in accordance with the relevant regulations. • Seek advice and support where necessary to secure a balanced budget. • Ensure external advice on pay progression in relation to SLT members and that national pay requirements are adopted. • Ensure regular reports on financial performance of the school are reported to the full Governing Body. • Support the Headteacher and SLT in pursuing opportunities for cluster or school network proposals to pool budgets, share resources and build capacity in accordance with the Education vision of the Council. • Consider and determine those Council services which will be purchased through SLA, including staffing and Health and Safety implications. • Ensure compliance with the Councils procurement framework.

6.2 Premises and Buildings

It is the responsibility of the Governing Body to ensure a safe and secure working environment for school staff and pupils; as detailed in Section 40, schedule 13 of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998. The Control of School Premises (Wales) Regulation 2008 set out the arrangements for the control of school premises.

In delivering our vision for education and promoting wellbeing we are clear that School premises must be viewed as a resource not only for pupils but for the wider community. The role of schools is an integral to community provision. Schools are expected to promote and maximise availability for community use; including continued use and further development of school buildings within the local community to cost effectively increase levels of community activity. The Council and schools will seek out opportunities to develop their community role. This will help improve pupils' attainment and instill a sense of ownership and engagement with the school amongst parents/ guardians, carers and the wider community.

The Council and schools will give priority to activities that support and promote pupils' learning, health and well-being and that of the wider community generally. Examples include: sporting activities, homework and after-school clubs/other study support activities, basic skill development sessions / courses, adult education, youth service activities and family learning opportunities.

The Council also encourages multi-agency use of school facilities in each community so that adults, children and young people will have better access to local services such a primary health, social services, childcare, early learning and other leisure and community learning activities.

Responsibilities for Premises

COUNCIL	GOVERNING BODY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic and operational investment into the school estate- both capital and revenue; • Monitoring the effectiveness of the school estate, particularly with reference to changes to: school capacity calculations and plans in terms of room usage and development; management of surplus and sufficiency issues in line with the provision of pupil places; suitability and condition of premises; and, facilities management in terms of repairs, maintenance, Health and Safety/ Fire Risk Assessment action planning and resolution; • Producing, reviewing and administering the Division of Responsibilities Guidance and TE100 process, linked to ensuring appropriate financial accountability for property maintenance- 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Control over the occupation and use of the school premises for all categories of school, both during and outside of school hours (subject to any provisions of a school's trust deed conferring rights on trustees or others). This does not include caretaker houses; • Developing arrangements to make premises available for community use outside of school hours; • Seeking Council advice on transfer or control agreements giving third parties control of premises to promote community use; • Recognise the legal right of the Council to make directions in accordance with Council policies about community use; • Comply with the Councils' policy for the use of and charging for school premises.

<p>along with the timely resolution of property-based issues;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertaking annual facilities reviews in informing minor and planned work programming; • Provision of directions and advice about the use of school premises, • Provision of health and safety advice and monitoring; • Managing school capacities, planning reductions of surplus places to reflect pupil projections and to ensure sufficiency of school places; • Support the engagement of partners such as Early Years providers in Community Schools; • Seeking to avoid any conflict with activities already planned by the school for that academic year; • Issue any tenancy agreements and or licenses to occupy premises as required; and, • Support in the drafting of agreements for the use of school premises; • The EAS will provide curriculum specific advice on health and safety matters such as science practical's. 	
---	--

Repairs and Maintenance of School Premises

School premises and building stock must be maintained to an acceptable level in order to complement education provision and ensure an effective and appropriate teaching and learning environment. Where a significant improvement is made to a school and/ or additions to a building or school site, capital monies prioritised and allocated by the Council may assist. For maintenance and repair work, guidance on responsibilities is detailed in the document on division of responsibilities between the local authority and schools.

Responsibilities for School Repair and Maintenance

COUNCIL	GOVERNING BODY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Producing, reviewing and administering the Division of Responsibilities Guidance and TE100 process, linked to ensuring appropriate financial accountability for property maintenance - along with the timely resolution of property-based issues; • Undertaking annual facilities reviews in informing minor and planned work programming; • Facilities management in terms of Health and Safety/ Fire Risk Assessment action resolution; • Provide clear advice on School obligations for property maintenance; • Provide advice and support to schools on the expenditure and management of their delegated budget for property maintenance; • Manage, monitor, deliver and inform the direction of future capital investment into the school estate, via both the Council's Capital Programme and Welsh Government's 21ST Century Schools Programme; • To undertake a rolling programme of condition surveys also assessing suitability of buildings; • Issue specific advice on School Asbestos Management, ensuring Asbestos Registers are in place, communicated and monitored. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be aware of the Governing Body's responsibilities for maintenance as detailed in the Council's division of responsibility document. • Responsibility for all repairs as detailed in the division of responsibility document; • Ensuring that emergency repairs are dealt with promptly to prevent the problem from escalating and costs rising; • To undertake routine building maintenance to secure acceptable standards of accommodation for teaching and learning; • To maintain the asbestos register and to ensure that all staff and contractors are made aware of the asbestos register; • Ensuring contractors sign the asbestos register before undertaking any work; • To consult the Council before progressing any proposals for new build or structural change to the school premises; • To advise the Council in the event of a caretaker's house becomes vacant or the caretaker's contact terminating.

6.3 Providing, Maintaining and Using Data

The Council will provide services working in partnership with schools and outside agencies to promote the effective and efficient use of Capita SIMS and the provision of support for both statutory and non-statutory data.

COUNCIL	GOVERNING BODY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide access to advice on compliance with the Data Protection and Freedom of Information Acts; • Provision of advice and support to schools on the use of Capita SIMS and EMS; • Provision of data via the s2s website; • Advice on hardware specification requirements to host SIMS software; • Installation of Capita Sims/ EMS / My Concerns upgrades and patches as required; • The administration and management of performance data; • The administration of standardised assessment programme(s); • Compliance with Data Protection Act and freedom of Information for all data that is held by the Council. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the School complies with any statutory obligations relating to information or data e.g. Data Protection Act, freedom of Information Act; • As part of its compliance with GDPR and Data Protection legislation ensure that the school has an appointed Data Protection Officer; • Ensure the school enters and maintains all pupil data in a secure, timely and accurate manner on the school information management system to include LAC and ALN status and religion, ethnicity and language data; • At least annually and upon admission to the school to verify with parents/ guardians pupils' personal details including legal and preferred names and maintain accurate addressed (pupils and other contacts); • Ensure anti-discriminatory monitoring and analysis by minority group type (e.g. religion, ethnicity, language); • Ensure the school maintains its computer systems taking reasonable precautions against malicious software hackers. This includes using only software which is current, supported by its supplier and properly licensed.

6.4 Supporting Staff Development to achieve School Improvement and High Standards.

As part of its regular programme of work and in conjunction with the EAS, the Council will monitor and support effective staff development and performance management. The Council is clear that the quality of support to develop the quality of teaching and learning is a fundamental aspect of the school improvement agenda. Whilst the prime responsibilities for development rest with the Governing Body, the Council and EAS also have a role in promoting school to school sharing of best practice, helping schools and clusters to create effective development opportunities and being consistent in their commitment to build self-reliant and self-improving networks of schools.

Responsibilities for Staff Development

COUNCIL	GOVERNING BODY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure effective performance management arrangements are in place for all Headteachers; • Through the EAS, support schools through grants and other resources to identify staff development needs and to plan professional development; • Through SIP visits and electronic systems, monitor and evaluate the impact of grant spend on pupil outcomes and wellbeing; • Provide schools with authority wide performance priorities and strategic objectives to secure further improvement e.g. reduce the Fsm/ non Fsm achievement gap, improve L2+, reading, writing and maths in combination and standards in KS3 and KS4; • Through the EAS, offer professional development opportunities through the Professional Learning Offer and bespoke packages; • Keep governors informed of school key issues through a range of media; • Liaise with schools and the EAS to secure an appropriate level of delegated grant funding for schools; • Ensure all schools are aware of any LA performance objectives through regular discussion at Headteacher meetings; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use performance management and other systems to identify training needs, including those for the Headteacher; • Explore and establish relevant cluster based or wider staff development opportunities; • Ensure all staff have opportunities within and beyond the school to access best practice and to develop their skills and knowledge; • Ensure that all staff have access and support for professional development; • Support appropriate professional development of teachers and all school staff at all stages of their careers; • Evaluate the impact of all staff development on school improvement, standards and value for money Provide opportunities for dissemination of skills and expertise derived from staff development.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure schools are kept up to date with regional development opportunities;• Provide opportunities for sharing and promotion of best practice between schools;• Provide a range of support and development programmes to support the inclusion agenda via the ALN development programme;• Provide opportunities for Headteachers and school staff at all levels to participate in professional career development including early intervention strategies and catch up;• Use evaluations to inform future developments;• Celebrate achievements at a local, regional and national level. | |
|---|--|

6.5 Governing Body Training, Support and Reports.

Although the governing body of a maintained school is responsible for the conduct and standards of the school, the Council shares responsibility for standards and discharges strategic responsibilities for the overall provision of education services within Blaenau Gwent. In discharging some of its Governors Support functions the Council commissions the EAS to fulfil the delivery of the Governor Support service.

Governing bodies need, therefore, to have regard to the roles and responsibilities of the Council in the way in which they conduct themselves and in the decisions that they take.

Responsibilities for Governor Support and Training

Council	Governing Body
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council commissions the EAS to undertake the governance duties on its behalf; • Provide advice and guidance to governing bodies on their role and responsibilities in respect of the discharge of their duties and aligned to identified training needs; • Provides appropriate bespoke support and challenge for all schools; • Support Governors in the development of school-to-school support and self-improving Governor networks; • Maintain and shares sources of best practice via publications; • Devise and coordinates an annual governor training programme that includes the mandatory element of induction, chair, clerk and data sessions where necessary as well as legislative updates and topical issues as identified in the BG governor training needs; • Recruits, trains supports and performance manage all clerks to governing bodies; • Supports the Council's Governors Association and termly governor meetings with the Director and their representatives; • Facilitates termly joint meeting with Governors with the EAS and LA; • Facilitates all LA and parent governor recruitment and appointment processes; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To consider how Governors can best contribute to the life of the school and ensure progress and identify the knowledge and skills which will support their development; • Build relationships with cluster and network Governors to share experiences and good practice; • Identify the skills and abilities needed by the Governing body to fulfil their obligations under this Partnership Agreement through the self-evaluation toolkit; • Ensure appropriate governing body consideration of their obligations as detailed in this Partnership Agreement including performance, wellbeing, financial management, pay policy and complaints procedures; • To promote attendance of governors at training courses and where training is mandatory ensure that all relevant governors undertake this training with the agreed parameters; • To ensure that appropriate agenda items and documents are received in accordance with the timeframes prescribed by the EAS governor support function; • As part of self-evaluation identify training needs of individual governors and the governing body as a whole and arrange support/ training as appropriate;

- Establishes governing bodies, prepares and updates the instrument of government; Ensures the effective recruitment of LA governors through the LA appointment procedures;
- Ensures appropriate arrangements are in place to facilitate DBS checks;
- Maintains a record of attendance at training and development events;
- Enable governing bodies to undertake annual self-evaluation of its performance and impact in order to further improve governance;
- Provides advice and support in respect of legal issues as requires. Where the advice is not taken the governing body are responsible for any resultant costs;
- Seeks to maintain a very low governor turnover rate;
- Ensures that all secondary and middle schools have an associate pupil governor on the governing body
- To liaise with diocesan Authorities re specific areas of governance in the Voluntary Aided and Controlled schools.

- Facilitate the induction of new governors;
- Ensure that the attendance / disqualification of governors is managed in accordance with regulations; and
- Notify the LA of the named governors for ALN, Health and Safety, Safeguarding and governor training;
- Must provide termly updates on safeguarding training for governors and DBS / volunteer compliance.

Responsibilities for Governing Body Reports

COUNCIL	GOVERNING BODY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advise schools of required reports and timescales including budget plans, any targets and exclusion/disciplinary findings; • Provide governing bodies with a written annual report on standards; • Provide Governing Bodies with Education policy and strategy consultation documents with clear advice on timescales for responses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The governing body must provide the following reports to the Council on the discharge of its function: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Signed minutes for all meetings of the full governing body and all committees, statutory and non-statutory, ▪ Targets as agreed for pupil performance and attendance, ▪ School self-evaluation, ▪ School Development/Improvement plan, ▪ Annual finance report, ▪ Annual Health and Safety report, ▪ Private fund account statement, ▪ Governors annual report to parents, ▪ Post inspection action plan following Estyn inspection, ▪ Governing bodies must make available to the Council on request copies of all statutory and non-statutory policies and document (full list Governors Wales website), ▪ Information regarding any incidents that have to be recorded e.g., racial, substance misuse, rights respect equalities, bullying, RPI, safeguarding (including child protection) data, • The governing body must respond to written concerns raised by the Council regarding the performance of the school or the Headteacher and notify the Council of any action the governing body proposes to take consideration of such reports.

6.6 School Staff Appointments, Redundancies, Managing Staff Attendance, Complaints and Disciplinary Matters.

For Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher appointments, the Corporate Director of Education or their representative is entitled to attend relevant meetings of the selection panel to offer professional advice and consideration of their availability should be a key consideration when agreeing dates. The governing body has an obligation to consider the Director's advice before making a decision. The school's School Improvement Partner will also be in attendance to offer professional advice and challenge to the selection panel. The selection panel has an obligation to consider this advice.

Accountabilities for Recruitment and Selection.

COUNCIL	GOVERNING BODY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce guidance on appointment of Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and other school base staff appointments, • Receive notification of Headteacher vacancies and discuss options with Governing Body, • Allocate professional support to Governing Body for HT appointments, • Offer advice to the Governing Body regarding recommended HT appointments in advance of any decision being confirmed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply Council Guidelines for staff recruitment, • Notify the Director of Education of any Headteacher or Senior Leadership Team vacancy, • Consider all options and opportunities to respond to the vacancy before replacement, • Ensure involvement of the Director of Education or his/her representative in any Headteacher recruitment process, • Ensure Job description and Person Specification reflects the Council's vision for Education and the commitment to a self-improving school system, • Ensure that all posts are advertised, • Ensure involvement of at least one Governor trained in recruitment, • Adhere to the advice of the Corporate Director of Education and his/ her representative.

The Corporate Director/representative, Organisational Developments representative and the school's School Improvement Partner will attend all selection panel meetings that involve short listings and interviews. In the case of voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools a representative from the appropriate Diocesan Office will also attend these meetings.

Council’s Role in School Staff Redundancies

Redundancy funding is not delegated to schools; the funding of redundancy payments and pension release costs are subject to arrangements outlined in the School’s redundancy Policy including:

- A genuine redundancy situation
- The governing body following their school policy and the advice of council officers
- Approval of the Corporate Redundancy Panel.

The Council's Organisational Development team will provide advice and guidance to Governing Bodies and members of staff prior to, during and following a redundancy situation arising. This will include advice on the application of Schools Redundancy Policy if adopted by the Governing Body.

Organisational Development will liaise with all schools to seek suitable alternative employment for employees under notice of redundancy.

The Council will support the governing body prior to and at employment tribunal stage where necessary, to include Human Resources and Legal services support providing their advice has been adhered to. In the case of voluntary aided and foundation schools where the governing body are the employer, the Council will liaise with the relevant authority.

Responsibilities for Managing Redundancy

COUNCIL	GOVERNING BODY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of a redundancy policy • Issue advice on the handling of redundancies, • Promote opportunities for redeployment across schools • Ensure corporate requirements to consult recognised Trade Unions are delivered, • Ensure training of Governors. • Authorise Redundancy decisions and payments where appropriate • Ensure availability of professional officer support, • Promote opportunities for cluster based responses to budget challenges where this can avoid compulsory redundancies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the Council advice on redundancy handlin, • Adopt a school policy for managing redundancy following consultation with recognised trade unions, • Fulfil statutory employer obligations to consult trade unions at an early stage to seek to avoid redundancy, • Ensure fair and transparent processes for redundancy selection, • Ensure access to appropriate professional advice, • Consider cluster-based solutions to avoid redundancy.

Complaints and Disciplinary Matters

All schools will seek specific Council advice on complaints and disciplinary matters in the following instances;

- all complaints which are potentially of a safeguarding / child protection nature;
- all disciplinary matters which could necessitate the suspension of a member of staff;
- all disciplinary matters which could potentially be gross misconduct;
- any disciplinary or capability matter which relates to the Headteacher or other school-based staff;
- all complaints and disciplinary matters which move to the stage of being heard by the governing body i.e. Stage B where complaints are progressed to the Chair of Governors;
- Organisational development may attend as the Directors representative meetings of the Staff Disciplinary and Dismissal and Appeal Committee to provide advice to the Committee in accordance with the statutory guidance contained within Welsh Government Circular no 002/2020;
- Foundation, voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools will also need to liaise with the relevant body.

Managing Staff Attendance

All employees of the school have a role to play in minimizing their own sickness absence. The primary responsibility for monitoring and controlling absence on a day-to-day basis in schools rests with Headteachers.

Responsibilities for Managing Sickness Absence

COUNCIL	GOVERNING BODY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and review policies and consult with Trade Unions prior to the implementation of any changes; • Arrange appropriate training for all Headteachers/ Line Managers involved in the management of attendance; • Promote Occupational Health initiatives; • Provide advice and support to the Headteacher and the Governing Body where appropriate on the management of sickness absence cases; • Ensure availability of professional Officer support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt a school policy for managing sickness absence; • Consider the Council advice on managing sickness absence; • Consider how absence from the classroom might impact on the formulation and implementation of the SDP; • Ensure that at full governing body meetings, the Headteacher's report for Governors includes an item on staff attendance so that implications for learners and expenditure on cover can be considered; • Ensure the Headteacher is effectively implementing healthy working practices and discharging any statutory responsibilities in relation to achieving a satisfactory work life balance for all staff; • Ensure there is a Disciplinary and Dismissal panel and a Disciplinary and Dismissal Appeals Panel available to deal with disciplinary action linked to poor

	<p>attendance or ill health dismissals linked to long term sickness absence;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend attendance management training and/or disciplinary training offered by the Local Authority or EAS.
--	--

Responsibilities for Complaints and Disciplinary Matters

COUNCIL	GOVERNING BODY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of advice and guidance in the application of the disciplinary procedures, schools' complaints procedure and Welsh Government Guidance on Complaints; • Provision of advice and guidance on the investigatory process; this is provided via the EAS governor services in respect of complaints under the school's complaints procedure and at stage B; • Provide guidance, advice and training on the protocols relating to allegations of a safeguarding nature; • Organisational development attends (as the Director's representative) at disciplinary hearings/ meetings of the staff disciplinary and dismissal committee (and disciplinary and dismissal appeals committee) to provide advice to the disciplining officer/ committee where requested/ appropriate; • Support the school prior to and at employment tribunal stage where necessary, to include Organisational development and legal support provided their advice was adhered to; • The Council will work with all other relevant bodies in respect of voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish complaints procedure, • Ensure all parents and pupils are made aware of and are able to access the schools' complaints procedure; • Produce a school Disciplinary Procedure; • Ensure participation in appropriate Training by Governors; • Fulfil employer obligation for triggering Disciplinary Procedures; • Ensure access to and consideration of professional advice in dealing with disciplinary procedures; • Ensure Director of Education is notified of any potential disciplinary or capability matter involving the Headteacher; • Ensure early advice concerning which Governors should or should not be involved in the investigation of any disciplinary matter to ensure availability of "untainted" Governors to deal with final stage procedures and appeals; • Ensure that there is a robust school safeguarding policy; • Refer any potential safeguarding issue to the Corporate Director of Education at the earliest opportunity.

6.7 Health and Safety (to include health, safety, welfare and fire safety herein referred to as health and safety)

The Council and the school Governing Body have responsibilities to ensure the Health Safety of all pupils, staff and visitors to the school. The Council has a Corporate Health and Safety policy and each school also has a Health and Safety policy which details arrangement and accountabilities to secure a healthy and safe learning environment.

Accountabilities for Health and Safety

COUNCIL	GOVERNING BODY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council will take all reasonable steps to meet its legal duties paying particular attention to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensuring workplaces, equipment, articles and substances are safe and without risks to health; ▪ Ensuring appropriate information, instruction, training and supervision is provided • The Corporate Director of Education has overall responsibility for health and safety in schools and is responsible for ensuring that schools and Governing Bodies are supported to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify, eliminate or manage hazards/ risks • Record and investigate all accidents and dangerous occurrences to prevent recurrence, • Ensure agreed remedial actions are implemented and monitored, • Access specific Health and Safety train in • Establish effective emergency procedures • The Council will support the accreditation and training of Employee Safety Representatives; • The annual School Health and Safety report will be received, considered and responded to as necessary and shared with Governors in a timely manner; • The Council will make available to schools an appointed person to 	<p>School Governing Bodies share, with the Council, responsibility for Health and Safety. Governors are required to establish Health and Safety Policies and Procedures including the adoption and implementation of a school Health and Safety Policy Statement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The statement should address arrangements to ensure the health and safety of all pupils, staff, contractors and visitors to the school, also the health and safety of pupils, staff and others involved in school visits, trips and events; • The Governing Body is required to conform to the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, and subsequent health and safety legislation and the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety Order) 2005; • Ensure that appropriate Health and Safety Policies and Procedures are in place in relation to their accountabilities as detailed in this document. These should be reflected in the School Health and Safety Policy Statement; • Consider and implement arrangements required as a consequence of new legislation, which has implications for educational establishments as advised by the Council; • Participation in health and safety and fire safety training courses for School Governors; • Nomination of a Governor with specific responsibility for Health and Safety support the Headteacher in the preparation of an annual Health and Safety Report to the governing body;

<p>provide advice and guidance as necessary;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council will encourage schools to work in clusters and networks to share Health and Safety expertise and to minimise duplication of effort as part of its commitment to support a self-improving school system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whilst the number of decisions taken on health and safety matters has increased with local management, the ultimate responsibility for health and safety rests with the local authority; • Governing bodies must comply insofar as it is within their power to do so, with the Councils Policy on Health and Safety; • Ensure that appropriate health and safety considerations are managed when procuring services from other companies/ organisations; • Governing bodies will seek opportunities to work in clusters to share Health and Safety expertise and knowledge; • Consult with Employee Safety Representatives; • Before opting out of Service Level Agreements with the LA any potential risks should be considered and a plan put in place to manage such risks; • When directly employing maintenance contractors the school as the client must ensure they comply with the Construction Design and Management Regulations;
--	--

7. Communication and Consultation Arrangements.

This section sets out the regular meetings hosted by the Council, to which Governors, Headteachers or their representatives are invited. For all groups requiring representatives from different sectors or clusters, the Council will seek nominations for representatives through the primary and secondary Headteacher meetings.

Where possible, the Council will ensure that meetings are either at the beginning or the end of the working day so that there is the least disruption for schools.

Corporate Director of Education meetings with Headteachers

Half-termly meetings will be held with Headteachers to discuss emerging issues, progress and to consult on new policies and strategies. Additionally, the meetings will share identified good practice within Blaenau Gwent, new information such as developments in teaching and learning, new legislation, Welsh Government guidance, new policy/ procedures affecting schools, presentations from Council advisers and officers or other Council staff (e.g. Finance) on appropriate topics. The meetings will have a particular focus on measures which will support school self-improvement and capacity building consistent with the Directorate's purpose vision statement. These meetings will usually last a half day.

Membership

All Maintained Schools in Blaenau Gwent (Headteacher or their representatives) Council representation will be through the Corporate Director of Education and all members of the Directorate Management Team. As appropriate, additional advisers and corporate officers will be invited depending on the topics to be covered.

Procedures :

- All meetings will be formally set with dates for the academic year,
- An agenda will be set following consultation and circulated 5 days before the meeting,
- Formal apologies for absence will be recorded,
- Items for inclusion on the agenda should be forwarded to the Director's Office,
- The Corporate Director of Education will chair meetings,
- Formal minutes will be taken and will be shared within 5 days of the meeting,
- Headteacher representation will be expected at these meetings, although each Headteacher may delegate to their senior management team members as appropriate. Where schools are unable to be represented the Corporate Director will be advised so that alternative arrangement for briefings can be put into place. Attendance and representation by every school will be key to ensure good levels of communication and positive engagement in the further development of Blaenau Gwent's education services,
- Where subgroups are established these will report back to Headteacher meetings on their work.

Schools Budget Forum

The Schools Forum (Wales) Regulation 2003 required each Council to establish a Schools Budget Forum. The Schools Budget Forum is key to developing informed and confident dialogue between the Council and schools on budgetary issues, including schools' funding level for the coming year, pressures on future years'

budgets, changes to local funding formula and reviewing contracts/service level agreements to schools.

Forums have been set up to represent the views of schools and other interested bodies, on the Council's schools' budget and other matters related to school funding. The Forum is a consultative and advisory body, and not a decision making one.

The Council's School Budget Forum shall comprise of 16 members, of which not more than 4 must be non-school members. School members must include a proportionate number of representatives of community schools, foundation school and voluntary schools and at least one must be a representative of a special school.

Non-school members currently include a representative from Unison and a representative from the Diocese of Swansea and Brecon.

The Forum meets at least once a term and the Forum constitution, agenda, minutes and papers are available on request. The views of the budget forum will be presented to Council as part of the budget setting process.

Admission Forum

The Education (Admission Forums) (Wales) Regulations (2003) required the Council to establish an Admission Forum. The role and function of the Forum is to consider, discuss, monitor and consult on: policy, procedural development and support the Council in taking key decisions in line with the development and delivery of the admissions process within Blaenau Gwent.

The membership of the Admission Forum is shown below:-

GROUP	RANGE	NUMBER	NOMINATOR
Members or Officers of the Authority	1-5	5	Authority
Members nominated by Church in Wales	1-3	1	Diocesan Authority
Members nominated By R.C Church	1-3	1	Diocesan Authority
Headteacher or Governor (not C.C appointed governors from each school group)	1-3 from each group (i) C, CP and VC (ii) VA (iii) Foundation	C & CP – 3 VA- 2 VC – 0 Foundation - 1	Authority via Headteacher Groups
Parent Governor	1-3	1	Parent Governors (Governors Association)
Community Governor	1-3	1	Community Governors (Governors Association)

The Council shall appoint a secretary, who is not a member, for the Council's School Admission Forum.

The Secretary shall circulate the agenda and documents relevant to the meeting to members. This will be done via Democratic Services.

Each member shall be appointed for a period not exceeding four years. Members may be re-appointed.

Removal of Members

Individuals shall cease to be members of the Admission Forum when they cease to hold the office by virtue of which they became eligible for appointment.

Forum members nominated by a diocesan authority shall cease to be members if their nominating body notifies the secretary of the Forum that they are of the opinion that the member should no longer be a member of the Forum.

The removal of members shall be in accordance with the provisions of the Education (Admission Forums) (Wales) Regulation 2003.

Meetings of the Admission Forum

The Forum is required by the Regulations to meet at least twice a year or as required.

Additional meetings may be called by the Secretary in consultation with the Chair.

At least five working days' notice of a meeting of the Forum shall be given in writing to members, except in the case of an emergency.

The Secretary shall circulate the agenda and documents relevant to the meeting to members at least seven days prior to the meeting of the Forum.

The quorum of the Forum shall be 40% of its membership, rounded up to the nearest whole number.

Members of the forum have no individual role with respect to the application of the admission policy and are bound by the corporate nature of the Forum i.e. they cannot act on an individual basis.

Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair

The Chair shall preside over meetings of the Forum. The Forum shall select a Chair and Vice-Chair at their first meeting and biennially thereafter. The Chair and Vice-Chair shall serve for a period of two years and may be re-selected.

The Secretary to the Forum shall act as Chair for that part of the meeting during which the Chair is elected.

Other meetings likely to involve Schools

School representatives are also invited to attend a number of other groups. The requirements for task and finish groups and other sub-groups may be revised during the course of this partnership agreement in response to national and local policy developments.

Groups currently include:

- People, Places and Partnership Scrutiny Committees
- Blaenau Gwent School Governors Association
- Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)
- ALN Panel
- Vulnerable Learner Panel
- ALNCO Forum
- ALNCO Cluster Groups
- Leader of Resource Bases
- Designated Safeguarding Leads
- Youth Engagement and Progression Framework Early Identification Reviews
- Post 16 Partnership Board
- Education JCC Trade Union
- Strategic HR Group (includes Directorate Health and Safety consultation and wellbeing)
- Safer Schools Partnership Board
- Headteacher Working Group
- Recovery and Renewal Working Group

Communication with Schools from the Council

Formal papers, e.g. new policies

- No education policy change will be made without first going through formal consultation with schools, Council staff and where appropriate wider council services, other agencies and voluntary groups. However, employment policies which are commended to governing bodies for adoption are subject to a different consultation process.
- A copy will be sent to the school email address via the Directorate's Weekly Bulletin
- A further copy will be , shared with Governor Support for timely onward distribution to Governing bodies.

Full public consultation documents

In many cases, it will be appropriate for a policy document to have been worked up in a small group or working party and shared at the appropriate Headteacher meeting before being considered a suitable draft for wider and formal consultation.

- Copies will be emailed to the Chair of Governors and Headteacher of each school
- The formal consultation group for public documents will automatically include the following circulation list:
 - Chairs of Governors
 - Headteachers
 - Recognised Trade Unions representing education based staff
 - SAC
 - The local Roman Catholic and Church of Wales Archdiocesan Offices
 - South East Wales Directors of Education
 - CLT
 - Learning Theme Group
 - Raising Aspirations Group
 - Youth Forum

- Chair of Blaenau Gwent's Governors Association
- South Wales Race Equality Council (SWREC)
- EAS
- And to any other relevant group as and when required

Changes to policies that involve parents directly (such as the Council Admission policy, Home to School Transport Policy and School Attendance policy) will be published on the Council's internet site for the period of the consultation

Formal consultation with children and young people will be encouraged. This will be facilitated on relevant documents through school councils, youth service and the youth forum.

At the close of the consultation period a summary concluding statistical and formal analysis will be included in the covering report to the final policy document. This evidence will be used to inform final policy or decision-making processes.

Policy adoption

The usual process for policy adoption is as follows:

- Draft policy shared with Headteachers and Chairs of Governors and or any working group,
- Draft policy considered at Education's Directorate Management Team,
- Draft policy shared with Corporate Leadership Team,
- Draft policy scrutiny at the People and Partnership Scrutiny Committee as appropriate,
- Policy endorsement from the Executive Committee,
- Policy distributed to SEW EAS Governor support function for inclusion in school governing bodies agendas for consideration of adoption. Policy adoption confirmed to EAS Governor Support who in turn update Education Directorate on a termly basis.

Written, email and telephone correspondence with schools

Council and schools can always expect professional correspondence from each other. A weekly Schools Bulletin will capture the majority of Council communication to all schools. In addition to this, the Safeguarding In Education Manager will share a Safeguarding bulletin with schools on at least a half termly basis.

Council Staff Visits to Schools

- Will usually be pre-arranged formally by telephone or email/letter and will always be prearranged if staff observation in schools is the purpose,
- Will be formally recorded either as a record or report of the visit and the outcomes or actions required being noted or a formal letter will follow which outlines these points,
- Subsequent action required by the Council staff and the relevant information or update will be provided to the school in writing within 10 working days.

Monitoring of statutory functions

As more statutory responsibilities are delegated to schools, the Council is required to fulfil a monitoring role and will request that schools submit returns within specified timeframes to a nominated officer for example safeguarding matrix and rights respect equality returns.

Where a school chooses not to use an agreed LA system or platform for data reporting reasons the Governing Body will ensure that the data is provided to the LA in line with the agreed reporting requirements and timeframes.

Formal Complaints

The Council has an agreed compliments and complaints policy. If a compliment or complaint is about a Council issue or about a member of staff, The information can be found here: [Corporate Compliments & Complaints | Blaenau Gwent CBC \(blaenau-gwent.gov.uk\)](http://blaenau-gwent.gov.uk)

Schools have their own Schools Complaints Policy, which is agreed by the respective governing bodies. In essence, complaints should be made to the Headteacher of the relevant school, in the first instance to be deal with in accordance with the school’s complaint policy, and subsequently escalated to the Chair of Governors if required. A complainant may request the Corporate Director of Education or relevant Diocesan authority to review the procedure used to reach a decision. However, the Corporate Director of Education or relevant Diocesan authority may not review the decision itself or act as an appeal mechanism.

Public Relations

The Council receives numerous press enquiries daily. It is the role of the Communications team within the council to monitor and manage all enquiries regarding council services. However, Headteachers take responsibility for responding to press enquiries relating to their schools but the Council’ Communications team can provide support and guidance to schools on responding to media enquiries and can also help with proactive media coverage.

Senedd Member and Member of Parliament: Visits and Invitations

Governing bodies should notify the Corporate Director of Education of all visits by Assembly Members and Members of Parliament to schools well in advance of the visit. The Corporate Director of Education will notify the relevant personnel within the Council of the proposed visit so that appropriate protocol may be implemented.

Responsibilities for Communication and Consultation

COUNCIL	GOVERNING BODY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Corporate Director will produce a programme of regular Headteacher meetings; • The School Budget Forum will meet termly. The views of the forum will be presented to council as part of the annual budget setting process; • The Schools Admission Forum will meet twice yearly as a minimum; • Proposed Education Policy changes will be circulated to schools for comment; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider and respond to Council policy consultation documents; • Seek to develop cluster based consultation responses and where possible, cluster based implementation arrangements; • Ensure professionalism in contacts with the Council; • Wherever possible, seek to agree proposed visits and make the necessary arrangements for access to required resources, staff or pupils;

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cluster based responses from schools or networks of Governors will be encouraged; • Policy proposals will be circulated where they are part of a public consultation process; • Consultation responses will be reported and considered before decisions are taken; • Ensure professionalism in contact with schools; • Wherever practicable provide written or telephone notice or school visits; • Ensure that monitoring visits to schools by EAS staff working on behalf of the Council are prearranged and purposed explained; • Offer PR support to schools with local issues where needed; • Advise schools on arrangements for visits by Assembly Members and MP's and in particular of their obligations during pre-election periods; • Produce and circulate regular updates on Education developments locally and nationally; • Produce a weekly Schools Bulletin for all school; • Issue a weekly Corporate Managing Director message to all schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek Council advice and support where necessary in dealing with school-based issues; • Notify the Corporate Director of Education any issue which is likely to generate adverse publicity or public interest; • Consider and follow Council guidelines in response to Visits by S.M's and MP's; • Comply with the statutory requirements of pre-election period as detailed in advice from the Council; • Receive and present to Governing Body meetings regular information and updates provided by the Council or EAS.
--	--

8. Revision of Partnership Agreement

This Partnership Agreement is for the period September 2022 to August 2025 with a review commencing in September 2024. The Council reserves the right to provide further updates through an Addendum during the lifetime of this agreement.

The regulations relevant to partnership agreements stipulate the circumstances when a review of agreements may be triggered. These are:

- If a school goes into special measures or the need for significant improvements are identified by inspection;
- The Council uses its power to appoint additional governors;
- The Minister for Education and Skills directs the closure of a school;
- Statutory proposals are made and come into effect leading to:
 - Changes to the National Model for school improvement in Wales
 - Amalgamations
 - Changes to ALN provision
 - Alterations from single sex education to co-education or vice versa
 - Change of language medium of the school
 - Introduction of language medium to the school
 - Introduction or ending of boarding provision
- Where a Council makes, or minister approves school reorganisation proposals which could mean the establishment, alteration or discontinuance of schools
- If the Council uses its power to suspend the governing body's right to a delegated budget;
- Where consistent and upheld complaints by stakeholders are made against the school.

Where a review is triggered under any of the above circumstances, the Council will complete the review within 6 months and revise the partnership agreement if necessary. A review may therefore lead to:

- No change
- Amendment of the agreement or statement
- Replacement with a new agreement or statement
- The Council drawing up a statement if the school did not agree to changes to an agreement.

When reviewing an agreement due to one of the circumstances listed above, if another circumstance comes to light, this circumstance will be reviewed together with the first circumstance. The Council and school will then have one year from the date of the second circumstance occurring to carry out the review. If during this year, a third or more circumstances occur, the Council and school would have one year from the date of the later circumstance to carry out the review. If following a review, no change is made to the agreement; up to four years may elapse after the circumstance which triggered the review took place before the Council and school must review the agreement of statement again.

Appendix 1

Statutory and non-statutory functions of a Partnership Agreement

	Statutory functions	Non-statutory functions
2	<p>Achieving Excellence</p> <p>2.2 Pupil progress targets (currently suspended)</p> <p>2.3 Attendance</p> <p>2.5 Transition from Primary to Secondary</p> <p>2.6 ALN</p>	<p>2.4 Exclusion</p> <p>2.5 Transition for pupils from nursery to primary school</p> <p>2.5 Transition from KS3 to KS4 Youth Engagement and Progression Framework</p>
5.	<p>Monitoring, Challenge, Support and Intervention</p> <p>3.2 Safeguarding</p> <p>5.1 Monitoring, Support, Challenge and Intervention</p> <p>5.2 Factors the LA will take into account in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identifying schools giving cause for concern Support the LA will offer to schools giving cause for concern, and to prevent them from becoming failing schools Support the LA will provide to schools in special measures, or requiring significant improvement 	<p>Securing Wellbeing</p> <p>3.1 Wellbeing</p> <p>Partnership for Improvement</p> <p>4.1 Improvement</p>
6	<p>Managing Resources</p> <p>6.2 Premises and Buildings</p> <p>6.5 Governing Body Training Support and Reports</p> <p>6.7 Health and Safety</p>	<p>6.3 Providing and maintaining data</p> <p>6.5 Staff development to improve school improvement</p> <p>6.7 Staff appointments, redundancies, complaints and disciplinary matters.</p>

Agenda Item 10

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 12.10.22

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 13.10.22

Committee: **Executive Committee**
Date of meeting: **26th October 2022**
Report Subject: **Review of Inclusion/ALN Strategies, Policies and Practices**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr. Sue Edmunds, Executive Member for People-Education**
Report Submitted by: **Lynn Phillips, Corporate Director of Education**
Luisa Munro-Morris, Head of School Improvement and Inclusion

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
✓	08.09.22	11.10.22			19.09.22	26.11.22		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Members of the Executive Committee with an opportunity to consider the Inclusion/ALN Strategies and service policies and practices, in line with the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and Educational Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 and the associated ALN Reforms.
- 1.2 The strategies, policies and guidance will be taken through the democratic governance process, prior to re-issuing these policies to Governing Bodies for adoption by schools.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 The Education Directorate's purpose is to deliver 'Better Schools, Better Citizens and Better Communities' through child centred approaches and supporting learners with ALN is fundamental to improving life chances for our children and young people. A previous report, presented to the Executive and Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee in September 2021, outlined plans to review the Inclusion Service during the period September 2021 – August 2022, in line with ALN Reform.
 - 2.1.2 The ALNET (Wales) Act 2018 replaces the terms 'special educational needs (SEN)' and 'learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD)' with the new term 'Additional Learning Needs (ALN)'. All children and young people with ALN regardless of the severity or complexity of their learning difficulty or disability will be entitled to a statutory support plan called an 'Individual Development Plan' (IDP). Children and young people with ALN will receive support called additional learning provision (ALP), which will be set out in their IDP.
 - 2.1.3 It is anticipated that the new ALN system will be fully implemented over a three-year period. The implementation period is expected to run from September 2022 to August 2025. However, Welsh Government is yet to publish its revised implementation timetable following its decision to delay its original implementation over three years from September 2020. Within the previous report, presented to the Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee alongside

policy review, the practices of the Inclusion Service were also to be considered, with the additional foci identified:

- i. ALN Panel arrangements and criteria;
- ii. ALN Act Reform and Implementation Lead (Tredegar Comprehensive);
- iii. Developing IDPs;
- iv. Review of ALN Service Level Agreement; and,
- v. Partnership Working.

2.2 Review of Inclusion/ALN Strategies, Policies and Guidance

- 2.2.1 Most of the previous inclusion policies pre-date the ALNET Act and its associated reforms but outline the Council's approaches and processes for ensuring the needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils are met. The Education Directorate are prioritising renewed inclusion, equity and diversity approaches, in line with ALN Reforms.
- 2.2.2 The most significant documents that required review were the former Special Educational Needs (SEN) Policy, now replaced by the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Strategy, and the Inclusion Strategy (**Appendix 1 & 2**). The draft strategies now require the consideration of Members and democratic governance, prior to adoption by schools' Governing Bodies.
- 2.2.3 The ALN Reform Working Party, consisting of LA Officers and Headteachers from across all sectors, agreed that certain policies should be 'merged', with the creation of revised strategies for discrete areas. The ALN Reform Working Party is led by the Head of School Improvement and Inclusion. Moving forward, the LA/ Headteacher Working Group (HWG) will continue to review existing policies on a themed basis e.g., wellbeing/relationships/behaviour/vulnerable pupils. It is appropriate that the review of existing policies/guidance is on-going, especially considering the WG's requirements for ALN implementation; therefore, the draft versions are attached as (**Appendix 3**). The main policies and guidance that have been updated include:
- Educated Other Than At School (EOTAS);
 - Traveller Attendance Guidance;
 - Pregnant School Girls Guidance;
 - Reduced Timetables Policy;
 - Hard To Place Protocol;
 - Positive Relationships and Behaviour Policy;
 - Admissions Guidance;
 - Education Of Children and Young People With Medical Needs;
 - Exclusions Guidance;
 - Managed Move Protocol;
 - Pastoral Support Guidance;
 - Children Looked After (CLA) Policy;
 - Wellbeing in Education - Good Practice Guidance;
 - Relationships (Anti-Bullying) Policy; and,
 - Physical Intervention Policy.

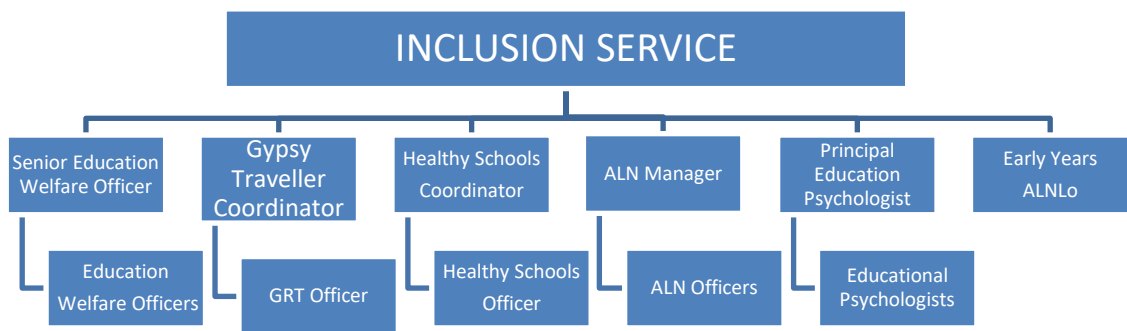
2.5 Review of Practice

2.5.1 The current Inclusion Service is comprised of the following teams and members of staff, directly employed by the LA:

- The Educational Welfare Service (EWS)
- Gypsy Roma Travellers Coordinator
- Healthy Schools Coordinator
- ALN Team
- The Educational Psychology Service (EPS)
- Early Years Additional Learning Needs Lead Officer* (Sept 2022)

2.5.2 Apart from the EPS, the teams are line-managed by the Service Manager – Inclusion who, in turn, reports to the Head of School Improvement and Inclusion. The structure is shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1



2.6 ALN Panel Arrangements and Criteria

2.6.1 The Additional Needs Panel (ALN) Panel manages the statutory assessment processes; resource base placement; special school placement - revolving door and longer-term placements; early years and complex moves into county, additional support, and requests for specialist medical equipment. ALN Panel also ensures that all decisions taken regarding ALN provision and the placement of pupils is consistent and monitors the availability of resource base places and budget balances. Significantly, the panel meetings provide an open forum for discussion regarding Additional Learning Provision (ALP) for learners in Blaenau Gwent.

2.6.2 In considering curriculum and ALN reform, the criteria for placement in a specialist setting has been reviewed in 2021/22. Headteachers and schools were part of the consultation, as were the members of the Headteachers' ALN Working Party. A draft version is now in place for 2022/23, with a view to finalising the criteria once assessment and progression in the new Curriculum for Wales is determined by Welsh Government.

2.6.3 The Interim Service Manager – Inclusion has, however, been liaising with GL Assessment to secure a bespoke package of assessment tools that will assist schools in the early identification of the needs of individual children and young people. The range of diagnostic assessments available will, inevitably, influence the decisions made at ALN Panel and will form part of the revised entry and exit criteria to the LA's specialist provisions.

2.6.4 The ALN Reform agenda has made it clear that some learners will not fall within the criteria for ALN Panel determination, but still have learning or other identified needs. In these circumstances, the Inclusion team has established a Vulnerable Learners' Panel (VLP). This group of key stakeholders will assess the learners' requirements and secure appropriate provision. The panel will be led by the Service Manager-Inclusion with the close support of the Senior Education Welfare Officer. There are clear links between the work of the VLP group and the ALN Panel to ensure that all learners needs are met in a systemic and comprehensive way across the board. The VLP protocol is attached as **(Appendix 4)** within the report.

2.7 ALN Reform - Local Authority Implementation

2.7.1 Within the SEWC region, each LA has chosen to support schools in the ALN Reform Implementation Phase in different ways. Blaenau Gwent brokered a collaboration with Tredegar Comprehensive school to take on the role of LA Implementation Lead for schools. The Phase 1 work in association with Tredegar Comprehensive has concluded and an Evaluative Summary has been produced outlining the current implementation position in **(Appendix 5)**.

2.7.2 The report highlights the considerable progress schools across the LA have made in implementing the ALN reforms. However, the following four recommendations were highlighted for the next stages of implementation:

- Headteachers to address the highly variable time allocation for ALNCOs to fulfil their now statutory role;
- The significant concerns around the significant delay in the development of 'Rising 3s' Speech, Language and Communication (SLC) skills, which impacts upon learning in later years, especially reading and literacy;
- Continued support for the development, maintenance, and quality assuring of school based IDPs; and,
- The LA's ALN Reform Lead and ALN Champions to lead cluster work, support schools, and monitor universal/targeted/specialist provision.

2.7.3 The LA's Head of School Improvement and Inclusion will strategically lead this work in conjunction with the HWG in taking forward these recommendations from September 2022.

2.8 Development of Individual Development Plans (IDPs)

2.8.1 Importantly, to support schools in implementing the statutory requirements of the ALN Act and Code, the ALN Manager and ALN Officers have already actioned the following:

- In Partnership with the other LAs in SEWC region, developed the 'Barriers to Learning' Matrix, for schools to use to identify needs and whether those needs can be met through Universal, Targeted or Specialised support.
- Developed a new 'Graduated Response' to meeting children's needs.
- Developed a statutory workflow for both schools and the Local Authority.
- Provided schools with the statutory letters and leaflets to send to parents/carers at every point of the process.
- Each cluster and school have been allocated a member of the ALN team as their link for IDP support.

- 2.9 Review of ALN Service Level Agreement
- 2.9.1 During the Spring and Summer terms 2022, the Interim Service Manager – Inclusion worked closely with the ALN Service to change how the team support schools in meeting the requirements of ALN reforms and implementation. Following a review of the service and its previous practices, the ALN Service has since been renamed the Inclusive Practice Service (IPS), to reflect the move from working with individual pupils to providing support and advice for all school-based staff.
- 2.9.2 The renewed focus of the IPS Service is anticipated to contribute to schools’ strategic development, ensuring effective implementation of the ALNET Act (2018) and ALN Code (2021). The service will also support schools in the development and effective delivery of a continuum of Additional Learning Provision (ALP) for children and young people with an Additional Learning Need (ALN). This will be complementing the LA’s work in reviewing all the Special Needs Resource Bases (SNRBs), to ensure the specialist provision across the County Borough is meeting the needs of those learners in Blaenau Gwent who have the most complex additional learning needs. The review of Resource Bases will be concluded in September 2022.
- 2.10 Partnership Working
- 2.10.1 To date, the regional focus of EAS and support for the LA has been predominantly well-being, and their input into ALN Reform from a school improvement stance has been limited. The EPS and Healthy Schools Coordinator have worked closely with the Well-Being Lead from the consortium, ensuring Welsh Government funding for developing Whole School Approaches (WSA) to Well Being is used effectively. However, the EAS are also supporting the LA in reviewing all the Special Needs Resource Bases (SNRBs), to ensure the specialist provision across the County Borough is meeting the needs of those learners in Blaenau Gwent who have the most complex additional learning needs.
3. **Options for Consideration**
- 3.1 This report will be discussed by Education DMT and CLT prior to submission to the People Scrutiny and Executive Committees. This report provides the Committee with important strategy/policy renewal information, as well as the opportunity to identify where progress has been made in implementing ALN reforms and where further developments are required.
- 3.2 The People Scrutiny Committee supported Option 1, as its meeting on 30th September 2022.
- 3.3 **Option 1:** to consider and accept the report as presented and the attached strategies/policies and guidance; or,
- Option 2:** Members are requested to contribute to the on-going review of the effectiveness of the Inclusion Service’s strategies/policies and guidance by making appropriate suggestions and/or recommendations to the strategies/policies.

4. **Evidence of how this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

4.1 One of the objectives of the Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan aims for every child to have the best start in life. The Education Directorate seeks to ensure that provision is appropriate and able to meet the needs of children and young people, so that their progress and performance improves.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 **Impact on Budget (short and long-term impact)**

5.1.1 The statutory requirements of the ALNET Act and ALN Code will be fulfilled. Whilst there are no direct additional financial implications in maintaining the current position, there may be indirect consequences because of any national changes to the statutory requirements moving forward.

5.1.2 In addition to the Education Directorate's revenue budget for ALN, Welsh Government has allocated funding directly to schools to support with the implementation of ALN reforms. Also, the LA has been allocated an additional funding of £215,000. The additional funding is to provide high quality education and to improve pupil outcomes for all learners with an additional learning need. Specifically, the funding should focus on improving additional learning provision, increased provision for complex needs and Mental Health and Wellbeing support.

5.1.3 On-going review of the Inclusion Service will also determine whether there is a need for additional capacity for the local authority to undertake its enhanced statutory duties under the ALNET Act, to ensure that all children and young people aged 0-25 in Blaenau Gwent receive high quality ALN provision.

5.2 **Risk including Mitigating Actions**

There is a risk that without an on-going review and refinement of the Inclusion Service with an increased focus on ALN, the Council will be unable to fulfil its statutory duties under the ALN Act. The Inclusion Service is also a key component of the Estyn LGES Inspection Framework, and the service needs to be fit for purpose, with clear lines of accountability and responsibility. The risk mitigation will be managed through the Education Directorate's Risk Register and the operational work of the Headteacher Working Group/ALN Reform Working Party, led by the Head of School Improvement and Inclusion.

5.3 **Legal**

The ALN Act provides the legislative framework for the planning and delivery of additional learning provision. The ALN Act is supported by regulations and a statutory ALN Code of Practice. The ALN Code and operational regulations were laid before the Senedd in March 2021 to support the commencement and phased roll out of the ALN Act from September 2021. However, due to the impact of the pandemic, this roll out was delayed initially until January 2022 by Welsh Government, with a further extension of September 2022 being granted.

5.4 **Human Resources**

There are no direct HR/OD implications associated with this report at present. However, it is intended to establish a cross-directorate corporate Inclusion, Equity and Diversity Strategic Board to create collective ownership as well as distributed leadership for self-evaluation across the board corporately across all the Council. From November 2021 to August 2022, the Service Manager – Inclusion post was filled on an interim basis. However, a permanent appointment has now been made, and the new Service Manager – Inclusion started on a full-time basis in September 2022. Furthermore, the statutory role of Early Years Additional Learning Needs Lead Officer (EYALNLo) was finalised in June 2022 and a permanent appointment made. The EYALNLo joined the Education Directorate in September 2022 and will be part of the Inclusion Service structure, supporting pre-school settings and nursery classes within mainstream schools in the implementation of ALNET Act and its associated reforms.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

The Inclusion Service uses an array of performance information and data to inform provision. This will be complemented through the GL Assessment work to secure a bespoke package of assessment tools that will assist schools in the early identification of potential children with additional learning needs. The range of diagnostic assessments available will allow schools to identify individual potential learning needs, and to implement early intervention and support for those learners.

6.2 **Expected Outcome for the Public**

Pupils with additional learning needs are provided with high quality education, appropriate to their educational needs, to ensure they have the best chance of reaching their potential and improving their life chances.

6.3 **Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)**

The Directorate's approach to ALN reform and implementation is aligned with approaches adopted by other LAs in the regional ALN groups. The SEWC Inclusion Leads meet monthly to share best practice and ideas for the monitoring, support, and evaluation of ALN reform in their respective schools.

6.4 **Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)**

Since January 2022, the ALNET Act and ALN Code have been statutory with a new mandated cohort of learners needing to move to the new system in the academic year 2022/23.

6.5 **Preventative Focus**

Planning for the implementation of the ALN Act and Code will ensure that the statutory requirements for pupils with additional learning needs are met.

6.6 **Collaboration / Partnership Working**

6.6.1 The Council collaborates with key strategic partners and neighbouring local authorities through the South-East Wales Consortium for the provision of school improvement services from the Education Achievement Service (EAS) as well as

a range of pupil support services for specific groups such as visually and hearing-impaired learners.

- 6.6.2 The ongoing review and refinement of the Inclusion Service, including closer collaboration with key partners in Phase 2 of ALN Implementation including:
- Headteachers and ALNCoS in schools
 - The Inclusive Practice Service
 - EAS
 - WG
 - Other relevant partners across region e.g., Inclusion Leads, ABUHB

6.7 **Integration (across service areas)**

The Head of School Improvement and Inclusion takes the strategic lead on relevant cross-directorate panels to ensure appropriate information sharing. The Head of School Improvement and Inclusion and the Service Manager – Inclusion will work closely with the other Service Managers within the Education Directorate and across the Council to ensure the needs of all schools and learners are met.

6.8 **Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions**

In all areas of review of provision for pupils with ALN, decarbonisation and reducing carbonisation will be a priority consideration.

6.9 **Integrated Impact Assessment**

An Integrated Impact Assessment will be undertaken during the assessment.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

- 7.1 This work will be monitored through both the professional and political reporting management arrangements, including:
- Implementation of corporate review processes;
 - Consultation meetings with key stakeholders;
 - Council/Directorate performance management arrangements; and,
 - Reports to Scrutiny and Executive Committees.

Background Documents / Electronic Links

- Appendix 1 – The Inclusion Strategy 2022-24
- Appendix 2 – The ALN Strategy 2022-24
- Appendix 3 –Additional Policies 2022
- Appendix 4 – Vulnerable Learner Panel (VLP)
- Appendix 5 – Tredegar ALN Transformation
- Appendix 6 – Relationships (Anti-bullying) Policy
- Appendix 7 – Physical Intervention Policy

<https://gov.wales/additional-learning-needs-and-education-tribunal-wales-act>

<https://gov.wales/the-additional-learning-needs-code-and-regulations>

INCLUSION STRATEGY

August 2022



Cyngor Bwrdeisdref Sirol
Blaenau Gwent
County Borough Council

Contents:

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Policy and Legislation**
- 3. Context**
- 4. Aims**
- 5. Principles**
- 6. Definitions**
 - a) Inclusion**
 - b) Vulnerable learners**
 - c) Wellbeing**
 - d) Behaviour and Relationships**
 - e) Exclusion**
 - f) Roles and Responsibilities**
- 7. Partnerships**
- 8. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review**
- 9. Appendices**

1. Introduction

“Inclusion requires the active involvement from all concerned. It places the onus on schools to adapt their organisation and their ways of responding to the needs of all children and young people and to value their development in all areas of school life.” (Inclusion and Pupil Support, WG 2016)

The Local Authority (LA) is committed to an approach of social inclusion of which inclusive education is a key dimension. This approach is aligned with the strategic direction of the Education Directorate and other linked strategies and policies and provides definitions for inclusion and the underpinning principles and values.

The LA recognises that there are a number of factors to consider in further developing a truly inclusive ethos across schools and education providers and has considered the direction of travel for Welsh Government (Curriculum for Wales reform, ALN reform, CAMHS transformation, support for vulnerable learners, thematic reviews by Estyn, research, school inspections, case studies, stakeholder views and the voice of the child in developing this approach).

The aim of this overarching strategy is to support the further development of our collective view of inclusion as being central to underpinning a high-quality education, promoting good attendance and minimising the use of exclusion, wherever possible.

Participation is concerned with the quality of learners’ educational experiences and the extent to which they are accepted and feel that they belong. BG believe that all learners have a right to express their views about educational matters that affect them. We have a responsibility to listen to and learn from those views.

Achievement is concerned with learning outcomes. It is about what learners learn both inside and outside the classroom. Achievement, therefore, includes academic attainment, but it is a much broader concept that cannot be measured by tests alone.

2. Policy and Legislation

In recent years, the Welsh Government have issued a range of guidance, some of which has statutory status, which require LAs, schools, and other educational settings to:

- promote equality of opportunity for different groups of learners;
- review their policies and practice to ensure they do not discriminate against particular groups of learners; and,
- pro-actively promote equality in relation to disability, race, gender, religious belief and sexuality.

The LA considers that inclusion is a fundamental principle that underpins all our practice and procedures, and the LA is committed to an effective and inclusive education system in which all children and young people are:

- valued equally;
- treated with respect;
- given equal opportunities.

All children and young people should have access to an appropriate and high-quality education, which will inspire them to participate in lifelong learning. The LA, EAS, schools, early years and other educational settings will:

- work collaboratively to promote equality of opportunity for different groups of learners;
- review policies and practices to ensure they do not discriminate against groups of learners; and,
- pro-actively promote equality in all areas in relation to disability, race equality, gender, religious belief and sexuality.

3. Context

The Inclusion Strategy is supported by key policies and practices, which support the development of best practice in all schools and settings. The core guidance in relation to inclusion in Wales is found in Welsh Government's guidance document '*Inclusion and Pupils Support*' (2016). This guidance identifies a number of vulnerable groups of children and young people who may have additional learning needs (ALN) as identified in the ALNET (Wales) Act 2018.

The LA is committed to the seven core aims identified by the Welsh Government, which summarise the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

The LA believes in celebrating diversity as a source of richness and potential that benefits all. The LA's commitment is to act in accordance with relevant equality legislation, and the LA and Inclusion Service's various policies, a number of which have been created or updated in line with the ALNET (Wales) Act 2018 and its associated reforms including:

- ALN Strategy
- Promoting Positive Relationships and Behaviours Policy
- Attendance Policy & Guidance
- Well Being Strategy
- Safeguarding in Education Policy
- Traveller School Attendance Guidance
- Policy for the Education of Pregnant School Girls and School Age Parents
- Policy and Guidance for Schools on the Use of Reduced Timetables
- Hard to Place Protocol
- Exclusion Guidance
- Education Other Than at School (EOTAS) Guidance
- Blaenau Gwent Policy for the Education of CYP with Medical Needs
- Admission Guidance

4. Aims

The aim of this strategy is to set out the commitment of the LA to the principles of inclusive education and its responsibilities to implement this across all relevant service areas and activities.

Inclusive principles will inform the work of the LA within the context of Blaenau Gwent's support for lifelong learning with the following as a focus:

- review and further develop a holistic education approach to inclusion, wellbeing, behaviour and relationships;
- support and empower schools to further develop their coherent whole school approach to wellbeing, relationships and behaviour; support schools to reduce exclusions and improve attendance;
- provide a framework for associated guidance;
- promote effective partnerships and cluster working with and across schools; and,
- support effective working between schools and other education providers to share good practice.

5. Principles

Inclusion involves celebrating, not just tolerating, diversity and the creative use of resources to support all children and young people to learn effectively. The LA, EAS, schools and other educational settings will show good practice in relation to inclusion by:

- adopting a person centred approach to planning and delivery of services in order to meet individual needs;
- providing dynamic leadership and effective management to promote social and emotional well-being through inclusive and non-discriminatory practices;
- facilitating a multi-agency focus to provide early intervention through a team around the family approach;
- targeting resources, interventions and training through positive actions in accordance with identified need;
- improving educational access and participation, and promoting achievement for all, particularly those in vulnerable groups;
- providing high quality learning and teaching experiences which are flexible and respond to the changing needs of individuals and the community;
- reviewing policies and practices to facilitate the change process and improve and develop culture and ethos;
- communicating effectively with and supporting schools, education settings, parents/ carers, children and young people.

6. DEFINITIONS

a) **Inclusion**

“Inclusion requires the active involvement from all concerned. It places the onus on schools to adapt their organisation and their ways of responding to the needs of all children and young people and to value their development in all areas of school life.” (Inclusion and Pupil Support, WG 2016)

https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-05/guidance-inclusion-and-pupil-support_0.pdf

Welsh Government has, in recent years, issued a range of legislation and guidance which requires local authorities, schools, and other educational settings to:

- promote equality of opportunity for different groups of learners;
- review their policies and practice to ensure they do not discriminate against particular groups of learners, including those with characteristics protected by the Equalities Act 2010;
- pro-actively promote equality in relation to disability, race, gender, religious belief and sexuality;
- ensure the needs of vulnerable groups including those with additional learning needs are identified and met in a timely fashion;
- adopt person centred approaches.

b) **Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Learners**

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-08/guidance-supporting-vulnerable-disadvantaged-learners.pdf>

In its ‘Guidance for supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged learners’, Welsh Government stress that children may be seen as vulnerable for a number of reasons. In accordance with WG, Estyn also state that vulnerable children may be defined as those who may be more likely to experience emotional, social, and developmental barriers to learning. This may be as a result of their life experiences and disadvantage. A wide definition of vulnerable and disadvantaged learners has been adopted. It includes, but is not limited to, learners who are in one or more of the following groups:

- children with Additional Learning Needs (ALN)
- care-experienced children, including Children Looked After (CLA)
- those at risk of exclusion
- Minority Ethnic and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (MEGRT) learners who have English or Welsh as an additional language (EAL/WAL)
- young carers
- young offenders
- learners educated other than at school (EOTAS)

- children of refugees and asylum seekers
- learners eligible for free school meals (eFSM)
- children at risk of harm, abuse or neglect.

Not all learners from these groups will face barriers to learning or be vulnerable to underachieving. Learners from these groups **may** face a range of barriers to achieving their potential and will, therefore, require different solutions and support targeted towards meeting each of their individual needs. In addition, learners may belong to several of the above groups at the same time, depending on their individual circumstances. *The list of groups is not exhaustive.* Learners not in these groups may be considered vulnerable or disadvantaged, including specifically as a result of COVID-19. For example, some learners who would not have been considered vulnerable or disadvantaged pre-COVID-19 may require additional support when they return to school because of their experience during lockdown.

Learners educated through the medium of Welsh from homes where Welsh is not spoken may also require additional support, especially where they also face other barriers to learning. This may also be the case for those learners where English or Welsh is not their first language.

The role of the LA is to ensure that schools and providers are supported to identify the vulnerable learners in a broader context, and that there are clear links for support for schools from EAS and LA officers. It is often the most vulnerable learners for whom education other than at school (EOTAS) is considered. The LA has a clear EOTAS Policy which aligns with the principles outlined in this strategy.

Additional Learning Needs (ALN)

The LA has an ALN Strategy which defines Blaenau Gwent's Local Authority's (LAs) approach, objectives and plans (within the context of current legislative changes) to support schools to meet the needs of children with additional learning needs (ALN) to overcome barriers and challenges to enable them to reach their full potential. The principles underpinning the additional learning needs system are to support the creation of a fully inclusive, person centred education system where all learners are given the opportunity to succeed and have access to an education that meets their needs and enable them to participate in, benefit from, and enjoy learning.

Children Looked After (CLA)

The LA has a policy for children looked after (CLA), which outlines the LA approach, supports the development of schools' policies, implementation and monitoring of a consistent approach, working in partnership with children's services and the EAS.

c) Wellbeing

There has been significant focus from Welsh Government, Public Health Wales and Estyn for a number of years on ensuring a collective focus on improving children's wellbeing. Locally, in Blaenau Gwent, there is a significant focus on children's wellbeing and mental health, particularly in relation to the Whole School Approach (WSA), early help and enhanced support, CAMHS in-reach project and EAS strategy for wellbeing and equity. Blaenau Gwent makes a significant contribution to the WSA agenda at both a national and regional level.

The LA has a Wellbeing Strategy and Good Practice Guide, which defines Blaenau Gwent's Local Authority's (LAs) approach, objectives and plans (within

the context of current legislative changes) to support schools to support learners' well-being and mental health. The Blaenau Gwent aspiration for well-being is that all children and young people are purposefully engaged in education which is appropriate to their needs and age. We want our children and young people to flourish and achieve positive outcomes for themselves, their families and our community. We want our children and young people to be healthy, confident and capable and ready to learn throughout their lives. We want our children and young people to be enterprising, creative contributors who are ready to play a full part in life and work.

The Wellbeing Strategy and Good Practice Guide recognises the multi-dimensional nature of well-being and the critical importance of promoting good well-being for all. The mechanism for achieving this will be through the co-ordination of the curriculum in schools and how extra and co-curricular activities can be designed to enhance and complement learning experiences to improve well-being. This strategy aims to establish a framework where it is possible to map how aspects of learner well-being are explicitly promoted through the curriculum and how the community, outside agencies and partners can help augment school provision to provide comprehensive and meaningful experiences to promote well-being.

Schools and other education settings should strive to have an inclusive culture that fosters schools' ability to provide protective factors that develop resilience and promote wellbeing. The LA, working together with partners, aims to support schools to develop a coherent whole school approach to wellbeing, focusing on the Welsh Government 'whole school approach' and to develop a coherent whole education approach to wellbeing across a range of dimensions. These aims are consistent with the recommendations outlined in Estyn's (2019) report: Healthy and happy: school impact on pupils' health and wellbeing and with the 'Mind Over Matter' (2018) report.

d) Behaviour / Relationships

The Local Authority has recently produced a draft version of the 'Promoting Positive Relationships and Behaviours Policy and Guidance' document, to support schools in promoting inclusion and preventing exclusion amongst its community.

In addition, there is a range of policy and guidance documentation from the Welsh Government including:

- [Welsh Government Inclusion & Pupil Support Document](#)
- [Exclusion from schools and pupil referral units 225/2019](#)
- [Practical approaches to behaviour management in the classroom. A handbook for classroom teachers in primary schools 117/2012](#)
- [Practical approaches to behaviour management in the classroom. A handbook for classroom teachers in secondary schools 086/2010](#)
- [Effective managed moves: A fresh start at school for children and young people 096/2011](#)
- [Rights, respect, equality: Statutory guidance for governing bodies of maintained schools 2019](#)

- The Children Act 1989 and The Social Services and Wellbeing act (2014),
- Curriculum for Wales 2022 and
- Challenging Bullying: Rights, Respect Equality statutory guidance (2019)

e) Exclusions

Our vision is for all children and young people in Blaenau Gwent is to be purposefully engaged in an educational programme appropriate to their needs and age. We want our children and young people to flourish and to achieve positive outcomes for themselves, their families, and our community and for society at large. We want our children and our adults to be happy, healthy, capable and engaged with school and the wider community. Minimal school exclusions will be a key indicator of our collective success.

Welsh Government recognises and promotes the importance of wellbeing in schools as a key factor in achieving this ambition. Blaenau Gwent is aware that improving the all-round wellbeing of pupils and staff is important in and of itself, as well as crucial in lifting performance and attainment levels.

In most cases, fixed-term exclusions are only given after exhausting all the available options for internal interventions and exclusions from the classroom. However, research demonstrates the clear need to consider what additional external support can be provided to children to prevent exclusion when internal school-based interventions do not succeed.

The Local Authority has produced a guidance document to support schools in promoting inclusion and preventing exclusion amongst its community. There are regular exclusion monitoring arrangements in place e.g. DMT and school levels.

f) Roles and Responsibilities

The Education Directorate and Inclusion Service, in collaboration with the Education Achievement Service (EAS) and local and regional partnerships, will:

- provide leadership to promote successful inclusion in schools, early years, youth and adult learning settings and have regard to stakeholder views;
- develop strategies and policies that are inclusive and non-discriminatory;
- monitor educational outcomes of vulnerable groups and target resources appropriately and transparently aim to challenge and monitor outcomes, provision and the quality of leadership in order to secure the best possible quality of education for vulnerable groups;
- promote effective and coordinated transition for children and young people between phases and settings;
- celebrate and disseminate good practice that has been identified across LA.

Schools and other educational settings will:

- develop an organisational culture and ethos that is inclusive, non-discriminatory and responds to diversity;
- personalise learning so that all children and young people achieve and reach their full potential;

- celebrate and publicise the achievements of all learners;
- monitor educational outcomes for all potentially vulnerable groups work to remove barriers and build bridges for inclusion;
- work with local communities to promote inclusion and continued access to education and lifelong learning.

7. Partnerships

Working in partnership is a key priority for the LA. Effective collaboration will be secured through active involvement with:

- the Wellbeing Partnership.
- Multi-agency forums with Children's Services and Health;
- voluntary organisations and other key stakeholders;
- schools and other educational settings;
- children, young people, parents and carers.

Learner Voice

The LA recognises the importance that all agencies involved in the education of children and young people should seek their views. Their views will be sought through relevant pupil participation forums and taken into consideration when decisions about their educational experience are made.

8. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The Inclusion Strategy will be reviewed annually. The LA will monitor progress towards inclusive practice both at school and other educational settings through:

- Reviewing performance indicators at local and national level on a regular basis;
- Analysis and effective use of relevant data at a corporate, directorate and school level;
- Education and EAS Officer visits and reports;
- Estyn inspection findings and independent reviews;
- The range of self-evaluation processes.

Appendices

Please refer to the BG strategies, policies and guidance for the following:

Appendix 2 - ALN Strategy

- Wellbeing Strategy and Good Practice Guide
- Positive Relationships and Behaviours Policy and Guidance
- Attendance Policy & Guidance
- CLA Policy
- Traveller School Attendance Guidance
- Policy for the Education of Pregnant School Girls and School Age Parents
- Policy and Guidance for Schools on the Use of Reduced Timetables
- Hard to Place Protocol
- Exclusion Guidance
- Education Other Than at School Guidance (EOTAS)
- Blaenau Gwent Policy for the Education of CYP with Medical Needs
- Admission Guidance

Links:

- [Welsh Government Inclusion & Pupil Support Document](#)
- [Exclusion from schools and pupil referral units 225/2019](#)
- [Practical approaches to behaviour management in the classroom. A handbook for classroom teachers in primary schools 117/2012](#)
- [Practical approaches to behaviour management in the classroom. A handbook for classroom teachers in secondary schools 086/2010](#)
- [Effective managed moves: A fresh start at school for children and young people 096/2011](#)
- [Rights, respect, equality: Statutory guidance for governing bodies of maintained schools 2019](#)
- [Guidance-supporting-vulnerable-disadvantaged-learners.pdf \(gov.wales\)](#)

This page is intentionally left blank

ALN STRATEGY

August 2022



Cyngor Bwrdeisdref Sirol
Blaenau Gwent
County Borough Council

Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Strategy

Contents

- 1. Executive Summary**
- 2. Context - National and Local**
- 3. Definitions**
- 4. Principles and Aims**
- 5. Roles and Responsibilities**
- 6. Partnership / Dispute Resolution**
- 7. Safeguarding**
- 8. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review**
- 9. Training**
- 10. Appendices**

1. Executive Summary

The Education Directorate's agreed purpose is to deliver 'Better Schools, Better Citizens and Better Communities' and the work of the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Strategy is fundamental in supporting our learners with identified needs. The ALN Strategy defines Blaenau Gwent Local Authority's approach, objectives and plans (within the context of current legislative changes) to support schools to meet the needs of children and young people with additional learning needs to overcome barriers and challenges to enable them to reach their full potential. Blaenau Gwent has a proportionately high-level of learners experiencing ALN, therefore, this strategic approach is of high importance.

The strategy sets out the Welsh national context for meeting the needs of all learners, as outlined by the Education in Wales: Our National Mission Action Plan 2017-21 and the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act. Both the plan and the Act advocate the need to work in partnership to ensure that all learners are inspired, motivated and supported to reach their potential and that every learner has access to an education that meets their needs and enables them to participate in, benefit from, and enjoy learning. The duties placed on Local Authorities by the Act and the new Additional Learning Needs Code (2021) are highlighted.

The local context demonstrates how Blaenau Gwent's ALN Strategy is supported by the aims and objectives identified in wider local authority strategies. The holistic view that Blaenau Gwent Local Authority (LA) has taken to understand how key issues in children's early years, such as poverty and exposure to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES), can affect attainment is outlined. Within this context, the LA focus is on: improving the provision and outcomes for vulnerable groups of learners; early intervention; reducing the rates of exclusions (as these impact upon pupil attainment and outcomes); securing excellence in learner well-being; and ensuring that the LA is fully compliant with the Additional Learning Needs and Tribunal Act 2018.

Definitions of ALN and disability are provided. The principles underpinning the ALN system are discussed and the importance of including children and young people in decisions which affect them are highlighted, as this contributes to better outcomes for them.

The key partnerships with the Education Achievement Service (EAS), local and regional services, schools and other educational settings are set out to emphasise the importance in facilitating high quality support and provision and developing the knowledge and skills of school staff to effectively support children with additional learning needs.

The roles and responsibilities of schools and early years settings (including the governing body, senior leadership team, additional learning needs coordinator and teachers) and the local authority with respect to the duty outlined in the Additional Learning Needs Act and Code to: identify whether a child or young person has additional learning needs, prepare, maintain and transfer an IDP, Partnership/Dispute resolution, Safeguarding and Monitoring, Evaluation and Review are highlighted.

2. Strategic Context

National Context

All learners must be supported to be emotionally and physically ready to learn in a safe and supportive environment. Equity requires that we ensure that the system, at settings, local and national level takes account of and responds to the unique challenges that present themselves to individuals or groups of learners. We will strengthen partnership working to improve the early childhood experiences of children and ensure a widespread understanding of the importance of the first thousand days in a child's life. The reformed twenty-first century curriculum will help schools focus effectively on learner well-being, equity and excellence. Each learner must be respected and challenged to achieve the best that they are capable of, including our most able learners, while being supported to overcome barriers that inhibit their learning. Children and young people who have strong relationships and a positive sense of self – and who can understand and manage their own health and emotions – are in a better position to reach their full potential in the future.

Working in partnership, WG are determined that no challenge should prevent any learner from reaching their potential, including those learners who experience several Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).

(Education in Wales: Our National Mission Action Plan 2017 – 21)

The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Bill was passed by the National Assembly for Wales on 12 December 2017 and became an Act on 24 January 2018 after receiving Royal Assent.

There is a clear duty on local authorities to secure education at mainstream maintained schools, where possible. The power of local authorities to secure additional learning provision (ALP) at independent schools will be limited.

The Welsh Government is committed to ensure that all learners are inspired, motivated and supported to reach their potential. Every learner should have access to an education that meets their needs and enables them to participate in, benefit from, and enjoy learning.

The Act places a range of duties on the local authorities in relation to additional learning needs (ALN) which can be grouped as follows;

- Specific duties in relation to individual learners (usually those in their area) such as duties to maintain Individual Development Plans (IDPs) for some learners (including learners who are dual registered and those with more complex needs).
- General duties – to support the functioning and effectiveness of the additional learning needs system – including the duty to provide information and advice and the duty to keep additional learning provision under review.
- Local authorities will be directly responsible for meeting the needs of children and young people with the most complex and/or severe needs, those who do not attend a maintained school or further education providers in Wales (including those below school age).

- To have due regard to the United National Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with a child or young person. (It provides guidance on actions local authorities and NHS bodies might consider taking when discharging these duties).

The new ALN Code imposes a duty on local authorities, early years settings, schools, providers and further education providers to determine whether children and young people aged 0-25 have additional learning needs (ALN), which calls for additional learning provision (ALP). Once a school or setting has decided that a child has additional learning needs (ALN), it must prepare an Individual Development Plan (IDP) for that child. Where emerging needs are identified particularly in very young children this does not necessarily require an identification of an additional learning need but may require early intervention.

The Code sets out the general principles underpinning the additional learning needs system which are reflected in the 2018 Act.

- A rights-based approach where the views, wishes and feelings of the child or the child's parent(s)/carers are central to the planning and provision of support; and the child, child's parent are enabled to participate as fully as possible in the decision-making process.
- Early identification intervention and effective transition planning where needs are identified and provision put in place at the earliest opportunity, and transitions are planned in advance.
- Collaboration where all those involved in planning and providing support to children and young people with additional learning needs (ALN) should work in the best interests of the child or young person.
- Inclusive education where children and young people are supported to participate fully in mainstream education, wherever feasible, and a whole setting approach is taken to meeting the needs of learners with additional learning needs (ALN).
- A bilingual system where all reasonable steps are taken to deliver additional learning provision (ALP) in Welsh for children and young people who require support through the medium of Welsh, with scope for increasing the delivery of additional learning provision (ALP) in Welsh over time.

In following the additional learning needs legislation and guidance, the Local Authority will also be mindful of other relevant legislation and guidance such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, The Social Services and Wellbeing Act and The Equalities Act.

Blaenau Gwent - Local Context

This policy is supported by the aims and objectives identified in wider local authority policies and strategies including, amongst others, the BGCBC Education Improvement Plan, Corporate Plan, Education Achievement Service (EAS) Business Plan, BG Council Well-being Objectives, Inclusion Equity and Diversity Strategy, Wellbeing Strategy, Education Other than at School (EOTAS) Strategy and Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETS) strategy.

Objectives that relate to this includes those which aims to:

- Raise the standards of attainment;
- Support those who are not able to follow a traditional attainment path;
- Improve the learning environment;
- Improve skills for a digital age;
- Support learning that enables young and adult employment opportunities;
- Safeguard all children and young people in order to create a climate for learning, particularly for those most vulnerable.

Blaenau Gwent Local Authority takes a holistic view of education such as understanding issues in children's early years and aspects like poverty and how they can affect attainment. Much has been done to develop a multi-agency approach and learn from relevant research, such as our work on 'Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES).

The Local Authority is committed to the delivery of statutory education for children and young people, alongside providing support and guidance to families to provide opportunities for those children and young people to achieve within their schools and communities. It provides opportunities for adults and young people to improve their life chances by gaining qualifications and supports them into sustainable employment.

The Education Directorate will focus on:

- Improving the provision and outcomes for vulnerable groups of learners.
- Early identification and intervention.
- Reducing the rates of exclusions, therefore impacting upon pupil attainment and outcomes.
- Securing excellence in learner well-being.
- Ensuring that the Local Authority is fully compliant with the Additional Learning Needs and Tribunal Act 2018.

Exceptionally, it is recognised that for a small minority of children and young people with severe and complex needs, alternative provision arrangements will need to be identified. Within the Local Authority (LA) there is a continuum of specialist provision that includes Pen-y-Cwm School and the River Centre 3 -16 Learning Community, and specialist resource bases attached to mainstream schools. These facilities are appropriately resourced to meet the needs of children and young people with more significant additional learning needs.

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council believes that for many children and young people the best place to undertake their education is in their local mainstream school. It is recognised that schools must respond to a diverse range of pupil need and they may require help and support from other agencies, including the Local Authority. There will be a small but significant group of children and young people who may be unable to be educated in school at a given point in their life. Where a child is not electively home educated, a key priority for the Local Authority is returning these children to school as soon as they are able to do so; therefore, Education Otherwise Than At School (EOTAS) provision is not to be considered as a long term solution. The Local Authority's EOTAS policy and guidance provide further detail regarding the approach taken by the Local Authority in this area.

(A full list of specialist provision within the Blaenau Gwent County Borough is attached – Appendix 1)

3. Definitions

Additional Learning Needs

A child/young person is said to have 'additional learning needs' if they need more, or different, support to what is normally provided in schools or pre-schools to children of the same age. Children might need extra help to be able to take part in school or get the most from their education.

Key questions:

- Does the child have significantly greater difficulty in learning than many others of the same age?
- Does the child have a disability (within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010) which prevents or hinders the child from making use of facilities for education or training of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream maintained school or mainstream further education providers?

In the early years, providers will focus on early intervention to support emerging needs thus supporting children where possible to have their needs met in mainstream alongside their peers. In some instances, it may be appropriate for a child in the early years to have an individual plan. In nearly all cases the maintained school will be responsible for deciding whether a child has additional learning needs (ALN) and for preparing and maintaining an Individual Development Plan (IDP).

Identifying whether a child may have additional learning needs (ALN) and the subsequent decision as to whether the child has additional learning needs and if so, what those additional learning needs are, needs to be based on evidence; this evidence might come from staff within the early years setting, school or further education provider, other services which have been involved with the child or young person, it might also come from the child, their parents or the young person themselves.

Disability

According to legislation, children and young people are considered to be disabled if they are:

“blind, deaf or dumb or suffer[s] from a mental disorder of any kind or is substantially and permanently handicapped by illness, injury or congenital deformity or such other disability as may be prescribed. Section 17 (11), Children Act 1989.

A person has a disability for the purposes of this Act if he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Section 1(1), Disability Discrimination Act 1995.”

4. Blaenau Gwent's Principles and Aims

The principles underpinning the additional learning needs system are to support the creation of a fully inclusive education system where all learners are given the opportunity to succeed and have access to an education that meets their needs and enable them to participate in, benefit from, and enjoy learning.

Blaenau Gwent include the participation of children and young people and families in decisions which affect them, which ultimately may contribute to better outcomes for them.

This will ensure that:

- Families are supported with their child's development.
- Practitioners supporting children and young people with additional learning needs having a better understanding of the child or young person, including who they are and what are important to them.
- Increased expectations of children and young people based on an understanding of the child or young person's strengths and potential.
- The development of personalised learning based on the identification of targets that build on the strengths of children and young people with additional learning needs.
- More effective planning and delivery of ALP which supports children and young people to work towards achieving positive outcomes based on their ambitions and aspirations.
- The empowerment of children and young people and their families through celebrating their achievements and abilities and focusing upon the possibilities, rather than the problems they face.

The Local Authority's objective is to achieve high quality support and provision by working in partnership with the Education Achievement Service (EAS), local and regional services and school and other educational settings. The LA is committed to supporting schools and other educational settings to raise attainment levels and achievements, celebrating progress towards realistic goals which are motivating and jointly developed with children and young people.

The Local Authority in collaboration with the Education Achievement Service (EAS) will provide a range of training and professional development programmes and information sharing forums for schools and other agencies in order to maintain and develop knowledge and skills to effectively support children and young people with additional learning needs (ALN). Further details can be found in section 10.

The aim is to ensure that the Local Authority:

- Incorporates processes and practice that adheres to the stipulations set out in the ALN Code of practice and the ALNET Act.
- Works together to deliver the best outcomes for children with additional learning needs.
- Support schools and settings to develop an inclusive and highly skilled universal provision.
- Support schools and settings to improve educational and inclusion opportunities.

- Attempts to raise achievement and attainment by removing barriers to learning.
- Ensures early identification and intervention for children and young people who have additional learning needs and establish coordinated approaches across services and settings that work.
- Increases physical and curricular access for all children and young people with additional learning needs.
- Promotes inclusive education in all educational and early years settings and colleges.
- Develops a fair and equitable system for providing resources and support to schools and settings to meet an array of additional learning needs.
- Builds on existing expertise and enhances the professional development of all staff working with children and young people with additional learning needs.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Person centred practice puts the child, child's parents or young person at the centre of decisions. The Local Authority, schools and settings will use a range of resources to gather relevant information and to inform actions to support learners with an additional learning need. The Local Authority has developed person centred templates in readiness for the move to Individual Development Plans.

Identifying ALN and ALP Needs and Provision

Additional learning needs processes are based on the premise that:

- the views, wishes and feelings of the child and the child's parent or the young person are central to the process;
- the child and the child's parent or the young person should be enabled to participate as fully as possible in decisions; and
- appropriate information and support are provided to enable participation in decision making.

Local Authority and school / settings paperwork reflects person centred approaches and information collated through person centred reviews forms the focus of decisions about additional learning needs.

Schools, Early Years Settings and LA Responsibilities

Schools and Early Years settings are responsible for operating in accordance with legislation and adhering to the ALN Code, recognising and responding to the diverse needs of their learners, while also offering a continuum of support and services to match those needs.

When it is brought to the attention of, or appears to, a maintained or non-maintained early years setting or school that one of its pupils (who does not have an Individual Development Plan (IDP) or Education Health Care (EHC) Plan) may have additional learning needs, these settings must follow the process outlined below: (different arrangements apply if pupils are dual registered, looked after, detained, an English resident without an EHC plan):

- Obtain child (or parents) consent to decide about whether the child has additional learning needs.

- Prepare an Individual Development Plan when the school considers the child has additional learning needs.
- Where the setting has determined that the child has additional learning needs, which calls for Additional Learning Provision (ALP) and it would not be reasonable for the setting to secure, they can refer the matter to the Local Authority responsible for the child or young person for support and consideration.

The Governing Body

The Governing Body must have regard to relevant guidance in the ALN Code when exercising functions under Part 2 of the Additional Learning Needs Act. The Governing Body, with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), will maintain Individual Development Plans (IDPs) and ensure appropriate Additional Learning Provision (ALP) for learners with Additional Learning Needs.

Senior Leadership Team (Schools)

The SLT will advise, support and challenge the systems and processes to identify and meet the needs of the learners. The SLT and Governors will work strategically to ensure the education setting is meeting its responsibilities under the additional learning needs Act, the additional learning needs Code and Act.

Additional Learning Needs Coordinator (ALNCo)

The additional learning needs coordinator, at a strategic/operational level, ensures the needs of all learners with additional learning needs are met within the education setting. The additional learning needs coordinator will either form part of the Senior Leadership Team or have a clear line of communication to the SLT in accordance with the ALN Code. The additional learning needs coordinator has responsibility for deploying and supporting staff and will be involved in decisions around budgets and resources to plan appropriate provision. The additional learning needs coordinator will ensure IDPs and other associated records are maintained and kept up to date and will have regard to the views, wishes and feelings of the child, the child's parent or the young person.

The additional learning needs coordinator will secure relevant services that will support the learner's ALP as required and this may involve liaising with specialist external services. The additional learning needs coordinator must also prepare, and review information required to be published by the governing body pursuant to the additional learning needs Code.

Teachers

Teachers are responsible for the day-to-day process of supporting every learner with additional learning needs. The class teacher will work closely with the additional learning needs coordinator to assess the child and to track child's progress in order to provide a differentiated learning programme. The class teacher will also make effective use of teaching assistants deployed to support learners.

Local Authority

Where it appears that a child or young person may have additional learning needs the LA **will** decide whether the child or young person has additional learning needs unless:

- an IDP is already being maintained for the learner;
- the LA has previously decided the issue and is satisfied that the child's needs have not changed materially since that decision and there is no new information which materially affects that decision;
- the LA is satisfied that the question of whether or not the child has additional learning needs is being decided by a Governing Body; and/or,
- the child is a young person who does not consent to the decision being made.

If the LA decides that a child or young person has additional learning needs the LA **will**:

- prepare and maintain an IDP,
or
- prepare an IDP and direct a Governing Body to maintain it,
or
- direct the Governing Body to prepare and maintain the plan.

Following such a direction the Governing Body **must** prepare and/or maintain the plan unless the young person does not give consent.

The circumstances in which the LA duty to maintain an IDP ceases; in the case of an IDP maintained by the LA for a child or young person, the local authority's duty to maintain the IDP ceases to apply in the following circumstances:

- the LA decides that the child or young person no longer has additional learning needs, and that decision has not been successfully challenged;
- in the case of a young person, the young person no longer consents to the IDP being maintained or, in the case of a child becoming a young person, does not consent to the IDP being maintained;
- the LA ceases to be responsible for the child (provided the child is not looked after) or young person - that is, if the child or young person ceases to be in the area of the Blaenau Gwent Borough;
- in the case of a child who is looked after by Blaenau Gwent LA, the person ceases to be a looked after child (for whatever reason, including because the child has become a young person) and the LA is not responsible for the person (i.e., the child is not in its area). Where another LA is responsible for the child or young person, the duty to maintain the IDP transfers to that LA;
- in the case of a child or young person who is a registered pupil at a maintained school in Wales, the LA will direct the school to maintain the plan;
- in the case of a young person who is enrolled as a student at an FEI in Wales, the FEI agrees to a request from the LA to become responsible for maintaining the IDP or the Welsh Ministers have determined that the FEI should maintain the plan;
- the child or young person becomes subject to a detention;
- in the case of a young person, the young person attains the age of 25, in which case the duty to maintain the IDP will cease at the end of the academic year in which the person attains that age;
- in the case of a young person who is neither a registered pupil at a maintained school in Wales nor enrolled as a student at an FEI in Wales, the LA decides that it is no longer necessary to maintain the IDP to meet the young person's reasonable needs for education or training.

Transferring an IDP Responsibilities:

Where a child or young person with an IDP maintained by a school transfers to another maintained school in Wales or to an FEI in Wales, responsibility for maintaining their IDP will usually transfer at the same time. Similarly, where a child or young person with an IDP maintained by Blaenau Gwent LA moves to another local authority's area, responsibility for maintaining the IDP will normally transfer between the local authorities.

Where a child or young person with additional learning needs becomes the responsibility of Blaenau Gwent LA, the LA will maintain the IDP if immediately before the child or young person became its responsibility, an IDP was being maintained for the child or young person by another local authority.

The LA will provide children, young people and others with information and advice about additional learning needs and the new system, and ensure that it is accessible for all who need it.

Decision-Making Processes:

Currently, the LA use multi-agency panels to moderate decisions in a consistent and robust manner. Evidence based decisions include;

- Whether to proceed with the full statutory assessment of additional learning needs.
- Whether to issue / amend Statements of Special Educational Needs.
- Whether to provide additional resources / provisions at School Action Plus.
- Whether a child requires access to a specialist placement (both in/out of the Blaenau Gwent Borough).
- To allocate Additional Learning Needs specialist transport. Edibility criteria can be found in Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Home to School and Post 16 Transport Policy.

The decisions are based on the written information received according to the criteria for Statutory Assessment / School Action Plus. In the context of the ALN reform Blaenau Gwent LA are revising processes and practices. This includes developing a fair and consistent approach in the form of an ALN Assessment Matrix which will support:

- Effective identification of additional learning needs
- Effective identification of interventions / provision appropriate to meet the identified need
- The identification of who has the duty to maintain the IDP
- Compliance of the additional learning needs and Tribunal Act 2018

This approach will apply to all children and young people aged 3-19 on roll at Local Authority maintained and grant-maintained schools. The system will be flexible and support learners' needs at all significant transition points. The matrix links robust identification of need to targeted provision/interventions which would support for children and young people, demonstrating a more efficient and effective use of resources. The purpose of the matrix is not to categorise or diagnose, but to identify the barriers to learning a child may be experiencing.

The LA has worked with colleagues across the South East Wales Consortia (SEWC) region to develop this as a regional approach, thereby allowing for consistency and coherence.

6. Partnership / Dispute Resolution

The LA is committed to working in partnership with parents /carers and values the contribution they can make to enable children and young people with additional learning needs achieve their potential. A parent independent partnership service is currently provided by SNAP Cymru.

SNAP Cymru's aim is to ensure families have access to information, advice and guidance in relation to the Additional Learning Needs of their children and young people so they can make appropriate, informed decisions. SNAP Cymru make sure that the views and wishes of children and young people are listened to and taken into consideration and they, along with parent's views, can inform and influence the development of local additional learning needs policy and practice. This service also has in place processes for avoiding and resolving disagreements (Dispute Resolution).

The LA also provides information and advice about additional learning needs and the additional learning needs system. The information and advice is provided in an impartial manner. In addition to working with parents / carers and SNAP, effective collaboration will be secured through active involvement with;

- LA teams including:
 - The Educational Psychology Service (EPS)
 - The Inclusive Practice Service (IPS) from Pen y Cwm Special School
 - Early Years Additional Learning Needs Lead Officer (EYALNLo)
 - LACE/CLA
 - Safeguarding in Education Lead
 - Youth Service
- Education Achievement Service (EAS)
- Gwent-wide Sensory and Communication Support Service (SENCom)
- Gwent Education Minority Ethnic Service (GEMS)
- Careers Wales
- Local Health Board
- Social Services

7. Safeguarding Children

Children and young people with ALN may be more vulnerable to issues such as bullying, emotional, sexual and physical abuse and neglect. All those working with children must be alert to these issues and their responsibilities in accordance with the Wales Safeguarding Procedures and Safeguarding in Education guidance.

Children and young people who have behavioural, emotional or social difficulties or who are at risk of disaffection or exclusion or who have physical medical difficulties may require a risk assessment to ensure their health, safety and well-being.

8. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The LA has a statutory duty to ensure the quality of educational provision, and as part of this to ensure that the needs of individual children / young people are met. In carrying out its responsibilities towards children with additional learning needs the LA will monitor how effectively schools and governing bodies fulfil their duties via:

- the Monitor, Challenge, Intervention and Support process undertaken by the Education Achievement Service (EAS) including scrutiny of school development plans in relation to ALN;
- Professional Discussions with all schools on an annual basis;
- Termly Team Around the School (TAS) meetings
- Progress against Estyn recommendations;
- Termly review of individual service areas provision and the effective use of its resources through the evaluation of Service Improvement Plans and against service standards and national & local performance indicators as well as impact evaluation of specialist staff visits;
- Self-evaluation; and,
- use of relevant data.

Through termly analysis of data, the LA will:
track vulnerable learners;

- monitor and evaluate the impact of interventions for an individual child, groups of children and at school level;
- monitor trends and identify emerging areas of need;
- monitor and evaluate the impact of additional funding, both delegated and centrally held on outcomes for children with ALN; and,
- target additional funding appropriately and identify future funding needs.

The LA will collate and share information in line with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (2018). The LA will keep Additional Learning Needs provision under review and will link their activity to action linked wider strategic duties including:

- The Schools Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013
- The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014
- The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

9. Training

Support / Training for Schools: the LA has developed a range of training / resources which have been designed to support schools including:

- ALN transformation and implementation.
- ALN training
- NQT training
- Assessment Matrix Tool
- Training and intervention provided by the Teams within Education and Inclusion Service (e.g., EPS, Inclusive Practice Service, ALN teams)
- EAS (Education Achievement Service) professional learning offer focuses on the 'universal provision' for vulnerable groups of learners in the eight areas

- Awareness of other training opportunities through signposting schools to relevant training opportunities. These include Communication and Intervention Service (ComIT), Gwent Education Minority Ethnic Service (GEMS), Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS).

APPENDICES

<u>Appendix 2.1</u>	Specialist Provision Details
<u>Appendix 2.2</u>	The Education Directorate - Additional Learning Needs Services
<u>Appendix 2.3</u>	Sources of Information
<u>Appendix 2.4</u>	Regional Principles and Practice Document

APPENDIX 2.1

Specialist Provision Guide

Provision	Contact Details
Pen y Cwm Special School (PMLD)	Strand Annealing Lane Ebbw Vale NP23 6AN Tel: 01495 357755
The River Centre 3-16 Learning Community (SEBD)	River Centre 3-16 Learning Community Pontygof, Ebbw Vale Blaenau Gwent NP23 5AZ
Abertillery Learning Community - Six Bells Primary Campus SNRB (Complex Needs)	Bryngwyn Road Six Bells Abertillery NP13 2PD Tel: 01495 212678
Coed y Garn Primary School SNRB (Complex Needs)	Parrot Row Blaina NP13 3AH Tel: 01495 290044
Glanhowy Primary School SNRB (ASD)	Coach Bach Tredegar NP22 4RW Tel: 01495 722312
Willowtown Primary School SNRB (Complex Needs)	Brynheulog Street Ebbw Vale NP23 6NJ Tel: 01495 302436
Ystruth Primary School SNRB (ASD)	East Pentwyn Blaina NP13 3XG Tel: 01495 290955
Abertillery Learning Community - Secondary Campus SNRB (Complex Needs)	Alma Street Abertillery NP13 1YL Tel: 01495 217121
Ebbw Fawr Learning Community SNRB (ASD)	Lime Avenue Ebbw Vale NP23 6GL Tel: 01495 354690

APPENDIX 2.2

List of Additional Learning Needs Services within Blaenau Gwent LA

Service	Email	Contact Number
ALN Team (Statutory Assessment)	TBC	01495 355443
Communication Intervention Team (ComIT)	TBC	01633 645468
Educational Psychology Service	TBC	01495 357890/1
Education Safeguarding	TBC	01495 355823
Education Welfare Service	TBC	TBC
GEMS	TBC	01633 851500
Gypsy Roma Traveller (GRT) Officer	rebecca.bevan@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk	TBC
Hearing Impairment Service	TBC	01633 645458
The Inclusion Service – Service Manager	julie.sambrook@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk	TBC
Inclusive Practice Service	TBC	01495 357841
School Admissions	TBC	01495 355493
Visual Impairment Service	TBC	01633 645420

APPENDIX 2.3

Sources of Information

Hyperlinks:

<https://gov.wales/additional-learning-needs>

<https://gov.wales/additional-learning-needs-and-education-tribunal-wales-act>

<https://gov.wales/the-additional-learning-needs-code-and-regulations>

[United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(1989\)](#)

[Estyn Thematic Report \(2020\). Knowing Your Children - Supporting Pupils with Adverse Childhood Experiences](#)

[Welsh Government \(2020\). Education in Wales: Our National Mission](#)

[Estyn Thematic Report \(2020\). 'Effective School Support for Disadvantaged and Vulnerable Pupils' – Case Studies of Good Practice](#)

[Welsh Government \(2018\). Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal \(Wales\) Act](#)

[DfE \(2010\). The Equality Act](#)

[Welsh Government \(2015\). Inclusion and Pupil Support](#)

[Rights, Respect, Equality Statutory Guidance for Governing Bodies of Maintained Schools \(2019\).](#)

[New Curriculum for Wales 2022](#)

APPENDIX 2.3

Principles and Expectations of School's and PRUs ALN Education Provision for Pupils with ALN and Disabilities

Nov 2020

Aims and Purpose of this Document

This document summarises the Local Authority's expectations of the support arrangements in mainstream educational settings for children and young people with additional learning needs (ALN)

The information contained in this document, produced in consultation with primary and secondary settings, sets out how schools and PRUs are expected to use delegated budgets to ensure that the needs of pupils with ALN are met.

Consultation with the LA Parent Forum has also taken place.

The purpose of this document is to create a shared understanding between schools, PRUs families and the local authority in respect of:

- improving progress and securing better outcomes for learners with ALN
- clarifying what parents can expect schools to provide
- a reference point for ensuring that requests for an LA to provide additional learning provision (ALP) are appropriate

Therefore, the LA can base its decision making on the evidence that schools and PRUs have made good efforts to apply the principles and person-centred processes above before reaching the decision to refer to the LA.

Key Aims and Principles of the Code

Aim

To support the creation of a fully inclusive education system where all learners are given the opportunity to succeed and have access to an education that meets their needs and enables them to participate in, benefit from, and enjoy learning

Principles

- a) **A rights-based approach** where the views, wishes and feelings of the child, child's parents/carers or young person are central to planning and provision of support.
- b) **Early identification, intervention and effective transition planning**
- c) **Collaboration** where all involved work together in the best interests of the child or young person
- d) **Inclusive education** supporting participation fully in mainstream education, wherever, feasible and a whole setting approach to meeting the needs of learners with ALN.
- e) **A bilingual system** where all reasonable steps are taken to deliver ALP in Welsh.

The LA has a duty to review the arrangements made by the authority and the governing bodies of maintained schools in its area for children and young people with additional learning needs, having regard to the additional learning provision that may reasonably be arranged by others. (Chapter 5 of the Code)

Principles for all professionals working with children and young people who have ALN

Alongside the expectations of all teachers identified within the Welsh Government professional standards for teachers, the following principles will be observed by all professionals working with children and young people who have ALN as stated in the Code.

“Maintained schools in Wales have a key role to play in identifying ALN and in delivering ALP to support learners with ALN. They are directly responsible for identifying and meeting the needs of the majority of their pupils who have ALN.”
ALN Mandatory Code (draft 2018)

The head teacher and school leaders

It is the role of the head teacher to:

- Advise the governors on policies to meet their statutory responsibilities under the ALN ET Act
- Work to agree the ALN Transformation policy and to implement the agreed vision and policy.
- Oversee all aspects of operational leadership and management.
- Ensure that the ALNCo has enough time and resources to carry out their duties. The Code recommends that ALNCos are most effective when they are a member of the senior leadership team or have a direct line of communication to the senior leadership team.

The role of the ALNCo:

- Ensuring all practitioners understand their responsibilities to children with ALN and understand the school's approach to identifying and meeting the needs of all pupils
- Ensuring there is an overview of all children who have ALN including their relevant stage of support
- Ensuring the close and continuing involvement of parents, and that their views inform action taken by the setting
- Liaising and make referrals to specialist professionals

The ALNCo should:

- Play an important role in the strategic development of ALN policy and provision in the school advising the leadership team of what is necessary regarding staff and resources.
- Have day-to-day responsibility for the operation of the ALN policy and coordination of specific provision made to support individual pupils with ALN, including those who have IDPs
- Be allocated enough time and resources to carry out these functions
- Have access to appropriate levels of administrative support and time away from teaching to enable the fulfilment of responsibilities
- Support staff with guidance and direct assistance in the identification and assessment of pupils with ALN
- Provide advice and guidance on suitable interventions and strategies
- Be involved in transition planning between schools and college
- Consider the views of children, young people and their families; ensuring that they are involved in discussions and decisions about their individual support
- Enable children, young people and their parents to participate in decision-making
- Collaborate with partners in education, health and social care to provide support
- Making high quality provision to meet the needs of children and young people
- Focus on inclusive practices and removing barriers to learning
- Provide ALN support that should be evidence based, informed by effective practice and personalised to the students.
- Endeavour to deliver ALP in Welsh if requested to do so.

In all schools teachers are:

- Responsible and accountable for the progress and development of all pupils in their class, including where support staff are involved
- Appropriately qualified and experienced
- Supported to gain skills and knowledge in areas that will improve their teaching and their support of child or young person with ALN
- Able to access support and guidance from the ALNCo in school

- Supported to access advice and training where needed
- Responsible for differentiating the curriculum to accommodate the needs of all pupils and students in the class
- Equipped with the skills to implement the assess, plan, do and review cycle effectively.
- Are aware of the needs of the pupil or student as necessary
- Have access and are familiar with planning documents, IDPs and pupil profiles.
- Clear about what is expected of them in relation to named pupils/students and groups of pupils/students
- Plan to implement a child or young person's individual targets into their teaching where the child or young person is in their teaching group.
- Demonstrate person-centred practice-person-centred practice puts the child, child's parent or young person at the centre of decisions.

Responsibilities of the governing body/management board:

- Have legal duties under the ALN ET ACT 2018; Equality Act 2010, and the ALN Code in relation to pupils with additional learning needs and disabilities
- Be clear about the arrangements for the admission of pupils with disabilities, the steps taken to prevent them being treated less favourably than others, the facilities provided to assist access, and their accessibility plans should be addressed through the school Strategic Equality Plan.
- There should be in place a Governor with specific oversight for the school's arrangements for ALN.
- Use their best endeavours and provide reasonable adjustments to make sure that a child with ALN or a disability gets the support they need – this means doing everything they can to remove barriers to learning. Through reviewing IDPs, they should consider what reasonable adjustments have been made to ensure fair and equal access to the curriculum. This may include staffing, timetable changes, adjustments to the physical environment, whilst also acknowledging that what matters most – and has the biggest impact – high quality teaching. (see Appendix 2)
- Work in partnership with the head teacher and school leaders to ensure the curriculum offered meets the needs of all learners and that there is a teaching and learning policy that is understood by all staff. It should reflect equalities legislation, accessibility requirements, and ALN Transformation.
- Ensure that children and young people with ALN and/or disabilities engage in the activities of the school alongside all pupils
- Ensure information is provided to parents when ALP for a pupil is made and that the provision made, is accurately recorded and kept up to date.
- Ensure that arrangements are in place in schools to support pupils at school with medical conditions, including Individual Health Care plans.
- Have a clear approach to identifying and responding to pupils with ALN and determine their approach to using their resources to support the progress of pupils with ALN.

- Ensure that a member of staff is designated as the ALNCo and that the ALNCo's key responsibilities are outlined and monitor how effectively they are carried out
- Ensure that the school's budgetary priorities reflect the needs of children with ALN, and they should assist staff in evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of ALN resourcing decisions within the school.

Teaching assistants:

Accordingly to recent research there is most impact on teaching and learning when teaching assistants clearly understood their role and knew exactly what they needed to do in order to help pupils make progress. Key to this is effective communication between teachers and TAs.

Adults support learning in the classroom by:

- Reducing children's anxieties, helping them to feel safe and secure in their classroom/school
- Being familiar with how the learner gains knowledge and by understanding the learners individualised targets
- Engaging and motivating learners to learn
- Assisting with pre-teaching, including on subject vocabulary, new concepts, early experience of practical activities
- Facilitating engagement and learning of learner in whole or small group learning activities
- Teaching daily programme of skills / concepts in fixed timetable periods, and monitored by teacher
- Classroom presence to refocus, encourage, explain, facilitate responses
- Supporting targeted subject areas, being prepared for what is to be taught and understanding the learning needs of the pupil/student
- Making sure transactional supports are consistently available e.g. Schedules, and within task check lists) this will help to increase independence and avoid over- reliance on adult support
- Monitoring the impact of any support provided.

Staff should be trained in the needs of the learner and understand how to:

- Communicate instructions
- Communicate new knowledge and concepts
- Provide opportunities for skills reinforcement and practice
- Recognise when a child is using behaviour to communicate
- Deliver specific programmes / interventions.

Parents and carers:

The ALN Code recognises that effective engagement with parents and carers has a clear impact on children reaching their potential.

Embedding parental involvement is based on extensive but often ignored evidence that greater parental involvement has a dramatic impact on

progression, attainment and wider outcomes as well as improved attendance and behaviour. This is especially relevant for children and young people with ALN who are already vulnerable learners.

The ALNCo and key pastoral staff should act as a communications bridge between their school, colleagues and parents and carers. Providing accurate and updated information from parents is an absolute pre-requisite. This is most effective in the context of a mutually trusting relationship between school and home.

To create the best partnerships there needs to be:

- A commitment to joint working and building the relationship between school staff and parents
- Opportunities for parents to communicate with the key staff on a regular basis- open channels of communication, whether that is face-to-face, phone or email

Provision Mapping

Support for children and young people with ALN begins with a range of provision that is available to all children and young people and becomes increasingly specific and personalised as the needs of the child/young person are identified as being long term, complex and exceptional. All schools, early years' settings and colleges are expected to admit and provide appropriate support to children and young people with ALN.

Each school/LA provision map is divided into 3 levels of provision:

- **Universal**
- **Targeted**
- **Specific**

It is expected that in almost all cases, earlier levels of provision will have been effectively implemented and evaluated before higher levels of the graduated approach are considered.

Expectations of School's and PRUs ALN Education Provision for Pupils with ALN and Disabilities

1. Identifying the particular ALN of children and young people

Schools will:

- Monitor the progress of all pupils through whole school data scrutiny processes
- Regularly review the ALN register and other processes used for identifying and supporting ALN pupils.
- Have clear processes for staff and parents/carers to raise concerns
- Provide teachers and TAs with comprehensive guidance around the identification processes
- Pay regard to advice and information from parents/carers, professionals and previous settings at transition points; liaising as necessary to continue the use of successful strategies and person-centred approaches
- Be able to distinguish between pupils who may need some targeted support through high quality teaching and pupils with an identified ALN that requires ALP
- Identify barriers to learning and know how to, or seek advice, so that the nature of each pupil's ALN can be identified and work to remove that barrier. Sometimes a pupil can have needs in more than one area which requires an individualised approach
- Have access to a range of appropriate screening and assessments in order to identify needs
- Maintain robust records so that evidence describing a pupil's needs can be gathered through the assess, plan, do, review cycle
- Consult with parents / carers when they are making additional learning needs provision for their child and have processes in place for them to provide feedback about provision
- When appropriate, seek advice from advisory services and outside agencies including the Educational Psychology Service, CAMHS, Speech and Language Service, Local Authority support services etc. in order to gain a better understanding of a pupil's needs

2. Consulting with parents

Parents know their child best and it is important that all professionals listen and understand when parents express concerns about them. They should also listen to and address any concerns raised by children and young people themselves.

Schools will:

- Have in place a transparent complaints procedure
- Have in place a robust annual review process that is underpinned by person centred planning through which aspirational outcomes are identified and appropriate provision is secured.
- Sign-post parents to services that provide independent advice and support

for ALN and disability, for example SNAP CYMRU; NYAS

- Provide or sign-post pupils and their parents/carers to sources of advice and information about matters relating to ALN and disability, for example, the LA web-site
- Be aware that a families and schools have the right to request an IDP. Families should feel able to tell their school if they believe their son/daughter has or may have ALN
- Inform parents when they are making additional learning needs provision for their child and have processes in place for engagement with pupils and their families to provide feedback on provision so that future provision is founded on the insights of families and pupils themselves
- Ensure parents/carers are fully aware of planned support and interventions and, where appropriate, plan to seek the involvement of parents/carers to reinforce and contribute to progress at home
- Ensure a clear date for reviewing progress is agreed and the parent/carer, pupil and teaching staff are clear about how they will help the pupil reach the expected targets or outcomes
- Ensure that pupils with ALN are included in 'whole school' mechanisms to capture pupil voice
- Develop parent consultation with the purposes of enabling families to play a role in developing and reviewing ALN provision. For example, feedback on annual review processes, transitions.
- Develop parent consultation with the purpose of providing families with information relating to ALN and disability

3. Securing the services, provision and equipment required by children and young people with ALN or disabilities

Schools will:

- Use their best endeavours to make sure that a pupil with an identified ALN receives the support they need from within the school's own delegated resources
- Understand how their duty to make reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010 translates into day-to-day practice
- Keep key indicators under review for ALN pupils, such as attendance, exclusion and progress so that the support of relevant services can be secured when necessary
- Know routes for referral for relevant education, health and care specialists in order to secure equipment and services for specific pupils in a timely manner
- Have knowledge of the expertise and training provided by support services and agencies so that it can be accessed on an individual pupil or whole school basis
- Seek further advice from advisory services and outside agencies in order to remove barriers to learning
- Understand the processes for accessing additional learning provision from

the LA

- Use IHPs, where appropriate, for those pupils with medical needs

4. Supporting disabled children and young people and those with ALN in moving between phases of education and preparing for adulthood and independent living

Schools will:

- Implement a coherent transition programme that priorities links with common feeder schools and takes a flexible approach to group and individual student needs so that planning can begin at the earliest stage
- Review their transition processes to take account of feedback from pupils, parent/carers and professionals
- Use an enhanced transition process to support pupils with ALN if required
- Pay regard to the LA Post 16 transition protocol so that local processes can be applied and evaluated consistently.
- Develop and implement an appropriate person-centred planning approach to all transitions between schools, key stages or phases so that the pupil and family are at the heart of the planning process
- Share advice and information from parents/carers, previous settings and supporting professionals, liaising as necessary to continue the use of successful strategies and approaches
- Provide or sign-post pupils and their parents/carers to impartial sources of advice and information, for example, SNAP Cymru; NYAS

5. Approaches to teaching, adaptations to the curriculum and the learning environment for children and young people with ALN or disabilities and additional learning support for those with ALN

Every school is required to meet the ALN of the children or young people that they support. Every teacher is accountable for the progress of the pupils within their class

Schools will:

- Ensure all pupils access good quality teaching which takes account of pupils' differing needs
- Ensure that a personalised approach is implemented for pupils with ALN if required
- Make appropriate use of their delegated budgets so that pupils with additional needs are supported as part of a whole school approach to securing and deploying resources
- Carry out regular monitoring of progress so that adaptations to the learning environment and/or teaching can be made
- Provide teachers and TAs with appropriate training and resources so that learning can be differentiated to match the pupil's level of learning
- Implement a consistent graduated approach to meeting pupil need. For example, by reviewing class teaching and access strategies before moving

on to develop a more individualised approach

- Provide ALNCoS with sufficient time to use their knowledge and understanding of areas of need to plan provision and to focus on interventions that are relevant and evidence-based
- Refer to the comprehensive range of examples of best practice within Local Authority, Consortia and national guidance documents
- Seek further advice from advisory services and outside agencies about removing barriers to learning so that individualised support programmes for more complex pupils can be put in place.

6. Securing expertise among teachers, teaching assistants, to support children and young people with ALN or disabilities – this should include continuing professional development for all staff

Schools will:

- Audit and review staff training needs on an annual basis so that relevant training can be planned into the school's CPD schedule
- Have clear systems in place for evaluating ALN provision and reviewing staff expertise through the schools review/quality assurance procedures. For example, through performance management processes; classroom observations, learning walks, book looks.
- Provide staff with information that describes effective strategies to use within their class and ensure staff are able to share best practice
- Embed the principle that 'All teachers are teachers of children with ALN'
- Provide sufficient time for the ALNCo to provide professional guidance to colleagues and contribute to wider professional development themes
- Ensure all staff (both teaching and non-teaching) have had training to develop knowledge of the areas of need and the nature of the difficulties linked to each area.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of relevant local and national guidance for example, the transition protocol, The Equality Act Advice for schools etc.
- Identify and develop specific teacher and TA knowledge through 'surgery' time or the opportunity to liaise with external professionals
- Access external training opportunities so that groups of staff can develop specific knowledge in order to meet the predominant need in a given cohort
- Identify on-going sources of training and development so that knowledge around specific needs can be embedded through a sustainable approach
- Develop and budget for a sustainable approach to succession planning for the ALNCo
- Ensure their ALNCo, if new to the role in a mainstream school, is given the opportunity to complete the National Middle Leadership Programme and the ALNCo Progression Pathway and is provided with adequate support to do so.

7. Enabling available facilities to be accessed by disabled children and young people and those with ALN (this could include ancillary aids and assistive technology, including Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC))

Schools will:

- Pay regard to duties outlined in the Equality Act (2010), specifically duties relating to strategic equality plan and accessibility planning, reasonable adjustments and the public sector equality duty
- Regularly review the impact of provision and resources secured through their delegated budgets to support children and young people with additional needs
- Implement a robust graduated approach which includes a clear rationale for access to specific resources
- Understand the processes for accessing additional learning provision from the LA to meet the needs of the most complex pupils
- Appropriately follow advice provided by supporting professionals, including the appropriate use of resources provided to the school for groups or individual pupils
- Ensure that referrals are made to relevant agencies in order to ensure that progress towards outcomes in IDPs can be secured where additional resources and facilities are required

8. Assessing and reviewing pupils' and students' progress towards outcomes, including how schools work with parents and young people in doing so

Schools will:

- Ensure that they have procedures in place for consulting and working with parents/carers
- Track and monitor pupil progress on a regular basis in line with whole reporting processes
- Set up / review 'additional to' or 'different from' **ALP** in the light of information gathered through the assess, plan, do review process
- Identify key outcomes, which are aspirational, along with steps to be taken that will support achievement of them
- Ensure robust use of school / setting data to identify and monitor progress of pupils with ALN
- Ensure that every teacher is responsible for pupil progress in their own class and feeds into wider school processes that monitor pupil progress
- Ensure that high expectations are in place and progress is considered against all pupils with similar starting points
- Have clear monitoring processes in place, including scrutiny of pupil books and work, ensuring that all staff are clear about what is expected and adjust practice accordingly
- Evaluate the impact of interventions through pre- and post- assessment data

analysis

- Gather pupil feedback as part of the process to review interventions and provision
- Hold regular parent meetings, with the child or young person, as appropriate, to discuss pupil progress
- Regularly review and evaluate the impact of ALP on the progress, attainment and well-being of ALN pupils

9. Assessing and evaluating the effectiveness of the education provision the school, PRU and local authority makes for children and young people with ALN or disabilities

Schools will:

- Regularly review and evaluate the impact of ALP on the progress, attainment and well-being of ALN pupils
- Review attendance and exclusion data for ALN pupils
- Monitor the impact and success of specific interventions through comparison of pre and post intervention data
- Use the feedback from ALN self-reflection framework; LA/EAS reviews and Estyn inspections to inform their evaluation of provision
- Engage with Regional and LA development work for example, network opportunities, cluster developments; new initiatives and LA ALNCo forums

10. Activities that are available to disabled children and young people and those with ALN, including physical activities and extra-curricular activities

Schools will:

- Pay regard to duties outlined in the Equality Act (2010), specifically duties relating to strategic equality planning including accessibility planning, reasonable adjustments and the public sector equality duty
- Promote the health and wellbeing of each pupil by supporting them to access appropriate extra-curricular activities
- Ensure that children and young people with ALN engage in and are included in the activities of the school alongside pupils who do not have ALN through monitoring ALN pupils engagement with extra-curricular activities
- Promote positive outcomes in the wider areas of personal and social development and ensure that the approaches used are based on the best possible evidence and are having the required impact
- Review the schools equality plan on an annual basis and renew the plan every 4 years.
- Raise awareness about opportunities for community involvement for families of pupils with ALN

11. LA quality assurance and support

The Local Authority will, through quality assurance, ensure that the processes described above are in place. This will include:

- Supporting schools by assessing and evaluating the effectiveness of education provision
- Supporting schools through LA and regional development work, including ALNCo forums
- Review school provision maps and ALN self-reflection framework on an annual basis and identify areas of good practice and areas for development.
- Ensuring annual reviews for pupils with IDPs take place and are of high quality
- Delivering the National Middle Leadership qualification in partnership with the EAS
- Supporting ALNCoS to access the Welsh Government ALNCo Progression Pathway
- Supporting schools in developing effective ALN provision
- Reviewing and updating the LA arrangements for meeting the needs of ALN pupils, including updating the LA provision map.
- Offering central and school-based training
- Responding to feedback from training and support to further enhance practice.

Appendix 3

Additional Policies

2022

Education Other than at School (EOTAS) Policy

August 2022



Cyngor Bwrdeisdref Sirol

Blaenau Gwent

County Borough Council

Contents

	Page Nos
Introduction and Context	3
Legal Background	3
Excluded Pupils	4
Full-time and appropriate provision	4
Supporting Learners with Healthcare Needs	5
Pupils who are hard to place	7
Responsibilities	10
Partnership Working	11
Funding	11
Monitoring and Evaluation	11
Links to other key strategies/key documents	12

Introduction and Context

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council believes that for most children in Blaenau Gwent the best place to undertake their education is in their local mainstream school. It is recognised that schools have to respond to a diverse range of pupil need and they do require help and support from other agencies, including the Local Authority. There will, however, be a small but significant group of children who cannot be educated in school. Children sometimes require education outside school because of illness, injury or clinically defined mental health issues. In addition, there are a number of children with behavioural issues. The situations of these children and young people will vary widely but they all run the risk of a reduction in self-confidence and educational achievement.

Where a child is not electively home educated, a key priority for the Local Authority is returning these children to school as soon as they are able to do so, therefore EOTAS provision should not be seen as a long-term solution.

This policy details the arrangements through which the Local Authority meets these requirements.

It should be noted that children and young people with statements of Special Educational Needs/Individual Development Plans are overrepresented in EOTAS provision.

Legal Background

The Education Act 1996: Section 19 states that. "Each local education authority shall make arrangements for the provision of suitable education at school or otherwise than at school for those children of compulsory school age who, by reason of illness, exclusions from school, or otherwise, may not for any period receive suitable education unless such arrangements are made for them".

Excluded Pupils

For a fixed-period exclusion of more than fifteen school days, the governing body must arrange suitable full-time education for any pupil of compulsory school age. This provision must begin no later than the sixteenth day of the exclusion. Schools will need to contact the local authority to start discussions as soon as possible so that suitable education can be considered.

For permanent exclusions, in compliance with the Education and Inspections Act 2006, the Local Authority must arrange suitable full-time education for the pupil to begin no later than the sixteenth day of the exclusion.

In addition, where a pupil has a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) or a Local Authority Individual Development Plan (IDP) plan the Local Authority needs to ensure that an appropriate full-time placement is identified in consultation with the parents who retain their right to express a preference for a

maintained school that they wish their child to attend or make representations for a placement in any other school.

Excluded learners should only be educated outside mainstream schools where there are significant problems that are better addressed in a different environment. Where this is the case, the Vulnerable Pupil Panel will discuss the learner and consider the most appropriate provision. This could be a turn-around placement at the River Centre, or a bespoke package where cost-effectiveness, quality and provision is appropriate to the learner's needs.

Full-time and Appropriate Provision

Part-time provision is often inadequate to meet the educational needs of excluded learners and to ensure continuity of education. It also leaves some of these learners unsupervised for significant periods of a normal school day. The LA, therefore, aims for all learners to receive full-time education 15 days after being excluded, either at another school or, where necessary an alternative provision. Where learners may have become so disengaged from education, or their current circumstances may be such, that a rapid reintroduction to full-time education is unlikely to prove successful a plan will be drawn up specifying how the move to full-time education is to be achieved.

Full-time means that the amount of supervised education should mirror that provided by mainstream schools in the area. An average school week might amount to some 25 hours; so excluded learners should receive around five hours of supervised education or other activity a day. A full timetable for an excluded learner may, however, look significantly different from that provided in a mainstream school.

Supporting Learners with Healthcare Needs

In 2018 Welsh Government published statutory Guidance – 'Supporting Learners with Healthcare Needs'. It provides comprehensive guidance to local authorities and related services. Roles and responsibilities, including those of the local authority and school, are outlined in detail. This policy should be read alongside this guidance and any future relevant guidance.

The LA is responsible for ensuring that pupils with health needs are not at home or in hospital for more than 15 working days without access to education: this may be consecutive or cumulative with the same medical condition. If the pupil is a patient at hospital, they will usually receive education on the ward from the onsite Hospital Teacher as soon as they are fit enough to do so. Effective liaison with medical professionals will ensure that there is a minimum of delay in starting appropriate support for those pupils not admitted to hospital.

The LA will arrange suitable education for children of compulsory school age who, because of illness, would otherwise not receive suitable education.

The LA is responsible for ensuring that there is a named senior officer with responsibility for the provision of education for children who are unable to attend school because of medical needs. In this Local Authority the officer is the Service Manager - Inclusion.

Educational provision for pupils who are physically ill or injured is the responsibility of all schools and education services. Provision for tuition is made through the River Centre. Where the child has a mental health condition, which requires a small group setting this will be provided at Ty Afon if the entry criteria is met. It is important to note that Ty Afon is not a dedicated EOTAS provision.

The current entitlement of medical tuition is as follows:

- Pupils who have not yet reached statutory school age i.e. the beginning of the term after the 5th birthday is achieved - no provision is made
- Pupils, from the beginning of the term after the 5th birthday is achieved, to the end of Year 10, 1 hour per day (up to 5 hours per week)
- Pupils in Years 11, 2 hours per day (up to 10 hours per week)

The provision may include use of more than one teacher, on-line learning, cluster groups etc. Clear lines of communication operate to ensure that a pupil absent from school due to medical needs for more than 15 school days consecutively is not left without education.

Parents and pupils will be consulted before teaching begins. In order to support reintegration back into school at the earliest opportunity and reduce isolation, tuition will only take place in the home as an exception and may include an element of on-line learning.

Children receiving education outside of school should do so in the most appropriate setting to their needs. Pupils will be taught in groups wherever possible according to their medical needs to provide a more rounded education and social experience.

Teaching at home will only be carried out if there is an agreed "named adult" also in attendance and the appropriate risk assessment identifies safe practice for all. On-line tuition will be provided where appropriate, including the establishment of on-line links to the pupil's school to support social inclusion and maintain friendship groups. The pupil's experience will be an extension of their school experience and will seek to maintain their studies and social contacts with the schools (as their medical condition allows).

Close liaison and sharing of information will be maintained by the pupil's school with the pupil's, school and other key professionals, which will include some or all the following, medical professional, Educational Psychologists, Education Welfare Officers, Tuition Service and Careers Wales.

Provision will be reviewed on a half termly basis and will be integral for long term planning for the education provision for the child. Where the child has a mental health condition and a pupil has been offered a place at Ty Afon, the provision will be a full-time placement, initially for 5 weeks with fortnightly reviews.

Transport will be provided to the educational setting if outside of the home in line with the LA's Home to School Transport Policy.

The pupil's experience will be an extension of their school experience and will seek to maintain their studies and social contacts with the schools (as their medical condition allows).

Close liaison and sharing of information will be maintained by the pupil's school with the pupil's teacher from the school and other key professionals, which will include some or all the following, medical professional, Educational Psychologists, Education Welfare Officers, Tuition Service and Careers Wales.

It is recognised that, whenever possible, pupils should receive their education within their mainstream school and the aim of the provision will be to reintegrate pupils back into mainstream education at the earliest opportunity as soon as they are well enough. Arrangements for reintegration will be discussed with school staff and each child will have a personalised reintegration plan.

The Tuition Service and Ty Afon should make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantage faced by children with disabilities, and plan to increase the children's access to their school and their curriculum. They will also maintain good links with the child's home school and, through regular reviewing, involve them in decisions concerning the educational programme and pupil progress. This should also include social and emotional needs, for example ensuring that learners feel fully part of their school community, are able to stay in contact with classmates, and have access to the opportunities enjoyed by their peers.

The pupil's school should be aware of its continuing role in the child's education whilst they are not attending. For example, through providing relevant assessment information and liaising with the relevant Tuition service or Ty Afon staff over planning and examination course requirements where appropriate and ensuring that there is a named teacher within school who can co-ordinate and support these links.

The pupil's school must also work closely with the provider to prepare Key Stage 4 pupils for their transition into post 16 education, employment, or training – this would be under the umbrella of careers guidance.

All pupils will remain on roll of their home school and the prime responsibility for their education lies with that school. The process to refer to Ty Afon or the Tuition service is via the Vulnerable Pupil Panel.

The panel paperwork is sent to the Senior Education Welfare Officer by the school with the attached medical advice. The advice confirming that a pupil is medically unfit for school must be completed by a Community Paediatrician, Consultant or Child and Adolescent Mental Health Consultant. Once the referral has been received the Local Authority will work with the pupil's school to put appropriate education in place within the 15 days as stated in the WG guidance.

As soon as educational support via the relevant route has been agreed, schools are required to provide baseline assessment information and curriculum plans to

inform the planning of educational provision. This information, along with advice from medical professionals, will ensure that the education provided is effectively matched to the child or young person's unique needs.

The education provided should be tailored to the learner's individual educational needs and the impact of their medical condition on their ability to access education. Use of baseline assessment information from the home school will inform individual education plans, which should be suitable and flexible enough to be appropriate to the learner's needs. The nature of the provision should also reflect the demands of what can be a changing or fluctuating medical condition.

Schools are responsible for monitoring the quality of the provision for the individual learner e.g., through regular reviewing. The learner should, where available, have access to IT equipment and to the school's intranet and internet. However, this will not be used in isolation and should complement face to face education.

Pupils who are Hard to Place

Sometimes children can find themselves without a school place during the year, for example, because their personal circumstances are such that they have had to move into the local authority or are looked after children. In some cases, these children may also exhibit challenging behaviour. (Please refer to Blaenau Gwent's Admission Guidance and Hard to Place protocol for further information). Where children meet the criteria, they will be referred into the Vulnerable Pupil Panel for further discussion. Where it is deemed that a mainstream placement is not the most appropriate provision for the child tuition will be provided, whilst further assessments are completed.

Areas of Responsibility

Schools

Notifying the Education Welfare Officer if a pupil is likely to be away from school due to medical needs for longer than 15 school days; making an appropriate referral to the Vulnerable Pupil Panel and remaining responsible for:

- producing a plan with clear targets for each half terms learning incorporated in half
- termly work programmes in core curriculum subjects which the pupil would normally be studying in accordance with statutory requirements
- schemes of work in each subject
- setting and marking work
- resources
- examination entry fees
- planning for National Tests
- assessment of course work
- career interviews
- work experience placements
- informing all other agencies of any alterations to the agreed plan
- Providing appropriate support for reintegration at the earliest opportunity.

Tuition responsibility

- supports schools in producing a medical plan which will include arrangements for the delivery of a broad, balanced and appropriate curriculum, homework and marking
- ensures clear lines of communication between all agencies and particularly ensures parents are informed about whom to contact in respect of education provision
- sends a half termly report to the pupil's school and the LA, outlining the pupil's progress and achievements
- works with the Education Welfare Service to ensure good attendance whilst receiving teaching outside of school and if necessary, making the appropriate referral requesting a home visit
- completes attendance records which will be sent to the pupil's school
- attends review and reintegration meetings
- ensures that teachers receive appropriate continuing professional development
- liaises with appropriate agencies

Partnership Working

It is essential that, for pupils with medical needs, there is effective partnership working between education, health and other agencies. Medical / Healthcare Plans are an effective tool to ensure that the pupil's education is not compromised by interim arrangements because of the pupil's medical needs.

Funding

While the pupil remains on roll at the school, the LA will withdraw from the school the funding linked to that pupil, on a daily basis, consistent with the number of days that the pupil is in receipt of medical tuition and that funding is then passed to the tuition service.

Monitoring and Evaluation

For pupils on the roll of a school, the school is responsible for monitoring the progress of the pupil's education through regular liaison with the tutor. Schools should also review their provision for vulnerable pupils through their own school self-evaluation.

In the case of children on bespoke packages, the LA will be responsible for quality assuring the quality of the provision. The LA should ensure an appropriate level of insurance is in place to cover the setting's activities in supporting learners with healthcare needs. The level of insurance should appropriately reflect the level of risk. Additional cover may need to be arranged for some activities, e.g. off-site activities for learners with particular needs.

Where EOTAS services are commissioned from private providers the LA will have a set of guidelines regarding the education, safeguarding and wellbeing responsibilities they will be expected to fulfil. The LA reporting will be responsible for undertaking all necessary checks to ensure they are satisfied that the organisation has met their requirements. Once the local authority has undertaken these checks, the Vulnerable Pupil Panel can agree the organisation's 'approved' status. A database should be made available to all maintained schools within the local area.

Once an EOTAS provider has been entered onto the LA's database as 'approved', the local authority will have a responsibility to regularly monitor the provision available to ensure that the quality of the provision available, and all necessary safeguarding precautions, remain suitable.

Links to other strategies / key documents

- Welsh Government - Inclusion and Pupil Support 203/2016
- Public Health Wales – Report 1 ACES
- Estyn – Happy and Healthy (2019)
- Estyn – Education other than at school (2016)
- Public Policy Institute for Wales: Promoting Emotional Health, Well-being, and
- Resilience in Primary Schools 2016
- Wellbeing of Future Generations Act
- Additional Learning Needs Act (ALNET) (2018)
- Shared Ambitions (2019)
- Positive Relationships and Behaviour Strategy (2022)
- Wellbeing Strategy (2020)
- Inclusion and ALN Strategies (2022)
- Managed Moves Policy (2022)
- Elective Home Education Protocol (2022)
- Safeguarding – BG Keeping Learners Safe Policy (2022)

Traveller School Attendance Guidance

August 2022



Cyngor Bwrdeisdref Sirol

Blaenau Gwent

County Borough Council

Introduction

A number of different groups are covered by the generic term Traveller – Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers', Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers'.

The Education Act 1996 and the Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 make statutory provision for all of these groups.

Children of Traveller groups, whose families do not travel, are expected to register at a school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly once registered at school.

However, many Traveller families will travel for work purposes. Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council has issued this guidance to support schools with clarity around attendance and registration of Traveller pupils.

School attendance regulations.

Section 444(6) Education Act 1996, gives parents a defence in which they cannot be found guilty of a school attendance offence, provided that the child is of no fixed abode and:

- a) parents are engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place, and
- b) the child has attended at a school as a registered pupil as regularly as the nature of that trade or business permits, and
- c) if the child has attained the age of six, that he or she has made at least 200 attendances during the period of 12 months ending with the date on which the
- d) proceedings were instituted.

Registration Codes.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 provide the following registration guidance.

When should the T code be used?

On days when a pupil from a Gypsy, Roma or Traveller (GRT) family is known to be out of the area for work purposes and is not in educational provision, schools can use the T code to record the absence.

Parents should make sure they let the school know in advance when they are going to be travelling and when they expect to return. This enables the child's attendance and absence to be recorded accurately, their safety and well-being to be monitored and appropriate distance learning work to be set by the school. The term 'travelling' means travelling as part of the parents' trade or business that requires them to travel from place to place. It does not mean travelling as part of a holiday.

The T code can only be used if the child is travelling for work purposes with their parents, not with any other relatives.

The use of the T code to authorise a pupil's absence is at the discretion of the headteacher.

D code

The law allows for dual registration of pupils at more than one school. To help ensure continuity of education for GRT children it is expected that the child(ren) should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling. Where a GRT pupil is travelling and attending another school the pupil should be dual-registered using D code. The child remains on the D code until the subsidiary school informs the base school they have left and are off roll, or until they return to the school full time.

C code

Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Schools should consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

O code

Where GRT children are registered pupils at a school and are known to be residing at a site (official or otherwise) or in a house and are not attending school, the absence must be investigated in precisely the same way as that for any other pupil. If the reason for the absence is not known, it must be recorded as unauthorised.

Apart from travelling for work purposes, Gypsies and Travellers participate in events and occasions that are of particular significance to them, e.g. Appleby show/horse fairs. Extended family and religious events such as weddings and christenings or economic gatherings such as horse fairs will draw together extended family groups and reinforce communal identity. Gypsies and Travellers put high value on extended family responsibilities so families may move to care for sick relative or a bereaved family member.

If a school approves leave of absence, the school needs to make it clear the days that are authorised and from what time that approval takes place.

What actions should a school undertake when a GRT child does not return to school after travelling?

If a child/ young person does not return to their base school after travelling the school should:

- Make regular attempts, beginning on the first day of any unexplained absence to contact the pupil's parents either by telephone or text messaging. Every effort to locate and contact the family must be taken.
- Contact the GRT access and attendance officers who will make every effort to visit the family and ascertain when the child will be returning to school (contact details below).
- Contact any other school where the pupil or their siblings are known to attend while they were away.
- For pupils known to be at risk or where safeguarding is a concern the school should contact social care.

- If despite these efforts the pupil's absence continues and his/her whereabouts remains unknown where a pupil has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days' school must contact the Education Welfare Service in line with the CME Policy.

Distance learning and parent held education records.

When it is known that a family is going travelling the school should supply a Parent Held Education record, to the family. Parent held records can be downloaded from the National Association of Teachers for Travellers website at <http://www.natt.org.uk/parent-held-education-record-book>

The school should complete the relevant sections before handing it to the family. This record enables swift transfer of important information, including base school contact details, between dual registered educational settings. It can also serve as a record when children are travelling with distance learning materials.

Clarifying Guidance

Schools must not remove Traveller children from the school register when they are travelling for occupational purposes and have stated their intention to return. It is good practice for schools with registered Traveller pupils to ensure that the guidance in this document is written into the school's attendance policy and that the guidance is explained to parents. Schools may differentiate Traveller absence statistics for school attendance evaluation purposes in the school's self-evaluation form.

Estyn

Estyn's published guidance discusses how school absences of Traveller children is managed, particularly ensuring that the school can demonstrate that:

- the registration codes are used correctly
- it is strategic and proactive in communicating with Traveller parents about their travelling patterns on a regular basis
- it is strategic and proactive in ensuring excellent attendance when the children are not travelling
- it provides distance learning materials in accordance with good practice
- it provides Travelling families with the parent held education record before they travel
- it includes specific guidance for Travellers in the school's attendance policy and ensures the policy is accessible to parents
- it evaluates its provision for narrowing the gap in attendance for Traveller children in the school self-evaluation form
- it evaluates its provision for narrowing achievement gaps for Traveller children in the school self-evaluation form.

POLICY FOR THE EDUCATION OF PREGNANT SCHOOL GIRLS AND SCHOOL AGE PARENTS

DRAFT

August 2022



Cyngor Bwrdeisdref Sirol

Blaenau Gwent

County Borough Council

Contents

	Page Nos.
Introduction	1
The legislative framework	1
The Equality Act 2010	1
The Responsibilities of the Local Authority	1
Child Protection	2
The Responsibilities of Schools	2
School attendance	3
Supporting young parents	4
Childcare	4
Risk assessment	5

Introduction

This policy has been developed to support pregnant schoolgirls and teenage parents in continuing their education. It outlines the responsibilities of the local authority and schools and the need to ensure adequate support and safeguarding arrangements and child protection procedures are in place. It is essential that all agencies work together to provide a co-ordinated support package for the young person.

The legislative framework:

This policy is cognisant of the 2016 Welsh Government Pupil Support and Inclusion Guidance as well as the Protocol from All Wales Child Protection Procedure which in accordance with the Sexual Offences Act 2003 states that:

- Children under the age of 13 are of insufficient age to give consent to sexual activity;
- For young people aged between 13 and 16 whilst mutually agreed, non-exploitive sexual activity between teenagers does take place, the age of consent should still remain at 16. This acknowledges that this group of young people is still vulnerable, even though they do not view themselves as such; and,
- For young people over the age of 16 but under the age of 18 consideration needs to be given to sexual exploitation and abuse of power and where appropriate a referral needs to be made.

In any of the above circumstances a member of staff receiving the disclosure should not promise to maintain confidentiality and should share the information with the schools Designated Safeguarding Officer who will then determine the most appropriate course of action, which in the case of children under the age of 13 will involve an automatic child protection referral.

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 removed the exemption that previously applied to schools about bringing discrimination cases on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity. This means that pupils should not be excluded because of their pregnancy or be required to study at home or in an alternative provision when they wish to remain in school. Pupils must also be allowed to return to school once they have had their babies.

The responsibilities of the local authority

The local authority has a statutory duty to provide suitable education for all pupils who reside in the local authority and ensure all learners are kept safe. This includes pregnant schoolgirls and young parents.

Child Protection

In line with the Keeping Learners Safe (Wales) Safeguarding Procedures: When a girl under the age of 13 is known to be pregnant, an immediate referral to Social Services **MUST** be made.

Any staff member in a school setting who becomes aware that a girl is pregnant must inform the school's Designated Safeguarding Officer who will determine the most appropriate course of action and ensure appropriate support and safeguarding arrangements are in place. Further advice may be sought from the Safeguarding in Education Manager, Sarah Dixon (01495 356016 / 07815 005241).

Any professional in any learning setting in Blaenau Gwent must not assure confidentiality to a young person, under the age of 18. Appropriate safeguarding and child protection procedures must take precedence. The duty of confidentiality is not absolute and must not be assured or guaranteed.

Any decisions regarding disclosure must be justified according to the particular facts of the case and guidance and documented accordingly. Advice should be sought in cases of doubt from Social Services, Information, Advice and Assistance team.

The Responsibilities of the Schools

When a school becomes aware that a pupil on their roll is pregnant, they should follow the Child Protection guidance and safeguarding arrangements as set out in this policy. The school must also make sure that the pupil is made aware of local services and how to access them.

The school should inform the school's Education Welfare Officer so that appropriate support can be put in place. This support could include counselling, youth service projects or Families First. The head teacher will ensure that the pupil is able to continue with their education and that teachers and other pupils deal with the pregnancy sensitively.

A meeting should be arranged in school to complete a risk assessment, to develop a pre- and post-natal plan and look at what multi-agency support might be needed. This may include counselling if the young mum wants to talk about her situation and options. Awareness is needed of the reaction of other pupils to the pregnancy and the support structure that may be needed for the young mum regarding this. Childcare arrangements should form part of the meeting. The risk assessment will need to be reviewed every trimester.

The Youth Service can support the young mum using the Baby Think It Over (BTIO) programme to help develop the young mum's confidence and skills (also dads). Other ways in which the Youth Service could provide support should also be explored.

It is good practice for schools to identify a designated person to have responsibility for school age parents so that they can oversee the young person's educational and pastoral support needs. This could be the Designated

Officer for Safeguarding in the setting. It should be noted that pregnancy is not a reason for exclusion.

School Attendance

The pregnant schoolgirl is expected to attend school as regularly and punctually as her pregnancy allows as she is still a child of compulsory school age. Where necessary the pupil should be allowed out of class to rest during the day.

Pregnant schoolgirls and expectant young fathers are entitled to attend ante-natal classes. These absences should be authorised, and code 'C' must be used for registration purposes.

A schoolgirl who becomes pregnant is entitled to up to 18 weeks authorised absence to cover the time immediately before and after the birth. It would also be reasonable to authorise two weeks' paternity leave for the expectant father following the birth. Code 'C' must be used for registration purposes for both young mum and dad.

The school should consider how they can best support the pupil's education during the period of maternity leave, for example by sending work home.

After the period of maternity leave, the young mother should return to the school at which she is on roll. There may be instances when it is agreed, in consultation with the pupil and her parents/carers that a return to mainstream education would not be in her best interests. In this situation the school are advised to seek guidance from the Inclusion Service.

Breastfeeding has a strong protective effect on the health of the mother and baby. It is important that schools support the student's choice to breastfeed. If the childcare is close to the school, the pupil should be allowed to leave at agreed times or arrangements made for the baby to be brought into school. The school should identify a private area to enable the student to express milk and provide suitable facilities to store milk during the school day.

Young parents are also entitled to some time off to care for their baby in the case of illness. Absence in this instance should be classified as 'authorised' for the mum or the dad. However, should this be an ongoing issue it would be advisable to contact the allocated EWO to discuss what support is available.

Supporting Young Parents

Schools should be supportive of both parents, acknowledging the additional needs that school age fathers and fathers-to-be have. In some cases, the parents may attend the same school. Schools may need to consider offering counselling or additional support to the father as appropriate.

Childcare

The availability of childcare facilities should be considered when considering options. Lack of appropriate or affordable childcare provision can prove to be a significant barrier to participation in education. The Family Information Service can provide advice to the young parents about accessing childcare. Families where both grandparents are working, or where a lone grandparent works, may be eligible for the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit for the childcare of their grandchild while they are claiming child benefit for that child. Further information about Working Tax Credit is available by calling 0345 300 3900.

Provided that appropriate education and free childcare facilities are available, any pupil who still fails to attend education will be liable to the same legal action as any other pupil. Where there are childcare problems, the young parent should contact the designated Education Welfare Officer to see whether there are alternative educational arrangements that could be made.

Wherever possible, pregnant schoolgirls and young parents will continue their education in mainstream settings. However, where there are medical or psychological difficulties preventing this then an alternative placement or part-time education will be considered.

Appendix 1

School Risk Assessment - Example

To be completed by schools educating a pregnant schoolgirl
Extra-curricular school visits and events necessitate a separate risk assessment.

Young parent name:	Tutor group:	Estimated date of delivery:
Young parent lead:	Risk assessment lead:	Current planned maternity leave date:
Risk assessment date:	Review date:	Review date:
Emergency contact numbers: Parent/Guardian emergency contact number 1 – Parent/guardian emergency contact number 2 –		
Pregnancy and coronavirus guidance: The coronavirus environment and official guidance is constantly evolving. Please see the latest NHS pregnancy and coronavirus guidance to inform your risk assessing. https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/people-at-higher-risk/pregnancy-and-coronavirus/ Your workplace risk assessment should already consider any risks to female employees of Childbearing age and, in particular, risks to new and expectant mothers. As part of your risk Assessment, you should consider whether adapting duties and/or facilitating home working may be Appropriate to mitigate risks. It is recommended that schools follow the same principles for pregnant pupils, in line with their wider Health and safety obligations. From week 28 if school are unable to offer a separate room for the pupil to work in, remote learning should be offered. If it is felt that this would be unsuitable due to additional learning needs then an IDP needs to be completed and forwarded to the Inclusion service, along with a current risk assessment.		
Additional Notes		

Activity or Risk	Hazard	Control Measures In place	Further Controls Measures required Y/N
Manual handling of equipment and school books/bag.	Excessive manual handling increases the potential for postural issues to arise. Risk may increase as the pregnancy progresses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pregnant schoolgirl should take particular care when moving or carrying any loads and should not presume that she is capable of moving equipment "as normal". - Reduce manual handling tasks where possible and alter the way the task is done to minimise fatigue and reduce physical stress. - Provide a locker to reduce the need to carry heavy loads. - These measures are especially important from the 28th week of pregnancy onwards. 	N
<p>Exposure to shocks, vibration, sudden movements.</p> <p>Risk of impact injuries, falls and being knocked over.</p>	<p>Regular exposure to shocks and vibrations can lead to health complications for the unborn child.</p> <p>Impact injuries, falls and being knocked over can lead to health issues for the pregnant schoolgirl and her unborn child.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Workstations to be assessed taking the schoolgirl's need for more space into account. - Pregnancy pass (or similar more discrete pass if appropriate) issued permitting schoolgirl to leave class five minutes early to avoid congestion in corridors and to avoid queueing for lunch. - Agreed quiet space can be accessed during break and lunch to avoid congested social areas. - Contact sports ceased. No new sports, not already undertaken before pregnancy, to be started in PE. 	N
School activities causing physical fatigue.	<p>Fatigue caused by excessive physical exertion can lead to significant health issues for the unborn child.</p> <p>Fatigue caused by over exerting during P.E lessons or walking around a large school site with urgency and multiple flights of stairs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In discussion with the schoolgirl, adjustments to the length of school day and lessons undertaken should be under regular review. - Seating to be provided where possible and additional rest breaks should be considered. 	N

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Access to food and drink between lessons for regular snacking, a bottle of water accessible during lessons. - The amount and type of exercise a pregnant schoolgirl is able to undertake within P.E. lessons to be determined by the schoolgirl in collaboration with her P.E. teacher or identified mentor. - Pregnancy pass (or similar) issued to allow schoolgirl to leave class five minutes early so she can take her time and not rush around the school site. - Consider if a lift pass would be appropriate. 	
Using chemical agents during science lessons.	Use of chemical substances may cause ill-health to the pregnant schoolgirl and her unborn child.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Normal safety practices which apply to all students will protect the pregnant schoolgirl and her unborn child. - Consider seating plan to allow the schoolgirl to be sat in a well ventilated part of the classroom to minimise exposure to smoke and fumes. 	N
Ingesting harmful foods during food	Ingesting foods the NHS recommends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Food technology teacher should be aware of the pregnancy and educated on which foods pregnant women should avoid. - Particular care is taken to ensure the pregnant schoolgirl avoids food the NHS has recommended pregnant women avoid. 	N
Extended use of computer equipment during lessons.	Postural issues may occur through being seated for extended periods of time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Workstations assessed taking into account additional needs such as more space needed and postural support. - Sufficient rest breaks to be taken away from the screen. 	N
Working in extremes of hot and cold.	Pregnant schoolgirls may be more susceptible to heat stress and may generally feel more	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pregnant schoolgirl not to be in areas where temperatures are especially hot or cold. 	N

	uncomfortable in extreme conditions.	- Consider additional rest and refreshment breaks.	
Evacuation in an emergency.	Pregnant schoolgirl may be injured through impact with other evacuees during evacuation.	- Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan put into place, schoolgirl fully informed of plan in case of emergency. - Key staff informed of pregnancy	N
Access Arrangements to and from school.	Fatigue through travelling and risk of knocks and bumps from travelling in crowded areas.	- Schoolgirl to allow adequate travel time so no need to rush. - Consider using alternative modes of transport if appropriate. - Consider travelling and arriving/leaving school before it becomes crowded.	N
Poorly fitting school uniform due to an inevitable increase in size during pregnancy.	Severe discomfort leading to adverse effects. Difficulty wearing school uniform.	- Allow comfortable clothing, ideally in school colours. - Consider if some uniform, such as a blazer, could be comfortably worn in a larger size.	N
First aid needs to be administered.	Pregnancy not taken into account during administration of first aid.	- First Aiders are discretely familiar with the pregnant schoolgirl. - First Aiders and team responsible for calling an ambulance have quick access to emergency contact details. - Pregnant schoolgirl to keep maternity notes with her throughout the school day.	N
Sitting exams.	Increased stress and anxiety potentially causing health complications. Postural issues from being seated for long periods.	- Pregnant schoolgirl to be assessed for Exam access arrangement needs and necessary provision made. - Postural support should be provided. - Emotional support provided through a mentor or through mental health services.	N

POLICY AND GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS ON THE USE OF REDUCED TIMETABLES

Draft

August 2022



Cyngor Bwrdeisdref Sirol

Blaenau Gwent

County Borough Council

Contents

Page Nos

Purpose
3

Summary
3

What is a reduced timetable?
4

General principles of a reduced timetable?
4

When can reduced timetables be implemented?
5

Implementing a reduced timetable
5

Roles and responsibilities
7

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Reintegration (Reduced)/Part-time Timetable Process Flow Chart

Appendix 2 – Reintegration (Reduced)/Part-time Timetable Consent Form and
Action Plan

Purpose

This guidance is intended to support all maintained Blaenau Gwent schools, and specialist provision settings, hereafter referred to as 'schools', in the appropriate use of reduced timetables (sometimes referred to as 'partial' or 'part-time' timetables), within the current legal and safeguarding framework for pupils deemed medically fit to attend school.

This guidance does not refer to the 'staggered' introduction of reception-aged pupil.

Summary

There is no statutory basis upon which to establish a reduced timetable, however, in exceptional circumstances schools may need to implement a reduced timetable in order to support a pupil who cannot attend school full-time for a short, agreed period.

To ensure that the application of a reduced timetable is time-limited and that re-integration to full-time education occurs swiftly and is appropriate to the pupil's personal needs, abilities and circumstances, BGCBC is sharing this guidance with all schools in respect of all pupils of statutory school age.

Schools and education settings have a statutory responsibility to ensure that all pupils on their roll receive a full educational entitlement and achieve good outcomes.

In very exceptional circumstances, where the needs of a pupil require it, (for reasons outlined below), it may be reasonable for schools to consider placing a pupil on a reduced timetable for a short period. As the pupil's ability to cope improves, unmet needs are addressed and the offer is adapted, the pupil would be re-integrated quickly into full-time education.

For the purposes of this guidance, a reduced timetable means by agreement with the parent/carer, school and the Senior Education Welfare Officer, that the number of hours spent in education is reduced for a time-limited period of usually no more than six weeks. Schools should consult with all appropriate agencies involved with a pupil when considering a reduced timetable.

Schools should take account and act upon the following guidance in order to continue to improve standards of educational attainment, safeguard the well-being of all children and young people and reduce the likelihood to the school of charges being made in respect of a failure to educate.

What is a reduced timetable?

All pupils are entitled to a full-time education consistent with their Key Stage.

The WG recommendations are that the school offer for the taught curriculum on a weekly basis should be:

- Reception and Years 1 to 2 (children aged 5 to 7): 21 hours

- Years 3 to 6 (children aged 7 to 11): 23.5 hours
- Years 7 to 10 (children aged 11 to 15): 24 hours
- Year 11 (children aged 15 to 16): 25 hours

However [s19](#) of the Education Act 1996 permits a Local Authority to not provide full time education if it is considered in the best interests of the child.

If a school decides to implement a reduced timetable, then there must be a suitable reason to take such an approach as they could be found to have discriminated against a pupil (contrary to s15 of the Equality Act 2010) by a tribunal because the pupil has been denied full time education.

A reduced timetable is one which restricts a pupil's access to a full-time curriculum. Careful consideration must be given by schools to the impact that reduced timetables will have on a pupil's entitlement, academic progression and any safeguarding issues that may arise because of a reduced timetable being implemented.

General Principles of a Reduced Timetable

In very exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a temporary reduced / part-time timetable to meet a pupil's individual need. For example, where a medical condition prevents full-time attendance in education and reduced / part time timetable is considered appropriate to support the pupil's medical needs at this time. This package should form part of a planned reintegration package. A reduced timetable should be supported by a timetable comprising blended learning led by and monitored by the school and that it is suitable for the individual pupil.

The Local Authority advice is that schools should keep detailed records of the learning programmes provided to the pupil and identify a teacher/teacher who will be responsible for marking completed work and providing feedback to the pupil.

A reduced / part-time timetable must not be treated as a long-term solution and any agreement must have a time-limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend the school on a full-time basis. (Timescales are outlined in 5.3 below) If despite a robust reintegration plan a child/young person does not respond positively to school, consideration may need to be given to reviewing the current provision. If this is the case the school should call a meeting with parents, Senior Education Welfare Officer and other relevant LA Officers, e.g. Family First to discuss if other agencies can provide advice and support to address underlying need or Outreach Support to discuss strategies to support the pupil.

Where a pupil has a Statement of Special Educational Needs, or an Individual Development Plan delegated then a reduced / part-time timetable should only be used in exceptional circumstances and agreement must be obtained from the ALN Manager. A pupil should not be considered for a part-time timetable because of their additional learning need as this may constitute discrimination.

For a pupil who is looked after (either through agreement under section 76 of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 or a Care Order), has a

care and support plan or is on the Child Protection Register, consideration of implementing a reduced timetable must be taken in the context of the significant vulnerability of the pupil and this should be discussed with relevant agencies who may have a view as to whether or not this should be agreed. In these cases, any reduced timetable must be agreed with the Corporate Parent and the Senior Education Welfare Officer.

Reduced timetables

Could be implemented due to any of the following: -

- A pupil having a short-term medical condition
- A pupil in receipt of tuition for long term medical reasons
- A pupil who has been excluded from school and is being reintegrated back into school

When agreed by school's / education providers, Local Authority and parents/carers as part of a planned reintegration approach for a pupil who has not attended school / provision for a period due to a significant event such as illness, disability or mental health issues

Where a pupil has an on-going medical condition, which results in them being unable to attend school as a result of the condition, then schools can refer them to the Local Authority for tuition in line with Local Authority practice.

In limited circumstances reduced timetables are used as a method of managing a pupil at risk of exclusion. The Local Authority identify that this may only be chosen after other strategies have been implemented and exhausted. In this case the Local Authority advice is that these are for a maximum six-week period with regular reviews.

NB Where a reduced timetable is agreed, the offer or provision must also include blended learning through the school's hub to ensure continuity of learning. If the pupil does not have access to suitable technology to access this, the school would be expected to provide the equipment necessary to do so.

Implementing a Reduced Timetable

When considering placing a pupil on a reduced timetable, the school must:

- be satisfied that a reduced timetable is an appropriate intervention given the needs of the pupil. There must be a clear and evidenced rationale for considering a reduced timetable as an intervention aimed at supporting the needs of the pupil. A detailed assessment undertaken by the school with relevant evidence from an appropriate professional must be available to inform the decision in line with the rationale for a reduced timetable (e.g. if it is felt that a pupil requires tuition as they are not in a position to engage with the full curriculum due to significant medical/wellbeing concerns then this must be supported by appropriate advice from a CAMHS consultant prior to a referral being made for tuition, or if a pupil is struggling to access a full day in school then EPS advice should be sought as to

- appropriateness of a reduced timetable with the aim of reintegrating the pupil and enabling them to access a wider range of provision in school.
- formally notify the Senior Education Welfare Officer and where appropriate also alert the ALN Manager that this approach is being considered. Either Officer will link with relevant officers, i.e. EP, EWO, Social Worker to ensure agreement from the Local Authority
 - clearly evidence all strategies that they have implemented to engage the pupil in a formal document such as a Pastoral Support Plan
 - ensure ethical and informed permission has been secured from parent / carer. This will be underpinned by a written agreement with the parent / carer ensuring signed parental permission prior to the commencement of a time limited reduced timetable. If the parent does not agree, the reduced timetable arrangements cannot be implemented. In these circumstances the school must consider alternative interventions
 - complete a detailed written action plan with clear objectives, agreed with the parents / carers and the pupil and involving a relevant Local Authority Officer, demonstrating a clear path of planned reintegration from part time to full time provision over a maximum of a six-week period, reviewed regularly.
 - ensure that the written agreement / action plan is provided to the Local Authority within 2 days of its completion
 - ensure that review information is provided to the Local Authority within 2 days of each review
 - ensure the pupil has an active involvement in the process of planning, reviewing and evaluating the planned intervention
 - ensure full time education is in place at the end of the agreed period or arrange a review meeting to identify the way forward. A maximum of one further period of six weeks should only be agreed in exceptional circumstances with parental and Local Authority agreement. In this case, the school should revisit the plan to reflect the need for an extension.
 - ensure that where the pupil has a Statement of Special Educational Needs/Individual Development Plan, a copy of the reintegration plan must also be sent to the Statutory ALN Team so that it can be included in the pupil's file. The Local Authority must agree to the intervention and a reintegration (reduced) timetable must not interfere with any additional support given to a pupil due to his/her educational needs.
 - amend / undertake a risk assessment of the pupil's needs to assess the impact that a reduced timetable would have on the child / young person. It is essential that the pupil's welfare during any absence from school is considered.
 - amend any other existing documentation as appropriate to reflect the reduced timetable
 - ensure the blended learning offer is in place and that the pupil has the necessary equipment, IT infrastructure and skills to access the school's learning platform
 - ensure parents / carers are clear they are taking responsibility for the pupil when he/she is not in school and guarantee that the pupil will be supervised off site and that this is recorded on the agreement
 - provide termly returns to the Senior Education Welfare Officer indicating the numbers and names of learners who are accessing reduced timetables (in line with Local Authority practice for monitoring)

Roles and Responsibilities

The school must:

- Notify the Senior Education Welfare Officer (and where necessary also notify the ALN Manager) that a reduced timetable is in place.
- Meet with parent / carer to consider proposals.
- Provide the pupil with sufficient and appropriately differentiated work to do for those hours they are not in school. Arrangements should be made to ensure that the work is marked; assessed and constructive feedback is given to the pupil.
- Establish robust arrangements for monitoring and regular review of the plan by a named member of senior staff.
- Ensure the written agreement and action plan is completed and shared with the Local Authority.
- Ensure effective communication with parents or carers and key professionals about progress towards the pupil's full re-integration to school.
- Record the pupil's attendance, using the appropriate registration codes, any sessions where the pupils are undertaking blended learning from home whilst not directly supervised by a school member of staff would be coded "C" i.e. an authorised absence.
- Consult with Local Authority and provide appropriate information as outlined above to enable Local Authority to make an informed decision and consider the need for officer involvement (if not already in place) if an extension to the initial 6-week period is being sought.

The Local Authority must:

- ensure appropriate monitoring and challenge by collecting termly returns
- agree to any request for a further extension to a part time timetable for it to continue beyond 6 weeks.
- undertake quality assurance with schools to audit arrangements where part time timetables are in operation.

Reintegration (Reduced) / Part-time Timetable Process Flow chart

- Step 1:** School informs Senior Education Welfare Officer that it is considering implementing a reduced timetable and also inform relevant LA Officers; e.g. ALN Manager, Social Worker as required. Consultation with ALN Manager would be required if a pupil has a statement
- Step 2:** School gathers clear evidence in the form of robust assessment information to support the rationale for a reduced timetable.
- Step 3:** Local Authority discuss request and give agreement if pupil in receipt of additional funding/provision or is known to Social Services
- Step 4:** School meets with parents / carers.
- Step 5:** School completes written agreement and action plan and provides copy for Local Authority
- Step 6:** Named senior member of school staff to monitor and review at agreed periods and at the end of the 6-week period. Review information to be shared with Senior Education Officer and where appropriate ALN Manager.
- Step 7:** Meeting arranged to agree way forward
- Step 8:** A further period of 6 weeks may be considered in exceptional circumstances with agreement from the Local Authority. *

* If the Local Authority do not give agreement further discussion would be required with relevant officers before extending the reduced timetable period.

Reintegration (Reduced) / Part-time Timetable Consent Form and

Action Plan

Pupil Name:		UPN:	
Date of birth:		Gender: MALE/FEMALE	
School:		Year Group:	
FSM: YES/NO	CLA: YES/NO	EAL: YES/NO	ALN: YES/NO
If FSM: What arrangements that have been made to ensure child has access to lunch meals?			
If CLA: Who have proposals re amended timetable been discussed with and what were their view?		Local Authority:	
		Name of Social Worker:	
		Social Worker View:	
		Discussed with Senior Education Welfare Officer:	
		Senior Education Welfare Officer View:	
Is pupil on Child Protection Register/ Child In Need of Care and Support?		Name of Social Worker:	
		Social Worker View:	
Have any safeguarding issues been highlighted and discussed with Safeguarding in Education Officer?		SIE Officer view:	
Is the pupil in receipt of ALN provision?		Discussed with ALN Manager:	
		ALN Manager View:	
Has the child had a part-time timetable before?		If yes, when:	
YES/NO			

Name of parents / carers	
Name of lead person at school	
Date when this has been discussed and agreed with head teacher by lead person at school	
Name of head teacher	
Name of lead LA Officer	
Name of EP	
Name of EWO	

Reason for reduced / part time timetable (Including evidence)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A pupil having a short-term medical condition • A pupil in receipt of tuition provision for long term medical reasons • A pupil who has been excluded from school and is being reintegrated to school

Date of meeting agreeing the part-time timetable	
Persons Present at above meeting	
Start date of part-time timetable	
Number of hours in education each week	
Review date of part-time timetable	
End date of part-time timetable	

Timetable	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Time in school					

Objectives of part time /reduced timetable:

Reintegration Plan:

Review date	
Outcome:	

I / we agree to my child being placed on a reduced / part time timetable for a time limited period in line with the Local Authority policy on reintegration timetables. This has been discussed with me in detail and I understand that this is an intervention to support the reintegration of my child into full time education. I agree to take full responsibility for my child during the hours they are not attending school / education

Parent/carer signature:
Date:

School signature:
Date:

Other signatures (if required):

LA Officer:
Date:

Social worker:
Date:

HARD TO PLACE PROTOCOL

DRAFT

August 2022



Cyngor Bwrdeisdref Sirol
Blaenau Gwent
County Borough Council

Contents

	Page Nos
Aim of the Hard to Place Protocol	3
Needs of learners considered by the Hard to Place protocol	3
Coordinating the Hard to Place Protocol	4
Determining which learner is hard to place	5
Foundation Schools	8
Hard to Place processes	8
Movements between Mainstream Schools	9
Vulnerable Learners	10
Learners permanently excluded from a mainstream school	10
Mainstream process	11
Specialist provision process	12
Integration from Specialist Provision into a new school	13
Re-integration from Specialist Provision back into current mainstream school	14
Permanent Exclusion – More Details	15
The school's role	15
CLA learners	16
Learners with Statements of SEN/Individual Development Plans	16
Funding to follow learners	17
The LA's role	17
LA support to mainstream schools	17
Reintegration Plans and Pastoral Support Plans	18
Appendices	19

Aim of the Hard to Place Protocol

The aim of this Protocol is designed:

- to provide a fair, equitable and open allocation of school places for those learners who do not have a school place, have been permanently excluded or require re-integration following specialist provision;
- to ensure that vulnerable learners who require a school place quickly are admitted without unnecessary delay;
- to be fair and transparent and to have the confidence of all schools with all schools working collaboratively;
- to take account of the School Admissions Code (2013) and the statutory duty under section 86(2) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 to comply with parental preferences on school admissions;
- to ensure implementation in conjunction with the Blaenau Gwent School Admissions Policy for Nursery and Statutory Education;
- to ensure up-to-date and accurate records are kept of the movements in and out of all schools;
to take account of genuine school concerns, e.g. previous serious breakdown of relationship between school and family.

Needs of Learners Considered by the Hard to Place Protocol?

Learners covered under the Protocol will be those who are in years Reception to Year 11 who are not solely on a mainstream school roll or are out of school because they are in the process of transferring between schools and who fall under one of the following categories:

- Children who were permanently excluded from their last maintained school placement and are able / ready to integrate to an alternative school;
- Children attending PRUs or alternative provision who are ready to be reintegrated back into mainstream education;
- Children returning from the criminal justice system (secure estate);
- Child victims of serious crimes (child cruelty, kidnapping, sexual or violent crime, FGM);
- Children who are CLA;
- Children who have been out of education for longer than two months, including electively home educated pupils where there is evidence that the child has not been in receipt of a suitable education
- Children with below 50% attendance;
- Children with disabilities or medical conditions which have already impacted on their attendance or participation at school;
- Children of carers, Gypsies, Roma, Travellers, children whose parents offend, asylum seekers and refugees who have been in the UK less than two years and need a supported entry to school;
- Homeless children who have been placed in temporary housing;
- Children who are in a refuge due to domestic violence;
- Children of UK service personnel where a change of location ordered by the service leads to a need for a change of school and will have experienced multiple moves;
- Children who have received 10 days' exclusions in the last twelve months;

- Children on the child protection register;

Coordinating the Hard to Place Protocol

It will be the role of a Designated Inclusion Officer (DIO-SEWO) to coordinate the movement of learners who are considered hard to place, working in close liaison with the Admissions Officer who manages admissions arrangements and the general transfer process.

The role will include:

- point of contact for schools regarding hard to place learners;
- management of the Hard to Place Learner spreadsheet;
- oversight of PSPs;
- close liaison with schools, parents/carers, social services, health and other agencies to ensure a team around the learner approach for those hard to place;
- providing quality assurance of the hard to place summary forms;
- provision of regular updates to DMT, Attendance Forum, Admissions Forum and Vulnerable Learner Panel (VLP) QA Group.

In addition to the role of the DIO, and in line with the Welsh Government School Admissions Code (2013) and Blaenau Gwent Admissions Policy for Nursery and Statutory Education, the Admissions Forum will monitor how well the protocol is working, how quickly learners are found places, and the contribution every school in the area is making.

Determining Learners- Hard to Place

The table below (Hard to Place Learner Summary) will be used to determine those learners who are considered hard to place. Learners will fall into one of three categories:

Level 1 – Straight admission

Level 2 – Admission with acknowledged need but not meeting criteria for hard to place

Level 3 – Considered hard to place

The table sets out 14 categories each covering areas that would either cause a learner to be hard to place (such as permanent exclusion) or contribute in part to a learner being hard to place (such as a learner having been out of education).

Each category has a weighting attached to it, the sum of which determine whether a learner is considered hard to place.

NB: It should be noted that a learner who meets the criteria for Hard to Place does not mean that the learner is unable to be placed or is not appropriately placed in mainstream. It simply gives an indication of those pupils for whom a mechanism is needed to ensure a careful, coordinated and planned integration/reintegration and a recognition that the school has enrolled a pupil with particularly needs.

Nor is the Hard to Place Learner summary a list to be used to support a position that a learner in mainstream is no longer suitable for mainstream. Where schools consider a learner requires a more specialist placement appropriate documentation must be completed and submitted to VLP Panel for consideration.

Draft

Hard to Place Learner Summary

Category Score	Category	Tick if relevant	(for INC use only)
7	Children who were permanently excluded from their last maintained school placement and who are ready for re-integration to an alternative school.		
7	Children attending PRUs or Alternative Provision who are ready to be reintegrated back into mainstream education but into a different school from the one originally attended;		
7	Children returning from the criminal justice system (secure estate);		
5	Children who are CLA and in a residential setting;		
3	Child victims of serious crimes (child cruelty, kidnapping, sexual or violent crime, FGM);		
3	Children who are CLA.		
2	Children who have been out of education for longer than two months including electively home educated pupils where there is evidence that the child has not been in receipt of a suitable education;		
2	Children with below 50% attendance;		
2	Children with disabilities or medical conditions which have already impacted on their attendance or participation at school;		
2	Homeless children who have been placed in temporary housing;		
2	Children who are in a refuge due to domestic violence;		
2	Children who have received 10 days exclusions in the last twelve months;		
2	Children on the child protection register;		
1	Children who are carers; children of Gypsies, Roma, Travellers; children where parents offend; children of asylum seekers and refugees who have been in the UK less than two years and need a supported entry to school; children with SEN.		

1	Children of UK service personnel where a change of location ordered by the service leads to a need for a change of school;		
		Total	

Hard to Place Level

Description	Points
Level 1 - Straight forward Admission	0
Level 2 - Admission but doesn't meet scoring for Hard to Place (added to Hard to Place Learner spreadsheet)	1-5
Level 3 - Hard to place (Education Information) form to be completed	6+

The Learner form is sent to schools as part of the information requested by the Admissions Officer upon receipt of an in-year transfer request.

When the summary has been completed the scoring will determine whether a learner is considered hard to place.

Should a learner be Level 1 there is no further action required and the admission will be processed by the Admissions Officer in the usual way. Details of the learner will not be recorded by the DIO.

Should a learner be Level 2 the Admissions Officer will pass the details to the DIO who will hold the information provisionally until placement has been agreed through the Admissions process. Level 2 acknowledges a level of need but not to the extent that a learner could be considered hard to place. The DIO would allocate the scoring to the school the learner transfers to once enrolled and remove the same allocation from the school the pupil has left.

Should a learner be Level 3 then a Hard to Place (Education Information) form will be sent to the school for completion and the Hard to Place process will commence.

All in-year transfers have a 15-day processing deadline. If there is an indication or relevant additional information submitted that determines the pupil(s) is hard to place, then the transfer request will still need to be processed in line with the Blaenau Gwent Admissions Policy for Nursery and Statutory Education, within the 15-day deadline.

Foundation Schools

Foundation schools manage their own admission process, and therefore, reference to Admissions Officer in this document refers to both a local authority Officer in the Education Transformation team and the admissions committee responsible for admissions in the Foundation school.

Who can refer a pupil under the Hard to Place Protocol?

An officer of the Local authority can refer an individual under the Hard to Place Protocol. It is anticipated that any individual who has been identified as unplaced will be referred immediately following the local authority becoming aware of their status.

Any school receiving an application outside the normal applications round can refer any applicant under the Hard to Place Protocol if they consider that the applicant satisfies the criteria referred to in the Hard to place Protocol. However, if a parent/carer has applied for a place as an In-Year Admission and a place is not subsequently offered the parent/carer is entitled to appeal this decision. The outcome of an independent School Admissions Appeal will take precedent over the Hard to Place Protocol.

All referrals to the Hard to Place Protocol will be reviewed within 15 working days of the referral date.

Hard to Place Processes

Each year a significant number of learners change schools. For the majority, the change of placement will be straightforward and managed solely through the Admissions team.

However, there are a smaller number of learners who will have a range of needs that would warrant consideration of being Hard to Place.

A number of processes are needed to ensure that for such learners' movements between schools and in and out of specialist provision are managed smoothly.

Below are processes for:

- Movements between Blaenau Gwent schools
- Learners permanently excluded from a mainstream school
- Integration from Specialist Provision into a new school
- Re-integration from Specialist Provision back into current m/s school

Movements Between Mainstream Schools

The process below covers only Hard to Place pupils moving between schools following an in-year request by parents.

NB: This process sits separate to the managed move protocol although for pupils who are managed moved, once the learner is sole registered on the new school roll, and if the pupil met the level 2 or 3 criteria then the Hard to Place Learner spreadsheet will be updated to reflect the learner starting in the new school and leaving the previous school. The additional weighting will be added to the new school and subtracted from the old school.

1. Admissions form is submitted to the Education Transformation team.
2. Admissions Officer forwards a copy of the Learner form to the current school.
3. Learner form completed and returned to Education Transformation team.
4. If the learner scores 0 the Admissions Officer will process the admission in accordance with the Blaenau Gwent Policy.
5. If the learner scores above 0, the Admissions Officer will pass the details to the Designated Inclusion Officer (DIO).
6. If the learner scores above 0 but does not meet the threshold for Hard to Place, the learner's details and scoring will be recorded on the Hard to Place Learner spreadsheet and the Admissions Officer will be informed to proceed with the general admissions process.
7. If the learner's score meets the threshold for Hard to Place, the DIO will contact the current school and request that an Education Information Form (EIF) is completed.
8. Upon receipt of the EIF, the DIO will meet with the Admissions Officer and the Service manager - Inclusion to discuss parental preference and the current position of each school in terms of new pupil placements accepted and pupils who have moved into other provisions or out of the Borough, as recorded on the Hard to Place Learner spreadsheet.
9. Should it be agreed that based on the current scoring a placement in an alternative school should be considered, the DIO will discuss this with the parents/carers.
10. Once a placement has been determined in discussion with parents/carers (whether the original choice of school or an alternative) the DIO will contact the school to provide a copy of the EIF and the Learner form and seek their views. The following needs to be borne in mind:
 - The LA and the governing body of a maintained school have a statutory duty under section 86(2) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 to comply with parental preferences on school admissions.

11. Should a school not agree with the placement they will be asked to complete a Hard to Place referral form which will be returned to the DIO for discussion at the Vulnerable Learners Panel (Appendix 1).
12. On receiving a referral from a school the Vulnerable Learners Panel will consider the application and make a determination as to whether the referral meets the criteria for placement on the grounds of challenging behaviour.
13. Any referral under the Hard to Place Protocol that does not meet the agreed criteria will be referred back to the named school for admittance as an in year admission. The Vulnerable Learners Panel reaching this determination will provide the School full reasoning for this decision. Schools accept that the Vulnerable Learners Panel's decision in this matter is final and all pupils will be admitted within 5 days of receipt of the Vulnerable Pupil's Panel's decision.
14. Any referral not accompanied by suitable supporting evidence from the School will not be considered. Schools will instead be required to admit any pupils as an In-Year Transfer (in order to reduce the period of time a young person is unplaced). Pupils are to be admitted as an In-Year Transfer within 5 days of receipt of the Vulnerable Learners Panel's decision.

Vulnerable Learners - Panel Decision

Any school required to admit a pupil under the Hard to Place Protocol will be provided with the full reasoning for this placement and any supporting evidence and information that would assist with the pupil's admission and transition to the school.

Once a placement decision has been made, the Chair will notify the school that has been identified, in the first instance. The Local authority's Admissions Department will formally notify the school and parent/carer. Schools accept the Panel's decision and must contact the parent/carer to arrange the admission within seven calendar days. The school must also notify the Admissions team of the admission date confirming that the child is on roll.

In the event that a school refuses access of a pupil they must provide a written response to the Corporate Director of Education within seven calendar days. In this event the Local authority will seek to use its powers of direction or will seek the secretary of state to direct the school to admit.

Learners Permanently Excluded from a Mainstream School

Excluded learners should only be educated outside of the mainstream where there are significant problems that need to be addressed in a different environment. For some permanently excluded learners the best course of action is for them to re-join a mainstream school within a matter of days or weeks. The longer a learner is out of school the more difficult it is for them to be reintegrated. For those who are permanently excluded from primary schools, rapid reintegration into a mainstream environment is particularly important.

For a small number of learners approaching the end of compulsory schooling it may be unrealistic to expect them to make a successful return to school. In these circumstances the LA will arrange a programme of study and experience designed to lead to further education, training or employment.

Admission authorities should not normally refuse admission to learners because of their past disciplinary record, including any previous exclusions. The Welsh Government School Admissions Code (2013) - Statutory Code Document No: 005/2013 makes it clear that admission authorities should not make subjective judgements as to the suitability of certain learners for a school.

The LA and the governing body of a maintained school have a statutory duty under section 86(2) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 to comply with parental preferences on school admissions. However, this duty does not apply when a learner has been permanently excluded from two or more schools and at least one of the exclusions took place after 1 September 1997. The requirement to comply with parental preference is disapplied for a period of two years following the second exclusion.

When a pupil is permanently excluded from a Blaenau Gwent school, in addition to following Welsh Government process guidance, the school will complete an Education Information Form (EIF) within five school days of the permanent exclusion being issued and forward it to the Designated Inclusion Officer (DIO).

For learners who are CLA, a meeting will also be held within the first five days following the issuing of a permanent exclusion. More details are in the section 'CLA Learners' on page 16.

The LA will convene a Permanent Exclusion meeting within five school days of receiving the EIF with Lead Officer for Inclusion, Principal Educational Psychologist, SEWO, ALN Manager, DIO and a senior representative from the River Centre. The meeting will determine whether it would be appropriate for the VLP Panel to consider a placement in revolving door provision if available or whether a mainstream placement should be sought.

Option 1 – Mainstream

1. If agreed that a mainstream placement should be sought the outcome of the Discipline Committee and appeals process will be awaited.
2. If the permanent exclusion is overturned the pupil will return to school.
3. If the permanent exclusion is upheld the DIO will liaise with the parents/carers to ascertain parental choice of placement.
4. The DIO will meet with the Admissions Officer and the Lead Officer for Inclusion to discuss parental preference and the current position of each school in terms of the Hard to Place Learner spreadsheet and pupil movements.

5. Should it be agreed that a placement in an alternative school to the one expressed as parental preference should be considered, the DIO will discuss this with the parent.
6. Once a placement has been determined in discussion with parents (whether the original choice of school or an alternative) an admissions form will be completed and the DIO will contact the school to provide a copy of the EIF and seek their views. The following needs to be borne in mind:

The LA and the governing body of a maintained school have a statutory duty under section 86(2) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 to comply with parental preferences on school admissions.

7. Should a school not agree with the placement they will be asked to complete a Disagreement form which will be returned for discussion between the DIO and Lead Officer for Inclusion. The Lead Officer for Inclusion will then contact the Head for further discussion. If the matter remains unresolved, the Lead Officer for Inclusion will provide a brief for the Director of Education.

Option 2 - Specialist Provision

1. If agreed that a River Centre revolving door placement may be appropriate the outcome of the Discipline Committee and appeals process will be awaited.
2. If the permanent exclusion is overturned the pupil will return to the school unless it is agreed at independent appeal that because of exceptional circumstances or other reasons it would not be practical to give a direction requiring reinstatement
3. If the permanent exclusion is upheld the DIO will make contact with the parents/carers regarding placement and will:
 - a. gain parental consent for discussion at VLP Panel
 - b. gain the parents/carers and learner views
 - c. ascertain parental choice of roll school
 - d. explain next steps.
4. The DIO will meet with the Admissions Officer and the Lead Officer for Inclusion to discuss parental preference for roll school and the current position of each school in terms of the Hard to Place Learner spreadsheet and pupil movements.
5. DIO will agenda the learner for discussion at the next VP Panel (late inclusion on the agenda is agreed in this instance).
6. DIO will inform parents/carers of outcome.

7. DIO will liaise with Admissions Officer regarding enrolment.
8. Revolving door placement, if agreed, will begin. If not agreed, the process for integration into mainstream will be followed.
9. After a period of intervention, the pupil will be reviewed and paperwork submitted to VLP Panel with recommendations (either move to mainstream or continued placement at River Centre). If the latter, DIO will agenda under 'Ongoing Placement' and provide a clear rationale as to what has been done with the pupil and what will be done differently to meet their needs to prepare for reintegration.
10. If it is the view of the VLP Panel that a mainstream placement is appropriate, then the process for 'Integration from Specialist Provision into a new mainstream school' should be followed.

Integration from Specialist Provision into a new mainstream school

This process is applicable for:

- Learners who have been permanently excluded and are awaiting placement into a new school from a specialist provision.
 - Learners who attend a specialist provision on a dual registered basis but it would not be appropriate for them to reintegrate back into the school they previously attended.
1. At the point at which it is felt that a pupil is ready to integrate into a new school from specialist provision an EIF will be completed. It is not necessary for a Hard to Place summary to be completed as pupils in specialist provision for SEBD are considered Hard to Place learners automatically.
 2. The DIO will liaise with the parents/carers to ascertain parental choice of placement.
 3. The DIO will meet with the Admissions Officer and the Lead Officer for Inclusion to discuss parental preference and the current position of each school in terms of new pupil placements accepted and pupils who have moved into other provision or out of the Borough, as recorded on the Hard to Place Learner spreadsheet.
 4. Should it be agreed that a placement in an alternative school should be considered, the DIO will discuss this with the parent.
 5. An admissions form will be completed.
 6. Once a placement has been determined in discussion with parents (whether the original choice of school or an alternative) the DIO will contact the school

to provide a copy of the EIF and seek their views. The following needs to be borne in mind:

The LA and the governing body of a maintained school have a statutory duty under section 86(2) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 to comply with parental preferences on school admissions.

7. Should a school not agree with the placement they will be asked to complete a Disagreement form which will be returned for discussion between the DIO and Lead Officer for Inclusion. The Lead Officer for Inclusion will then contact the Head for further discussion. If the matter remains unresolved, the Service Manager - Inclusion will provide a brief for the Corporate Director of Education.
8. Should it be determined that the integration is not appropriate at that time, a further period of specialist provision will be allocated.
9. Once placement has been agreed, but whilst the learner is still on roll at the specialist provision, a PSP meeting should be held to update the PSP. This will be attended by the DIO, a senior member from the specialist provision, a senior leader from the school's relevant key stage as well as representatives from other agencies involved.
10. Once the learner is on roll, the Hard to Place Learner spreadsheet will be updated reflecting the learner starting in the new school and leaving the previous school. The additional weighting will be added to the new school.

Re-integration from Specialist Provision back into current mainstream school

1. At the point at which it is felt that a pupil is ready to re-integrate back from specialist provision into their current school, an EIF will be completed. It is not necessary for a Hard to Place summary to be completed as pupils in specialist provision for SEBD are considered to be Hard to Place automatically.
2. As the pupil is already dual registered there is no requirement to seek parental choice or complete an admissions form.
3. The DIO will contact the school to provide a copy of the EIF.
4. The DIO will coordinate a meeting between the school, DIO, specialist provision and the school's Educational Psychologist.
5. The meeting will discuss the reintegration plan, the establishing of a new PSP, timescales and the support that may be required to ensure a successful reintegration.
6. Should a school not agree with the reintegration they will be asked to complete a Disagreement form which will be returned for discussion between the DIO and Service Manager for Inclusion. The Service Manager for Inclusion will then contact the Head for further discussion. If the matter remains

unresolved, the Lead Officer for Inclusion will provide a brief for the Corporate Director of Education.

7. Should it be determined that a reintegration is not appropriate at that time, a further period of specialist provision will be allocated.
8. Once reintegration has been agreed, but whilst the learner is still dual registered at the specialist provision, an updated PSP meeting should be held. This will be attended by the DIO, a senior member from the specialist provision, a senior leader from the school's relevant key stage as well as representatives from other agencies involved.
9. Once the learner is on roll, the Hard to Place Learner spreadsheet will be updated reflecting the learner being back in school.

Permanent Exclusion – More Details

The School's Role

A decision to exclude a learner permanently is a serious one. It will usually be the final step in a process for dealing with disciplinary offences following a wide range of other strategies, which have been tried without success. It is an acknowledgement by the school that it has exhausted all available strategies for dealing with the learner and should normally be used as a last resort.

There will, however, be exceptional circumstances where in the head teacher's judgement it is appropriate to permanently exclude a learner for a first or one-off offence. These might include:

- serious actual or threatened violence against another learner or a member of staff
- sexual abuse or assault
- supplying an illegal drug
- use or threatened use of an offensive weapon.

Exclusion should not be imposed in the heat of the moment. Before deciding whether to exclude a learner the head teacher should:

- ensure that an appropriate investigation has been carried out
- consider all the evidence available to support the allegations. The more serious the allegation and thus the possible sanction, the more convincing the evidence substantiating the allegation needs to be
- take account of the school's behaviour and equal opportunities policies, and, where applicable, the Equality Act 2010
- allow the learner to give his or her version of events
- check whether the incident may have been provoked, e.g. by bullying or by racial or sexual harassment if necessary consult others, but not anyone who may later have a role in reviewing the head teacher's decision, e.g. a member of the discipline committee
- keep a written record of the incident and actions taken.

The school's obligation to provide education continues while the learner is still on the roll and therefore the name of a permanently excluded learner should remain on the school roll until the appeals procedure is completed, or until the time for appeals has expired without an appeal being lodged. It may be removed earlier if the parents/carers and/or learner give notice in writing that they do not intend to appeal.

CLA Learners

Everything must be done to avoid the permanent exclusion of any Child Looked After. Schools are expected to be proactive in working with the young person, carers, social workers, CLA Education Coordinator, River Centre and the Inclusion Service in doing everything possible to avoid permanent exclusion.

Should a headteacher permanently exclude a Child Looked After, the school will provide a completed Education Information Form to the LA within five school days. In addition, the head teacher will convene a meeting within that same timescale to discuss the pupil needs and the support available. The meeting will be attended by the social worker, foster carer/parent, CLA Education Coordinator and representative from the River Centre. The meeting will be chaired by the CLA Education Coordinator.

The headteacher will present the case for the permanent exclusion, providing evidence that the decision was reasonable, fair, proportionate and lawful. Those present will then have an opportunity to comment on the permanent exclusion. At the meeting it will be determined whether there is an option to put alternative provision in place that would enable the head teacher to rescind the permanent exclusion, dual registering the pupil whilst an alternative school setting is found. However, the right still remains with the head teacher to permanently exclude should the circumstances warrant it.

The Education (Admission of Looked after Children) (Wales) Regulations 2009 places a duty on admission authorities in Wales to admit children looked after by a LA in Wales where an application for admission outside the normal admissions round is made by the corporate parent on their behalf.

However, before making an application, the corporate parent (i.e. the Welsh LA responsible for looking after the child) must consult with the relevant admissions authority and make every effort to ensure the appropriateness of the named school in the light of the child's background including SEN and/or faith needs.

Learners with a Statement of SEN or Local Authority Individual Development Plan

Other than in the most exceptional circumstances, schools should avoid permanently excluding learners with statements of SEN/Individual Development Plans. They should also make every effort to avoid excluding learners who are being supported under the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice or the Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales.

Where a learner with a statement of SEN or a local authority IDP is permanently excluded, the head teacher should use the period between their initial decision and the meeting of the discipline committee to work with the LA to see whether more support can be made available or whether the statement can be changed to name a

new school. If either of these options is possible, the headteacher should normally withdraw the exclusion.

Therefore, when a learner with a statement of SEN/local authority IDP is permanently excluded, the school will provide a completed Education Information Form to the LA within five school days to enable a LA Permanent Exclusion meeting to be held. This meeting will discuss whether the ALN Panel should consider a revolving door placement for the pupil or whether another mainstream school may be appropriate.

No action can be taken on alternative/new placement until the discipline committee has reached a decision and the appeals process has been concluded.

Section 324 of the Education Act 1996 requires a maintained school that is named in a statement of SEN to admit the child.

Funding to Follow Learners

Funding is removed from the excluding school's budget at the point at which the permanent exclusion is upheld by the independent appeal panel, or alternatively if there is no appeal, the final date on which an appeal could have been made. The learner will remain on the excluding school's roll until that time and the school remains responsible for the learner's education.

Where a learner is permanently excluded from a maintained school, that school's budget share for that year will be reduced by the amount required in the School Funding (Wales) Regulations 2010 at the point at which the exclusion is upheld by the independent appeal panel, or alternatively if there is no appeal, the final date on which an appeal could have been made.

Where a school admits a learner who has been permanently excluded in that financial year from another maintained school, the LA will allocate an amount for the rest of the financial year as required by the regulations.

Alternatively, it will help offset the cost to the LA of education otherwise than at school under the LA's duty under section 19 of the Education Act 1996.

The LA's Role

The LA will seek to ensure there are flexible, creative strategies in place to meet the individual needs of learners permanently excluded from school.

Once a learner is removed from a school roll, unless a new school has been identified and transition begun, the LA is responsible for ensuring that suitable education is made available. In cases where the school from which the learner has been excluded is maintained by a different LA, this will be the home LA.

Should the LA Permanent Exclusion meeting decide that the excluded learner should be considered for a revolving door placement, the learner will be added to the agenda of the next available VLP Panel for consideration of future arrangements. Representatives from those services involved with the learner will be invited e.g. social services, CAMHS, Careers etc. and the learner will be discussed first on the agenda.

LA Support to Mainstream Schools

Reintegration of excluded learners into mainstream schools is a significant challenge for both schools and learners. The LA will make support available for the receiving school to ensure that the reintegration is successful. Support may be in terms of services such as advice & guidance, a suitably trained member of special school staff who provides an agreed level of transition support or ongoing support or funding to assist the school to support the excluded pupil. This is separate from the transfer of learner-related funding from excluding schools to accepting schools under the School Funding (Wales) Regulations 2010 and the Education (Amount to Follow Permanently Excluded Pupil) Regulations 1999 (as amended).

Reintegration Plans and Pastoral Support Programmes (PSPs)

An excluded learner reintegrating into a mainstream school will require a reintegration plan (or transition plan) drawn up. The plan may be an adaptation of an existing PSP or may remain as a separate but linked element.

The school and LA will look carefully at how to meet the needs identified in a learner's plan by using their resources both creatively and flexibly, making best use of existing and additional resources provided. Multi-agency strategies and provision should be fully considered in the development of a full individual timetable. Consideration should be given to whether learners need regular input from a teacher to address their key skills. The amount of input should be agreed according to the individual needs of the learner.

The LA will liaise with the parents/carers, the learner and the receiving school about the plan, where appropriate agreeing action with the learner. The plan should include the steps to be taken for reintegration into school including action to be taken by the setting to address the learner's problems and ensure a smooth return to mainstream, or transition into post-16 education.

Where it is considered that reintegration into mainstream is appropriate and possible, consideration should be given to:

- support arrangements to be put in place by LA and school
- preparing the pupil (including knowing their views)
- preparing the parents/carers (including knowing their views)
- preparing receiving staff
- arrangements for arrival
- time-tabling implications
- Specific Measurable Attainable Relevant Time-bound (SMART) targets
- monitoring and review arrangements
- learning and behaviour targets for individual education plans
- the nomination of a key worker in the LA and school
- multi-agency involvement and key areas of responsibility
- home-school liaison.

Appendix 1

Vulnerable Learners Panel Referral Form

Hard to Place

NB. Please consider UNCRC, Disability Discrimination 1995 and the Equality Act 2010 and any reasonable adjustments that can be made when completing this form.

School making referral			
Pupil name			
Pupil address			
DOB		NCY	
Reason for changing school			

I am referring this pupil to Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council as a Hard to place pupil. The pupil meets the following fair access criteria (*please indicate as appropriate*):

Blaenau Gwent Hard to Place Criteria	X
Children who were permanently excluded from their last maintained school placement and who are ready for re-integration to an alternative school.	
Children attending PRUs or Alternative Provision who are ready to be reintegrated back into mainstream education but into a different school from the one originally attended;	
Children returning from the criminal justice system (secure estate);	
Children who are CLA and in a residential setting;	
Child victims of serious crimes (child cruelty, kidnapping, sexual or violent crime, FGM);	
Children who are CLA.	
Children who have been out of education for longer than two months;	
Children with below 50% attendance;	
Children with disabilities or medical conditions which have already impacted on their attendance or participation at school;	
Homeless children who have been placed in temporary housing;	
Children who are in a refuge due to domestic violence;	

1. Information about your school (*Secondary schools – please read ‘class’ as year group*)

No. in year group	
--------------------------	--

How year group is organised	
No. in class this pupil would join	
No. of Statements/local authority IDPs/school based IDPs in class	
No. of EAL in class	
Support available in the class	
Additional information about this year group	
Please indicate below if there are any particular challenges the school is currently facing in addition to the pupil profile above:	

2. Information about the pupil

What is it specifically about this child that means your school could not meet their needs but another school could? These must be unique to the school and considered as valid reasons by the panel
What can the school offer the pupil and what support might be needed to integrate them into the school?
Please give any further information you would like the Panel to take into account

--

NAME	
ROLE	
DATE	

Please email this form to: lisa.adams@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

Draft

Positive Relationships & Behaviour Policy and Guidance

DRAFT

August 2022



Cyngor Bwrdeisdref Sirol

Blaenau Gwent

County Borough Council

Contents

	Page Nos.
1. Introduction, Definitions and Context	1
2. Welsh Government Guidance	2
3. Principles	2
4. Roles & Responsibilities	3
5. Partnerships	4
6. Positive Relationships and Behaviour Guidance	4
7. Successful Learning Settings/Environments	7
8. Preventing and Responding to Disruptive Behaviours	8
9. Pastoral Support Plans (PSPs) and Reduced Timetables	11
10. Pupils Excluded from School	12
11. Managed Moves	12
12. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review	12
13. Appendices	14
1) Universal Assessment Tools	
2) Behaviour Checklist	
3) Behaviour Guidance Matrix	
4) Pastoral Support Programme	
4a) Pastoral Support Plan Guidance Notes and Check List of Interventions	
5) A Graduated Response - Model of Support	

1. Introduction, Definitions and Context

The key to achieving effective learning/teaching/behaviour support is ensuring that a systematic approach exists across our schools and staff have the necessary understanding and skills to recognise behaviour issues. In recognising this, teachers can approach their teaching in ways that build relationships with their pupils and support them in a way that reduces poor behaviour choices. This policy and guidance document aims to provide guidance for schools to effectively support learners.

The **positive relationships and behaviour policy and guidance** document has been informed by a range of key national as well as local need, policies and plans. The aims of this policy and guidance are to:

- provide a framework to establish a co-ordinated, consistent approach to developing positive relationships and behaviours in schools;
- promote a graduated response to intervening, in all schools and other educational settings;
- promote effective partnership working;
- secure positive relationships and behaviours through effective teaching and learning environments; and,
- facilitate capacity building in all schools and other educational settings about effective management of children/young people experiencing social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Blaenau Gwent - Local Context

The Local Authority's (LA) Positive Relationships and Behaviour Policy should be viewed within the context of the Blaenau Gwent's overarching Inclusion Strategy and other key documents. Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council (BGCBC) has a strong focus on prevention, early identification and intervention. Schools should use a graduated response to need and ensure Universal Learning Provision (ULP) for all pupils to promote inclusion.

The LA is committed to the principles and values of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in all aspects of our work. Learners have the right to feel valued and entitled to the respect of others, both within and out of the formal learning environment.

The LA is committed to the principles of inclusion and equality and recognises that these are essential to the promotion of positive behaviour. This is underpinned by a commitment to fostering the wellbeing of all pupils and young people. The creation of nurturing, healthy and safe environments is crucial in enabling pupils and young people to thrive.

The LA also recognises the need to create an ethos that is engaging, empowering and supportive in order for learning and positive behaviour to develop. The cornerstones of trust, respect, inclusion and high expectations of all are integral to creating a well-disciplined learning environment.

2. Welsh Government Guidance

The Welsh Government's guidance document Inclusion and Pupil Support, 203/2016 highlights the factors necessary to promoting positive relationships and behaviour.

- [Welsh Government Inclusion & Pupil Support Document](#)

Other Relevant Guidance Includes:

- [Exclusion from schools and pupil referral units 225/2019](#)
- [Practical approaches to behaviour management in the classroom. A handbook for classroom teachers in primary schools 117/2012](#)
- [Practical approaches to behaviour management in the classroom. A handbook for classroom teachers in secondary schools 086/2010](#)
- [Effective managed moves: A fresh start at school for children and young people 096/2011](#)
- [Rights, respect, equality: Statutory guidance for governing bodies of maintained schools 2019](#)
- [School behaviour and discipline | Sub-topic | GOV.WALES](#)

3. Principles

It is recognised, especially following the COVID-19 pandemic that learner behavioural is a priority across the school estate. The LA is committed to ensuring that all children and young people gain maximum benefit from their education, regardless of ethnic origin, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, gender reassignment, religious beliefs or non-belief, use of Welsh language, BSL and other languages, nationality, responsibility for any dependents or any other reason which cannot be shown to be justified.

In seeking to promote the development of appropriate relationships and behaviour, the LA acknowledges that both effective whole LA and whole school approaches to practice is essential. Professionals need to understand why behaviour and attendance is important and affects learning. This will include understanding the underlying causes or triggers. The LA promotes partnership working and will support schools and education settings to:

- Provide an emotionally secure environment and safeguard vulnerable learners.
- Create an ethos that promotes de-escalation and supports positive relationships and behaviour.
- Develop programmes to promote children's emotional well-being; this should be integrated into all aspects of the curriculum.
- Recognise that exclusion is the last resort and that unofficial exclusions are both illegal and unlawful.
- Promote effective learning and teaching in order to secure positive relationships, behaviours and engagement.
- Respond to emerging social, emotional and behaviour difficulties at an early stage and implement effective Pastoral Support Plans (PSPs)

4. Roles and Responsibilities

A) The Local Authority

- Provide high quality management and leadership that promotes effective and inclusive practice.
- Develop policy, guidance and procedures to support effective practice.
- Promote and facilitate the continuous professional development and training of staff in relation to behaviour management, including the development of specialist skills where necessary.
- Recognise and promote the entitlement of all learners to ensure that all needs are met.
- Work with schools to provide a curriculum that recognises and values diversity.
- Work with schools to reduce the number of permanent exclusions, fixed term exclusions as well as the number of days lost due to exclusions.
- Support schools to improve attendance rates and address the needs of persistent absentees through robust monitoring arrangements.
- Provide services that are accessible to all learners.
- Engage with parents/carers, other agencies, and service providers to meet the specific needs of learners.
- Evaluate performance in the light of qualitative/quantitative data, independent reviews, and regulatory findings.

B) School and Governing Body

Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their learning, behaviour and achievement and to contribute effectively to their learning community. All settings should maintain a positive ethos and create an environment that allows them to develop into healthy confident citizens of Wales and the World.

Schools should ensure that they have an effective behaviour policy and an emotional health and wellbeing strategy. These should be aligned to other processes related to school improvement planning to ensure that they achieve an ethos where positive behaviour and attendance are essential foundations for effective learning, and where all learners can feel respected, safe and secure.

The school policy should set out:

- the school's underlying principles
- a code of conduct for pupils including behaviour when travelling to and from school
- how positive behaviour will be encouraged
- clear and appropriate support for negative behaviour
- the graduated response to challenging behaviour
- restorative approaches to conflict resolution
- how race, disability and other equality issues will be addressed
- arrangements for implementing the policy

- how the policy will be monitored and reviewed

Relationships built on mutual trust and respect are fundamental to promoting positive behaviour. High quality interaction between all members of the learning community, including parents/carers and partner agencies should be evident, to ensure that all feel respected, included and valued. Schools should be able to demonstrate consistent positive staff interactions with pupils and young people that demonstrate that they have a good understanding of pupils' learning needs, interests and development.

C) Teachers and other School Staff

Teachers and school staff will:

- Have a positive, caring attitude towards all pupils' behaviour
- Have an appreciation of all pupils as individuals whose talents are valued
- Have a fair and consistent treatment of all pupils
- Provide appropriate, focused praise
- Adopt the guidance and support when addressing unacceptable behaviour and create a culture of accountability and responsibility in all individuals
- Provide regular communication with parents/carers

5. Partnerships

Collaborative practice is a key priority for the LA. In order to promote and sustain positive relationships and behaviours and improve school practice, it is essential that partners work together effectively. This is of particular significance in relation to children/young people and families who may have a range of needs, sometimes in complex circumstances.

Effective collaboration will be secured through active involvement with:

- Children/young people
- Parents and carers
- Schools and other educational settings
- The Youth Service
- Multi-agency forums with Children's Services and Health
- Raising Aspiration Group (RAG)
- ALN Panel and Vulnerable Learners Panel
- Voluntary bodies and other key stakeholders

6. Positive Relationships and Behaviour Guidance

Understanding Behaviour

Understanding the causes of pupils' behaviour is essential, as without this it is unlikely that any behaviour strategy will be sustainable. There are five basic models in understanding pupil behaviour.

These include:

- biological
- behavioural
- systemic
- psychodynamic
- cognitive

This is available in more detail at 'Beyond Behaviours', Mona Delahooke, PhD (2019).

Adverse Childhood Experiences and (ACEs) Trauma Informed Practice

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) is the term used to describe traumatic experiences before age 18 that can lead to negative, lifelong emotional and physical outcomes. The 10 aspects of ACEs identified are:

- Emotional abuse
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect
- Domestic abuse/violence
- Household substance abuse
- Household mental illness
- Divorced or separated parents
- Incarcerated parents/family member
- Frequent changes in housing and schooling

Many schools across Wales and the UK, Blaenau Gwent included, practice trauma informed practices. A trauma informed school is one that is able to support children and young people who have experienced trauma or emotional wellbeing issues and can act as a barrier to learning. There are many organisations who support schools, communities and other organisations to become 'trauma informed'. In Blaenau Gwent, we work with Trauma Informed Schools UK (TISC UK) and our aim is for all our schools to be accredited.

For more information see:

<https://www.traumainformedschools.co.uk/home/what-is-a-trauma-informed-school>

7. Successful Learning Settings/Environments

In order to create a positive learning environment within a school, it is essential that the following key aspects are considered and implemented across the whole school.

- consistent classroom practices
- consistent positive relationships
- an inclusive learning environment

Children learn best when they feel safe, respected, included and valued. Effective learning in a happy classroom occurs when teachers can successfully create a nurturing, inclusive, structured classroom environment so that learning opportunities can be maximised. Teaching several pupils with different needs can be challenging. However, when a positive learning culture is created, the pupils will learn better because they will know what is expected of them.

The provision of a successful and inclusive learning environment includes;

- beginning the year with clear expectations and routines which are understood by all pupils – these should be visually available with no more than three school rules
- having agreed rewards and positive reinforcements
- making use of their physical space
- well-planned lessons that are accessible for all
- encouraging respect through developing positive relationships
- ensuring a consistent approach from **all** adults
- having set consequences for misbehaviour
- having a selection of options for dealing with disciplinary problems
- making use of restorative practices

Good practice in learning environments/settings, includes;

- **Positive relationships based on mutual trust that are led and demonstrated by staff;**
- **Clear expectations that need to be reinforced regularly and developed in conjunction with children and young people;**
- Routines help to minimise behavioural challenges in the classroom and are key to a well-managed and organised classroom however, flexible enough to alter if circumstances change.
- Praise is an effective way to encourage pupils to engage in the desired behaviour as it focuses on a pupil's effort rather than on what is accomplished. Encouraging pupils to peer praise each other not only

creates a positive classroom environment but also motivates individuals to make positive choices.

- BG's approach will focus on learner self-recognition so that the behaviour is intrinsically motivated rather than extrinsically. Intrinsic rewards/benefits are useful for schools in certain circumstances e.g., exam preparations.
- The frequency and level of rewards given to pupils depends on the level of behaviour. If a pupil is displaying frequent and quite difficult to manage behaviour, then the frequency and level of reward can be high.

Schools need to create a positive well-structured environment right from the start. For example:

- 'Calm down' and safe spaces
- Sensory rooms/areas
- Nurture programmes/spaces
- Learning environments set up to enable movement breaks
- Role play to promote positive relationships and encourage a sense of belonging
- An allocated seat/space for some individual pupils
- Displays which reinforce positive attitudes and mindset
- Displays and resources which reinforce the concept of family and how family structures differ
- Systems which encourage independence and ownership of learning e.g., positions of responsibility
- Displays and resources which promote positive attitudes of other minority groups and work against stereotyping
- Use 'check in' and 'meet and greet' at the start of the day to show pupils they are valued

8. Preventing and Responding to Disruptive Behaviours

- **Preventing Challenging Behaviours (Pro-active Strategies)**
Proactive management strategies are designed to equip the teacher with preventative measures to implement before a behaviour problem occurs. These strategies create a sound routine, clear expectations and coping strategies.
- **Responding to Challenging Behaviours (Reactive Strategies)**
Responding correctly to an incident of unwanted behaviour is vitally important. These strategies are effective providing they are planned for and used correctly. Reactive strategies should ensure that:
 - staff are non-confrontational
 - school's positive-handling strategies are followed
 - the school's guidelines of dealing with challenging behaviours are followed
 - the pupil is safe
 - staff and other pupils are safe

- **Dealing with Challenging Behaviour**

Wait for a pupil to calm down fully to have time to 'self-regulate', before discussing the incident techniques could include acknowledging how the child feels and mirroring their level of intensity. i.e. I can see that you are feeling very angry. De-escalation techniques should be the first stages of intervention, where possible.

- **Using Reasonable Force**

All school staff members in charge of pupils have a legal power to use reasonable force to prevent pupils committing a criminal offence, injuring themselves or others, or damaging property; and to maintain good order and discipline among pupils. The focus should be on preventing, as far as possible, the need for the use of force on pupils. The use of reasonable force should only be a last resort.

- **Recording and Reporting Incidents**

Schools are expected to keep systematic records of every incident in which force has been used, in accordance with school policy and procedures on the use of force and its child protection requirements. The views of the child regarding any incident should be recorded, as well as witness testimonies from other staff/pupils/observers

- **Monitoring and Evaluating Behavioural Progress**

There are many ways to monitor and evaluate pupil's behaviour:

- reward charts
- home-school link books
- self-monitoring
- behaviour contracts – including parenting contracts and/or orders
- Individual Development Plan (IDP)
- Individual Behaviour Plan (IBP)
- Pastoral Support Programme (PSP)

Further information can be found in the following Welsh Government guidance for primary and secondary schools:

- [Behaviour Management in the Classroom: A Handbook for Classroom Teachers in Primary Schools](#)
- [Behaviour Management in the Classroom: A Handbook for Classroom Teachers in Secondary Schools](#)

The involvement and support of parents is recognised as invaluable in achieving good outcomes for pupils. The expectation is that schools will engage with parents in some or all of the following ways:

- Ensuring that parents and carers are aware of all relevant school policies.
- Offering parents and carers the opportunity to engage positively with school staff through attendance at reviews, parents' meetings and other arranged activities.
- Working in partnership with parents to help address the needs of their children and develop strategies for ensuring high levels of success.

Blaenau Gwent – Inclusion Services and Provision

Universal Learning Provision

Universal Learning Provision (ULP) should be made available to all children in schools should they need it. This is the first response to emerging needs.

Ordinarily, if after two terms of intervention / support through Universal Learning Provision a child is still not making sufficient progress from their baseline they will be moved onto a school Individual Development Plan (School IDP).

Many schools have other resources that can be considered before approaching the Local Authority such as

1. Nurture provision
2. Use of a Reduced Timetable, short term when appropriate and agreed by an LA Officer through the VPP
3. Support from INREACH services
4. Access to the Youth Service
5. Managed moves, depending on the reason for behaviour
6. Bespoke packages at KS4

These approaches may be considered before contacting the LA. However, the Local Authority recognises that for a pupil dysregulating, two terms can be a long time, and this can be detrimental to the child. Therefore, in situations where the child's emerging need is behaviour based and the strategies recommended within this Policy and support provided through Universal Learning Provision are not helping alleviate the issue, a referral can be made to the Educational Psychology Service (EPS).

The LA offers a continuum of support. This consists of:

- Whole school support/advice/training
- Support for individual pupils in mainstream school
- Consideration for placement in the River Centre 3-16 Learning Community School via ALN Panel either as a revolving door, dual registration or main
- Consideration for placement in Ty Afon via Vulnerable Pupil Panel
- Consideration for placement in 'out of county' school via the ALN Panel

The River Centre 3-16 Learning Community

The River Centre is a special school for pupils who, despite school-based intervention, still experiences significant behavioural difficulties. Pupils who attend the River Centre have a Statement of Special Educational Needs or a school or Local Authority Individual Development Plan (IDP) for Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD).

Education Other Than at School (EOTAS)

EOTAS is education outside of school, arranged by the LA and schools for pupils for whom mainstream education is inappropriate. EOTAS takes place away from the school site and can be led by school staff.

The LA aims to work closely with pupils, parents and schools to seek positive improvements in the behaviour of pupils who present challenges, in order to improve their access to education and to reduce the risk of exclusion. To do this the LA commits to:

- clear, honest, and effective communication
- equity of support across Blaenau Gwent for pupils of all ages, backgrounds and ethnicities
- clear and consistent policies and processes
- ensuring that all pupils are in an education setting that best suit them, be that in a mainstream school, specialist school or alternative learning provision
- appropriate specialist provision within the authority for those pupils with the most acute behavioural and emotional needs.

Early Intervention

To support early behaviour identification of need for pupils failing to make progress at Universal Learning Provision Stage, the Local Authority will provide the following:

- Cluster level and individual school level ALN consultation meetings led by the Educational Psychology service
- Cluster level Early Years ALN consultation meetings led by the EYALNLO
- Cluster level support from the ALN Manager and ALN Statutory Officers, answering general and specific queries around SEN/ALN and behaviour, such as:
 - advice on provision mapping
 - advice on reasonable adjustments
 - advice on submitting an application to the ALN Panel
 - advice on the graduated response
 - advice on Welsh Government guidance on where to find sample policies
 - links to external agencies
 - advice on IDPs
 - advice on changes related to the ALN Act

- ALNCo forum which takes place on a half termly basis, chaired by the Principal Education Psychologist
- A comprehensive training programme, offered by both the EPS and Inclusive Practice Service (IPS)

Blaenau Gwent ALN and Vulnerable Learners Panel

ALN Panel

For pupils whose needs are more complex and require further support, and a possible change of placement, the school will be required to submit an application to the ALN Panel with parental and child agreement, where capacity is not an issue and school and other agency engagement. With this, they will need to demonstrate the support provided through the pupil's Pastoral Support Plans along with evidence of impact of any support already put in place. Pupils should be at school IDP level before being referred to ALN Panel.

Types of support/intervention that may be agreed include:

- Referral to Educational Psychology Service
- Local Authority or school to consider an IDP
- Educational Psychology Service for support or assessment

The ALN Reform agenda has also made it clear that some learners will not fall within the criteria for ALN Panel determination, but still have other identified needs and in some cases behavioural considerations. In these circumstances, the Inclusion team has established a Vulnerable Learners' Panel (VLP) and this group of key stakeholders will assess the learners' requirements and consider appropriate provision. The panel will be led by the Senior Education Welfare Officer. There are clear links between the work of the VLP group and the ALN Panel to ensure that all learners needs are met in systemic and comprehensive way across the board.

9. Pastoral Support Plans (PSP) and Reduced Timetables (Modified Day)

Reduced Timetable – What is it?

All pupils are entitled to a full-time education. However, section 19 of the Education Act 1996 allows a Local Authority to reduce the full-time education offer, if it considered to be in the best interests of the child. A reduced timetable can only take place through a Pastoral Support Plan (PSP) and with the agreement of the ALN Manager or Senior Education Welfare Officer. These are intended to be short term, school-based interventions, and the relevant paperwork, including review paperwork, must be submitted to the Local Authority Vulnerable Pupil Panel.

The Pastoral Support Plan (PSP) – What is it?

A Pastoral Support Plan (PSP) is a school-based intervention that is designed to support young people with health care needs and/or who may be anxious and phobic and/or who may be at risk of becoming disaffected through repeated fixed-term exclusion or permanent exclusion. PSPs are designed to be a short-

term intervention tool which is regularly reviewed and leads to the reintegration of the learner to full-time education (Appendix 4)

When to use a PSP?

National guidance recommends that a PSP should be considered where one or more of the following apply:

- A pupil who has had two or more fixed term exclusions in what period?
- A pupil who has had one fixed term exclusion of ten days or more is this always necessary e.g. setting off a fire alarm
- A pupil who is at risk of permanent exclusion
- A pupil who is at risk of exclusion
- A pupil who has medical and/or is anxious/phobic and/or whose behaviour is rapidly deteriorating and where there is previous planning to support behaviour

If a pupil is returning from an exclusion of ten days or more it is recommended that a PSP is developed prior to the pupil returning to school. This will enable the programme to support the reintegration process once the pupil returns to school. The PSP is designed to bring together views and solutions from a variety of perspectives. It is a multi-agency meeting with a focus on the needs of the pupil. It includes views of parents or carers, the pupil, the school and other services involved with the pupil. The PSP is an outcome driven plan with targets set for the pupil, the school, the family and other agencies involved in supporting change. A PSP;

- Is usually school based
- Is time-limited
- has smart targets with practical strategies
- is overseen by a school leader e.g. Headteacher, ALNCO, or another member of the Senior Management Team
- follows a standard format so involves minimum administration
- includes the views of the child or young person and their family

NB. The decision to implement a PSP is made in conjunction with the school, appropriate Local Authority Representative, pupil and family.

Monitoring Impact

The impact of interventions for behaviour by the Local Authority will be measured using the following key data:

- Reduction in fixed-term and permanent exclusions
- Increase in attendance percentages
- Improvement in pupil progress
- Reduction in the number of pupils with behavioural, emotional and social needs at risk of exclusion
- Reduction in the number of pupils with behavioural, emotional and social needs being placed out-of-county
- Reduction in the number of referrals to panel
- Reduction in reduced timetables and Pastoral Support Plans (PSP) in place

10. Pupils Excluded from School

Decisions to exclude learners should be taken very seriously and only as a last resort. Exclusions should **only** take place:

- in response to serious breaches of the school's behaviour policy and
- if allowing the learner to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the learner or others in the school.

NB. It is only the Head Teacher or Senior Teacher with delegated responsibility when the Head Teacher is absent, that can exclude a pupil.

Guidance relating to fixed-term and permanent exclusions can be found in Exclusion from Schools and Pupil Referral Units:

- [Exclusion from schools and pupil referral units 225/2019](#)
- Exclusion from Schools and Pupil Referral Units 171/201
- BG Exclusion Policy

11. Managed Moves

A managed move could be an appropriate strategy for the following pupils:

- Pupils for whom there is a genuine belief that a fresh start would be beneficial. However, it is essential to establish the core reasons for the problems being experienced and/or behaviours displayed by the pupil prior to consideration of a managed move.
- Pupils who find that attendance at their current school is negatively affecting their emotional well-being.
- Pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties who have received a variety of supportive strategies in their school with limited success.
- Pupils who are risk of permanent exclusion but who might succeed in a new placement.
- Pupils reinstated into a school by an independent appeal panel following a permanent exclusion but where reintegration proves to be impractical.

[Effective managed moves: A fresh start at school for children and young people 096/2011](#)

12. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated considering any legislative changes. The LA will monitor how effective schools and other educational settings are in meeting the needs of children and young people via:

- Monitoring Challenge Support and Intervention Programme
- Estyn reports
- Independent consultant reviews
- Specialist staff visits and reports

- A range of self-evaluation processes
- Analysis of relevant data (including exclusions, attendance, referrals to specialist settings, pupils accessing alternative settings, monitoring of bullying and restricted physical interventions)

The work of the LA will be reviewed against service standards, statutory responsibilities, and national and local performance indicators.

DRAFT

APPENDICES

Appendix 1	Universal Assessment Tools
Appendix 2	Behaviour Checklist
Appendix 3	Behaviour Guidance Matrix
Appendix 4	Pastoral Support Plan (Primary and Secondary Schools)
Appendix 4a	Pastoral Support Plan Guidance Notes and check list of interventions
Appendix 5	A Graduated Response - Model of Support

- [Welsh Government Inclusion & Pupil Support Document](#)
- [Exclusion from schools and pupil referral units 225/2019](#)
- [Practical approaches to behaviour management in the classroom. A handbook for classroom teachers in primary schools 117/2012](#)
- [Practical approaches to behaviour management in the classroom. A handbook for classroom teachers in secondary schools 086/2010](#)
- [Effective managed moves: A fresh start at school for children and young people 096/2011](#)
- [Rights, respect, equality: Statutory guidance for governing bodies of maintained schools 2019](#)

Universal Assessment Tools

Universally available assessments to help identify pupil needs may include the following:

- Boxall Profile
- Pupil Attitudes to Self and School (PASS)
- CAT4 SAS (Standardised Assessment Score)
- A range of sensory and behaviour checklists are available in the 'Beyond Behaviours' Mona Delahooke, PhD (2019).

Further information can be accessed through the Welsh Government's Inclusion and Pupil Support web pages www.wales.gov.uk/inclusionandpupilsupport

Behaviour Checklist

Does the child display...?	Have you already tried...?
Has there been a recent or past bereavement?	Rainbow Trust CRUSE
Is there a history of ACES/family issues?	Families First Helping Hands Barnados Team around the Family
Has eyesight been checked?	Opticians
Has hearing been checked?	Audiologist
Do they have any Speech and Language difficulties?	Referral to SALT
Do they have a reading difficulty?	ULP for reading
Do they have a mathematics difficulty?	ULP for mathematics
Have they got poor working memory?	Precision teaching, working memory games Kim's game
Do they have concentration difficulties?	'Now, next then' boards Short/clear instructions. Use of Timers
Is the pupil EAL?	Follow EAL strategies in Hwb
Is the pupil MEAGRT?	Look at cultural differences. One page Profile (liaise with family)
Does the pupil have difficulties with friendships?	SociallySpeaking Circle time Buddy
Is the pupil a young carer?	Young carers
Does the child bully or get bullied?	KIVA, NSPCC, School policy based on guidance
Has the child a sibling with an ALN?	Young carers
Has the pupil got a medical need?	Referral to Occupational Therapy or health and any support groups
Is the child displaying attention seeking behaviours?	Give role of responsibility, Become a buddy mentor,
Has the pupil got a diagnosed medical condition?	If on medication have medication levels been checked?
Does the child have somewhere safe to go?	Calm down space, stamping board, breathing exercise reminders, mindfulness
Has the child moved house a lot?	Transition objects, attachment strategies
Has the child ASD tenancies	SPACE Wellbeing, ND Pathway
Is the child MAT	Reasonable adjustments in place

This list is not exhaustive but provides a range of avenues to explore prior to referral.

Behaviour Guidance Matrix	
Positive Behaviour	Low Tariff / Risk Behaviour
Targets being achieved Following instructions Adhering to class/school rules Polite & respectful to pupils & staff Focussed on task Question and challenge appropriately & offer opinions Empathy and emotionally considerate Share / co-operate Self-control / honesty Positive modelled behaviour Understanding positive behaviour	Passive Easily distracted Off task Pushing / shoving / 1 punch (NO INITIAL ADULT INTERVENTION OR PHYSICAL MARKS) Disrupting learning of others Teasing / name calling Answering back (tone/verbal and non-verbal language) Smirking Stealing Swearing Walking around class when they shouldn't be
Medium Tariff / Risk Behaviour	High Tariff / Risk Behaviour
Fighting (adult intervention – verbal) Attempting/ threatening to leave school premises Leaving classroom without adult permission Stealing Swearing in context Disrupting the session Refusing to comply with staff	Confrontation & aggression Fighting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - pre-meditated - malicious - physical harm - physical intervention required Leaving school premises Sexual / racial abuse (aggressive) Damage to property Stealing Victimisation Swearing at staff Disrupting whole class learning Bullying (consistent & persistent) Abuse of staff / authority Deformation of character Weapon brought to school Substance misuse

BLAENAU GWENT	
PASTORAL SUPPORT PROGRAMME - Primary and Secondary schools	
Name of School:	
Purpose of Pastoral Support Programme:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To improve academic attainment, attendance and/or prevent alternative provision / permanent exclusion 2. To support the student to manage his/her behaviour/attendance/academic performance. 3. To identify precise and realistic behavioural/academic/attendance outcomes for him/her to work towards. 	
PUPIL NAME:	YEAR GROUP:

NAME OF CONTRIBUTORS	AGENCY

DATE THE PROGRAMME WAS:	
INITIATED:	
REVIEW 1:	
REVIEW 2:	
REVIEW 3:	
REVIEW 4:	
REVIEW 5:	
REVIEW 6:	

(Add further reviews as required)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:			
Primary / Nursery School:		DoB	
Address:	Contact Details:		
	Home:		
	Mobile:		
Nationality:	Ethnicity:		
Mother tongue:	Gender: M / F / Other		
FSM: Yes/No	Medical info: Yes/No		
Other: MAT, EAL etc	<i>If Yes please give details:</i>		

ACADEMIC INFORMATION:				
Foundation Outcomes:				
TAs KS2	En	Ma	Sci	Wel
CATs (Year ?)	Verbal	Non-verb	Quant	TSAS
TAs KS3	En	Ma	Sci	Wel
Literacy/Numeracy Please state name of test & date:	Reading Standardised Score:	Spelling Standardised Score:	Numeracy Standardised Score:	Attitudinal Survey results e.g. PASS
KS4 – (Predicted Grades & Course name/title e.g GCSE, Entry Level & Exam Board)	En	Ma	Sci	Wel
Predicted Grades in Options/Courses				
Additional Needs:				
ALN Register?	YES/NO	Stage of Graduated Response: U T S		
Support entitlement:				
Initial Statement/IDP date:				
Last Statement/IDP Review date:				
Educational Psychologist Consultation: Name: Date:				

SAFEGUARDING INFORMATION:	
Looked after by the LA? If so which LA?	Yes / No / Previous Involvement
Social Worker (name and contact details):	
Child Protection Register?	Yes / No / Previous Involvement
Child in Need?	Yes / No / Previous Involvement
Risk Assessment? <i>(if yes, the risk assessment must be completed and attached to this form)</i>	Yes / No
Care and Assessment Plan (CASP)	Yes / No

ATTENDANCE CONCERNS?			
<i>Please delete year groups to reflect relevant phase i.e. Primary / Secondary</i>			
Truancy			YES/NO
Term Attendance	%	E.W.O. Involvement?	YES/NO
e.g. Autumn 12	%	E.W.O. Name:	
	%	Action by E.W.O / School	Date
	%		
	%		
	%		
Reception / Yr 7 Attendance			
Unauthorised Absence			
Yr 1 / Yr 8 Attendance			
Unauthorised Absence			
Yr 2 / Yr 9 Attendance			
Unauthorised Absence			
Yr 3 / Yr 10 Attendance			
Unauthorised Absence			
Yr 4 / Yr 11 Attendance			
Unauthorised Absence			
Yr 5 Attendance			
Unauthorised Absence			
Yr 6 Attendance			
Unauthorised Absence			

OTHER AGENCIES involved with the pupil and their involvement:			
AGENCY	CONTACT DETAILS	INVOLVEMENT	DATES
Children's Services			
CAHMS			
Restorative Justice			
Careers Wales			
EWO			
OASIS (Youth Worker)			
Learning Coach			
Key Worker – TAF			
Sexual Health Service			
Young Carers			
Domestic Abuse Services (DAS)			
Prevent			
School Based Counselling			
School Nurse			
CRI (substance misuse support)			
Youth Offending Service			
GP			
YISP			
Police Liaison Officer			
The River Centre (EOTAS)			
CLA Worker			
Other			

SUMMARY OF BEHAVIOURAL, EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL DIFFICULTIES AT START OF THE PSP:

Blank area for summary of behavioural, emotional and social difficulties at start of the PSP.

EXCLUSIONS:

Internal:			
Date initiated	Length in lessons/days	Reason	Parents informed

Fixed Term:			
Date initiated	Length in days	Reason	Return Date

Governors Discipline Committee:		
Date	Parents	Outcome

Initial Meeting:			
Venue:	Time:	Chaired by:	Minuted by:
Present		Relationship / Reason	

Risk of Permanent Exclusion : (1 = extremely low; 5 = significant risk; 10 = extremely high)									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Student Commitment to (e.g. current mainstream placement)									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Record of meeting:									
Strengths / What is going well?									
Summary of Barriers to Learning.									
Outline terms of behaviour contract. What will help?									
Pupil's views:									
Parent's / carer's views e.g. background									
Pupils Targets:									By when
Success criteria									By when
Parents can contribute by:									By when
School can contribute by:									By when

Action to be taken	Person Responsible
(To include rewards and incentives, consequences and sanctions)	
Pupil targets: 1. 2. 3. (Please add other targets as required)	
Date & time of next PSP review: Signed: _____ Parent: _____ Pupil: _____ School Representative: _____	

DRAFT

REVIEW 1

Targets to be reviewed. Has success criteria been achieved?
(Review should be at least termly but normally every 6 weeks)

Venue:	Time:	Chaired by:	Minuted by:
Present	Relationship / Reason		

Risk of permanent exclusion: (1 = extremely low; 5 = significant risk; 10 = extremely high)										
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Student Commitment to (e.g. current mainstream placement)										
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Any changes/updates to the main PSP document e.g. SEN status, FSM etc										YES / NO
Record of meeting: Include relevant information, update/progress since last meeting										
Strengths / What is going well?										
Summary of Barriers to Learning										

Outline terms of behaviour contract What will help?	
Pupil's views:	
Parent's / carers views e.g. background	
Pupils Targets:	By when
Success criteria	By when

Parents can contribute by:	By when
School can contribute by:	By when
Action to be taken	Person Responsible
(To include rewards and incentives, consequences and sanctions)	
Pupil targets: 1. 2. 3. (Please add other targets as required)	
Date & time of next PSP review: Signed: _____ Parent: _____ Pupil: _____ School Representative: _____	

REVIEW 2
Targets to be reviewed. Has success criteria been achieved?

Venue:	Time:	Chaired by:	Minuted by:
Present		Relationship / Reason	

Risk of permanent exclusion : (1 = extremely low; 5 = significant risk; 10 = extremely high)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

Pupil / Student Commitment to (e.g. current mainstream placement):

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

Any changes/updates to the main PSP document e.g. SEN status, FSM etc YES / NO

Record of meeting: Include relevant information, update/progress since last meeting

Parents' / Carers' Comments:

Action to be taken	Person Responsible
---------------------------	---------------------------

(To include rewards and incentives, consequences and sanctions)	
---	--

Pupil targets:
 1.
 2.
 3.
 (Please add other targets as required)

Date & time of next PSP review:

Signed:

Parent: _____ Pupil: _____

School Representative: _____

Pastoral Support Plan Guidance Notes and Check List of Interventions

Please note that this document contains suggested strategies specific to individual schools which can be used for guidance but does not form part of the PSP.

Current intervention strategies: (Please tick)			
Handwriting	<input type="checkbox"/>	SEAL	<input type="checkbox"/>
Commit	<input type="checkbox"/>	Speech and Language	<input type="checkbox"/>
Read, Write Inc	<input type="checkbox"/>	Life Skills	<input type="checkbox"/>
Numeracy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Social Skills	<input type="checkbox"/>
SpLA	<input type="checkbox"/>	Circle of Friends	<input type="checkbox"/>
Behaviour Management/ Youth Work	<input type="checkbox"/>	Spelling	<input type="checkbox"/>
Daily reading Sessions (LS)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Catch up Reading (MS)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Educational Psychology	<input type="checkbox"/>	OASIS	<input type="checkbox"/>
Speech and Language	<input type="checkbox"/>	Counselling	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Youth Worker	<input type="checkbox"/>
Method / Strategies to support pupils / students with SEBD (Please tick all that apply) to support Students with SEBD (Please tick all that			
Positive praise and encouragement	<input type="checkbox"/>	Careful planning, eg. Seating plan, group organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reward System	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mentoring, discussion with pupil	<input type="checkbox"/>
Variety of teaching activities to suit different learning styles	<input type="checkbox"/>	Contact with pupils' head of year, SENCO etc to monitor pupil progress	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clear instructions and guidelines stating high expectations	<input type="checkbox"/>	Detentions for poor behaviour, lateness etc	<input type="checkbox"/>
Try not to raise your voice as this can escalate the behaviour, speak in a calm, firm tone	<input type="checkbox"/>	Early intervention, distraction, fast pace of lesson etc	<input type="checkbox"/>
Extra help/support with class work	<input type="checkbox"/>	Use of SFL	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Point out to pupil when he/she speaks in an inappropriate manner/ tone	<input type="checkbox"/>

Checklist of Interventions

Intervention	Date	Evidence
Change of class		
Change of subject teacher		
Learning Mentor		
Peer Support		
Parents/carer meeting		
Pastoral Support Plan		
School based counselling		
Reduced timetable		
Alternative curriculum		
Work based training		
AEN advisor team advice, support and guidance		
Educational Psychology advice		
Educational Welfare advice		
Outside agency involvement		
Other interventions – give details		

DRAFT

A Graduated Response - Model of Support

The following does not represent an exhaustive list of support services and/or interventions. In this respect, examples of support at different levels are provided and should inform individual schools' Provision Maps.

Universal Provision

Breakfast Club
Buddy System
Children's Rights Charter
Communities First
Internal Exclusion
Learning Coaches
National Qualification Award (Child behaviour. Working in Community etc)
Parents and Children Together
Parents Evening
Multi Agency Coffee Morning
Participation Agenda
Police Liaison Officer
Positive Behaviour Management
Restorative Justice
Rewards & Sanctions
Safe Area – Chat, Chill/Time Out Room
School Council (Pupil Voice, Parent Voice)
School Health Nurse
School Nurse
SEAL
Training for example: Team Teach, ASD
Well-being, Self-Evaluation Policy
Whole School Approach to Positive Behaviour/Code of Conduct/Rewards and Sanctions

Targeted Support

Universal
Children and Families Panel (CAF)
Circle of Friends
ComIT
Educational Psychology Service (EPS)
Education Welfare Service (EWS)
Family First Attendance Group
IBP
Inclusive Practice Service
Nurture Areas
Pastoral Support Programme
Restorative Justice
School Health Nurse
SEAL
Silver Seal

Specialist Support

CAMHS
ComIT
EPS
EWO
Families First Crime Reduction Initiative
Flying Start
Inspire
Managed Move Process (secondary)
Pastoral Support Plan
Regional Safeguarding Board
Restorative Justice
Restorative Work from the Police
School Based Counsellor
School Health Nurse
Social Services
YISP
YOS
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
Low incident-high cost residential placements

Admission Guidance

August 2022



Cyngor Bwrdeisdref Sirol

Blaenau Gwent

County Borough Council

CONTENTS

	Page Nos
1. Introduction	3
2. Admission to School – In Year Transfers	3
3. Making an In-Year Application	4
4. In Year Admissions Process	4
5. Parent / Carer Preference	5
6. School Statutory Duty to Admit Pupils	6
7. Refusal to Admit Pupils with Challenging Behaviours	6
8. Hard to Place	7
9. Managed Moves	10

Blaenau Gwent in Year Application Process

Includes In Year Transfer process, Hard to Place and Managed Move protocols.

1. INTRODUCTION

The School Admissions Code places duties and expectations upon Schools, Local Authorities and Admissions Authorities e.g., VA Schools.

The purpose of this document is to outline the key changes with regards to In- Year Admissions, the Hard to Place Protocol and Managed Moves and to outline a transparent process that will enable all schools and the local authority to meet their statutory duties around the provision of school places.

These protocols have been developed by Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, in association with the Admissions Forum, and take into consideration government statutory guidance and departmental advice;

- School Admissions Code,
- School Admissions Appeal Code,
- Exclusions from schools and pupil referral units in Wales, November 2019
- Blaenau Gwent Hard to Place Protocol.
- The Education Act 2002
- The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018

For the purpose of this document the term 'school' refers to maintained schools and independent schools

2. ADMISSION TO SCHOOLS – IN YEAR TRANSFERS

Children admitted to the reception year group of an infant/ primary school, those children and those transferring from year 6 in a junior/ primary school to year 7 in a secondary school apply to do so during the normal admissions round.

Where the number of applications for that year group is at or below the schools published Pupil Admission Number (PAN) all children will be offered places. However, where the number of applications for a school is greater than the number of places available the Admissions Authority – the Local Authority (LA) for maintained and Voluntary Controlled schools and the Governing Body for Voluntary Aided Schools must apply their published over subscription criteria. Any children who, because of the Admissions authority's oversubscription criteria, do not receive an offer of a place will be added to the school's waiting list. The waiting list will be ranked according to the published criteria. Parent/carers will also be offered the right to appeal against this decision.

In addition to the normal admissions period applications can be made by parent/carers who wish to transfer their child from one institution to another throughout the academic year. Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's School Admissions team currently co-ordinate this activity on behalf of all local schools except for faith and foundation schools.

As with applications within the normal admissions round, any children who are not offered a school place following an in-year admission application will be added to the requested school's waiting list. Their place on the waiting list will be ranked according to

the admission authority's published oversubscription criteria. Parent/carers will be offered the right of appeal against this decision.

3. MAKING AN IN-YEAR APPLICATION

Schools have identified key data and information required by any receiving school in advance of any pupil completing an In-Year admission. This will ensure the maximum success for any pupil changing school outside the normal admissions round. Information that is required via the in-year transfer information sheet by a receiving school includes;

- ALN status of applicant
- CLA status of applicant
- Attendance and exclusion data for current and previous school year
- Support service and other agency involvement with applicant
- Current levels of performance and details of qualifications currently undertaken by the applicant where relevant
- Details of any exclusions or behavioural issues for which additional support may be required at the receiving school.

The In-Year Admission application form has been developed to assist the admission process. This now needs to be completed online via the Blaenau Gwent website, paper copy applications can be issued on request. Any transfer request which is not accompanied by a fully completed application form will not be considered.

Completed application forms are to be forwarded to the School Admissions team at the LA by a pupil's current school. The LA will then forward the completed application to the requested school. On receipt of a completed application the process identified in Section 4 must be followed.

4. IN YEAR ADMISSIONS PROCESS

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, through the School Admissions team, must, on request, provide information to a parent/carer about the places still available in schools in the area. In order to achieve this, it is important that all schools provide the LA with up-to-date information on the number of places available in each year group. Application forms for both primary and secondary in-year admissions for all admissions authorities are available on the School Admissions page via the Blaenau Gwent website.

Primary and Secondary Schools

Parent/carers must complete Section A of the application form. It must then be returned to their current school. The current school will complete Section B and will forward the completed application to the School Admissions team at the LA who will then liaise with the requested school on the availability of places. Applications for an in-year admission will not be considered without this supplementary information.

The School Admissions team will communicate to the parent/carer the outcome of their application. The letter will explain whether their application has been successful, or, should it be unsuccessful, their right to appeal. Where a school operates as their own Admissions Authority, parent/carer will be advised that they need to contact the school directly to request an appeal form. The Governance Services team at the LA will coordinate appeals in circumstances where it has not been possible to offer a place in a maintained school.

When communicating the outcome of an application, the letter must provide the following information:

- The outcome of an application
- If an application has been unsuccessful the reason that the application has been unsuccessful
- The right to appeal against the refusal of a place and process to do so

NOTE –The same process will apply to all applications, including those moving into the area. The Local Authority Acknowledge the difficulty in receiving evidence/paperwork from another Local Authority, but this should not be a barrier to admit a pupil.

Where a secondary school has not provided a response on an application for an in-year transfer for an unplaced applicant within 10 days of receipt the LA will inform the school of its intention to use its powers of direction or its intention to seek secretary of state intervention.

It is anticipated that all applicants will be notified on the outcome of an application within 15 working days of the receipt of a completed application form (with section B completed). During this time, it is the responsibility of the LA, receiving school and current school to co-ordinate the completion of the remainder of the application form.

5. PARENT/CARER PREFERENCE

The duty to comply with parent/carer preference is not removed, despite an application to transfer a school place occurring outside of the normal admissions round. All Admissions Authorities have a duty to comply with parent/carer preference when there are sufficient places within the applicant's identified year group to facilitate this.

In the event that parent/carer preference cannot be met within the applicant's identified year group, the applicant will be provided with an opportunity to be added to the nominated school's waiting list. The School Admissions Code requires each Admissions Authority to maintain a clear, objective and fair waiting list for at least the first term of the academic year. Each child on the list will be ranked against the admission authority's published oversubscription criteria. Looked after children, previously looked after children and those allocated a place at the school in accordance with Blaenau Gwent's Hard to Place Protocol (See 7) must take precedence over those on a waiting list. In an instance where a school place cannot be offered the applicant must be given the right to appeal this decision.

6. SCHOOLS STATUTORY DUTY TO ADMIT PUPILS

As the Admissions Authority for Local Authority Maintained Schools the LA has the statutory ability to admit children to its schools, however, this would always be following consultation with the school leadership and/ or governing body, unless the child has a statement or a Local Authority IDP naming the school, or the child is 'new' into the LA with a statement or IDP and the ALN Panel agrees a particular school can meet need For other maintained schools the LA's powers of direction are identified below. A local authority has the power to direct the governing body of a maintained school for which they are not the admission authority to admit a child in their area even when the school is full. The local authority can only make such a direction in respect of a child in the local authority's area who has been refused entry to, or has been permanently excluded from, every suitable school within a reasonable distance. The local authority must choose a

school that is a reasonable distance from the child's home and from which the child is not permanently excluded.

Should an applicant be unplaced but not be eligible for the Hard to Place process it is expected that they are offered a place at the school for which they have applied. In circumstances where following negotiation a school refuses to admit an unplaced applicant and cannot provide sufficient rationale to support this decision the LA will seek to use its powers of direction or will seek the secretary of state to direct the school to admit.

7. REFUSAL TO ADMIT PUPILS WITH CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

Where the governing body of a school which does not wish to admit an unplaced child with challenging behaviour outside the normal admissions round, even though places are available, they must refer the case to the local authority for access under the Hard to Place Protocol.

Where the governing body of a school which does not wish to admit an unplaced child with challenging behaviour outside the normal admissions round, and there are no places available, they must refer the case to the local authority for access under the Hard to Place Protocol. This will normally only be appropriate where a school has a particularly high proportion of children with challenging behaviour or previously permanently excluded children.

However, the allocation of a place in accordance with the Hard to Place Protocol does not override parent/carer's right to appeal against refusal of a place at any school for which they have applied. If an application has been refused despite there being places available, the governing body must present their case for refusal, demonstrating how the admission of the child would prejudice the provision of efficient education or efficient use of resources.

In instances where a school wishes to refer an in-year transfer application from a child with an existing school place to the LA under the Hard to Place Protocol it must provide the Vulnerable Learner Panel with written evidence as to why the application should be considered. While not prescriptive the school must as a minimum demonstrate that the receiving school has already admitted a disproportionate number of pupils in the named year group through the normal In-Year Transfer Process, Managed Moves or the Hard to Place Protocol and that how the challenging behaviour of the applicant will prejudice either the provision of efficient education to the existing cohort or the efficient use of resources. Information demonstrating the pupils challenging behaviour should also be provided.

Parent/carer preference is to be taken into consideration but is, ultimately, not the decisive factor when allocating a school place under the Hard to Place Protocol, given that schools are expected to admit a fair number of children with challenging behaviour. Should a parent/carer apply for a school place as an In-Year Admission but be allocated an alternative place under the Hard to Place Protocol they are entitled to appeal the decision not to offer a place at their chosen school. Where an Independent Appeals Panel considers the admission would not be prejudicial to the school or other children and make the decision to admit the child then it is this decision which takes precedence over the allocation of a place under the Hard to Place Protocol.

A school will not be considered for a placement under the Hard to Place Protocol where an applicant has had either an unsuccessful appeal for a school place (on the grounds of

challenging behaviour) or has undertaken an unsuccessful managed move at the school in the 12 months prior to their referral at that school.

If, at the point that the Vulnerable Learner Panel meets to discuss an applicant's referral, the referring school has not been removed from consideration through either appeals panel or mitigating circumstances (identified through the Hard to Place Panel placement process) it will be included as a potential placement destination.

Any referral to the Vulnerable Learner Panel on the grounds of challenging behaviour must be received by the LA within 5 days of the receipt of an In-Year Admission application.

8. HARD TO PLACE CHILDREN:

Sometimes children can find themselves without a school place during the year, for example, because their personal circumstances are such that they have had to move home; or are looked after children; or they have been permanently excluded from their school. In some cases, these children may also exhibit challenging behaviour.

There is often a balance to be achieved between finding a place quickly, perhaps in an undersubscribed school or one facing challenging circumstances and finding a place which is appropriate for the child. It is also recognised that no school should be requested to take an excessive or unreasonable number of pupils who have been excluded from other schools or are otherwise 'hard to place'.

While the Hard to Place Protocol is a means of securing places for hard to place children it does not mean that an application from a hard to place child should automatically be referred to the Hard to Place Protocol. A parent/carer can still apply for a place at any school as an in-year admission and is entitled to an appeal if they are not offered that place.

For a pupil to be eligible to be considered under the Hard to Place protocol, school must demonstrate that a pupil can be identified once as a minimum from each of the lists of children identified below;

- Children from the criminal justice system or Pupil Referral Unit who need to be reintegrated into mainstream education
- Children who have been out of education for two months or more,
- Children of Gypsies, Roma, Travellers, refugees and asylum seekers.
- Children who are homeless
- Children with unsupportive family backgrounds for whom a place has not been sought.
- Children who are carers
- Children with additional learning needs (ALN), disabilities or medical conditions that do not have a statement or IDP/IEP

In addition to the minimum requirements the following will be considered as hard to place attributes:

- Children in year 11, that have significantly challenging behaviours and who have moved into the authority.
- Children who are permanently excluded, including those moved into the authority (MIA)
- Children leaving custody

- Children who have been withdrawn from schools by their parent/carers, following several fixed term exclusions, due to social or behavioural difficulties or additional educational needs, and are unable to find another place
- Children whose parent/carers have been unable to find them a school place after moving into the area or moving around the Borough.
- Children without a school place and with a history of serious attendance problems. This must have included previous involvement with the education welfare service. Children, without a statement/IDP, with significant challenging behaviour. (i.e. a high number of previous exclusions (including internal exclusions) and/or accessing alternative provision.

The above list is not exhaustive, and it is recognised that some children not included on this list will be considered 'vulnerable' and may be required to have their case considered within the protocol. Schools will need to demonstrate how they perceive a child to be vulnerable and hard to place.

Challenging behaviour will normally be defined as;

- Children whose behaviour has resulted in multiple fixed term exclusions or multiple internal exclusions within a period of one academic year preceding the request for a school place.
- Children whose behaviour has resulted in a permanent exclusion or managed move within the last 12 months preceding the request for a school place.
- Significant unauthorised school attendance, in the current academic year linked to behavioural or emotional issues.

Issues relating to non-attendance in isolation of any other factors will not be considered under the Hard to Place Protocol.

Where a parent/carer has elected to home educate and subsequently requires a school place, a child will only be eligible for Hard to place if there is evidence that the child has not been receiving an education. Where there is evidence that a pupil has not been receiving an education, the Panel may consider parent/carer preference and consider returning the child to their school of origin. However, if a child was previously permanently excluded from their school of origin or the Panel deems it is not in the best interests of the pupil to return to their school of origin, an alternative school placement will be sought. Schools best placed to support the child's educational and welfare needs will be considered in the first instance.

Referral Under the Hard to Place Protocol

An officer of the LA can refer an individual under the Hard to Place Protocol. It is anticipated that any individual who has been identified as unplaced will be referred immediately following the local authority becoming aware of their status.

Any school receiving an application outside the normal applications round can refer any applicant under the Hard to Place Protocol if they consider that the applicant satisfies the criteria referred to in the Hard to place Protocol. However, as noted above if a parent/carer has applied for a place as an In-Year Admission and a place is not subsequently offered the parent/carer is entitled to appeal this decision. The outcome of an independent School Admissions Appeal will take precedent over the Hard to place Protocol.

All referrals to the Hard to Place Protocol will be reviewed within 15 working days of the referral date.

On receiving a referral from a school the Vulnerable Learner Panel will consider the application and decide as to whether the referral meets the criteria for placement on the grounds of challenging behaviour.

Any referral under the Hard to Place Protocol that does not meet the agreed criteria will be referred back to the named school for admittance as an in-year admission. The Vulnerable Learner Panel reaching this determination will provide the school full reasoning for this decision. Schools accept that the Vulnerable Learner Panel's decision in this matter is final, and all pupils will be admitted within 5 days of receipt of the Vulnerable Learner Panel's decision.

Any referral not accompanied by suitable supporting evidence from the school will not be considered. Schools will instead be required to admit any pupils as an In- Year Transfer (in order to reduce the period of time a young person is unplaced). Pupils are to be admitted as an In-Year Transfer within 5 days of receipt of the Vulnerable Learner Panel's decision.

Vulnerable Learner Panel Decision

Any school required to admit a pupil under the Hard to Place Protocol will be provided with the full reasoning for this placement and any supporting evidence and information that would assist with the pupil's admission and transition to the school.

Once a placement decision has been made, the Chair will notify the school that has been identified, in the first instance. The LA's Admissions Department will formally notify the school and parent/carer. Schools accept the Panel's decision and must contact the parent/carer to arrange the admission within seven calendar days. The school must also notify the Admissions Department of the admission date confirming that the child is on roll.

In the event that a school refuses access of a pupil they must provide a written response to the Corporate Director of Education within seven calendar days. In this event the LA will seek to use its powers of direction or will seek the secretary of state to direct the school to admit.

9.0 MANAGED MOVES

All schools in Blaenau Gwent have made a significant effort to avoid permanent exclusion. However, there are occasions where after lengthy and concerted efforts it is clear that it is not in the pupil's or school's best interest to continue with the placement, but mainstream education is nevertheless appropriate. In these circumstances one of the strategies that could be considered is a managed move. It must be recognised that this is not a means of avoiding permanent exclusion as in the most severe and persistent cases the problems often recur in the receiving school.

A managed move is a managed transfer, over a period of time, of a child from one school to another. A managed move consists of a formal agreement between the child's parent/carer, the head teachers of both the referring (home) school (School A) and the receiving school (School B). A managed move provides a child with the opportunity of a 'fresh start' in another school and is a means of positively re-engaging the pupil in education.

Generally, a pupil should not participate in more than two managed moves in one academic year.

Principles of a Managed Move

It is seen to be in the best interest of those pupils who are experiencing difficulties, which could appear to be leading towards permanent exclusion. When the full range of pastoral support strategies (including a pastoral support programme) have been resourced and tried but have failed to reach the young person.

When a 'new start' at another school is seen positively by all concerned and has not been used as a threat or punishment by either the school, or the parent/carers. This is a possible, negotiated strategy, not an imposition. It aims to keep pupils included who might otherwise become further disaffected.

A managed move is a voluntary arrangement, and no pressure must be put on to a Headteacher or a parent/carer if either feels that the move would not be in the child's best interests.

Criteria for a Managed Move:

A pupil with an otherwise good record has committed an offence that might lead to permanent exclusion, but the school feels the pupil would benefit from another chance.

There has been an irrevocable breakdown of relationships between a pupil and staff, because of significantly challenging behaviours displayed.

There has been an irrevocable breakdown of relationships between a pupil and his or her peers, because of significantly challenging behaviours displayed

A pupil with a record of inappropriate and disruptive behaviour or poor attendance, because of inappropriate and disruptive behaviour applies for an in-year transfer.

There has been an irrevocable breakdown in relationships between the pupil and staff or peers resulting in a pupil's low or non-attendance.

Where a managed move is proposed to resolve an attendance issue the school must demonstrate that the pupil in question has been referred to the Education Welfare Service. The managed move must be endorsed by the LAs Senior Education Welfare Service, where it is anticipated the move may resolve the existing barriers to attendance.

The above list is not intended to be a complete list of scenarios and there may be other occasions where a Managed Move is considered appropriate

The Procedure for a Managed Move

Managed moves will need to be referred to the Vulnerable Learner Panel. Prior to requesting a managed move, Headteachers must satisfy themselves that all possible preventative procedures have been met in full. Headteachers must make available all records in respect of:

- Pastoral support programme
- School's intervention and support given in respect of issues causing concern
- Referrals to external agencies
- ALN stage, provision of support and involvement of external agencies (if applicable)
- Assessment information
- Attendance

- Parent/carer interviews/discussions
- Strengths and potential areas for future development – a positive statement detailing the pupil’s strong points/subject preferences
- Key Stage 4 pupils – record of options

A system of managed moves works by negotiating a transfer of the pupil into a new school as a means of positively re-engaging the pupil in education. In the first instance, the head teacher or the head teacher’s representative of School A, will have discussed the consideration of a managed move with the parent/carer and child.

Where a Managed Move is being considered because of a pupil’s behavioural issues, this should only be considered when School A’s own behaviour management strategies and a pastoral support programme of at least 16 weeks has been resourced, tried and failed. Following agreement at the Vulnerable Learner Panel, a further pastoral support plan should then be set up for the pupil at the Initial Managed Move Meeting with School B to support the pupil. On occasions when a single incident occurs that would precipitate a permanent exclusion and without a background history of significant behavioural disruption, a pastoral support programme may not have been drawn up and exhausted by School A. In these circumstances, it is essential that a pastoral support programme is set up as soon as possible by School B to support the Managed Move.

An Initial Managed Move Meeting is arranged by the Headteacher’s representative from School A. Those in attendance will be the representatives from Schools A and B, an Inclusion Officer, parent/carer and the pupil. The managed move protocols will be explained, and all parties will provide written confirmation of their understanding and agreement to the parent/carer agreement (see appendix 3). Targets will be set to support the managed move process and information will be shared by parties (see appendix 3). An agreed start date and induction process will be agreed at the initial meeting. The pupil will then continue to attend the School B daily as agreed for the period of the Managed Move

The pupil remains on roll of the home school but has a fresh start and attends the new school for a period of up to 12 term weeks as a “dual registered pupil”. If the placement is successful, the pupil would then go onto the roll of the new school – School B.

The success of a managed move is based on targets set at the initial managed move meeting and the following:

- A pupil must have a good level of attendance and punctuality, as determined by the School B, during the period of the managed move.
- A pupil must have a good level of behaviour, as determined by the School B, during the period of the managed move
- A pupil must engage in learning in all aspects of their curriculum whilst attending the School B, during the managed move period

The above targets will be recorded at the meeting and reviewed during the managed move process.

A Review Meeting will be convened by the School B at approximately 6 school weeks into the Managed Move. This Review Meeting will be organised in advance, on a date where all professionals, the parent/carer(s) and the pupil attend. It is at this point where targets set are discussed and/or amended, if appropriate. At this point any concerns can be raised by any party and discussed to support the managed move process.

The School B will convene, a final Review Meeting to take place at 12 school weeks into the Managed Move. It is at this point where all parties consider whether targets set have been achieved, thus determining the success of the managed move. If successful, parties will agree a date when a pupil is to be taken off the School A's roll and become single registered with the School B.

In extenuating circumstances (i.e. when a pupil has had a medical condition that can impact on the attendance target), a managed move may be extended. The length (generally a further 6 weeks) must be agreed with all parties and another Final Review meeting must be arranged.

At the Review Meeting, the Final Review Meeting or at any point during the period of the Managed Move, it may be determined that the Managed Move has been unsuccessful. The determination of whether the Managed Move is unsuccessful will rest with School B and their decision is final. There is no appeal route following a determination that the Managed Move is unsuccessful. All records from School B will be transferred to School A and the pupil will continue to attend School A as a registered pupil there.

If the Managed Move is deemed to be unsuccessful at a point other than the end of the agreed period or at the mid review stage of the Managed Move, the Managed Move will come to end with immediate effect. Non-exhaustive examples of when a Managed Move may come to an end earlier than the agreed period of the Managed Move could be where the pupil displays poor behaviour or fails to attend School B under the Managed Move.

Should the Managed Move be deemed to be unsuccessful; the pupil will return to School A.

There is a clear understanding that School B does not have the ability to permanently exclude the pupil during the period of the Managed Move or at its conclusion. School A retains responsibility for the pupil until such time as the pupil is placed on roll of School B or returned to School A.

A managed move would not normally be appropriate where a year group is full but could be accommodated in exceptional circumstances with the agreement of head teachers.

All school records (as referred to in the Managed Moves Protocol) will be transferred to the receiving school for the Managed Move placement period. If the Managed Move is unsuccessful subsequent transfer applications to the School B may lead to the transfer application being referred by School B to the Hard to Place Protocol. School B will not be considered for placement if there has been an unsuccessful Managed Move for the same pupil in the 12 months prior to the referral.

Procedure for Managed Move where the Pupil has Additional Learning Needs and/or a Disability

A child with a statement or Local Authority IDP/ would not normally be considered for a managed move, evidence should be gathered for submission to the ALN Panel for a change of placement. Where a child has a statement or Local Authority based IDP, the consideration of the managed move should only be undertaken as part of a Person-Centred Planning (PCP) review process.

Pupils with a school based IDP can be considered under the Managed Move Protocol or the school can request that the Local Authority considers taking responsibility for the IDP through the ALN Panel submission process. A PCP review meeting will need to be held

and the outcome of the PCP, PCP report form, EPS report, outside agency reports and the views and wishes of the parent and child is submitted with the Panel Submission paperwork to the ALN Panel,

Where a managed move takes place for a pupil that has a statement or Local Authority IDP, School A should always discuss the arrangements with the Additional Learning Needs Manager prior to the managed move being considered.

Where a pupil has ALN, but does not have a statement or IDP, the IDP Statutory Process should commence, and the procedure outlined above should be always followed.

Procedure for a Managed Move for a Child Looked After

A looked after child would not normally be considered for a managed move. Should a managed move be considered for a looked after child it can only take place with the consent and support of the CLA Education Officer and form part of the child's Education care plan.

Registration and Roll Arrangements

School A keeps the pupil on roll during the trial period and includes him/her in all attendance statistics, local authority census, PLASC etc. School A maintains the pupil's record with an enrolment status of "M" (main dual-registration)

Although not placed on the roll, school B is responsible for recording the pupil's attendance and for feeding back to school A on a weekly basis. School B maintains the pupil's record with an enrolment status of "S" (subsidiary dual-registration). This enables the school to allocate the pupil to a tutor group, register, and generate a timetable.

It would be the responsibility of school A to keep the Inclusion Officer informed of progress of the managed move and in addition the Additional Learning Needs Team in the case of a child with a statement.

Other Factors

Every school involved in a Managed Move should identify a single person in their respective school who will manage all Managed Moves regardless of year group. This may be the Headteacher or a member of the leadership team.

Only the Headteacher of School A can exclude the pupil. School B would need to consider whether the actions of the pupils would warrant the termination of the Managed Move. It is important that School B keeps School A advised of any issues arising during the period of the Managed Move so that appropriate decisions can be taken by School A in a timely manner.

The pupil needs to be committed to the Managed Move process. There should be time allowed for the pupil and parent/carers to reflect on the suggestion of a Managed Move before the initial managed move meeting is scheduled. A copy of the managed move protocols should be provided to the parent/carer and pupil prior to the initial meeting taking place.

The pupil's transition into School B as part of the Managed Move must be on a full-time basis and will similarly need to be supported with effective induction process. These inductions are expected to be more detailed than what is normally provided to new pupils. The key to success is likely to be the pupil feeling an ownership of the transfer, prepared for it, and supported in it by School A, School B and the Inclusion Officer.

School A should enable pupils on a Managed Move who are eligible for free school meals to access them in School B immediately.

Not all pupils will be suitable candidates for a Managed Move. Negotiated transfer is part of a continuum of (developing) provision. Permanent exclusions may still be appropriate in certain cases.

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to also ensure that the pupil conforms to the uniform regulations at School B.

Pupils who move out of the area and where their home school is no longer within statutory walking distance of their residence, should not be subject to a managed move. A parent/carer has the right to submit a transfer request to their preferred school and the School Admission Code should be adhered to.

Finance

During the period of the Managed Move, funding related to the pupil will remain with School A. However, where a school is above their PAN, prior to the managed move then an agreement between both School A and School B should take place to discuss the recoupment of any additional costs incurred. This should be agreed prior to the initial managed move meeting taking place.

If the Managed Move is successful and the pupil transfers to the roll of School B, funding will be transferred to School B from this date. The accountancy team will calculate the funding available from the date it is agreed the pupil will be transferred to the roll of School B. This may involve the recoupment of some monies from School A for this same period. Accountancy will inform School A and School B of the amount of money to be transferred and the process of transferring such funds.

Out of County Managed Moves

There are no official arrangements for managed moves between local authority areas. However, it is suggested that where a managed move takes place between local authorities, schools and local authorities should follow the local authority's protocols of where the receiving school is located.

BLAENAU GWENT POLICY FOR THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH MEDICAL NEEDS

August 2022



Cyngor Bwrdeisdref Sirol

Blaenau Gwent

County Borough Council

Contents

Page Nos

Rationale	3
Registration	3
Funding	3
Aim	3
Tuition: Capacity	3
Exit Criteria	4
Groups Covered	4
Referral Criteria: Priority List	4
Referring Agencies	4
Referral Routes	5
Referral Information	5
Tuition: Links with School	6
Tutor Responsibilities	6
School Responsibilities	6
Withdrawal of Tuition	7
Reintegration Process	7
Elective Home Education	9

RATIONALE

Blaenau Gwent's Tuition Service and Ty Afon provide temporary educational support for pupils who are unable to attend school for medical reasons and pregnant schoolgirls, where mainstream school is not appropriate (please read policy for pregnant school girls). The purpose is to minimise disruption to education, provide access to as much education as their medical condition allows, and enable pupils to return to school as soon as their health permits.

REGISTRATION

Pupils will remain solely on the school roll until they are allocated tuition or a placement at Ty Afon. A pupil's registration status will be agreed as appropriate for the individual pupil at the Vulnerable Pupil Panel (VPP). A pupil may be dual registered, and their main registration type will be the setting where the pupil spends the majority of their time (more than 50%). School must contact the tuition service on a regular basis to ensure that marks are reflective of the pupil's attendance on tuition.

A pupil who is unable to attend school because of medical needs **must not** be removed from the school register, even during a long period of ill health.

FUNDING

Pupil funding will be divided between the school, the tuition service and the River Centre in a pro rata agreement based on the amount of time spent in each provision. The Headteacher of the River Centre and the Head of the Tuition Service will provide the finance team details of pupils' placement at the end of each term. The finance team will arrange for the appropriate proportion of the pupil's AWPU to be transferred from the school to The River Centre/Tuition Service.

AIM

The aims of tuition and Ty Afon is to reduce the detrimental impact of illness on the pupils' education, to re-engage pupils in learning, help them maintain education or make up for lost time, and successfully reintegrate them into mainstream or alternative education at the earliest opportunity. Therefore, all placements will be for an initial 6-week trial period and then reviewed.

TUITION: CAPACITY

Due to the high demand for tuition, tuition will not be offered to a pupil on a long-term basis. It is anticipated that tuition will be offered short term for a maximum of 1 - 2 terms, if the initial trial period is successful.

EXIT CRITERIA

If tuition provision is offered, pupils will be reviewed every 4-6 weeks to establish when a return to school is appropriate. At the end of the maximum provision of 2 terms, the review meeting will consider discharge to the host school, to another school or an alternative arrangement for the pupil's education.

GROUPS COVERED

All pupils whose home is in Blaenau Gwent who are:

- of compulsory school age
- on roll at a Blaenau Gwent maintained school

When a pupil has a Statement of Special Educational Needs/IDP, the school will need to hold an interim review with recommendations from the Review being forwarded for consideration by the VPP Panel. As such, the processes outlined in this document do not apply to such pupils.

REFERRAL CRITERIA: PRIORITY LIST

- pupils who are unable to attend school due to physical illness
- pupils who are unable to attend school due to a mental health illness
- girls of compulsory school age who are pregnant or new mothers with additional health related needs that mean they are unable to remain in their own school.
- pupils returning from elective home education, where there is evidence that the child has not been in receipt of an appropriate education

Tuition will normally only be considered where the pupil's anticipated absence will be for longer than 15 school days. Schools should note that for the first 15 school days of a pupil's absence they are responsible for the pupil's education.

Pupils with poor attendance and pupils excluded or in danger of exclusion for presenting inappropriate behaviours as the main concern are not appropriate referrals for tuition.

REFERRING AGENCIES

Referrals for tuition will be considered at the VPP Panel. Referrals will be made by Heads, Deputies and designated staff of schools. Acceptance of referrals is dependent upon the pupil's needs meeting the referral criteria.

REFERRAL ROUTES

Requests for tuition should be made to the VPP Panel with appropriate documentation (see below).

The VPP Panel will consider referrals and determine what provision will be made. The educational provision offered could be made up, in the short term (one review period), of a combination of time in school and small group provision. The primary provision offered will be group work at a centre. Any individual tuition has to be agreed on a case-by-case basis by the VPP Panel.

REFERRAL INFORMATION

It is essential that a referral to tuition is part of an integrated support plan for a pupil which is underpinned by the work of all relevant professionals, and which has clear goals or outcomes for a return to school, or other provision. Referral information will need to make clear the expected outcome.

In the case of pupils presenting with mental health conditions, it is expected that referrals are supported by:

- clear evidence of mental health difficulty experienced from senior CAMHS professionals
- information regarding work already carried out by the school, including the impact of advice implemented following Educational Psychologist involvement
- clear evidence that the home school has tried EVERY possible approach to re-engage the pupil and has evaluated the impact that these approaches have had.
- information regarding impact of family interventions and other agencies
- an indication of consensus amongst involved professionals that a referral to tuition is likely to be the most effective way forward
- The child must not have any evidence of disruptive or aggressive behaviours or incidents of exclusions.
- The home school must provide evidence that the child's attendance figure is lower than 50%.
- An agreement to continuing support for pupil and family by the referring agency, planned outcomes for tuition including a return to school.

* A request from a GP/ SSD or parent is not regarded as sufficient grounds for tuition.

** Please note those pupils allocated a Ty Afon placement will:

- serve a trial period of 6 weeks

- comply with an agreed attendance target that will be gradually increased
- exhibit no disruptive behaviours being displayed by pupils, that may cause upset to others

Any breach of these conditions can result in the placement being terminated.

TUITION: LINKS WITH SCHOOL

When tuition has been agreed for a pupil with medical needs, a tutor will be appointed. It is the home school's (the pupil's usual school) responsibility to provide work at the appropriate Curriculum level for the pupil. At key stages 1 and 2 the child's class teacher usually takes this responsibility and liaises with the tutor.

At key stage 3, a Head of Year or Additional Needs Co-ordinator is usually asked to take responsibility for obtaining work from subject teachers and liaise with the tutor.

Every school should have policy in place for meeting the needs of pupils with medical needs and a teacher with responsibility these pupils who will liaise with the tutor.

TUTOR RESPONSIBILITIES

The tutor is responsible for:

- planning and delivering a programme of work and maintaining appropriate records
- sending reports to the school and parents outlining the pupil's progress and achievements at least every half term
- Completing accurate attendance records which will be sent to the school and the LA.
- liaising between home, school and other agencies

All pupils receive support from the service in the knowledge that their goal should be to return to school as soon as their health permits.

Pupils should return to full time education as soon as they are able. Should special arrangements be advised by health professionals then the local authority, school and home tutor, in consultation with parents, will ensure they

are in hand. However, if the necessary arrangements are complex or the pupil has emotional difficulties and is anxious, then the tutor may plan for a supported return to school.

Following consultation with pupil, parent, school and tutor an individual programme of gradual reintegration will be arranged and tailored to the pupil's needs.

SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

The school will be responsible for:

- notifying the LEA/EWS if a pupil is, or is likely to be, away from school due to medical needs for more than 15 school days and request that VPP Panel considers the request for Home Tuition
- If agreed by the VPP Panel, liaise with the home tuition service to draw up an individual learning plan for the duration of the tuition. This plan should be agreed with appropriate health service personnel.
- providing information regarding pupils' prior educational progress and attainment in order to implement a programme appropriate to meet pupil needs
- implementing agreed reintegration programmes
- attending review meetings
- Ensuring that regular plans of work are made available in all Curriculum subjects that the pupil would be normally studying. (This will aid successful reintegration by helping the pupil feel confident that they have covered a similar programme of work to their peers.)
- Loaning appropriate resource materials where possible. These will be returned when the pupil has finished with them
- examination entry fees, making arrangements for examinations and assessment of coursework
- career interviews
- work experience placements
- a named contact within the school to aid communication and attend reviews
- procedures ensuring the pupil is successfully reintegrated into school
- issues related to a pupil with statements of special educational needs
- Ensure that pupils who are unable to attend school because of medical needs are kept informed about social events, and are able to participate, for example afterschool clubs.
- Encourage and facilitate liaison with peers, for example, through visits, videos and internet links

WITHDRAWAL OF TUITION

Tuition will be withdrawn if the pupil fails to attend or make themselves available for tuition on a regular basis without evidence of a medical reason for this and the Education Welfare Officer will be notified if there is an attendance issue. If the provision is considered inappropriate during the initial planning stage, the

provision will be ended. In this event, the referrer and school will be notified through the review process.

SUCCESSFUL RE-INTEGRATION INTO SCHOOL

Local authorities are responsible for ensuring that an individually tailored plan is in place for pupils before they return to school.

The local authority will work with the tutor, host school, parents and professionals to facilitate a return to school. The local authority will co-ordinate a school re-integration plan or some other exit strategy. For example, home tuition will gradually reduce as time in school increases.

The local authority will keep in regular contact with professionals involved in the pupil's case. In partnership with the tuition service, school and other agencies, the local authority will oversee the reintegration process when the relevant professionals agree that the pupil is well enough to go back to school. Some pupils may go on to more long-term specialist provision if their mental health illness cannot be effectively addressed during the short period of tuition.

A review meeting will be convened to review the Individual learning plan and look at all of a child's needs and how they can be best met in order for effective reintegration to take place. A review of the ILP at this stage will:

- bring together the support provided by all the different agencies
- identify any on-going medical support that the pupil might need or any reasonable adjustments that may be required
- consider whether the pupil will be back in school for the long term, whether he/she is likely to fall ill again in the near future or need further medical intervention
- review academic progress
- Consider what support will be required to reintegrate the pupil back into school successfully.

The pupil and parents/guardian should attend the reintegration meeting and should be given the opportunity to put forward his or her views. These views should be recorded in the ILP.

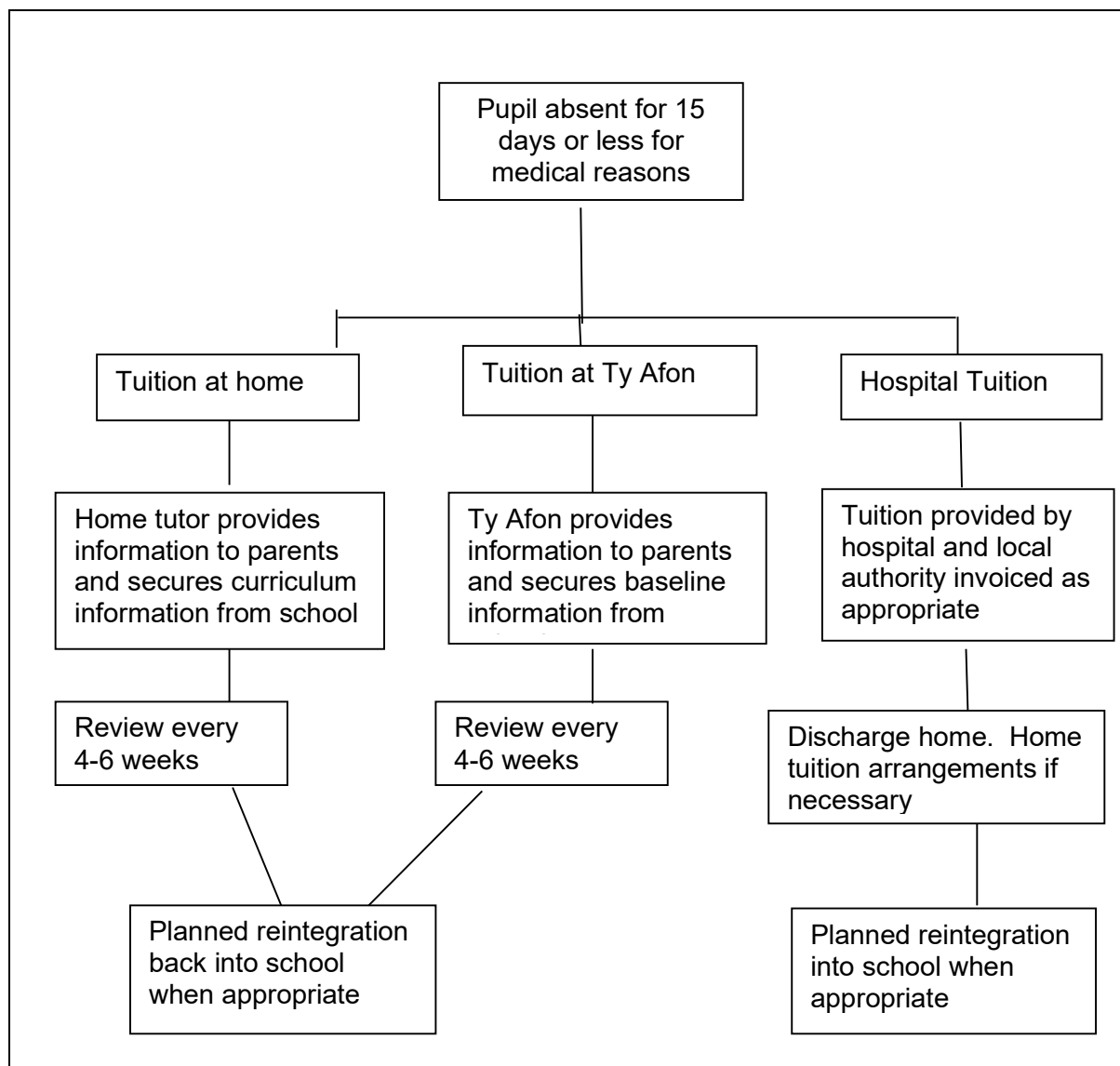
Where pupils need extra support to reintegrate, The River Centre and the home school will need to identify how that support will be provided. All schools receive funding for 'additional needs' as part of their funding formula and this funding can be utilised to support reintegration.

After a pupil has been successfully reintegrated, the support available from the different agencies should not stop immediately. A final review meeting should be held after the pupil has been back at school for about eight to ten weeks. The purpose of this meeting will be to ensure that the pupil has reintegrated successfully and that strategies are working. This meeting can decide whether any on-going support is required and whether any future review meetings will be

required. It will also be a useful forum for evaluating the multi agency service that was provided whilst the pupil was too ill to attend school.

ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION

Tuition should not be confused with Elective Home Education which involves the parent or guardian of a child removing the child from local authority schooling and accepting the responsibility of providing an appropriate education programme.



EXCLUSION GUIDANCE

August 2022



Cyngor Bwrdeisdref Sirol

Blaenau Gwent

County Borough Council

Contents

	Page Nos
Introduction	4
About this Guidance	5
3 Stage Approach to supporting inclusion of pupils presenting with challenging behaviour	6
Decision to Exclude	9
Key considerations before excluding	9
Headteachers' Checklist	10
Notification of Exclusions	12
Unofficial/Illegal Exclusions	12
Reduced Timetables	13
Procedures following exclusions	13
ALN/Disability/Vulnerable groups consideration	13
The Governing Body's duty to consider an exclusion – Key points	14
Appendices:	15
Appendix A - Exclusion form	
Appendix B - Summary of processes and time limits for fixed term exclusions	
Appendix C - summary of processes and time limits for permanent exclusion	
Appendix D - samples of model letters to parents for all types of exclusion	

Exclusion Guidance for Schools

This guidance is supplementary to and should be read in conjunction with the Welsh Government (WG) Guidance “Exclusion from schools and pupil referral units” – which was revised in November 2019. All decisions about exclusion must be made with reference to the guidance which outlines statutory responsibilities. In this BG guidance document, the term ‘schools’ refers to Primary, Middle, Secondary and Special schools.

Schools should note that the WG guidance is statutory guidance and is available via the link below:

<https://gov.wales/exclusion-schools-and-pupil-referral-units-pru>

Contact details for queries relating to exclusions:

Statemented pupils/IDP – ALN Manager

ALNEnquiries@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk or 01495 355443

Non statemented pupils – Senior Education Welfare Officer

lisa.adams@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk or 07870 998947

Introduction

Blaenau Gwent's aim is for all children and young people is to be purposefully engaged in an educational programme appropriate to their needs and age. We want our children and young people to flourish and to achieve positive outcomes for themselves, their families, and our community and for society at large. We want our children and our adults to be happy, healthy, capable and engaged with school and the wider community. Minimal school exclusions will be a key indicator of our collective success.

National government recognises and promotes the importance of wellbeing in schools as a key factor in achieving this ambition. Blaenau Gwent is aware that improving the all-round wellbeing of pupils and staff is important in and of itself, as well as crucial in lifting performance and attainment levels.

The latest published data from Welsh Government in October 2020 highlighted the fact that children with free school meals were consistently (at least 3 times higher) more likely to be excluded and overall children with additional learning needs (ALN) have higher rates of exclusion than those without.

The Children's Commissioner for Wales report, 'Building Blocks – Inclusion in the Foundation Phase', highlighted concerns about repeat exclusions, reduced timetables and children being taught in isolation.

The Office for the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) has also recently written a report considering growing national concern regarding the correlation between school exclusions and children's subsequent involvement in crime. The research indicated that school exclusions were not necessarily a causal factor for criminality, but rather an indicator of a series of vulnerabilities that increase both exposure to crime and exploitation. More specifically, the research suggested that children excluded or at risk of exclusion from school sit within a network of vulnerability, including adverse childhood experiences, additional learning needs and care experience.

In most cases, fixed-term exclusions are only given after exhausting all the available options for internal interventions and exclusions from the classroom. However, the research also demonstrated the clear need to consider what additional external support can be provided to children to prevent exclusion when internal school-based interventions fail.

Considering the recent reports, the increased focus on the emotional well-being needs of children, and the fact that Blaenau Gwent has relatively high number of fixed term exclusions in Wales, the guidance has been revised as part of Blaenau Gwent's approaches to reduce exclusions

In addition, the Managed Move policy has also been revised and we would encourage headteachers to use this as a supportive intervention.

About This Guidance

This supplementary guidance updates and replaces all previous guidance regarding exclusion from maintained schools, including special schools, published by Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, herein after referred to as the Local Authority (LA). It applies equally to children with and without statements of special educational needs or individual development plans (IDPs).

This guidance differs to previous guidance as it now contains a checklist for schools to reflect on provision for learners presenting with challenging behaviour to reduce the risk of exclusion. This guidance is also intended to be of assistance to all parties involved in the exclusion process including head teachers, governing bodies and local authority officers.

The requirements of the guidance apply in relation to all pupils, including those who may be below or above compulsory school age, such as those attending nursery classes.

The term “parents” in this guidance include any person who has parental responsibility (which includes the LA where it has a care order in respect of the child) and any person (for example, a foster carer) with whom the child lives. Where practicable it is expected that all those with parental responsibility should be engaged with the exclusion process. The Education Welfare Service should be the first point of contact for any queries that headteachers, governors, parents, pupils or others may have regarding exclusions.

3 stage approach to supporting inclusion of learners presenting with challenging behaviour

<p>1. Monitor Behaviour – report card – contact home</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the school relationship/behaviour policy and monitor behaviour, attendance and attainment regularly. • Work with ALNCO to ensure repeated behaviours resulting in sanctions are not a result of unmet need. • Ensure work is being planned for at the right level of challenge. • Work with parents, to ensure home-school partnership towards improved engagement with school and learning.
<p>2. Inclusion Support Plan ISP The ISP is a helpful alternative to an individual behaviour plan or Pastoral Support Plan. Try to establish what the child is trying to communicate through their behaviour by reflecting on triggers for disengagement and developing strategies to re-engage the learner.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce following internal exclusions or a serious behaviour incident. • Review weekly with key adults in school. Work towards agreed outcomes (rather than set targets) to ensure the pupil makes progress from where they are currently. • Parental engagement is on-going.
<p>3. Pastoral Support Plan PSP - The PSP continues to run as the main framework for supporting school settings to reduce permanent exclusions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce if the pupil is at risk of exclusion/PEX. Outline the support offered. • Frequently meet with parents to review progress. • Set achievable goals towards an acceptable outcome in a period of time.

When thinking about next steps for the learner – consider the following questions

- Check the data (attendance / exclusions / behaviour points)
- Are there any themes?
- Can you identify any triggers for behaviour through the patterns?
- Does the pupil file highlight a history of need?
- Has the pupil been identified with any ALN?
- Has Blaenau Gwent ALN guidance been used to check what the key barriers to engaging in learning are for the pupil? [hyperlink to be inserted](#)
- Have any diagnostic assessments been used to identify any needs or areas for development?

- Is the pupil in a group vulnerable to underachievement? (CLA/ALN/EAL/CASP)
- Is there an IDP/statement in place / Has there ever been a CAF or IDP/statement for this child?
- Does the pupil have a one-page profile?
- Is the school relationship/behaviour policy being used consistently to support the learner (including any identified reasonable adjustments?)
- Is the school reward system being used in a way that is equitable to the pupil's needs?
- What external issues may be affecting the learner at this time? (e.g. significant family events).
- Are there any historic issues that may now be affecting the pupil?

Provision for the learner. Have you engaged with or considered the following?

- Team Teach training and de-escalation strategies
- Behaviour assessment to identify inclusion strategies
- Is there a Risk Assessment in place for staff, other pupils, the pupil themselves?
- Have you considered an Ed Psych referral and assessment?
- Have you tried a bespoke timetable working with the pupil to avoid 'behaviour hotspots'?
- Work with the pupil to RAG rate their timetable and put in support to eliminate red and reduce amber.
- What incentives are meaningful and relevant to the pupil?
- Is a reduced timetable a useful tool currently? (Ensure all guidelines are followed for safeguarding reasons)
- What nurture interventions are available that would benefit the pupil?
- Would the CYP benefit from seeing a counsellor at this time?
- Some form of therapy?
- Is support needed for the family?
- Consider referral to external agencies / partners.
- Is there a key adult for the pupil – to advocate and support them each day, rewarding where success and progress has been made and communicate with home and other adults in school?
- Is there a need for restorative justice to move a relationship forward?
- Is there a timeline of incidents that supports the pupil to begin to understand and manage their behaviours?
- How are staff being supported?
- How is the pupil developing independence in managing their emotions?
- Support for developing emotional literacy and self-regulation strategies.

At each meeting / review point

- What is the data telling us now?
- What are the views of the child?
- What are the views of the Parents / staff / support team / external agencies?

- How will I ensure the meeting is professional and managed well so all views can be heard, and it is a positive process for all moving the situation forward?

At each significant incident

- Ensure the paperwork is completed and a clear record is maintained. Avoid emotional language and keep it factual.
- Ensure all parties share what happened so that an accurate account is recorded in an impartial manner.
- Ensure the pupil has supported time to reflect and learn from what went wrong using appropriate tools when they are calm, ready and able to do so.
- Ensure the pupil learns from the behaviour incident and has opportunities to mend relationships and 'put right' the situation when they are calm, ready and able to do so.
- Ensure staff who were involved have time to follow up with the pupil to move on from the incident when the time is appropriate.
- Ensure students who were involved in the incident have the appropriate follow up.
- For all CYPs involved communicate clearly with parents / carers what happened and the follow up

Decision to Exclude

Only the Headteacher or teacher in charge of a setting can exclude a learner. They cannot delegate the power to exclude to another teacher. In their absence, the most senior teacher may exercise the power of exclusion though they should make clear they are working in the Headteacher's absence.

If a pupil is deemed to be at risk of exclusion it is appropriate to have a Pastoral Support Programme and support from Families First to enable a range of strategies and support to be implemented.

Schools should, as far as possible, avoid permanently excluding any pupil with a statement, an individual development plan or any pupil who is a child looked after.

Key Considerations Before Excluding – Safeguarding

Where a pupil receives support from a Families First worker, is a child in need of care and support or subject to child protection planning, the school must inform the relevant professionals within social care if they feel the child is at risk of exclusion and in advance of any decision to exclude.

If you are concerned about the risk of exclusion of a looked after child, please contact the pupil's social worker and the child looked after co-ordinator.

For pupils where there is concern around sexual, drug or gang exploitation, for those who self-harm or demonstrate behaviours that could cause them significant harm, an exclusion can result in increased risks to the pupil's immediate safety, health and wellbeing.

Proactive planning with professional partners and family/carers about what to do in the event of a serious breach of school relationship/behaviour policy where the conditions for exclusion are met is the ideal, but in an unforeseen situation, contact the relevant involved professionals at the earliest opportunity and before sending a pupil home. There can also be consideration of the BG Safer Schools approach to support children and/or groups of children and young people.

Headteacher' s Checklist

Any decision to exclude a pupil must be:

In response to serious breach of the school's behaviour policy; and, If allowing the learner to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the learner or others in the school.

In deciding to exclude a pupil, the Headteacher must be able to demonstrate that the exclusion has been carefully considered and is being used as a last resort. The checklist below is designed to assist head teachers in these deliberations.

The circumstances of the case	Yes	No
Has there been a serious breach or breaches of the school behaviour policy?		
Does the pupil's presence seriously harm or threaten to harm the education/welfare of pupils/ others?		
Is exclusion a last resort following a wide range of other strategies that have been unsuccessful? Is this a serious 'one off' offence?		
Is exclusion the appropriate response? Factors to consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has a thorough investigation been carried out? • Has the pupil's version of events been sought / encouraged / recorded? • Has the evidence been considered in the light of school policies and possible discrimination? • Are there any mitigating circumstances or any provocation which may be relevant (bullying, harassment etc.)? 		
Has a pastoral support programme been used?		
Is this pupil at school action or school action plus? and if so; Has the possibility of additional support from the LA been explored?		
Have alternatives to exclusion been considered (e.g. restorative approach, mediation, internal exclusion)?		
Standard of proof – "on the balance of probabilities" is it more probable than not that the pupil did what he/she is alleged to have done?		
Special considerations	Yes	No
ALN Does this pupil have a statement of special educational needs or an individual development plan? Has the ALN team been contacted? Has an emergency review been arranged?		
CLA Is this pupil looked after? Has the CLA Co-ordinator been contacted?		
SAFEGUARDING Is this pupil subject to a child protection or a child in need plan? Has the social worker been contacted?		

The circumstances of the case	Yes	No
Is there a JAFF for this pupil? What other agencies/services are involved?		
Have issues of ALN or disability been taken into account and reasonable adjustments put in place?		

Notification of Exclusions

When a Headteacher has decided to exclude a pupil he/she must:

- immediately inform the parent(s) by telephone;
- draft the appropriate letter (see model letters in appendices)
- ensure that this letter is sent by first class post to arrive the following day or is hand delivered;
- ensure that the letter contains the following information:
 - the reasons for the exclusion;
 - the period of fixed term exclusion or, for a permanent exclusion, the fact that it is permanent and the date it takes effect;
 - parents' and learner's right to make representation about the exclusion to the governing body's discipline committee; *
 - how any representation should be made including the person for the parent/carer and/or learner should contact;
 - when there is a legal requirement for the governing body to consider the exclusion, that the parents and/or learner have a right to attend a meeting, be represented at this meeting (at their own expense) and to bring a friend;

Headteachers should ensure an exclusion form is completed **within 24 hours** after all exclusions and forwarded to the LA via BSInclusionSupport@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk so that the LA database can be kept up to date (see Appendix A for exclusion form). Full details of notification requirement to the school's governing body can be found in section 8.4 of this guidance and in Appendix B 'Summary of Main Processes and Time Limits for Fixed Term Exclusion'.

For a permanent exclusion, if the pupil lives outside the LA in which the school is located, the head teacher must also advise the pupil's 'home authority' of the exclusion without delay.

Unofficial / Illegal Exclusions

The procedures described above and in the WG guidance must always be applied when a pupil is excluded. Sending a pupil home informally for a "cooling-off period" or asking parents to take a pupil home to avoid an exclusion are illegal acts which could be subject to challenge. This also applies to lunchtimes; if a pupil is asked by the school to go home at lunchtimes this must also be treated as one quarter of a day exclusion for each lunchtime.

It is also unlawful to exclude for a non-disciplinary reason. For example, it would be unlawful to exclude a pupil simply because they have additional needs or a disability that the school feels it is unable to meet, or for a reason such as: academic attainment/ability; the action of a pupil's parents; or the failure of a pupil to meet specific conditions before they are reinstated, such as to attend a reintegration meeting.

At no time should a school encourage a parent to electively home educate (EHE) in order to avoid a permanent exclusion. Such children will either not have access to

the provision that they need or will transfer to a new school without appropriate support thereby placing additional pressures on both schools and families. Schools should, therefore, not promote the use of EHE to remove a child with challenging behaviour or poor attendance from their roll.

Reduced Timetables

It is illegal for a school to impose a reduced or partial timetable.

In some cases a reduced timetable may be used as a short-term measure towards achieving full reintegration, building back up to full time hours if the parents agree and a written agreement, signed by all parties with stated review dates where appropriate, put in place via a PSP.

Full Blaenau Gwent Guidance on the use of reduced timetables is available from the Education Directorate.

Procedures Following Exclusion

Following a permanent exclusion, staff are available within the LA to assist with the reintegration and support of excluded learners.

Statemented pupils – ALN Manager

Non statemented pupils – Senior Education Welfare Officer

The Education (Reintegration Interview) (Wales) Regulations 2010, require Headteachers of schools to request in specified circumstances parents/carers of learners excluded for a fixed term to attend a reintegration interview at the school. The request for interview applies to all fixed-term exclusions for primary-aged learners but only fixed-term exclusions of six or more days for secondary-aged learners. Reintegration interviews need to take place within 15 school days of the last day of the exclusion period.

Headteachers should note, however, that neither parents nor a pupil can be required to meet specific conditions, such as attending a reintegration meeting, before reinstatement.

ALN / Disability / Vulnerable Group Considerations

Other than in the most exceptional circumstances, schools should avoid permanently excluding any pupil with a statement of SEN or an IDP. The 2010 Equality Act does not prohibit schools from excluding learners with a protected characteristic but does prohibit schools from excluding learners because of their protected characteristic (e.g. excluding a disabled learner because of their disability or because of their racial group) or discriminating unlawfully during the exclusions process. This applies to permanent and fixed-term exclusions.

Where a pupil is 'Looked After' (CLA), schools should try every practicable means to maintain the learner in school and should seek LA and other professional advice as appropriate prior to any exclusion decision.

The Governing Body's Duty to Consider an Exclusion – Key Points

The responsibility of the governing body to consider exclusions is usually delegated to a sub-committee of at least three governors. This committee is known as the Discipline Committee. The Discipline Committee has a clear set of responsibilities.

Where required or requested, the governing body must hold a Governors Discipline Committee (GDC) within the required timescale. (In the case of a permanent exclusion, the GDC must meet within 15 school days of being notified of the exclusion).

For all fixed term exclusions of 5 days or fewer within a term, the Headteacher must notify the governing body discipline committee once a term. For fixed term exclusion of 6 to 15 days or more than 20 lunchtimes in a school term and/or where a public exam or national test will be missed, the Headteacher must notify the governing body discipline committee within one day. For all fixed term exclusions of more than 15 days in a school term and following any exclusion in the same term after 15 days has been reached the Headteacher must notify the governing body discipline committee within one day.

Full advice and support is available to school and governing bodies on the role and responsibilities of the GDC from the Governor Support and Development Section of the EAS (where the school has entered into the SLA agreement).

South East Wales Education Achievement Service
[Statutory Committees <statutory.committees@sewaleseas.org.uk>](mailto:statutory.committees@sewaleseas.org.uk)

NOTIFICATION OF SCHOOL EXCLUSION

Please send completed form within 24 hours to:
BSinclusionsupport@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk



SCHOOL

TYPE OF EXCLUSION Permanent Fixed Term Lunchtime

Name of Pupil DOB

Gender NC Year

Is Pupil CLA? Yes / No If Yes, please state LA and status

ALNN Status SA SA+ Statement /IDP Ethnicity

Name of Parent/ Carer

Address

Contact Telephone Number/s

EXCLUSION DETAILS:

Start date of exclusion: *AM / PM (*please delete as appropriate)

End date of exclusion: *AM / PM (*please delete as appropriate)

No of days excluded:

Return date: #INSET dates:

please indicate if there are any INSET / school closure days during the period of the exclusion

REASON(S) FOR EXCLUSION: ONE primary reason must be marked with a "P" for reporting to the Welsh Government. Supplementary reasons may also be marked with S.

Physical Assault against pupil (PP)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sexual misconduct (SM)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Physical assault against adult (PA)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Drug and alcohol related (DA)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Verbal abuse/threatening behaviour against a pupil (VP)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Damage (DM)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Verbal abuse / threatening behaviour against an adult (VA)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Theft (TH)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Persistent disruptive behaviour (DB)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bullying (BU)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Racial abuse (RA)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (OT)	<input type="checkbox"/>

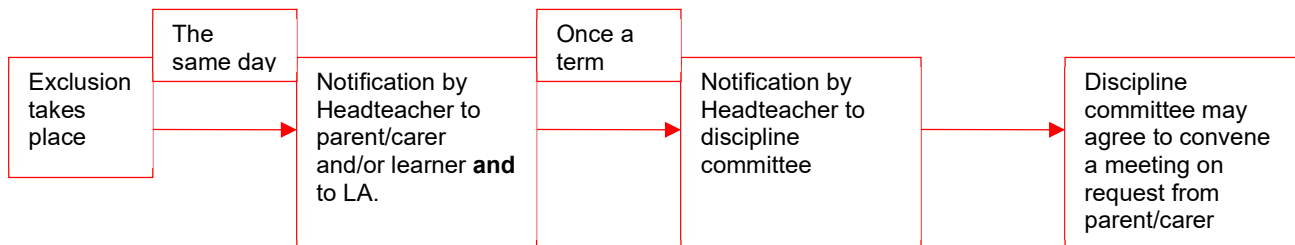
Signed:(Headteacher) Date:.....

You MUST attach a copy of the notification letter sent to parents/guardian

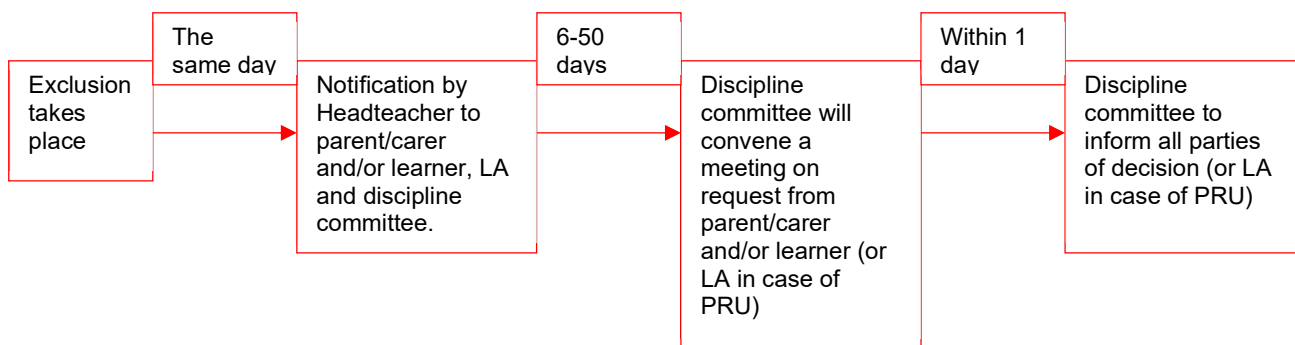
Fixed-term Exclusions

The term 'days' refers to school days throughout.

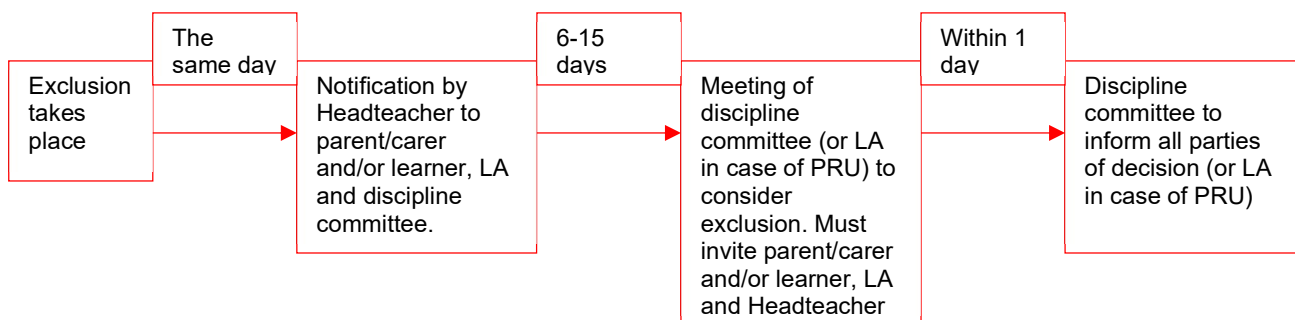
5 days or fewer in a school term



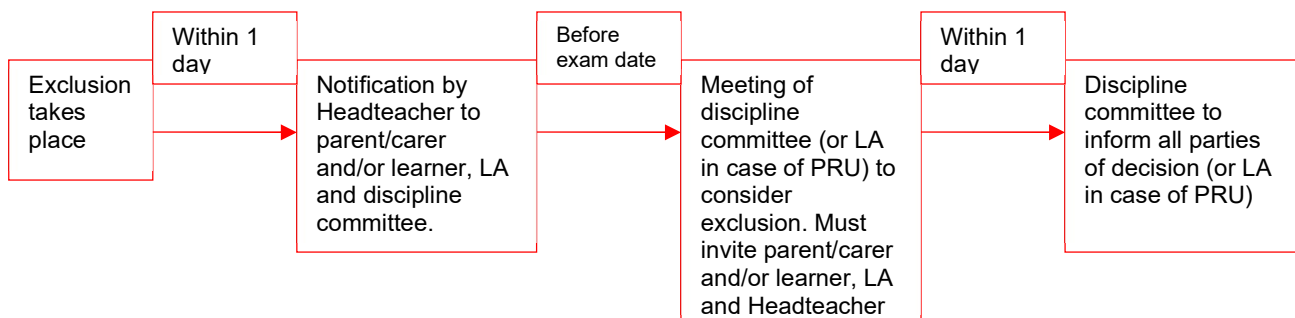
6-15 days or more than 20 lunchtimes in a school term and/or where a public exam or national test will be missed



More than 15 days in a school term and following any exclusion in the same term after 15 days has been reached



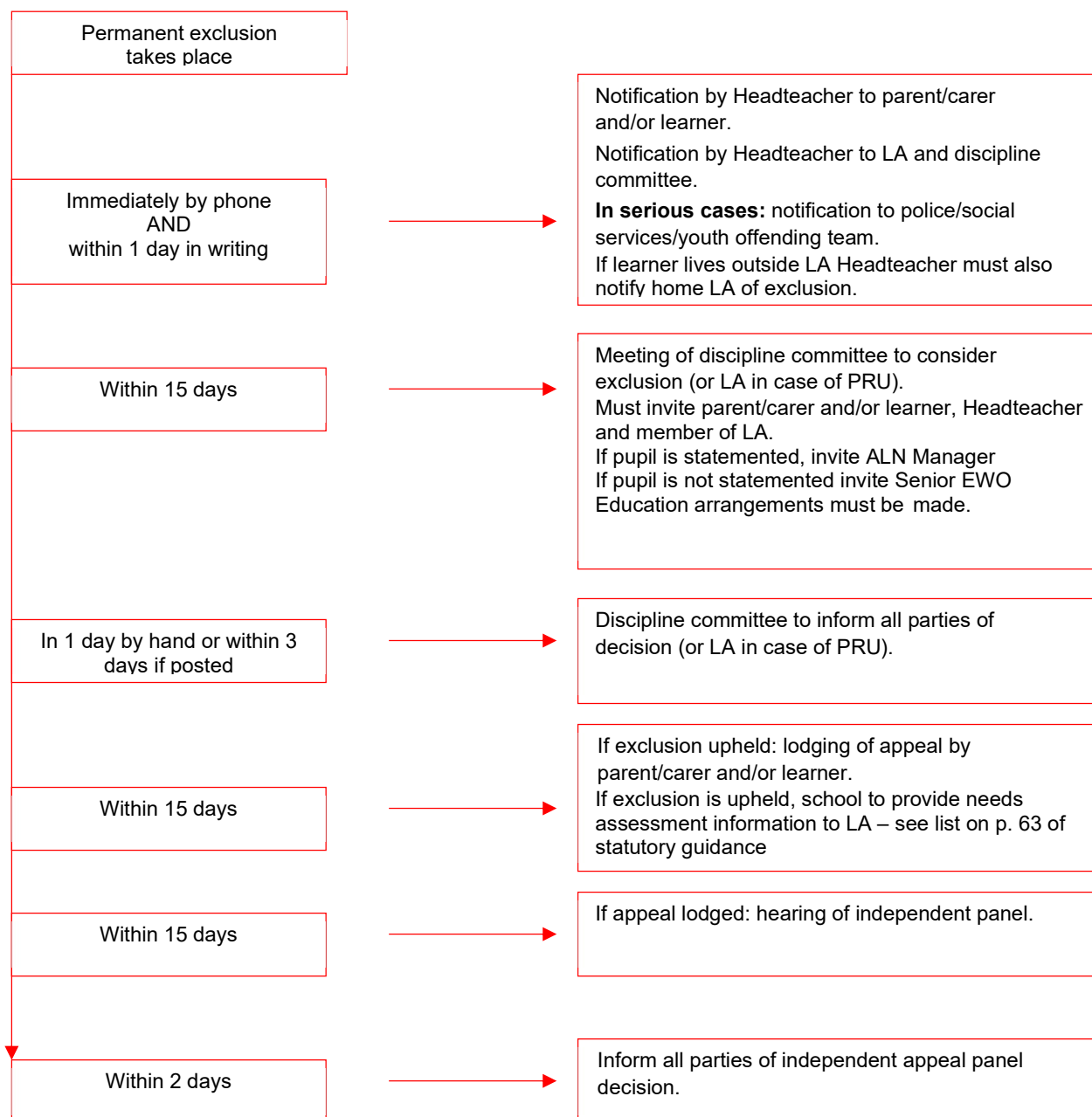
Where a public examination will be missed



Appendix C

Permanent Exclusions

The term 'days' refers to school days throughout.



Appendix D

Model Letters

Model letter 1: Fixed-term exclusion of less than six days

From Headteacher (or teacher in charge of a PRU) notifying parent/carer and/or learner of a fixed term exclusion of less than six days, and where a public examination is not missed.

Dear **[parent/carer/learner's name]**

I am writing to inform you of my decision to exclude **[learner's name/you]** for a fixed term of **[period of exclusion]**. This means that **[learner's name/you]** will not be allowed in school for the period of the exclusion which began on **[date]**.

I realise that this exclusion may well be upsetting for you and your family, but the decision to exclude **[learner's name/you]** has not been taken lightly. **[learner's name/you]** has/have been excluded for this fixed term because **[reason for exclusion]**.

The school will continue to set work for **[learner's name/you]** during the period of his/her/your exclusion **[insert details of arrangements that are in place for this]**. Please ensure that any work set by the school is completed and returned to us for marking.

[For learners over compulsory school age insert the following]. As you have been excluded from the school you should arrange for someone to return the work to us on your behalf.

[School/other setting]

You **[and learner's name where learner is aged less than 11]** have the right to make representations to the school governors' pupil discipline committee. If you wish to make representations please contact **[name of contact]** on/at **[contact details: address, phone number, e-mail]**, as soon as possible. While the discipline committee has no power to direct reinstatement they must consider any representations you make and may place a copy of their findings on your child's/your school record.

[Special School]

You **[and learner's name where learner is aged less than 11]** have the right to make representations to **Blaenau Gwent LA**.

These representations will be considered by **[contacting the Service Manager - Inclusion]**. If you wish to make representations please contact **[name of contact]** on/at **[contact details: address, phone number, e-mail]** as soon as possible.

You also have the right to see a copy of **[learner's name/your]** school record. Due to confidentiality restrictions, you will need to notify me in writing if you wish to be

supplied with a copy of **[learner's name/your]** school record. I will be happy to supply you with a copy if you request it. There may be a charge for photocopying.

A parent/carer also has the right to make a claim of disability discrimination to the Special Educational Needs Tribunal for Wales (SENTW) if she or he thinks that the exclusion is because of a disability their child has. The address to which claims should be sent is Unit 32, Ddole Road Enterprise Park, Llandrindod Wells, Powys LD1 6DF.

[Primary school only]

You **[and learner's name]** are requested to attend a reintegration interview with me **[alternatively, specify the name of another staff member]** at **[place]** on **[date]** at **[time]**. If that is not convenient, please contact the school before **[date within the next 10 days]** to arrange a suitable alternative date and time. The purpose of the reintegration interview is to discuss how best **your child's/your** return to school can be managed. You should be aware that **your/your parent's/your carer's** failure to attend a reintegration interview will be a factor taken into account by a court when deciding, on any future application, whether to impose a parenting order on **you/your parent/your carer**.

You may want to contact **[name]** at **Blaenau Gwent** LA on/at **[contact details: address, phone number, e-mail]**, who can provide advice.

[Learner's name/your] exclusion expires on **[date]** and we expect **[learner's name/you]** to be back in school on **[date]** at **[time]**.

Yours sincerely

[name]

Headteacher/teacher

Model letter 2: Fixed-term exclusion of 6–15 days

From Headteacher (or teacher in charge of a PRU) notifying parent/carer and/or learner of a fixed-term exclusion of six to 15 days, or where cumulative exclusions in the same term fall within this range, or where a public examination is missed.

Dear **[parent/carer/learner's name]**

I am writing to inform you of my decision to exclude **[learner's name/you]** for a fixed term of **[period of exclusion]**. This means that **[learner's name/you]** will not be allowed in school for the period of the exclusion which began on **[date]**.

I realise that this exclusion may well be upsetting for you and your family, but the decision to exclude **[learner's name/you]** has not been taken lightly. **[learner's name/you]** has/have been excluded for this fixed term because **[reason for exclusion]**.

The school will continue to set work for **[learner's name/you]** during the period of his/her/your exclusion **[insert details of arrangements that are in place for this]**. Please ensure that any work set by the school is completed and returned to us for marking.

[For learners over compulsory school age insert the following]

As you have been excluded from the school you should arrange for someone to return the work to us on your behalf.

[School/setting]

You have the right to request a meeting of the school governors' pupil discipline committee at which you **[and learner's name where learner is aged less than 11]** may make representations and the decision to exclude can be reviewed. As the length of the exclusion is more than five school days (or equivalent) the committee must meet if you request it to do so. The latest date the committee can meet is **[date – no later than 50 school days from the date the committee is notified]**. If you wish to make representations to the committee and wish to be accompanied by a friend or representative please contact **[name of contact]** on/at **[contact details: address, phone number, e-mail]**, as soon as possible.

[Special School]

You **[and learner's name where learner is aged less than 11]** have the right to make representations to **Blaenau Gwent Local Authority**. These representations will be considered by **the Lead Officer for Inclusion**. If you wish to make representations please contact **[name of contact]** on/at **[contact details: address, phone number, e-mail]** as soon as possible.

[Note: this wording is not suitable where the learner would lose the opportunity to take a public examination.]

You also have the right to see a copy of **[learner's name/your]** school record. Due to confidentiality restrictions, you will need to notify me in writing if you wish to be

supplied with a copy of **[learner's name/your]** school record. I will be happy to supply you with a copy if you request it. There may be a charge for photocopying.

A parent/carer also has the right to make a claim of disability discrimination to the Special Educational Needs Tribunal for Wales (SENTW) if she or he thinks that the exclusion is because of a disability their child has. The address to which claims should be sent is Unit 32, Ddole Road Enterprise Park, Llandrindod Wells, Powys LD1 6DF.

[Applies to children of compulsory school age only]

You **[and learner's name]** are requested to attend a reintegration interview with me **[alternatively, specify the name of another staff member]** at **[place]** on **[date]** at **[time]**. If that is not convenient, please contact the school before **[date within the next ten days]** to arrange a suitable alternative date and time. The purpose of the reintegration interview is to discuss how best **your child's/your** return to school can be managed. You should be aware that **your/your parent's/your carer's** failure to attend a reintegration interview will be a factor taken into account by a court when deciding, on any future application, whether to impose a parenting order on **you/your parent/your carer**.

You may want to contact **[name]** at **Blaenau Gwent** LA on/at **[contact details: address, phone number, e-mail]**, who can provide advice.

[Learner's name/your] exclusion expires on **[date]** and we expect **[learner's name/you]** to be back in school on **[date]** at **[time]**.

Yours sincerely

[name]

Headteacher/teacher

Model letter 3: Fixed-term exclusion of 16 or more days

From Headteacher (or teacher in charge of a PRU) notifying parent/carer and/or learner of a fixed-term exclusion of 16 days or more, or where cumulative exclusions in the same term are 16 days or more.

Dear **[parent/carer/learner's name]**

I am writing to inform you of my decision to exclude **[learner's name/you]** for a fixed term of **[period of exclusion]**. This means that **[learner's name/you]** will not be allowed in school for the period of the exclusion which began **[date]**.

I realise that this exclusion may well be upsetting for you and your family, but the decision to exclude **[learner's name/you]** has not been taken lightly. **[learner's name/you]** has been excluded for this fixed term because **[reason for exclusion]**.

Alternative education other than setting work will be provided for **[learner's name/you]** if the exclusion has not been overturned within 15 days. A **Blaenau Gwent** LA representative will contact you to discuss this.

[School/Setting]

As the length of the exclusion is more than 15 school days (or equivalent) the school governors' pupil discipline committee must automatically meet to consider the exclusion. At the review meeting you may make representations to the committee if you wish to do so. The latest date the committee can meet is **[date – no later than 15 school days from the date the discipline committee is notified]**. If you wish to make representations to the committee and wish to be accompanied by a friend or representative please contact **[name of contact]** on/at **[contact details: address, phone number, e-mail]**, as soon as possible. You will, whether you choose to make representations or not, be notified by the Clerk to the committee of the time, date and location of the meeting.

[Special School]

As the length of the exclusion is more than 15 days **Blaenau Gwent LA** must consider the exclusion. **[Set out the arrangements which the LA has made to review fixed-term exclusions.]** A review meeting will be held and at the review meeting you may make representations if you wish. The latest date for a review meeting is **[date – no later than 15 school days from the date the LA is notified]**. If you wish to make representations and wish to be accompanied by a representative please contact **[name of contact]** on/at **[contact details: address, phone number, e-mail]**.

You also have the right to see a copy of **[learner's name/your]** school record. Due to confidentiality restrictions, you will need to notify me in writing if you wish to be supplied with a copy of **[learner's name/your]** school record. I will be happy to supply you with a copy if you request it. There may be a charge for photocopying.

A parent/carer also has the right to make a claim of disability discrimination to the Special Educational Needs Tribunal for Wales (SENTW) if she or he thinks that the exclusion is

because of a disability their child has. The address to which claims should be sent is Unit 32, Ddole Road Enterprise Park, Llandrindod Wells, Powys, LD1 6DF.

[Applies to children of compulsory school age only]

You **[and learner's name]** are requested to attend a reintegration interview with me **[alternatively, specify the name of another staff member]** at **[place]** on **[date]** at **[time]**. If that is not convenient, please contact the school before **[date within the next 10 days]** to arrange a suitable alternative date and time. The purpose of the reintegration interview is to discuss how best **your child's/your** return to school can be managed. You should be aware that **your/your parent's/your carer's** failure to attend a reintegration interview will be a factor taken into account by a court when deciding, on any future application, whether to impose a parenting order on **you/your parent/your carer**.

You may want to contact **[name]** at **Blaenau Gwent** LA on/at **[contact details: address, phone number, e-mail]**, who can provide advice.

[Learner's name/your] exclusion expires on **[date]** and we expect **[Learner's name/you]** to be back in school on **[date]** at **[time]**.

Yours sincerely

[name]

Headteacher/teacher

Model letter 4: Permanent exclusion

From Headteacher (or teacher in charge of a PRU) notifying parent/carer and/or learner of a permanent exclusion.

Dear **[parent's/carer's/learner's name]**

I regret to inform you of my decision to exclude **[learner's name/you]** permanently from **[date]**. This means that **[learner's name/you]** will not be allowed back to this **[school/pupil referral unit]** unless reinstated by the **[school governors' discipline committee/LA pupil referral unit management committee]** or by an appeal panel.

I realise that this exclusion may well be upsetting for you and your family, but the decision to exclude **[learner's name/you]** has not been taken lightly. **[Learner's name/you]** has been excluded permanently because **[reason for exclusion – also include any other relevant history here]**.

Alternative education other than setting work will be provided for **[learner's name/you]** if the exclusion has not been overturned within 15 days. A LA representative will contact you to discuss this.

[School/Setting]

As this is a permanent exclusion the school governors' pupil discipline committee will meet to consider the exclusion. At the review meeting you **[and learner's name where learner is aged less than 11]** may make representations to the committee if you wish to do so. The discipline committee has the power to reinstate **[learner's name/you]** immediately or from a specified date, or alternatively, has the power to uphold the exclusion in which case you may appeal to an independent appeals panel. The latest date the committee can meet is **[date – no later than 15 school days from the date the committee is notified]**. If you wish to make representations to the committee and wish to be accompanied by a friend or representative please contact **[name of contact]** on/at **[contact details: address, phone number, e-mail]**, as soon as possible. You will, whether you choose to make representations or not, be notified by the Clerk to the committee of the time, date and location of the meeting.

[Special School]

You have the right to appeal to an independent appeal panel against this decision. If you wish to appeal please notify **[name of Clerk to appeal panel]** of your wish to appeal including your grounds of appeal in writing to **[address]** by no later than **[specify the latest date – the fifteenth school day after the second working day after the letter is posted if sent by first class post, or, if delivered by hand, the fifteenth school day after delivery]**. If you have not lodged an appeal by this date your right to appeal will lapse.

A parent/carer also has the right to make a claim of disability discrimination to the Special Educational Needs Tribunal for Wales (SENTW) if she or he thinks that the exclusion is because of a disability their child has. The address to which claims should be sent is Unit 32, Ddole Road Enterprise Park, Llandrindod Wells, Powys LD1 6DF.

You also have the right to see a copy of **[learner's name/your]** school record. Due to confidentiality restrictions, you will need to notify me in writing if you wish to be supplied with a copy of **[learner's name/your]** school record. I will be happy to supply you with a copy if you request it. There may be a charge for photocopying.

You may want to contact **[name]** at **Blaenau Gwent LA** on/at **[contact details: address, phone number, e-mail]**, who can provide advice on what options are available to you.

Yours sincerely

[name]

Headteacher/teacher

Model letter 5: Permanent exclusion – discipline committee’s decision

From the Clerk of the discipline committee notifying the parent/carer of a permanently excluded learner of the discipline committee’s decision.

Dear **[parent’s/carer’s/learner’s name]**

The meeting of the school governors’ pupil discipline committee at the **[school]** on **[date]** considered the decision by **[Headteacher]** to permanently exclude you/your son/daughter **[name of learner]**. The committee, after carefully considering the representations made and all the available evidence, have decided:

Either

to overturn the exclusion and direct that **[you/name of learner]** are/is reinstated in the school by **[date]**. We therefore expect **[you/name of learner]** to be back in school on **[date]** at **[time]**.

If you wish to discuss **[learner’s name/your]** return to school before reinstatement, please contact **[name of Headteacher]** to arrange a convenient time and date.

A copy of this letter will be added to **[learner’s name/your]** school record for future reference.

Or

to uphold **[your/name of learner’s]** exclusion.

The reasons for the committee’s decision are as follows: **[give the reasons in as much detail as possible, explaining how the committee arrived at its decision]**.

You have the right to appeal against this decision. If you wish to appeal, please notify **[name of the Clerk to the appeal panel]** of your wish to appeal. You must set out the reasons for your appeal in writing and if appropriate, you may also include any disability discrimination claim you may wish to make and send them to **[address]** by no later than **[specify the latest date – the seventeenth school day after the date of this letter]**. If you have not lodged an appeal by **[repeat latest date]**, your right to appeal will lapse.

Your appeal would be heard by an independent appeal panel.

A **[three-member/five-member]** panel will comprise **[one/two]** serving education practitioner[s] (possibly **[a]** Headteacher[s]) **[one/two]** serving or recently serving experienced governor[s]; and one lay member who will be the chair. The appeal panel will rehear all the facts of the case – if you have fresh evidence to present to the panel you may do so. The panel must meet no later than the fifteenth school day after the date on which your appeal is lodged. In exceptional circumstances panels may adjourn a hearing until a later date.

I would like to remind you of the following sources of advice and assistance: **[repeat]**

details from the original exclusion letter, i.e. a named LA officer and the Advisory Centre for Education and any other local source of advice or assistance if known].

The arrangements currently being made for **[learner's name/your]** education will continue for the time being. However, new arrangements to provide full-time education for **[Learner's name/your]** are being made and **[name of LA officer]** will liaise with you shortly about these new arrangements. If you have any questions about this please contact **[name]**.

Yours sincerely

[name]

Clerk to the discipline committee

Model letter 6: Independent appeal panel decision

From the Clerk to the independent appeal panel notifying the parent/carer and/or learner of the outcome of their appeal.

Dear **[parent's/carer's/learner's name]**

Following the hearing of your appeal by the independent appeal panel constituted by **Blaenau Gwent** Local Authority on **[date]** at **[location]** against the decision of the governing body of **[name of school]/the discipline committee for [name of PRU]** not to reinstate **[learner's name/you]**, I am writing to advise you of the panel's decision.

After careful consideration of your representations (both oral and written) and those of **[school/PRU]** and **Blaenau Gwent** Local Authority **[and of others if applicable, e.g. any victim]** and in the light of the available evidence, the panel has decided:

Either

(i) to uphold the exclusion

or

(ii) to direct **[learner's name/your]** reinstatement in **[name of school/PRU]** with effect from **[date and time]**. **[Learner's name/you]** should report to **[name of school staff member]** at that time

or

(iii) that it is not practical to direct **[learner's name/your]** reinstatement **[here give reasons, e.g. because this is an exceptional case where reinstatement would not be in the learner's best interests or those of the whole school/PRU community]** although otherwise reinstatement would have been appropriate. Your **[child's]** school record will show that the permanent exclusion was overturned on appeal even though reinstatement was not directed.

[Give reasons in as much detail as possible for the panel's decision: the decision may be challenged by judicial review; or be the subject of a complaint of maladministration by the appeal panel to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

The panel's decision is binding on you, the governing body of **[name of school]/** and **[name of LA]**.

For decisions (i) and (iii) above:

The alternative arrangements put in place for **[learner's name/your]** full-time education will continue for the time being; but **[LA officer's name]** will be in touch with you to discuss future provision.

A copy of this letter will be added to **[learner's name/your]** school record for future reference.

Yours sincerely

[name]

Clerk to the independent appeal panel

MANAGED MOVE POLICY

August 2022



Cyngor Bwrdeisdref Sirol

Blaenau Gwent

County Borough Council

Contents

Page Nos

What is a managed move?	2
Who would benefit from a managed move?	2
Managed move – points to consider	3
Managed move – unacceptable practices	4
Managed move process	4
Step 1- Discussion between school and family	4
Step 2- Discussion between school and LA Admissions	5
Step 3- Vulnerable Learners Panel	5
Step 4 - Managed Move Panel	5
Step 5 - Managed move meeting	6
Step 6 - Implementing the managed move	7
6.1 - Successful managed move	7
6.2 - Exceptional circumstances	7
<u>Appendices:</u>	8
Appendix 1 – Support Strategies & Interventions	
Appendix 2 - Parental consent to consider managed move	
Appendix 3 – Information for parents	
Appendix 4 – Managed Move form	
Appendix 5 - Parental invitation to managed move meeting	
Appendix 6 – Managed move agreement form (MM1)	
Appendix 7 – Managed move outcome form (MM2)	
Appendix 8 – Process flowchart	

Managed Move Policy

This policy sets out the arrangements for Blaenau Gwent schools regarding managed moves and is based on the Welsh Government circular, '096/2011 (March 2011) Effective Managed Moves – a fresh start at school for children and young people'.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the School Admissions Code – July 2013 and Blaenau Gwent's Admission Guidance 2021.

What is a Managed Move?

A managed move is a carefully planned transfer of a pupil from one school into another in a way which is acceptable to all parties including the pupil.

Managed moves are an important tool in providing pupils with the opportunity of a fresh start in a new school. They can also reduce the need for permanent exclusions and minimise the negative outcomes associated with them.

At the core of any managed move must be the best interest of the child in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the seven core aims in the Welsh Government document 'Children & Young People: Rights to Action'.

The National Assembly for Wales Circular 203/2016 – Inclusion & Pupil Support referred to the use of managed moves as one of the early intervention strategies that can be considered to help pupils in the management of their behaviour and attendance at School.

Who would benefit from a Managed Move?

A managed move could be an appropriate strategy for the following pupils:

- Pupils for whom there is a genuine belief that a fresh start would be beneficial. However, it is essential to establish the core reasons for the problems being experienced and/or behaviours displayed by the pupil prior to consideration of a managed move.
- Pupils who find that attendance at their current school is negatively affecting their emotional well-being.
- Pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties who have received a variety of supportive strategies in their school with limited success.
- Pupils who are risk of permanent exclusion but who might succeed in a new placement.
- Pupils reinstated into a school by an independent appeal panel following a permanent exclusion but where reintegration proves to be impractical.

Managed Moves - Points to consider:

- A managed move happens *with* the pupil and family not *to* them. The aim is to motivate the pupil in a new direction rather than apportion blame. Even if choices are limited, voluntary decisions are much more likely to be effective.
- Parental consent should be obtained prior to consideration of a managed move.
- It is essential that great care is taken to ensure that the pupil is informed, understands, and, as much as possible, has the opportunity to influence decisions affecting their life.
- There has to be consideration as to whether the benefits of the move outweigh any disadvantages of the inevitable disruption to the pupil of adapting to a new environment, new arrangements and making new friends. This is particularly important for those pupils with additional learning needs.
- To enhance the likelihood of success, a managed move should be considered as a possible support mechanism before reaching crisis point and as such should be offered as one of the many support strategies and interventions available for the pupil.
- The objective of a managed move is to provide a new school placement that will be successful, to do so with a minimum of disruption to the pupil's education or the education of others, and to re-engage the pupil with a 'fresh start'.
- Schools need to be able to demonstrate that they have explored and utilised all strategies/support mechanisms available to them and be able to evidence that these have met with limited or no success.
- A non-exhaustive list of support strategies and interventions to be considered, depending on specific circumstances, before, in conjunction with, and following a managed move can be found in Appendix 1.
- When a pupil has a Statement of Special Educational Needs or a Local Authority Individual Development Plan the school will need to hold a PCP review with recommendations from the review being forwarded to the Additional Learning Needs Panel.
- If a pupil, parents/carers, Head Teacher/Phase Director and other relevant professionals genuinely believe that a change of school would be beneficial for the pupil, then it is important that following the managed move the pupil is provided with the type of support that will facilitate his/her inclusion in a new peer group (e.g. mentoring and buddy scheme) and this should be evidenced in a Pastoral Support Plan.
- When a pupil has moved schools as part of a managed move then a bus pass will be provided to secondary school age pupils to support the pupil to attend their new school. For primary aged pupils' parents will need to be responsible for transport.

Managed Moves – Unacceptable Practices

Managed moves should not be used merely as an alternative to permanent exclusion as this denies the parents and young person their right of appeal. At no point should a managed move be presented to the parents as their *only* alternative.

Voluntary/illegal exclusions, i.e. advising/encouraging parents to remove their child from the school roll and 'find another school' under the threat of permanent exclusion, are not acceptable. Schools should also avoid advising parents to remove their child from roll to be educated at home or elsewhere.

Managed Move Process

It is key that pupil, parents/carers, representatives from the original school and receiving school, and relevant LA officers are involved in a managed move. When a pupil is looked after, this must also include the social worker.

Step 1 Discussion between school and family

Parents/carers will already be aware of the difficulties the pupil is experiencing within the school and the pupil should already have a Pastoral Support Plan (PSP) in place. The Headteacher/Phase Director, as part of a review of on-going intervention or PSP, should discuss with the parents/carers and the pupil the possibility of exploring a managed move as a further strategy to help the pupil.

Parents/carers should complete the 'Parental consent for consideration of managed move' (Appendix 2). It should be noted that by signing this consent, parents/carers are still able later to decline a managed move.

The parents/carers and the pupil should be provided with further information about managed moves and the Blaenau Gwent managed move process (Appendix 3).

Where the parents/carers or the pupil do not feel that a managed move is an option that they wish to explore, then the Headteacher/Phase Director, the parents/carers and the pupil together will need to look for other possible solutions that meet the needs of the pupil and build on his/her strengths.

In the case of children looked after (CLA), the CLA Education Co-ordinator should be invited to the meeting, with the social worker, to explore the possibility of a managed move. It is important to realise that a change in school placement can result in a change in a foster placement. The disruption in a child's life can be considerable. Therefore, moving a looked after child should only take place following detailed discussion.

Step 2 Discussion between school and LA Admissions

Following consideration that the pupil might benefit from a fresh start in a new school, and the agreement of parents/carers, the Headteacher will contact the LA Admissions Team and discuss the availability of spaces at the schools identified by the parent/carers.

Step 3 Vulnerable Learners Panel

The Vulnerable Learners Panel functions to ensure that all requests for managed moves are considered appropriately and transparently. The Panel will be attended by Secondary Headteachers/Phase Directors or a member of the School's Leadership Team plus an LA Officer to Chair and provide guidance, monitoring and coordination. The Panel will be held fortnightly with dates circulated in the summer term for the following academic year but will only sit if there is a case/s to consider.

Senior Leaders from each school must be empowered to make decisions regarding admissions without the need to refer to the Headteacher/Phase Director.

The LA Officer will be responsible for distributing paperwork (Appendix 4 – Consideration for Managed Move) prior to the Panel and providing minutes of the meeting.

Step 4 Managed Move Panel

Following consideration by the Vulnerable Learners Panel and prior to the Managed Move meeting it will be the responsibility of the original school to provide any further information the receiving school may require.

The Headteacher/Phase Director from the original school will coordinate a meeting with the Head Teacher/Phase Director of the receiving school, parents/carers and pupil, to discuss details of the managed move. Appendix 5 (Invitation to managed move meeting – letter to parents/carers) can be used for this purpose.

In the case of a child looked after, the social worker's involvement is essential, and they should also be invited to this meeting.

Practicalities of the move should be discussed in detail, including realistic expectations of the receiving school and an integration strategy for the pupil.

The integration strategy should include the updating of the PSP by the receiving school, in consultation with the pupil.

The pupil should be made aware of what will happen if the managed move fails and be clear that he/she has control of the success or failure of his/her own managed move. The pupil needs to accept responsibility for his/her own behaviour and be prepared and willing to change the circumstances which brought about the managed move in the first instance.

The receiving school will need to analyse the strategies tried in the original school and include and expand on the successful elements of these strategies.

Other details regarding transport, timetable, school uniforms, equipment required etc should be discussed at this meeting.

All managed moves are subject to a six-week trial period. A start date and final review date should be given to the pupil and it needs to be acknowledged that if the managed move is not successful, the pupil will return to their original school.

Legislation in The Children and Young Person Act 2008 requires every school to have a designated member of staff for CLA (i.e. a lead person). For a child looked after, during the period of transition between schools, the lead person should be in close communication to enable a smooth transfer of placement. This will provide the opportunity for consistent support for the looked after child.

At the end of the meeting, the Managed Move Agreement Form (MM1 - Appendix 6) should be signed and a copy provided for all appropriate parties. For a child looked after a managed move should be recorded on their PEP and therefore noted in the Care Plan.

Minutes of the meeting should be placed on the pupil's school record and a copy given to the parents/carers.

Step 5 Managed Move Meeting

The initial stage of the managed move will be on a trial basis, whereby the pupil remains on the roll of the original school and their progress is monitored closely.

It is essential that the transferring pupil should be supported by the receiving school during the managed move. As a minimum, the pupil should have access to a named member of the teaching staff with whom the pupil can share anxieties and concerns, e.g. a learning mentor/behaviour mentor and peer support to facilitate the integration into a new peer group (e.g. buddy or mentoring scheme).

In addition, the PSP could consider some of the following elements of support:

- Access to the VPCo or specialist VP teacher for baseline testing and needs assessment in order to access specialist VP teaching support.
- Access to a time-out base.
- In-school support procedures such as report cards.
- A mentor from the voluntary or community sector.
- Access to after-school clubs and activities.

Step 6 Implementing the managed move

The trial period of the managed move should last six weeks with progress being monitored through recorded discussions between the pupil and the PSP coordinator and/or learning mentor.

The original school should be kept informed of the pupil's progress during the managed move process and informed on a weekly basis regarding attendance.

A formal review meeting held with the same people involved in the initial managed move meeting should be conducted at the end of the trial period to assess the effectiveness of the transfer.

Three potential outcomes may stem from discussions at the formal review meeting:

- a. The managed move is considered successful. In this case the permanent transfer is agreed. Processes are outlined in Section 6.1 below.
- b. It may be agreed that the managed move should be extended (to no more than 12 weeks in total from the date the pupil started attending), in which case a second review meeting should be planned and a new date agreed;
- c. The managed move is not considered successful in which case the pupil will return to the original school.

6.1 Successful Managed Move: making the move permanent

All appropriate parties complete the Managed Move Outcome Form (MM2 – Appendix 7). Copies should be signed by all present in the meeting and distributed to appropriate parties.

The pupil's school record is transferred to the receiving school in compliance with the Education (Pupil Information) (Wales) Regulations 2011.

Following the signed agreement by all appropriate parties, the pupil will be removed from the roll of the original school and be placed on the roll of the receiving school.

6.2 Exceptional circumstances

If, during the trial period and in exceptional circumstances (e.g. following a serious incident), the receiving school wants to end the managed move before the pupil is registered at that school, the Head Teacher/Phase Director of the receiving school will initiate a meeting of all those involved in the original managed move meeting.

Support Strategies and Interventions

A non-exhaustive list of support strategies and interventions that should be considered, depending on specific circumstances, before, in conjunction with, and following a managed move are listed below.

- Educational Psychologist advice
- Youth Service support
- School based counselling
- Education Welfare Service advice, support, guidance and if appropriate input
- Pastoral support plan
- Peer mentor and/or small group support
- Change of class
- Change of subject teacher (if identified as an issue for the pupil)
- Learning mentor
- Parents/carers meeting with Head Teacher/Phase Director and LA representative
- Involvement of relevant/appropriate support agencies, e.g. health sector, social services, outreach teams, Careers Wales
- Alternative timetable/curriculum
- Work-based training

Support Strategies and Interventions

Parental Consent Form

Consent to Share Information at Vulnerable Learners Panel.

The information collected in the Managed Move form helps us to understand what support your child may need. No information from this form will be shared without your permission unless there is a legal requirement to do so. (In which case, you will be notified that the information has been shared without your permission, unless doing this will place you, your child or a member of your family at risk.)

I understand the information that is recorded on this form will be stored and used for the purposes of providing the support requested.

I understand that I may withdraw my permission at any time in the future, in which case you should contact the person who completed this form.

Pupil's Name		Date of Birth	
Parent Name			
Address			
Contact Number			

I **agree** to a managed move being discussed for my child and confirm that I have received a copy of the 'Managed Moves – Information for parents/carers'.

My initial preferences for a new school are:

1. _____

2. _____

Parent / Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Managed moves – information for parents/carers

What are managed moves?

A managed move offers a pupil the opportunity to move to a new school and have a fresh start in a carefully planned and managed way.

When should I consider a managed move for my child?

You may consider the possibility of a managed move if your child:

- finds that attendance at the current school is having a negative impact on his/her welfare.
- has emotional and behavioural difficulties that have not improved because of the supportive strategies put in place by the current school; or
- is at risk of permanent exclusion but might succeed in a new environment;

What do I need to do?

The Head Teacher/Phase Director or representative of the school will have met with you to discuss your child and as part of the discussion will have explained the managed move process to you and discussed this as an option to consider.

You will have been asked to complete a form stating you are willing for a managed move to be considered for your child. With this agreement, your child will then be discussed at the next Managed Move Panel.

Should a managed move be agreed, you and your child will be invited by the Head Teacher/Phase Director or representative of the current school to attend a meeting to discuss the next step. The Head Teacher/Phase Director or representative of the identified new school will also attend the meeting.

If you feel that you would like to bring someone with you to the meeting to represent your views, you could do so. Details of Blaenau Gwent's independent Parent Partnership Service are below.

Before the meeting

It is important to find out what your child's views are so these can be clearly shared at the meeting if your child does not feel able to do so.

What happens at the meeting?

Discussions will focus on the needs of your child and the best way to support him/her to make the most of the fresh start.

A start date in the new school and a formal review date to discuss progress will also be agreed.

Parent Partnership Service

Is provided by SNAP Cymru. They can be contacted on 0808 801 0608 or complete the enquiry form on the SNAP Cymru web page.



Vulnerable Learner Panel Submission Form

Please complete this form electronically and send to:
Lisa.adams@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

This form is being used to: <i>(Tick one box only)</i>	
CLA Requests	
Request – Home Tuition or placement in Ty Afon (complete appendix 2 only)	
Hard to Place	
Request – Managed Move	
LA - EOTAS	

Reason for Application
Outline the reason for the referral to Panel

Expected Outcome
Explain what you are hoping the submission will achieve. Please ensure the outcome is specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely

Please complete this section for ALL Children.

School Information			
School Name			
Admission Date			
School Address			
Name of referrer		Position	
Tel No.		Email:	
Previous school			

1. Child Details

Full Legal Name					
Preferred Name					
Date of Birth		Year Group		Age	
Gender		FSM		Ethnicity	
Religion		First Language		Traveller	
Immigration Status:		CLA	Yes/No		
Is the child a Child in Need?			Is the child on the Child Protection Register		
CLA Only:					
What Section is the Child Under		Placement Details	Foster Home Children's Home Placed with Extended Family SGO With parent(s) but CLA Other (state)		

Child's Home Details	
Main Home Address include Postcode:	Who does the child live with at this address:
Other home address (if applicable):	Who does the child live with at this address:

Details of Parent/Carers		
Please provide details of all parent/carers		
	1 st	2 nd
Name		
Relationship to child		

Does this person have PR/shared PR?		
Address		
Home Phone		
Mobile Phone		
Email address		
First Language		

Parent/Corporate Parent Consent given by	
Relationship to Child	
Date:	

2. Category of Need(s)

Primary VP Need	<input type="text"/>	Additional Needs	<input type="text"/>
Any Formal Diagnosis	<input type="text"/>	Date Received	<input type="text"/>

3. Child Data

Attendance:
percentage for
last three terms

Current Term

Last Term

Term Before Last

Additional
Attendance
Information

Exclusions:
No. of days
No. of incidents

Current Term

Last Term

Term Before Last

**Reduced
Timetable:**

Yes / No
(delete as
appropriate)

If **YES**
How many
hours per
day / week

Per Day

Per Week

Please provide a summary of exclusions the child has received including the reason (an exclusion report providing further details should be included as supporting documentation).

--

Who attended the Meeting where the Reduced Timetable was agreed?

<p>Please attach a copy of the AGREEMENT and the education being provided to the child whilst on the reduced timetable.</p>

Risk Assessment
<p>Is the child a potential risk to self, adults, peers, property or other risk?</p> <p>If yes, please provide a copy of the most recent risk assessment.</p>

4. Educational Attainments (Please complete as appropriate.)

P Levels

Date Measured	Language Skills	Mathematical Skills	Personal; Social; Well-being

Foundation Phase Outcomes (Outcomes 1-6)

Date Outcomes Measured	Language Skills	Mathematical Skills	Personal; Social; Well-being; Cultural Diversity

Standardised Measures of progress

Date of Assessment	Name of Test	Result (Standard Score)	Age Equivalent if available

Non-standardised Measures of progress relating to primary need

Date	Measure	Outcome

Only complete the following table if the request is for HOME TUITION. MANAGED MOVE OR TY AFON.

Foundation Assessment Grade/Level	Grade/Level
Language and Learning	
Mathematics and Numeracy	
The Arts	
The World Around Us	
Personal Development and Mutual Understanding	
Physical Education	
Religious Education	

Pupils in Key Stage 2

KS1 Test / Assessment – P Levels	Grade
Mathematics	
Reading	
Writing	
Science	

Pupils in Key Stage 3 and 4

Current Subjects	Qualification	Exam Board	Predicted Grade

5. School Support

Class Description

Child /Teacher Ratio Number of children with a Statement or LA IDP Number of Children with a school based IDP

CURRENT SUPPORT IN PLACE

	In-class support	Withdrawal support	Unstructured time support
How much support and when?			
What is it used for?			

6. Child Profile

In this section the VP Panel will expect to see details of strategies/interventions carried out, recommended by EPS or other services in addition school-based interventions, and the outcomes of those interventions using the following headings where applicable.

Medical, Physical & Sensory

Cognition & Learning

Speech, Language and Communication

Personal Skills

Social, Emotional & Behavioural

Brief Synopsis of Behaviours

Provide an overall summary of the behaviours displayed: *(please include details of the types of negative behaviours displayed, when and how often such behaviours are happening, triggers for inappropriate behaviour).*

Please indicate the behaviours the child is currently displaying in relation to level of frequency. Behaviours and the frequency (i.e. 1 = Rarely, 2 = Occasionally, 3 = Frequently and 4 = Very Often)

Behaviour	Freq. 1, 2, 3, 4	Behaviour	Freq 1, 2, 3, 4	Behaviour	Freq 1, 2, 3, 4
Disruption		Absconding / Absenting		Discriminatory behaviour	
Vandalism		Substance / alcohol misuse		Inappropriate Sexual behaviour	
Bullying		Threats & invective		Medically related behaviour	
Fighting		Impulsive dangerous behaviour		Withdrawal	
Violence & physical Aggression		Verbal abuse		Self-harm	
Inappropriate attitude to staff		Inappropriate attitude to peers		Racist abuse	
Defiance				Other (please specify below)	

Other (please include any other additional behaviours displayed)

SEMH Strategies Implemented by School:

(provide an overview of the strategies used to promote positive behaviours and the impact of such strategies – This can be taken from a child's SEN/Behaviour/Pastoral support plan and must include how external advice has been used to support the child's needs).

Strategy	Range	Impact (detail both positive and negative impacts)

Please provide details of any alternative provision that the child may have engaged in (including all registered providers and managed moves).

--

Family and Environmental Factors

i.e. Family history, well-being, wider-family network, housing, employment and financial considerations, social and community involvement,

FAMILIES FIRST / SOCIAL CARE

Has school referred the family/pupil to Families First/Social Care? Yes No

Please provide a synopsis of the support currently being offered and by whom.

External Agency Involvement

Please identify all agencies involved, including key worker contact details.

Agency	Currently Involved	Name	Email/Phone number
EWO Service			
EPS			
Inclusive Practice Service: (Please indicate which area – Spld, ASD, Behaviour)			
Social Care (Please indicate which service area)			
Health - Specialist			
CAMHS (Please indicate which service area)			
Health Visitor/School Nurse			
SenCom Service (Please indicate which service area)			
ISCAN (Please indicate which referral/service area)			
Substance Misuse Services			

9. Views expressed by child:

Schools must share the completed form with parents/carers before the parent/carer signs the Consent to Share section and before the panel submission is sent to the LA. Parent/carers must receive a full copy of the submission.

Parent / Carer's Consent

What is the Vulnerable Learners Panel?

The Vulnerable pupils panel considers referrals from schools and Local Authority representatives to consider alternative provisions, bespoke packages and other areas to meet children's areas of vulnerability. The panel consists of representatives from the Local Authority and schools and meets fortnightly during term time (TBC).

Your view

Your view of your child's current issues, the impact this is having on his/her learning, and your views are important. Please share your views in the box below.

Your consent

Your consent is required for your child to be referred to the panel and please note your views will be shared with the Panel along with the application form submitted by the school. To ensure you fully understand and consent to the application being considered by the Panel please sign and date the consent statement below.

If you have any queries regarding this application, please do not hesitate to contact the Referrer of the application.

Parent / Carer's Views

Parental views on application to panel/potential placement (*please explain what you are hoping the panel application will achieve*):

Parent / Carer's Consent

I understand the information provided on this application form

I give consent for my child to be referred to the Vulnerable pupils panel

I give my consent for my child's information to be shared with other people/services as indicated (✓) below:

	✓
Allocated alternative provider	
Families First	
Children Looked After co-ordinator	
Ethnic minority and traveller service	
Social Care	
Your child's mainstream school	
Child and Mental Health Services (CAMHS)	
Children with disabilities Team	
Outreach Behaviour Support Service	
Other third party as required by law	
Other partner agencies that may support your child	

If you do not agree to information being shared, please state who it cannot be shared with by indicating (✗) above.

I/We have read and understood the above and agreed that my child's school can refer my son/daughter for discussion at the Vulnerable Learners Panel. I am also happy for information to be shared with agencies as indicated above.

Signed: _____

Name (print): _____

Date: _____

If at any-time that you wish to revoke your consent for information to be shared, please contact the Education Welfare Service Team, on **01495 355340**.

11. Signatories:

School's lead for vulnerable pupils Name

Signature

Date

Head Teacher's Name

Signature

Date

Please find a checklist below to assist you in providing the appropriate evidence to the VP Panel.

Submitted	Checked
VP Panel Submission Form	
Only one request box ticked	
Clear pupil views	
Clear parental views and signature	
Copy of the completed form has been shared with parent/carers	
Most recent Education Psychology report	
Most recent Outreach Advisory Service report	
Recent outside agency report/s	
School Based IDP	
Pastoral Support Plan	
Positive Handling Plan / Risk Assessment/Behaviour logs	
Copy of Reduced Timetable	

Please return form to:

VPPanel@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

**Parental invitation to managed move meeting
letter to parents/carers**

Dear

Re: (Name of Pupil)

Following our previous discussions, I am writing to invite you to attend a meeting on [date, time and location] to further explore whether a managed move may be beneficial for [name of pupil] in the long-term.

The meeting will be attended by the Headteacher/Phase Director or a representative of [name of receiving school] and by colleagues from [name of other agencies attending if necessary].

If you wish, you may choose to bring a representative with you.

Yours sincerely

Signed by Headteacher/Phase Director of original school

Managed move agreement form (MM1)

This agreement follows on from the meeting held at [name of school] on [date] involving the following:

- Head Teacher/Phase Director of the original school [name].
- Head Teacher/Phase Director of the receiving school [name].
- Pupil [name].
- Parents/Carers [name].
- Social worker (in the case of a looked after child) [name].
- Other agencies [names].

It was agreed by all parties that a managed move would be the most suitable way forward for [name of child].

Name of Pupil			
Date of Birth			
Year Group			
Male/Female			
Home Address			
Original School			
Receiving School			
Parent's/Carer's Contact No			
Period of Transfer	From:		To:
Final Review meeting date			
Reason(s) for managed move			
Terms and Conditions of managed move			

Signed:

Pupil:

Signed: _____ **Date:** __/__/__

Parent/Carer:

Signed: _____ **Date:** __/__/__

Headteacher/Phase Director original school:

Signed: _____ **Date:** __/__/__

Headteacher/Phase Director receiving school:

Signed: _____ **Date:** __/__/__

[other agency]:

Signed: _____ **Date:** __/__/__

Copies to: Parent/Carer / Original school / Receiving school.

The receiving school will keep a daily record of the pupil's attendance during the transfer period and sends details of weekly attendance to the original school. These records must be maintained by the original school for legal purposes.

Managed move outcome form (MM2)



Name of Pupil				
Date of Birth				
Year Group				
Male/Female				
Home Address				
Parents/Carers Contact No.				
Original School				
Receiving School				
Was the move successful?	YES		NO	
Period of transfer	From:		To:	
End date if unsuccessful				
Please state reasons why managed move was / was not successful?				

Signed:

Pupil:

Signed: _____ Date: __/__/__

Parent/Carer:

Signed: _____ Date: __/__/__

Headteacher/Phase Director original school:

Signed: _____ Date: __/__/__

Headteacher/Phase Director receiving school:

Signed: _____ Date: __/__/__

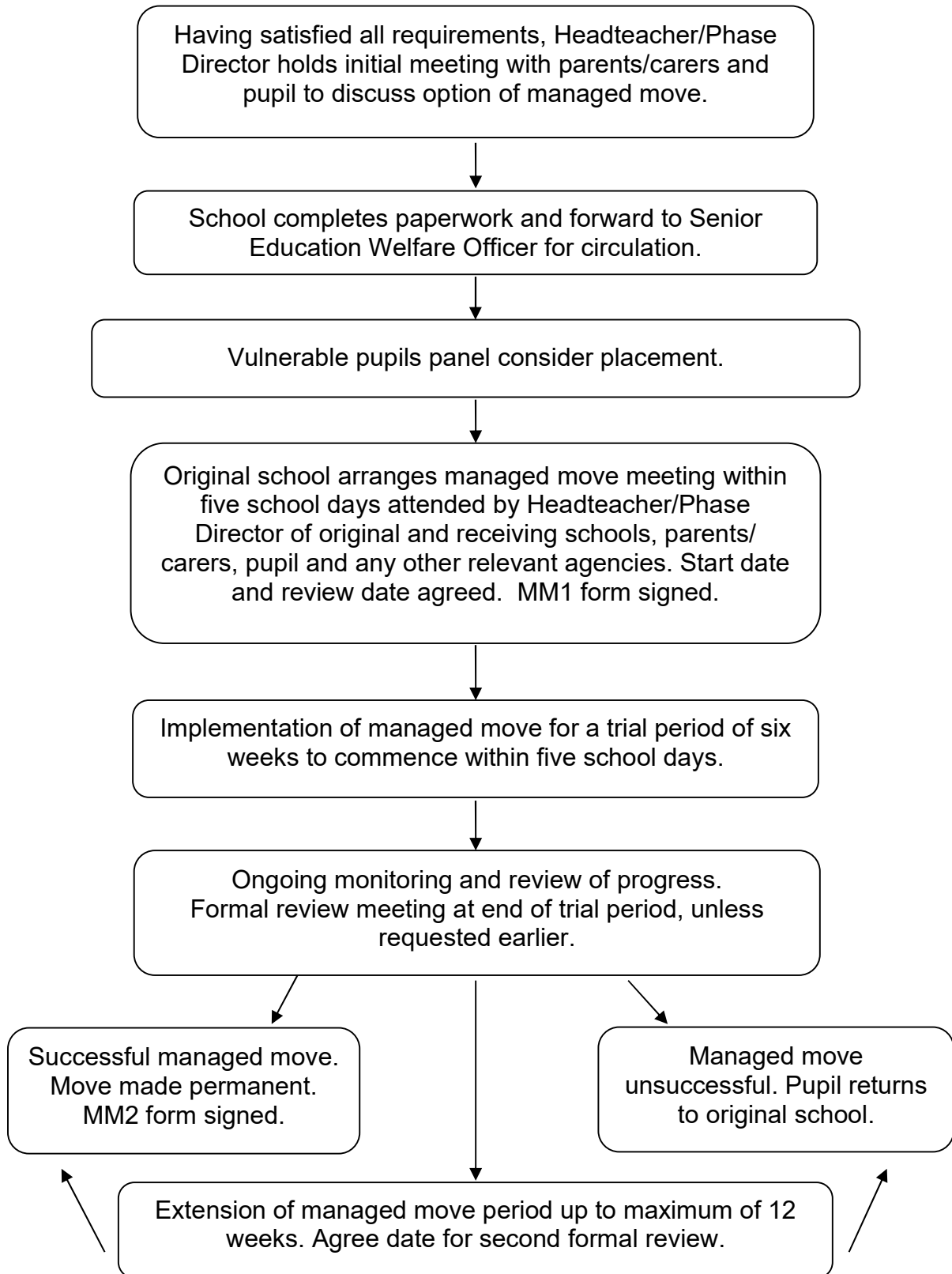
[other agency]:

Signed: _____ Date: __/__/__

Signed..... Date.....
Pupil

Copies to: Parents / carers / Original school / receiving school / LAO.

Process Flowchart



Pastoral Support Plan (PSP) Guidance

August 2022



Cyngor Bwrdeisdref Sirol

Blaenau Gwent

County Borough Council

Contents

	Page Nos
Initial Summary Sheet	3
Initial Meeting	7
Interim Review Meeting	9
Final Review Meeting	12
Appendices	15

Initial Summary Sheet

The Reason for a Pastoral Support Plan is:

To improve academic attainment, attendance and/or prevent alternative provision / permanent exclusion.

To support the pupil to manage his/her behaviour/attendance/academic performance.

To identify precise and realistic behavioural/academic/attendance outcomes for him/her to work towards.

Basic Details

Name	<input type="text"/>	Date of Birth	<input type="text"/>
Dates of Fixed Term Exclusions	<input type="text"/>	Attendance	<input type="text"/>
Primary need / diagnosis for PSP	<input type="text"/>	Year Group	<input type="text"/>

Brief description of current support in school and at home

Background information:

School:	<input type="text"/>		
Address:	<input type="text"/>	Home/Mobile Phone nos.	<input type="text"/>
Nationality:	<input type="text"/>	Ethnicity:	<input type="text"/>
Preferred Language:	<input type="text"/>	Gender:	<input type="text"/>
FSM:	<input type="text" value="Yes / No"/>	Other (e.g. MAT, EAL):	<input type="text"/>
Any medical information:	<input type="text"/>		

Additional Needs

SEN Register?	YES/NO	Code of Practice Stage (SA/SA+/ST):	
Initial Statement/ID P date:		Last Statement/IDP Review date:	
Support:			
Educational Psychologist		Date of last Consultation	

Educational Attainments (Complete as appropriate.)
Foundation Phase Outcomes (Outcomes 1-6)

Date Outcomes Measured	Language Skills	Mathematical Skills	Personal; Social; Well-being; Cultural Diversity

National Curriculum Levels (KS2 - 4)

Teacher Assessment	Current National Curriculum Level			Cognitive Ability Tests (CATs) Standardised Scores (SS)			
	KS2	KS3	KS4		NC Y4	NC Y7	NC Y9
English				Verbal			
Mathematics				Non-verbal			
Science				Quantitative			
Welsh				Mean S.S.			

Standardised Measures of progress

Date of Assessment	Name of Test	Result (Standard Score)	Age Equivalent if available

KS4 Predicted Grades and Courses

Course	Subject	Predicted Grade

Safeguarding Information

Looked after by the LA:

Social Worker Name:

Social Worker Contact details:

Child Protection Register:

Child In Need:

Risk Assessment:
(If yes the RA must be completed and attached to this form)

Involvement of Other Agencies

Educational Psychology Service		Inclusion Officer	
Education Welfare Service		Social Services	
CAMHS		Learning Coach	
Police		School Nurse	
Restorative Justice		Young Carers	
Families First		BAROD (substance abuse)	
Domestic Abuse		Youth Offending Service	
School Counsellor		REACH	
GP		CLA	

ATTENDANCE CONCERNS?			
Truancy		YES/NO	
Attendance for last three terms	%	E.W.O. Involvement?	
Current term	%	E.W.O. Name:	
Last term	%	Action by E.W.O / School	
Term before last	%		

Exclusions

Internal	Date initiated	Length in lessons/days	Reason	Parents/Carers informed

External	Date initiated	Length in days	Reason	Return Date

Governor Discipline Committee	Date	Parents/Carers attended	Outcome

Initial Meeting

Name of Pupil:		Date of Birth:	
Class/Form:		Year Group:	
Date of Meeting;			
Attending			
Agency	Name	Agency	Name
CAMHS		Careers	
Educational Psychologist		Education Welfare Officer	
Inclusion Officer		Social Services	
School Nurse		Police	
Young Carers		Other	
Learning Coach		Families First	
Domestic Abuse		BAROD	
Youth Offending Service		REACH	
GP		CLA Officer	
Main points arising from the discussion			
Key Triggers Identified			
Effective Support Already in Place			
Target 1	Strategies to support target 1		

Target 2	Strategies to support target 2
Target 3	Strategies to support target 3
Additional actions to be taken	
Action	When
Future meeting dates:	
Weekly (school and parents/carers)	
Interim (all professionals)	
Final (all professionals)	
Agreed by:	Signature:
Pupil	
Parents/carers	
School	
Other agencies	

Interim Review Meeting

Name of Pupil:		Date of Birth:	
Class/Form:		Year Group:	
Date of Meeting:			
Attending			
Agency	Name	Agency	Name
CAMHS		Careers	
Educational Psychologist		Education Welfare Officer	
Inclusion Officer		Social Services	
School Nurse		Police	
Young Carers		Other	
Learning Coach		Families First	
Domestic Abuse		BAROD	
Youth Offending Service		REACH	
GP		CLA Officer	
Apologies			
Summary of progress			
Target 1	Progress made		
Strategies	Review		

Target 2	Progress made	
Strategies	Review	
Target 3	Progress made	
Strategies	Review	
Additional Strategies		
Additional actions to be taken		
Action	When	By whom
Future meeting dates		
Weekly (school and parents/carers)		
Final (all professionals)		
Agreed by	Signature	
Pupil		

Parents/carers	
School	

Final Review Meeting

Name of Pupil:		Date of Birth:	
Class/Form:		Year Group:	
Date of Meeting;			
Attending			
Agency	Name	Agency	Name
CAMHS		Careers	
Educational Psychologist		Education Welfare Officer	
Inclusion Officer		Social Services	
School Nurse		Police	
Young Carers		Other	
Learning Coach		Families First	
Domestic Abuse		BAROD	
Youth Offending Service		REACH	
GP		CLA Officer	
Apologies			
Summary of progress			
Target 1	Progress made		
Strategies	Review		

Target 2	Progress made	
Strategies	Review	
Target 3	Progress made	
Strategies	Review	
Evaluation of progress		
Next steps to be taken		
Additional actions to be taken		
Action	When	By whom
Agreed by	Signature	
Pupil		

Parents/carers	
School	

Guidance

What is a Pastoral Support Plan (PSP)?

The aim of a Pastoral Support Plan (PSP) is to promote social inclusion and help to reduce the need for permanent exclusion. This guidance aims to provide both a school management process and procedural framework within a PSP in any Blaenau Gwent school.

The PSP procedure and process is designed to support those pupils for whom the normal school-based strategies have not been effective. A PSP is a structured intervention for pupils at risk of permanent exclusion. The aim of the PSP is to involve the pupil, parent and family in the shared challenge of improving behaviour and social skills and ensuring social and educational inclusion.

The PSP should not be used to replace the normal Special Educational Needs assessment process; pupils should still be taken through the appropriate stages of the SEN Code of Practice.

A PSP is essentially a school based and owned process. Schools and parents/carers will for the most part, be providing the additional support, interventions, adaptations and communication that are agreed.

Given the intensive nature of a PSP, schools need to target those pupils whose behaviours mean that they are at risk of permanent exclusion. A number of factors may be considered including the number of fixed term exclusions (three exclusions or more than ten days in one term should certainly be a trigger), integration from a managed move or starting at a school following a permanent exclusion. There is an expectation that pupils who receive three or more fixed term exclusions that amount to more than ten days' exclusion will be placed on a PSP.

It is for individual school leadership and management to decide upon the number of PSP's that it can manage at any one time but given the fact that each one will require additional intensive support over and above that, that could be agreed as part of a normal Individual Education Plan (IEP) it is likely that only small numbers can be managed.

There would have to be a good reason for a pupil not to be on a PSP at the point of permanent exclusion. It would be expected that a PSP would have been in place within the last two terms. The PSP process is useful in co-ordinating support and reviews of alternative packages. The decision to propose a PSP should be done in conjunction with the school's behaviour policy.

Who should be invited to a PSP meeting?

An Inclusion Officer should be invited to attend the first meeting. This allows them to hear a potted history of issues and support to date. If by the time the interim and final reviews are held, things have not progressed then the Inclusion Officer should be invited to these meetings. The Inclusion Officer keeps records

of all the information sent. This can be particularly helpful and important if he/she is supporting schools, for example in cases where parents/carers feel that a school is not doing enough to support a child or young person.

What should already be put in place?

Before initiating a PSP, the following should have been considered and/or carried out:

- changes to learning environment
- adaptations to unstructured times
- deployment of additional adults (1:1 or group work)
- review differentiation of curriculum
- adaptations for learning style
- ensure behaviour policy consistently applied
- review behaviour management strategies
- baseline behaviour assessment
- discuss difficulties with pupil
- discuss difficulties with parents/carers
- consult colleagues in department, key stage, pastoral team and/or ALNCO regarding special educational needs
- additional staff training
- IEPs with smart targets and regular reviews
- referral to and liaison with EPS and any other Outside Agencies
- withdrawal from lessons
- flexible curriculum and/or individualised timetable
- use of IT
- risk assessment
- allocation of a key worker
- managed move
- internal exclusion
- restorative approaches work
- CAF

If it is decided that a PSP is the best way forward, the school staff member identified as being responsible for co-ordinating monitoring and reviewing a PSP needs to initiate a meeting.

What does an effective PSP look like?

Before the meeting

The nominated person at the school for organising PSP's should arrange a PSP and invite the parents/carers (a model letter is available – Appendix 4) and appropriate outside agencies, as well as ensuring that key staff that are involved with the child are included. It would be advisable to check an Inclusion Officer is available before booking the date.

At this stage, the co-ordinator needs to ensure that the parents/carers and pupil understand the nature of the process before the initial meeting. Close liaison with the ALNCO is paramount.

Schools should also remember that good practice indicates that PSP's are most effective when there are on-going weekly meetings between the school and the parents/carers to discuss progress against the agreed targets.

Schools should ensure a suitable room is available.

The Staff Questionnaire (Appendix 2) should be completed to elicit staff views about the pupil and highlight the main areas of concern.

The Parent Questionnaire (Appendix 3) should be sent to parents/carers to give them the opportunity to describe the qualities in their child and express their own concerns.

A member of staff who has a good rapport with the pupil should elicit how the pupil feels about the current situation. The pupil should be encouraged to express views freely and honestly and they should be recorded uncritically. (Appendix 5 can be used for Primary pupils and Appendix 6 for Secondary pupils.) The purpose of a PSP should be explained to the pupil and the agenda of the initial meeting shared before the meeting.

The Initial Meeting

The following information needs to be available at the meeting:

- The Initial Summary Sheet
- An up-to-date Behaviour Log
- Completed Staff questionnaire(s) (Appendix 2)
- Completed Parent Questionnaire (Appendix 3)

This may be presented as a written summary of significant information.

Parents/carers and school staff will need to consider whether the pupil should be present for the whole meeting or whether it may be appropriate for him/her to contribute towards the end.

The chairperson will need to clarify the purpose and aims of the meeting, encourage brief introductions and run through the agenda (Appendix 7). A note taker should be agreed.

Everyone should have the opportunity to have their say and offer some contribution to the solution to the issues.

At the conclusion everyone will need to be clear about what is to be done, by whom and by when. A consistent approach both in and out of school is necessary to affect a positive outcome.

Targets agreed at the meeting will need to be distributed to all appropriate staff the next school day.

A record of the meeting (not minutes) will need to be sent to everyone who attended and others who are involved.

A date for the next meeting will need to be set which includes key professionals.

PSPs run for approximately 16 weeks or a similar length of time at the discretion of the meeting

Ongoing Support

At the initial meeting monitoring arrangements will have been made explicit. These would usually be weekly or fortnightly with a key member of staff (although in exceptional circumstances, daily reporting may be helpful).

The most effective PSP's are where there is ongoing communication between school and home. There should therefore be a commitment from both the school and the home for adults to meet each week to review how things are going. The pupil may be included for all or part of the meeting. This will provide opportunities to share successes and if necessary, amend any arrangements to support the pupil to continue to move forward.

The Mid Term Review

A midterm review meeting between the pupil and all the participants from the initial meeting will be useful to reflect on the progress to date. An outline agenda can be found in Appendix 7.

The focus of the meeting should be on areas of improvement and the pupil should be praised for progress made. The halfway point is the occasion for encouraging further and better efforts. The aim is to assess what is working, maximise it and to shift the emphasis away from what has gone wrong. Adjustments can be made to the routine, content and targets in the programme. Prior to the meeting the pupil's views should have been sought about how they feel they have made progress against the targets and strategies that are in place.

Where targets have been achieved, subsidiary or consequent targets can be introduced. It is important both to keep up momentum and to monitor and evaluate targets.

The idea of the session is to give pupils the opportunity to identify what has gone well, what effect that has had and how to replicate success.

The Final Review

Although it should have been clear at some point in the second half of a PSP whether or not the programme has been successful, reviewing and assessing the intervention is an integral part of the process. Appendix 7 provides an outline for this review meeting.

Focusing on solutions is the key. If the current provision is not meeting the pupil's needs what further measures can be put in place to help a pupil sustain his/her place in mainstream schooling. The experience of the programme should provide excellent information from which to plan for the future.

An assessment by the school of each programme will help develop knowledge for subsequent PSPs. Identifying what went wrong has a place, but of far greater importance is to examine, replicate and develop what went right.

The procedures following a PSP could be as follows:

- School repeat PSP
- Look for a planned request for change of placement

Staff Questionnaire

Name:		Class:				
National Curriculum Levels						
Speaking and Listening		Reading				
Writing		Maths				
Any additional Comments regarding their learning						
Please rate his/her behaviour this term						
5 – Very good	4	3	2	1 – Very poor		
Please rate the behaviour of the class						
5 – Very good	4	3	2	1 – Very poor		
Please rate the pupil's behaviour in each of these aspects:						
Positive to teacher	5	4	3	2	1	Negative to teacher
On task	5	4	3	2	1	Off task
Self-contained	5	4	3	2	1	Attention seeking
Appropriate behaviour	5	4	3	2	1	Inappropriate behaviour
Positive to peers	5	4	3	2	1	Negative to peers
In their place	5	4	3	2	1	Out of their place
Appropriately equipped	5	4	3	2	1	Inappropriately equipped
Work up to date	5	4	3	2	1	Work behind deadlines
Able to follow instructions	5	4	3	2	1	Ignores instructions
Puts up their hand	5	4	3	2	1	Calls out
Answers appropriately	5	4	3	2	1	Answering back
Homework always done	5	4	3	2	1	No homework done
Calm when others behave inappropriately	5	4	3	2	1	Reacts badly when others behave inappropriately

Things this pupil does well in school	
What strengths / skills does the pupil demonstrate in other areas?	
What specific behaviours shown by this pupil regularly cause concern?	
Any other comments you may wish to make.	
Please return this form to:	
Return date:	

Parent Questionnaire

Name:	Class:
What do you think are your child's best qualities?	
What sort of things worry you about your child?	
When did you first notice difficulties with your child's behaviour?	
How does your child behave at home?	
What do you think we can do to help your child at school?	
Is there anything else you think we should know about?	
I/We will/will not be able to come to the meeting. Please delete as applicable.	
Signed:	Date:

Letter to Parents/Carers

Dear _____

As you know we are worried that _____ may be placing themselves at risk of permanent exclusion from school. We want to do everything we can to avoid this and are asking for your help.

We would like you to come to a meeting to plan a support plan for _____ on _____ at _____.

It will be an opportunity for you to give us your views and will enable us to work together to help _____ to be successful in school. We have also invited staff from the school and professionals from other services to attend.

Would you please complete the form and return it to me by _____? If you wish to add additional information, please do so overleaf.

Thank you for your help.

Pupil View – Primary

Name:		Date:		
Class:		Year Group:		
<p>Please help us by saying how you feel you are getting on in school. A grown up you trust can help as much as you want but they need to record your ideas and comments in your words.</p>				
Activity	Happy	Okay	Sad	Comments
Reading				
Writing				
Maths				
PE				
Computers				
Science				
Art/Craft				
Carpet/Listening time				
Working by yourself				
Working with a group				
Assembly				
Playtime				
Lunchtime				
Homework				
With friends				
With teachers				

What things do you enjoy doing in school?

What things do you find tricky in school?

What would make school better for you?

What do you enjoy doing when you are not at school?

Pupil View – Secondary

Name:		Date:	
Tutor Group:		Year Group:	
How would you describe yourself?			
What things do you like doing at school?			
What things do you find tricky in school?			
What would make school better for you?			
What do you enjoy doing when you are not at school?			

What do you think about your behaviour in?					
	Very Good	Quite Good	OK	Poor	Very Poor
Classrooms	5	4	3	2	1
Corridors	5	4	3	2	1
Assembly	5	4	3	2	1
Toilet	5	4	3	2	1
Breaks	5	4	3	2	1
Outside school	5	4	3	2	1
Canteen	5	4	3	2	1
How do you feel you generally behave?					
5 – Very Good	4	3 - Average	2	1 – Very Poor	
Do you think your behaviour needs to change?					
Yes			No		
How do you feel about changing your behaviour?					
5 – Able to change	4	3 – May be able to change	2	1 – Unable to change	
Would you like some help to change your behaviour?					
Yes			No		
What would that help look like?					

PSP Meeting Agenda

Initial PSP Meeting Agenda

1. Welcome (includes anticipated finish time)
2. Purpose and aims of the meeting
3. Introductions and apologies
4. What the pupil does well (Class teacher, Head of Year/House or form tutor)
5. Analysis of staff questionnaires (SENCO)
6. Summary of behaviour log (Class teacher, Head of Year/House or form tutor)
7. Parent comments
8. Pupil comments (Their view should be given if they are not attending)
9. Contributions from other professionals
10. Summary and target setting
11. Strategies to support targets including rewards.
12. Monitoring and review arrangements
13. Dates of next meetings – weekly session, interim review, final review.
14. Thanks

Interim PSP Meeting Agenda

1. Welcome (includes anticipated finish time)
2. Purpose and aims of the meeting
3. Introductions and apologies
4. What the pupil is doing well (Class teacher, Head of Year/House or form tutor)
5. Summary of behaviour log (Class teacher, Head of Year/House or form tutor)
6. Parent comments
7. Pupil comments (Their view should be given if they are not attending)
8. Contributions from other professionals
9. Summary of progress to date
10. Review of targets and strategies to date, any additional actions
11. Monitoring and review arrangements
12. Thanks

Final PSP Meeting Agenda

1. Welcome (includes anticipated finish time)
2. Purpose and aims of the meeting
3. Introductions and apologies
4. What the pupil is doing well (Class teacher, Head of Year/House or form tutor)
5. Summary of behaviour log (Class teacher, Head of Year/House or form tutor)
6. Parent comments
7. Pupil comments (Their view should be given if they are not attending)
8. Contributions from other professionals
9. Summary of progress
10. Review of targets and strategies
11. Next steps
12. Thanks

Well-being in Education Strategy AND Good Practice Guide

August 2022



Cyngor Bwrdeisdref Sirol

Blaenau Gwent

County Borough Council

Content Nos	Page
Introduction	3
Background	3
The context in Blaenau Gwent	7
Evidence-based research on the need to improve practice for well-being in education	
Defining Well-being	8
Aims and objectives	8
A framework for promoting well-being in education in Blaenau Gwent	9
Measuring the effectiveness of provision for promoting well-being in education.	10
How will we know if we have made a difference?	12
What needs to happen next?	12
Good Practice Guide for Schools	14

Introduction

Blaenau Gwent's Well-being in Education Strategy sets out the Education Directorate's plan to promote positive learner well-being in our schools. The strategy recognises the interdependencies between schools, families, communities, the Education Directorate and partners and agencies in promoting learner well-being and providing preventative and supportive services when necessary

This strategy is supported by a range of other relevant Blaenau Gwent Council policies and plans, for example:

- The Corporate Improvement Plan
- The Single Integrated Plan
- The Well-being Assessment and Corporate Well-being Objectives
- The Directorate Improvement Plan
- The Learning for Well-being Partnership Plan

Background

The national vision and legislation for well-being

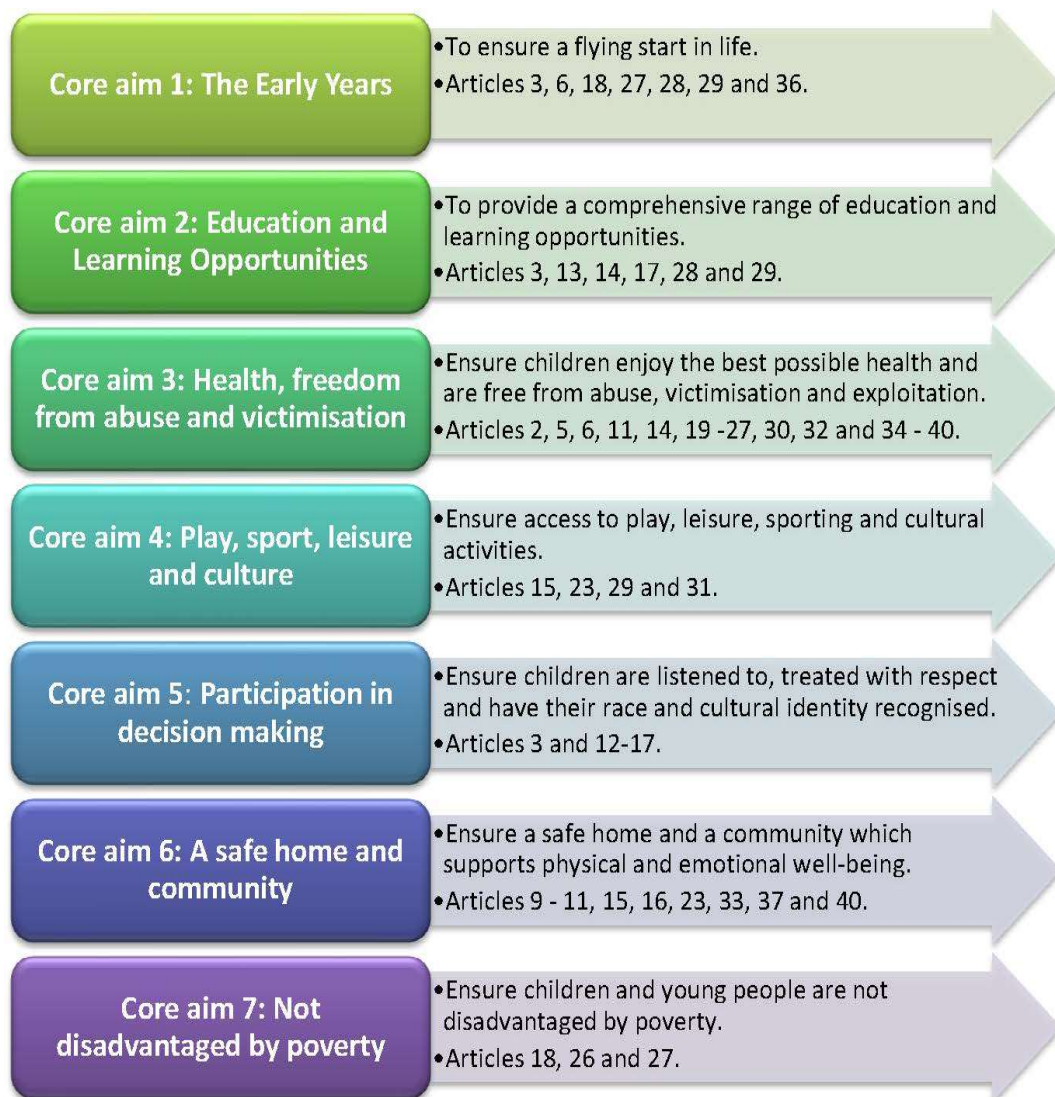
Promoting children and young people's well-being is central to the vision of the Welsh Government and as a result of this all local authorities and schools in Wales already have a number of duties which collectively promote learner well-being. Every school is required to ensure that their existing policies, initiatives and practice comprehensively cover effective promotion of emotional health, wellbeing and positive behaviour.

The Education Act 2002 expresses aims in the form of general requirements as follows.

'The curriculum for a maintained school or maintained nursery school satisfies the requirements of this section if it is a balanced and broadly based curriculum which —

- (a) promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society, and
- (b) prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.'

The Welsh Government formally adopted the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of Children in 2004 as a means of promoting the well-being of children and young people, which underpins all of the work it undertakes with, and on behalf of children and young people. As a result of this the Welsh Government identified **Seven Core Aims** which are a translation of the rights enshrined in the UNCRC:



The Welsh Government has further strengthened its commitment to improving the well-being of children and young people through the **Well-being of Future Generations Act** which became law in April 2015 (and operational from April 2016). This Act places new requirements on the Welsh Government and public bodies to work together to develop practice to promote the seven well-being goals that aim to improve social, economic, cultural and environmental well-being. As from April 2016 all local authorities have conducted well-being assessments and formulated subsequent action plans to address the seven well-being goals identified in the act

The seven well-being goals are:

Goal	Description of the goal
A prosperous Wales	An innovative, productive and low carbon society which recognises the limits of the global environment and therefore uses resources efficiently and proportionately (including acting on climate change); and which develops a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work.
A resilient Wales	A nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change).
A healthier Wales	A society in which people's physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.
A more equal Wales	A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio economic background and circumstances).
A Wales of cohesive communities	Attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities.
A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	A society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation.
A globally responsible Wales	A globally responsible Wales. A nation which, when doing anything to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, takes account of whether doing such a thing may make a positive contribution to global well-being and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change).

In 2015 the Welsh Government commissioned Professor Donaldson to conduct a review of the curriculum and assessment arrangements in Wales and as a result of this **Successful Futures**¹ was published which recommended far-reaching and significant changes to the current educational system. Donaldson makes a specific recommendation that the importance of health and well-being be recognised as one of the six key areas of learning in his proposals for a new curriculum because:

Children and young people need to experience social, emotional and physical well-being to thrive and engage successfully with their

¹ Successful Futures. Independent review of curriculum and assessment arrangements in Wales. Donaldson 2015

education. The Health and well-being Area of Learning and Experience will help them to build the knowledge, understanding and skills that will enable them to develop positive and appropriate relationships, deal with the difficult issues and decisions they will face and learn to live independently.

The Common Inspection Framework devised by Estyn, the Welsh education and training inspectorate, makes explicit reference to the expectation that schools actively promote children and young people's well-being. Estyn arrive at judgements about the quality of outcomes, provision and leadership of well-being in schools using a combination of objective and subjective measures which broadly encompass aspects of social, physical, emotional and intellectual well-being and how well children and young people are prepared for life after school.

Evidence-based research on the need to improve practice for well-being in education

A report commissioned by The Welsh Government and published in 2016 by the Public Policy Institute in Wales (PPIW)² proved that despite the existence of a wide range of initiatives and interventions in schools there was limited evidence regarding causal links between these and measurable improvement in aspects of children's and young people's well-being. However, it was found that school-based work in this area could be very effective but to succeed school systems needed to be better connected with each other to translate the research evidence into sustained positive impacts.

Interventions and initiatives were seen as more likely to succeed if they were embedded within wider school systems and teaching and learning across the curriculum. Similar findings in England were published by Weare (2015)³ concluding that traditionally, whole-school approaches have proved too vague and diluted to be effective. The report advocates that a genuine whole-school approach can only succeed if well-being is seen as everybody's responsibility which would include genuine involvement from pupils, staff, governors, parents/carers, partners and the wider community.

The context in Blaenau Gwent

The corporate well-being goals for Blaenau Gwent, identified through the statutory well-being assessment completed under the Well-being of Future Generations Act are as follows:

1. Create a better and enhanced environment and infrastructure that our communities, businesses and visitors benefit from.
2. Continue to improve learner outcomes and well-being so that all children and young people thrive and realise their full potential

² Promoting emotional health, well-being and resilience in primary schools. Public Policy Institute Wales 2016

³ What works in promoting social and emotional well-being and responding to mental health problems in schools?. Advice for schools and framework document. K Weare 2015

3. We will be a modern, smart Authority, providing leadership to enable people and communities to thrive
4. Take a preventative and early intervention approach to support the most vulnerable ensuring, where appropriate, they are protected and supported to achieve personal outcomes and well-being
5. Maximise the employability of local people through skills development at a local and regional level
6. Enabling older people to feel valued and empowered to maximise their independence and lead healthy and engaged lives
7. Support citizens to take an active role in their communities to provide empowerment and resilience

Well-being in Education in Blaenau Gwent

The Vision for Education in Blaenau Gwent is to secure excellent achievement and well-being through a partnership, school-led, self-improving, school to school, system approach.

The Blaenau Gwent aspiration for well-being is that all children and young people are purposefully engaged in education which is appropriate to their needs and age. We want our children and young people to flourish and achieve positive outcomes for themselves, their families and our community. We want our children and our young people to be healthy, confident and capable and ready to learn throughout their lives. We want our children to be enterprising, creative contributors who are ready to play a full part in life and work.

Aims and objectives

The purpose of the strategy is to provide a framework to enable the development of a self-improving, school led system with children and young people's well-being at its core. It identifies how schools and the Education Directorate can work together to:

- support schools to plan and deliver a comprehensive and sustainable programme to promote and meet the identified wellbeing needs from the Foundation Phase to Key Stage Four.
- coordinate the planning of services to ensure that the resources of the education directorate are used in the most effective way to support schools to develop capacity and that the approach taken is informed;
- respond to current legislation
- engage effectively in partnership with others in order to improve wellbeing in education in Blaenau Gwent.

The objective of the strategy is to:

- capture accurately the extent of what is already being done to promote well-being across all aspects of school life;
- analyse the quality of provision that is intended to promote well-being at a universal whole-school level as well as identify what is in place to support vulnerable groups and individuals;
- map the extent that families/carers, communities, partners, outside agencies and the voluntary sector are utilised by schools to promote learner well-being and provide preventative and supportive services;

- evaluate improvements in learner well-being using a range of qualitative and quantitative measures.
- identify needs at a whole authority level as well as at an individual school level so that targeted support can be provided

A framework for promoting well-being in education in Blaenau Gwent

Mapping provision

In order to ensure that the curriculum promotes well-being it would be useful if schools adopted a provision mapping approach. Each area of the curriculum should be mapped using the following three criteria: Universal, targeted and focused.

- **Universal** refers to what children and young people would receive as part of a basic entitlement with an emphasis on promotion of good well-being for all. This would provide an insight into how well the curriculum was co-ordinated to cover all five areas of well-being and how well parents/carers, partners, outside agencies and the voluntary organisations were used to enhance the promotion of learner well-being.
- At a **targeted** level this would be provision for those children and young people that need more than just the universal approach to promotion of well-being for all and would benefit from additional and/or small group input to address early indications of potential difficulties.
- At the **focused** level this would look at provision for those children and young people who are experiencing difficulties and need support which is above what is normally provided at the targeted level and would incorporate advice and guidance from other services.

Measuring and evaluating the effectiveness of provision for promoting well-being in education

What should be measured and how should it be measured?

The following range of information (some of which is already routinely collected by the Education Directorate) would be necessary to create a meaningful multi-dimensional picture of practice across schools in the authority:

A range of objective data which would include:

- Attendance
- Exclusions
- Reported bullying incidents
- Restrictive physical interventions
- End of key stage results
- NEETS
- School categorisation

All secondary schools in Blaenau Gwent have enrolled in the Schools Health Research Network which will provide bi-annual standardised measures of whole-school health and well-being including: Food, fitness and physical

activity; Well-being and emotional health; Substance use and misuse; Sex and relationships.

The following list is not exhaustive and provides examples only:

- A provision map detailing curriculum coverage for the 5 dimensions of well-being
- Counselling Service annual report
- PASS audit results
- Thrive assessments
- Healthy Schools documentation
- Rights respecting schools reports
- ELSA practitioners
- ASD Friendly status/ Autism learning Wales
- SpLD friendly status
- Restorative Practices
- Attachment aware programme

Subjective information should regularly and routinely be collected by schools from learners through a range of pupil voice activities. For example:

- Do pupils feel safe in school?
- Do pupils know how to keep themselves safe?
- Do pupils report an increased sense of well-being in school?
- Do pupils feel respected?
- Engagement in school related out of hours activities
- Do pupils experience enjoyment in their learning?
- Are pupils able to learn in all lessons?
- Do pupils know how to improve their learning?
- Are pupils involved in making decisions about teaching and learning?

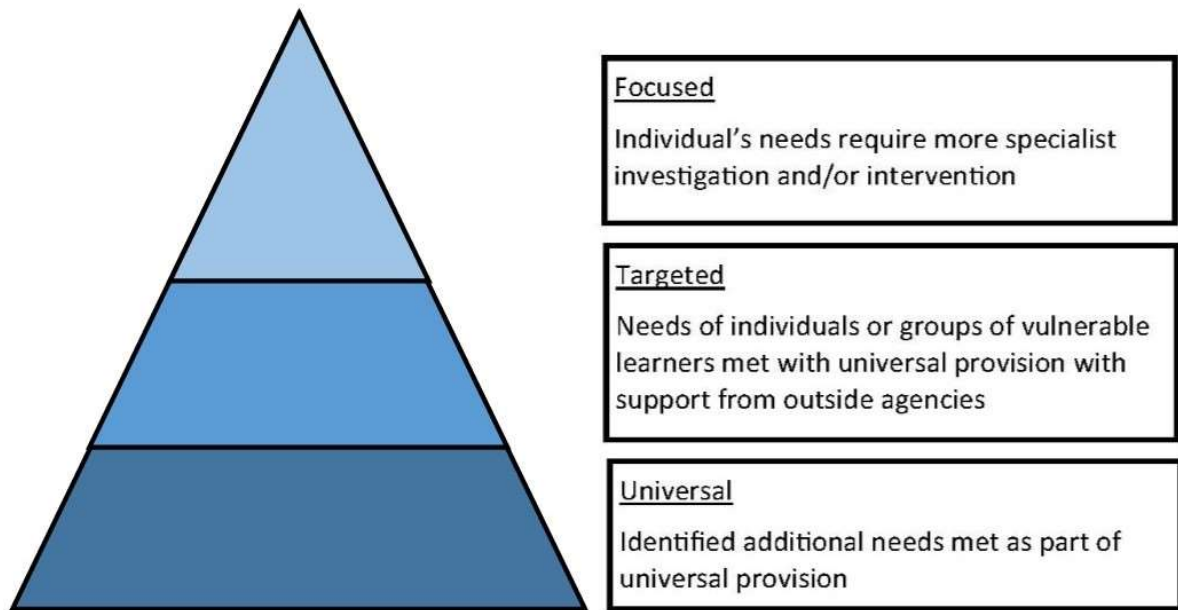
Evidence of effective school engagement with parents/carers, community, partners, outside agencies and voluntary organisations to enhance the promotion of learner well-being will need to be provided. It is recommended that schools adopt the Welsh Government's FaCE the challenge together: Family and community engagement toolkit for schools in Wales. The toolkit is designed to provide practical help to schools with an emphasis on helping families to support their child's learning, and in particular families of children who are underperforming, children from deprived backgrounds or those receiving less support for their learning at home.

A framework for well-being in schools

The following five dimensions offer a potential framework to develop a pro-active curriculum in its widest sense to help schools plan to develop practice, activities and experiences which form the entitlement of children and young people to opportunities to enhance all aspects of their well-being.

Dimension	Description
Physical	<p>Having the best possible health and best care when in ill-health, living a healthy lifestyle, being adequately nourished, living in a comfortable warm home, being protected from abuse, having the opportunity to engage regularly in sports, active play/and or leisure activities.</p> <p>Avoiding smoking, alcohol and substance misuse. Healthy sexual behaviours.</p> <p>Understanding of environmental awareness and sustainable development. Appreciation and care of physical environment locally and globally.</p>
Social	<p>Having the opportunity to engage with others in a range of settings, school and college, out of school activities, youth clubs, play settings, cultural or religious groups, the community, engaging in active citizenship.</p> <p>Developing social skills to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • empathise and handle relationships with family, friends in school or college and in the community. • interact through listening to others, asking questions, using appropriate body language, appropriate verbal communication and group working. • respect through accepting others, practicing empathy, valuing relationships and respecting the rights of others. • gain satisfaction from helping others, making others feel welcome or good about themselves, volunteering, giving something back to the family, learning setting or community.
Emotional	<p>Having the opportunity to love and be loved, to feel safe and secure at home, school or college and in the community and to have friends.</p> <p>Developing skills to understand and manage emotions and feelings.</p> <p>Developing effective coping strategies that prevent or help deal with stress, depression, anxiety and isolation.</p> <p>Promoting the development of positive self-esteem and self-worth.</p>

	<p>Having a sense of awe about the world including art and culture of all kinds, spirituality (not necessarily religious)</p> <p>Increasing independence, taking control, understanding and developing self-efficacy, being pro-active in developing goals and aspirations, taking responsibility for actions and managing risks and understanding consequences.</p> <p>Motivation and involvement. Being able to focus and direct attention towards engaging in and completing tasks, seeing a value in and being willing to take part, making a positive contribution to an activity. Showing resilience through able to stick at activities in the face of difficulties.</p>
Intellectual	<p>This is about having the desire to learn new concepts, improve skills and seek challenges in pursuit of lifelong learning. It is concerned with ability to be able to open the mind to new ideas and experiences that can be applied to personal decisions, group and community improvement.</p> <p>Having appropriate learning opportunities from early years onwards, gaining and growing skills, knowledge and understanding.</p> <p>Being able to achieve and fulfil potential irrespective of socio-economic factors or disadvantage.</p> <p>Thriving in school or college through personalised learning.</p> <p>Having the chance and support to achieve and ultimately to make a positive contribution to society and the economy.</p>
Economic	<p>For families to have enough money to meet every day needs and enable children and young people to engage in activities and experiences that help to underpin and promote emotional, physical and social well-being.</p> <p>Managing debt (as research shows a strong correlation between debt and mental health) to avoid anxiety, stress, depression, self-harm and isolation from society.</p> <p>Understanding budgeting including saving and lending for living healthily and securely.</p> <p>Children and young people to develop skills so that they are able to access financial support manage money and develop employability skills in order to break the cycle of poverty.</p>



A four staged approach to developing well-being in schools

Stage 1: Identify what currently happens in school

Consult widely to work out what you currently do for well-being?

- Who does what at senior and middle leadership?
- What do teachers understand their role to be in promoting well-being?
- What do support staff believe their role to be in promoting well-being?
- What do children and young people say about provision for well-being?
- How do we involve pupil voice in shaping provision?
- How do we involve parents/carers in shaping provision?
- How do we use other stakeholders and the wider school community to promote well-being?
- Is well-being explicit or implicit in school policies?
- What current specific school policies/plans promote well-being? For example: attendance; behaviour; teaching and learning; assessment; anti-bullying; equalities; school council/ pupil participation; ALN; safeguarding (child protection, e-safety, Prevent, whistleblowing); sex and relationships education; substance misuse etc...
- What wider opportunities do we provide eg after school activities to promote well-being?
- What co-curriculum experiences do we provide to promote well-being? Do we ensure experiential pupil-led learning during the day to support the curriculum?
- Do curriculum subjects as well as PSE cover aspects of well-being?
- Is well-being supported through teaching and learning?
- How do we know if we have impacted on the well-being of pupils?
- What mechanisms do we have for early identification?
- What interventions or approaches do we use for individual pupils?
- How well do we link with other agencies to support well-being?

- Are there any issues at a whole-school/ group/ individual level?

Stage 2: Getting a shared understanding and commitment of what needs to change.

Involve a wide range of stakeholders including children and young people, parents/carers, teachers and support staff, governors and the wider community to create a shared definition of well-being.

Although there will be similarities across all Blaenau Gwent schools a bespoke approach will need to be undertaken by each school to define its own vision for well-being which should be based on what its pupils, parents/carers, staff, governors and wider community decide.

- Agree on what sort of provision is needed to ensure teaching coverage for the five dimensions of well-being across all subject areas.
- Decide on how and who will co-ordinate well-being provision.
- Identify how external agencies will be involved to enhance curriculum coverage to promote well-being.
- Prioritise professional learning and staff development.
- Identify any new teaching resources that need to be created.
- Decide what school-based targeted support will be provided to those 'at risk'
- Agree what evidence-based interventions will be provided for focused work with individual pupils.
- Decide on how to increase parents/carers participation in enhancing provision.
- Establish the overlap between other policies/plans that support well-being across the school.
- Create a timetable of pupil voice activities scheduled throughout the year involving a number of focus groups responsible for different aspects of well-being that feedback directly to senior leadership and all other pupils.
- Identify which members of staff will have responsibility and accountability for monitoring well-being.
- Share messages with the wider community eg social media, flyers, assemblies, PACT.
- Consider any financial implications.
- Consider the range of stakeholders to be involved in monitoring progress and holding the school to account for improved well-being outcomes for example a well-being committee.

Stage 3: Making it happen

Consideration will need to be given to the following:

- Confirm key milestones and named personnel responsible for leading the process
- New support and identification implemented with links made across whole-school practice.
- Links to wider services established with agreements about actions and objectives.

- Staff training delivered on promotion and protection of well-being across the curriculum.
- Staff training delivered on early identification and range of in-school intervention as well as pathways to access outside agency support.
- Procedures for working with external partners agreed and implemented.
- Well-being committee (if using – if not a suitable equivalent) to hold identified personnel to account for implementing roll out of programme.
- Pupil voice activities undertaken on a timetabled basis with feedback to managers and all school pupils.

Stage 4: Did we make a difference?

- Pupil attainment is maintained or improved
- Pupils feel safe in school
- Pupils report increased personal and social wellbeing in school
- School staff feel competent and confident in promoting children's wellbeing
- Staff are confident in responding to their pupils' needs.
- Pupil behaviour is improved and there is a reduction in 'risky' behaviour
- Pupil attendance is maintained or improved
- Fewer pupils are excluded from school.
- Preventative mental health measures are in place and there is a reduction of concerns in addressing mental health issues.
- Parents and carers report an increase in engagement with school.
- Identified children and families report productive engagement with the appropriate services

Example School Policy for the Education of Children Looked After (CLA)

August 2022



Cyngor Bwrdeisdref Sirol

Blaenau Gwent

County Borough Council

Contents Page

Description	Page
1.0 Introduction: Policy Objective	2
2.0 Aims	2
3.0 School contact details	2
4.0 Who are children looked after?	3
5.0 Roles and Responsibilities	3
The Headteacher	3
The Governing Body	3
The Designated Teacher for CLA	4
All Staff	5
6.0 Policy review	5
Appendix 1 CLA Friendly School toolkit	6

1 Introduction: Policy Objective

To promote the educational achievement, inclusion and welfare of Children Looked After (CLA) on the roll of [school name] to reach their potential both academically and personally.

We are committed to promoting improved educational life chances for CLA.

We provide a safe and secure environment where CLA have access to excellent educational provision.

We recognise the vital role our school plays in providing a stable base for CLA in promoting their academic, social and emotional development.

We promote staff training specific to the needs of CLA, so that all adults are sensitive to the barriers to learning that CLA experience and feel able to support discretely and confidentially, as needs arise.

Our school community champions the needs of CLA to ensure they make progress.

2 Aims

Our Aims for CLA:

- to create a whole school ethos in which all staff understand their responsibility in supporting the role of Corporate Parent;
- to ensure CLA are advantaged within school policies and procedures and are prioritised for additional support through school-based interventions, with their needs explicitly considered and provided for.
- to narrow the gap between the attainment of CLA and their peers
- to ensure that school systems facilitate discrete support, as appropriate
- to ensure CLA feel part of the school community and take as active a part as possible in all school activities
- to ensure that all CLA are involved, where practicable, in decisions that affect them

3.0 School contact details:

Name of the Designated Teacher for CLA and contact details:

Insert details

Name of the Designated School Governor for CLA:

Insert Details

4 Who are Children Looked After (CLA)?

Under the Children Act 1989, a child is in the care of the local authority if he or she is provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the authority. This includes the following:

- children who are accommodated under a voluntary agreement with their parents
- children who are the subjects of a care order or interim care order
- children who are the subjects of emergency orders for their protection
- children who are compulsorily accommodated – this includes children remanded to the local authority or subject to a criminal justice supervision order with a residence requirement

Children looked after may live with foster carers, in a children's home, in a residential school, with relatives or with parents. They may be looked after by our Local Authority or may be in the care of another authority but living in ours.

5 Roles and Responsibilities:

The Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

- identify a Designated Teacher for CLA
- ensure that procedures are in place to monitor the admission, progress, attendance and any exclusions of CLA and that appropriate action is taken
- report on the progress, attendance and conduct of CLA
- ensure that staff in school receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and related guidance.
- Be aware of the Blaenau Gwent CLA Friendly school toolkit and support the completion of the CLA friendly school self-evaluation.

The Governing Body

The Governing Body will

- identify a nominated governor for CLA
- ensure that all Governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of CLA
- ensure the school has an overview of the needs and progress of CLA
- ensure that all school policies and procedures support the needs of CLA
- review the effective implementation of this policy, preferably annually and at least every three years
- receive an annual report detailing:
 - *the number of CLA in the school*
 - *a comparison of attainment progress as a discrete group, compared with those of other pupils in school and nationally (when this data becomes available);*
 - *the attendance of pupils as a discrete group, compared to other pupils;*
 - *the level of fixed term/permanent exclusions*
 - *pupil destinations after leaving the school*

The Designated Teacher for CLA

The Designated Teacher for CLA will:

- act as an advocate for CLA
- promote a school culture that has high expectations and aspirations of CLA
- maintain an up to date record of all CLA on the school roll
- Engage in learning and development opportunities, including the Local Authority forum for CLA designate staff, and act as an advisor to staff and governors, raising their awareness of the needs of CLA.
- report to the Governing Body at least on an annual basis (preferably each term), on the outcomes for CLA
- prioritise CLA for school-based additional support
- ensure that all CLA have relevant, up to date, high quality Personal Education Plans (PEPs) with SMART targets to promote progress
- ensure that the educational targets within the Personal Education Plan are implemented fully, reviewed regularly and that all relevant school staff are aware of them
- ensure that the Pupil Views section of the Blaenau Gwent Personal Education Plan is completed for each child and is the result of a one to one meeting so that the views of the child are faithfully represented in the PEP;
- *coordinate and evaluate the effective use of the CLA element of the Pupil Deprivation Grant*
- develop and monitor systems for communicating with carers (and birth parents where appropriate) and colleagues in Children's Services
- ensure that each CLA has an identified member of staff that they can talk to
- ensure confidentiality for CLA sharing personal information only on a need to know basis
- be pro-active in supporting transitions and planning when moving within or between key stages, including the smooth induction of a CLA into the school and the swift transfer of information to the next school when a CLA leaves
- seek urgent meetings with relevant parties where the child is experiencing difficulties and/or is in danger of being excluded
- track and support the educational progress of all CLA, and target and coordinate support robustly; intervening quickly if there is evidence of individual underachievement
- Be aware of the Blaenau Gwent CLA Friendly school toolkit and support the completion of the CLA friendly school self-evaluation.

All staff:

All staff will:

- have an understanding of the needs of CLA to enable them to support them appropriately
- be familiar with the guidance on CLA
- have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of CLA

- respond promptly to requests from the designated teacher to provide accurate information and data to support the completion of PEPs and other documentation needed as part of review meetings
- participate in whole school training on CLA
- make every effort to engage with colleagues from other agencies and facilitate their work, enabling colleagues to successfully perform their roles and positively impact on the education and wider needs of CLA
- play their part in creating an attachment and trauma-informed 'CLA-friendly' culture and ensure that CLA benefit from any additional school-based support available

6.0 Policy review and evaluation:

We consider the CLA policy to be vitally important and as such, we undertake a thorough evaluation and review of both policy and practice (**insert timescale here**). The Headteacher, Designated Teacher and Governing Body will ensure that all staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in this policy.

Date:

Review date:

Appendix 1

CLA Friendly Schools – Handbook

[..\CLA Friendly Schools Handbook.docx](#)

CLA Friendly School QA Tool

[..\CLA Friendly School Quality Mark.docx](#)

CLA Friendly School Quality Mark – Criteria & Process

[..\CLA Friendly School Quality Mar1.docx](#)

Vulnerable Learners Panel

August 2022



Cyngor Bwrdeisdref Sirol

Blaenau Gwent

County Borough Council

Vulnerable Learner Panel (VLP)

Purpose

This Panel will ensure that the local authority meets its statutory duty to ensure that all pupils have access to an appropriate education that is suitable to meet their needs.

The Panel will discuss:

- those pupils who are experiencing difficulties in attending mainstream school
- seek to enable pupils to be effectively supported to ensure that their vulnerabilities are better addressed; and,
- are placed in the most appropriate setting for their needs.

This Panel has responsibility for the management of those pupils identified under the following policies or procedures

- Managed Moves
- Reduced Timetable
- EOTAS
- Hard to Place
- Pregnant School girls
- Elective Home Education
- Exclusions
- Children who offend
- Children with a Medical need
- Persistent Absenteeism
- Children Missing from Education

Objectives

The Key Objectives are:

- to ensure that the child is better supported in a timely manner with a holistic overview of the child's needs identified, resourced, and agreed by all stakeholders
- to minimise the amount of time that vulnerable pupils spend out of education
- ensure that schools admit pupils with challenging educational needs on a fair and equitable basis, through objective and transparent processes
- to improve opportunities for young people whose behaviour is challenging
- to significantly reduce exclusions in schools
- to reduce persistent absence
- to improve the behaviour and attendance in all schools
- to ensure that education is delivered for day 16 to excluded pupils

Membership

The lead for the Panel will be Service Manager - Inclusion. Should the officer not be able to attend the Senior EWO will Chair the meeting.

- Service Manager – Inclusion

- Senior Education Welfare Officer
- Educational Psychologist
- Education Safeguarding Manager
- Youth Service Manager
- School Nurse
- Primary Schools representation 1 per meeting depending upon pupil to be discussed
- Secondary Schools representation 1 per meeting

Other partners will be co-opted on the VLP to discuss specific cases. These may include and are not limited to:

- The Referrer
- ALN Officer
- CLA Co-ordinator
- Blaenau Gwent Learning Zone
- Police
- Families First
- Home Tuition Service
- Ty Afon
- Children's Services
- Elective Home Education Officer
- YOS
- Community Safety

Representatives from primary and secondary/ all though schools will be invited to attend on a rota basis with a schedule to be agreed with schools in advance at the start of the academic year. Representation should ideally come from the Lead Inclusion person within the setting.

This panel will replace the EHE Panel.

Governance and Accountability

Section 436a of the Education Act 1996 requires all local authorities to make arrangements to enable them to establish (so far as it is possible to do so) the identities of children residing in their area who are not receiving a suitable education. Suitable is defined as "efficient full time education suitable to her / his age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs the child may have".

The VLP will report to the Head of School Improvement and Inclusion within 5 days of the meeting being held.

Meetings

Secretariat

The secretariat will be provided by Education Business Support. Relevant papers will be circulated 5 clear days in advance of the meetings. Minutes/ Actions/ Decisions will be produced within 5 working days of a meeting. The Panel will meet every two weeks. There is an expectation that each representative who attends will prepare information prior to the meeting and if they are unable to attend the case history / written report needs to be submitted to the Chair ahead of the VLP meeting. The referral form will capture the parents' permission for the pupil in question to be discussed at this meeting.

There is a standard agenda for each meeting as shown in appendix **

There is a standard referral form as shown in appendix **

The Chair of the Panel will review the papers for each meeting prior to circulation.

GDPR Considerations

The VLP will operate and abide by The European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which came into force from May 25th 2018.

Any data breaches will be managed in accordance with the relevant policy and the advice of the Council's Data Protection Officer will be sought.

Evaluation and Quality Assurance

The VLP will report to the Head of School Improvement and Inclusion who will QA the work of the VLP Panel. The effectiveness of the Panel will be an iterative process and be part of the Directorate's self-evaluation processes. In the first year termly FADES on the effectiveness of the VLP will be submitted to DMT.

Quality assurance arrangements are being reviewed by the Service Manager-Inclusion.

Appendix 1

Copy of Standard Agenda:

Appendix 2

Copy of Standard Referral Form:

This page is intentionally left blank



ALN Education Transformation: Supporting LA Implementation

Evaluative Summary (Summer 2022)

Context

Following initial discussions with all schools in Autumn 2021, an evaluative summary was produced to outline the current position of schools across BG. Following these initial discussions, YGTCS has continued to support schools to progress, in line with their set timelines, in order to realise fully the implementation plans for mandated years by Summer 2022. The work of YGTCS has been very much led by each individual school's own requirements, and any support identified has reflected fully these bespoke needs as part of a co-constructed provision package working within Priority 2 of the Regional Implementation plan.

As part of its work, YGTCS has undertaken evaluative discussions during the summer term with individual schools, to determine progress during the first year of the 'roll-over', the challenges faced and plans moving forward into 22-23. All schools once again engaged fully in open, honest and non-judgemental discussions with regards to their current position for ALN transformation. These professional dialogue sessions were held with the school's respective Headteacher (and/or SLT Lead where applicable) and ALNCO, together with YGTCS's Headteacher and ALNCO.

From the outset, it is imperative to note that although schools have been open this year and have not had firebreaks or national lockdowns to contend with, this academic year has been far from normal. There has been hugely significant and ongoing challenges faced by all schools due to C-19, with staff absences and the availability of supply staff a key concern. As such, many planned activities/interventions have been affected and this has naturally impacted on learner progress.

An additional area of concern, although not necessarily under this remit of Priority 2 but naturally impacting on later years, are the significant concerns with those learners in the early years setting. It has been reported across the LA schools that communication skills (speech and language), emotional wellbeing and disruptive behaviours are significantly higher than those pre-Covid. There are further reports of toileting concerns and an increased number of non-verbal learners. As such, schools are directing significant human and consequentially financial resource to this area of great concern. The sustainability of this support and the potential detriment to other learners is a real worry.



Introduction

As discussed previously, Priority 2 of the RI plan comprises six key objective areas. Each of these aspects are integral in securing ALN transformation and the professional discussions held during the summer term have sought to determine progress since the Autumn,

Objective 1

'Ensure consistent PCP approaches involve children, young people and parents at every opportunity'

PCP approaches across both primary and secondary schools were reported as strong in Autumn, with all schools fully adopting the principles and practices. The concern, however, was that most ALNCOs were facilitating this comprehensive and time-demanding role within their settings. Since Christmas, many schools have reported that there has been extensive professional learning provided by ALNCOs to either whole staff or identified staff with regards to the PCP process. Primary settings reported the greater involvement of Class teachers in supporting the PCP process and all schools welcomed the full return to face-to-face multi agency reviews. Most ALNCOs confirmed that throughout the next academic year, there would be greater opportunities provided for key staff to participate and engage in PCP reviews and to share the facilitation.

There was a collective agreement that the PCP paperwork and processes were supportive for both schools and families, and ensured the focus remained fully on the child in question.

Objective 2

'Ensure the school continues to develop and effective and efficient workforce ready for transformation'

The time allocation for ALNCOs to fulfil their now statutory roles remains as highly variable, ranging from non-teaching ALNCOs to those allocated one afternoon a week. The increasing strategic demands of the role was fully recognised by all leaders, but budgetary demands continues to be identified as the key limiting factor in providing greater time. There are, however, a number of schools both within primary and secondary settings, who for 22-23, have increased the non-contact time for ALNCOs. The sustainability of this time beyond the next academic year remains questionable. All Headteachers continued to be responsive in recognising key 'pinch-points' during the year and provided the tie for their ALNCOs accordingly.

As per the Autumn term, it remains that in many primary settings, the ALNCO is part of the leadership team. In many secondary settings, the ALNCO role does not sit within the senior or extended leadership teams, although there is a direct line to leadership through line management arrangements.



Governor professional learning has been undertaken in all settings, with further upskilling planned for 22-23. This has predominantly been delivered by the Headteacher and/or ALNCO, although in some instances, the ALN Lead for the LA has facilitated.

Schools with bespoke ALN governor sub-committees that were established at the start of the year have purported that these have continued to develop throughout this academic year.

Despite schools identifying calendared opportunities throughout the year to support the ongoing professional learning for their staff, these opportunities have been impacted by severe staff absences. All schools have identified key specialists within their teams to focus during 22-23 on areas such as literacy, numeracy and wellbeing. In the majority of schools, there are clear plans to further build and strengthen TA 'specialisms' to support both in-class and in small group/1:1 interventions.

All ALNCOs reported the challenges regarding cluster work this year, again due to staff absences and release time, although it was fully recognised that these meetings are incredibly valuable. All clusters have set their meetings for the forthcoming academic year and will be meeting face-to-face to ensure opportunities for high quality professional dialogue.

Objective 3

'Develop robust and consistent practices to inform early identification of need using a graduated response, resulting in effective provision mapping'

Provision mapping, in line with the graduated response, has strengthened across all settings since the Autumn term. All are subject to at least termly reviews and the provisions within the Universal tier have developed considerably. It is noted, however, that provisions cannot and should not be pigeon-holed into specific tiers, but should be determined by a school's own justifications and allocated accordingly. For example, ELSA can sit within both Universal and Targeted tiers, as this is very much based upon a school's staffing structures.

Objective 4

'Ensure teaching responds to the needs of individual learners; Develop effective systems for monitoring the progress and achievement of learners with ALN'

The development of provisions at the Universal tier has started to translate effectively into classroom provision. Teaching staff have a comprehensive understanding of what provisions are available within their settings and ALNCOs are developing the confidence to challenge and coach staff when identifying and implementing provisions. Tracking and monitoring processes have continued at a whole school level, with progress reviews by all schools being undertaken at least termly.



Objective 5

'Develop arrangements for reviewing the effectiveness of interventions'

There continues to be further developments with regards to interventions being implemented across BG schools to support literacy, numeracy, social and emotional skills. Commonly identified interventions include: THRIVE, ELSA, Catch -up literacy and numeracy and COMIT. There has been a noticeable increase in schools offering specific wellbeing provision to support those ever-increasing emotional wellbeing concerns across all settings. However, due to funding constraints, these highly worthwhile provisions are being withdrawn during the next academic year and concerns have been raised regarding the impact of this regrettable but necessary change.

As noted earlier, the challenges being seen in the early years are placing significant strain on the availability for interventions across settings. It was noted by many schools the difficulties in deciding whether a young learner does indeed have an ALN or whether the exhibited behaviours are as a consequence of social deficits due to the pandemic. Such determinations will take time and again this places further constraints on the school's human and financial resources.

Objective 6

'Undertake moderation of IDPs to secure a consistency of approach and understanding by all'

Confidence levels with regards to the preparation and construction of IDPs have developed throughout the year with ALNCOs. The Barriers matrix has proven to be a useful tool in their development. In many primary settings, the matrix has been shared with teaching staff to develop and support their own planning and understanding of needs.

The number of IDPs across school settings continues to be variable with one school reporting over 10 IDPs (ex of a resource base) whilst others reporting none. There is the full recognition that schools will have differing numbers of learners with ALN. Discussions with the LA ALN Lead regarding IDPs have been incredibly valuable and have supported ALNCO confidence.

All schools identified the want and need to have IDPs checked and agreed in the early stages of educational transformation. This would help build confidence levels and secure a greater knowledge and understanding of the IDP requirements. The cluster meetings were recognised as a forum for this moving forward, with schools having the opportunity to present anonymised IDPS for the other schools to act as 'critical friends'.

There is still some confusion with regards to the IDPs for learners placed with LA maintained resource bases. Clarity is needed as to who is accountable for owning and maintaining the IDP in this case. Further clarity is also required with regards to the legislation with regards



to IDPs and how the LA will support schools with this to avoid any resulting tribunal scenarios.

Moving forward & Possible LA Action Points

Firstly, YGTCS would once again like to thank all participating schools for their valuable time and honest contributions during a year which has been extremely challenging for all.

The key action points identified are as follows:

- **LA Action Point 1** – Address the highly variable time allocation for ALNCOs to fulfil their now statutory roles.
- **LA Action Point 2** – An additional area of concern, although not necessarily under this remit of Priority 2 but naturally impacting on later years, are the significant concerns with those learners in the early years setting.
- **LA Action Point 3** - There is still some confusion with regards to the IDPs for learners placed with LA maintained resource bases. Clarity is needed as to who is accountable for owning and maintaining the IDP in this case. Further clarity is also required with regards to the legislation with regards to IDPs and how the LA will support schools with this to avoid any resulting tribunal scenarios.
- **LA Action Point 3** - Designate roles for an ALN Reform Lead and ALN Reform Champions (similar to Merthyr model e.g. full or part time secondments for ALNCOs), to lead cluster work, support schools, monitor ALPs and QA IDPs)

This page is intentionally left blank

Relationships (Anti-Bullying) Policy

September 2022

Contents

1) Introduction

2) Aim

3) Definition

4) Strategic Objectives

Core strands

- Policy and Practice
- Awareness and Communication
- Evidence Based Initiative
- Involving Children and Young People
- Collaboration and Partnerships
- Monitoring

5) Data Collection and Protection

Appendices

- Appendix A – Data Form
- Appendix B – Incident Recording Form

1) Introduction

Challenging bullying in schools is a key priority. Blaenau Gwent are committed to ensuring all our learners feel safe, secure and are supported to achieve their full potential. All young people have a right to an education and to be treated equally.

We remain committed to challenging bullying holistically. This is achieved by addressing the root causes of unacceptable behaviour and creating an inclusive and engaging environment, with priority placed on well-being so learners feel safe and are ready to learn. It is imperative children and young people are taught, both at home and in school, about building and maintaining respectful relationships; this is the cornerstone on which positive behaviour is based.

We all need to ensure the values of respect, tolerance and kindness form part of our school communities and cultures.

This policy recognises the complex nature of bullying behaviour and the importance of early identification and intervention. Traditional 'bully/victim' stereotypes need to be challenged, and a more in-depth understanding and awareness needs to be fostered. We need to establish a 'culture of telling' across settings, where children and young people, parents and professionals alike feel confident in dealing with bullying and have confidence that appropriate action will be taken if instances are reported. Although we cannot entirely control the environment children and young people grow up in, we can discourage them from engaging in bullying behaviour.

There are often deep-rooted triggers to bullying behaviour, and a multi-faceted approach is required in response. Prevention of, and reaction to, bullying should be addressed in equal measure and guidance and training need to be provided. Specific support will be required to protect all children and young people including the most vulnerable children and young people (e.g. those in care of Social Services, those who are young carers, those who have additional needs and/or disabilities, and those who experience hate crime in particular), and communication between agencies will be essential if we are to identify and reduce persistent patterns of bullying behaviour.

By bringing together work from various teams in Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council with that of partner agencies, this policy provides a coordinated approach to tackling bullying. A borough-wide definition of bullying is provided, along with six core strands of work. A number of strategic objectives are outlined and a shared approach to tackling bullying is summarised.

Anti-bullying needs to take a high priority, and each setting is responsible for developing a model of good practice. The Council will work with all relevant settings to monitor, support and challenge where appropriate. Ultimately, we all have a role to play in ensuring communities flourish where children and young people are free from bullying.

What Children, Young People, Parents and Professionals Think - 'It isn't big to make others feel small'.

Primary school pupil - 'Bullying is cruel not cool'.

Secondary school parent - 'We found that listening to what our daughter wanted and needed was the right thing to do'

Parent - 'Bullying is not an easy issue to approach, especially if you suspect the child you're looking after is doing the bullying'.

Foster Carer - 'Schools should create a whole school ethos where bullying is unacceptable in a safe and inclusive environment'.

2) Aim

The aim of this Relationships (Anti-Bullying) Policy is to establish a coordinated, consistent approach to tackling bullying in all Blaenau Gwent schools, youth and community settings. The Council and all partner agencies will work together from a shared understanding to develop evidence-based methods for significantly reducing instances of bullying between children and young people.

3) Definition

The Local Authority expects schools to use the following definition as the foundation for developing their own definition, or a learner-friendly version. It is essential that schools define what is meant by bullying because this will form the basis of their relationships/anti-bullying policy and everyone, including all staff and learners, should understand what is meant.

For the purposes of this guidance, bullying is defined as:

Bullying is expressed through a range of hurtful behaviours: it can happen face-to-face or in the digital environment. It can be carried out by an individual or group but is generally executed in front of an audience to assert power or popularity. It may involve an element of secrecy so that adults are not aware of it.

Bullying differs from an argument, a fight or friendship fallout in that it:

- is deliberate or intentional
- is generally repeated over time
- involves a perceived imbalance of power between perpetrator and target
- causes feelings of distress, fear, loneliness, humiliation, and powerlessness.

It is recognised that a one-off incident can leave a learner traumatised and nervous of reprisals or future recurrence. The Welsh Government expects intervention to be immediate whether it is bullying or any other one-off negative behaviour. The Authority expects one-off incidents that do not appear to be the start of bullying to be handled as inappropriate behaviour and addressed under the school's behaviour policy.

Clarifying what is meant by bullying behaviour is an essential starting point. Agreeing a definition provides an opportunity for a school to align its values and vision and create a consistent framework of policies and procedures. The Authority expects the definition to be used in staff training, in day-to-day anti-bullying work with learners and to clarify the position for parents/carers.

This will help to make the policy clear and consistent for the whole school community.

There are several distinctive elements associated with bullying. These include, but are not limited to:

- Intention to harm – bullying is deliberate with the intention to cause harm.
- Those who bully others are often skilled at knowing exactly how to humiliate or hurt their target, picking on key aspects of their appearance, personality or identity that produces the effect wanted. They seek out the area in which they have power over their target.
- Harmful outcome – someone or a group is hurt physically or emotionally.
- They can be isolated, humiliated or made fearful. Their sense of self-worth is reduced.
- Direct or indirect acts – bullying can involve direct aggression such as hitting, as well as indirect acts such as spreading rumours, revealing private information about someone or sharing intimate images with people for whom the information/images were not intended.
- Repetition – bullying usually involves repeated acts of negative behaviour or acts of aggression. An isolated aggressive act, such as a fight, is not usually considered bullying. Yet any incident can be the start of a pattern of bullying behaviour which develops subsequently. That is why incident records are so valuable.
- Unequal power – bullying involves the abuse of power by one person or a group who are (perceived as) more powerful, often due to their age, physical strength, popularity or psychological resilience.

How is bullying expressed?

Bullying can take many forms, including:

- Physical – kicking, tripping someone up or shoving them, injuring someone, damaging their belongings or gestures of intimidation,
- Verbal – taunts and name-calling, insults, threats, humiliation, or intimidation,
- Emotional – behaviour intended to isolate, hurt or humiliate someone,
- Indirect – sly or underhand actions carried out behind the target's back or rumour-spreading,
- Online – using any form of technological means, mobile phones, social networks, gaming, chat rooms, forums or apps to bully via text, messaging, images or video,
- Relational aggression – bullying that tries to harm the target's relationships or social status: drawing their friends away, exploiting a person's Additional Learning Needs (ALN) or long-term illness, targeting their family's social status, isolating, or humiliating someone or deliberately getting someone into trouble,
- Sexual – unwanted touching, threats, suggestions, comments and jokes or innuendo. This can also include sextortion, so called 'revenge porn' and any misuse of intimate, explicit images of the learner targeted,
- Prejudice-related – bullying of a learner or a group of learners because of prejudice. This could be linked to stereotypes or presumptions about identity. Prejudice-related bullying includes the protected characteristics. Prejudice can and does also extend beyond the protected characteristics and can lead to bullying for a variety of other reasons such as social status and background.

Bullying can also be based on any of the protected characteristics.

It is important that when dealing with alleged incidents of bullying, individual perspectives are considered. If a child, young person, or adult states that bullying is happening, action must be

taken to determine why this allegation has been made. There will be occasions when children and young people physically or emotionally hurt others without meaning to do so, and it is important that appropriate support is provided to both parties, but the behaviour need not be labelled as bullying. It is also important to be mindful that extreme instances of bullying that include harassment could be treated as a criminal offence. All bullying is based on difference to some degree (perceived or actual), and the WG document 'Rights Respect Equality' provides further guidance.

[\(https://www.bing.com/ck/a?!&&p=d3fe4606ba17490dJmItdHM9MTY2NDIzNjgwMCZpZ3VpZD0xODk1MTU4NS01NGUyLTY5MmQtMDAyYi0wN2E0NTUyOTY4YzQmaW5zaWQ9NTE4OA&pfn=3&hsh=3&fclid=18951585-54e2-692d-002b-07a4552968c4&u=a1aHR0cHM6Ly9nb3Yud2FsZXMvcmlnaHRzLXJlc3BIY3QtZXF1YWxpdHktZ3VpZGFuY2Utc2Nob29scw&ntb=1\)](https://www.bing.com/ck/a?!&&p=d3fe4606ba17490dJmItdHM9MTY2NDIzNjgwMCZpZ3VpZD0xODk1MTU4NS01NGUyLTY5MmQtMDAyYi0wN2E0NTUyOTY4YzQmaW5zaWQ9NTE4OA&pfn=3&hsh=3&fclid=18951585-54e2-692d-002b-07a4552968c4&u=a1aHR0cHM6Ly9nb3Yud2FsZXMvcmlnaHRzLXJlc3BIY3QtZXF1YWxpdHktZ3VpZGFuY2Utc2Nob29scw&ntb=1))

4) Strategic Objectives

Core Strands

Six core strands of work underpin this work:

- Policy and practice
- Awareness and communication
- Evidence-based initiatives
- Involving children and young people
- Positive partnerships
- Monitoring

Each of these will be summarised in turn, and key activities will be highlighted throughout.

Strand 1: Policy and Practice

To tackle bullying effectively, it is essential that we get policy and practice right. The Welsh Government Circular Rights Respect Equalities guidance provides school governors, headteachers, teachers and other staff with information on tackling relationships/bullying in schools and the steps that schools should take to support learners who report bullying outside of school.

School governing bodies are accountable for ensuring effective policies are in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in accordance with Welsh Government guidance and for monitoring its compliance.

The Welsh Government expects school governing bodies and individual school governors to act at all times with honesty and integrity and be ready to explain their actions and decisions to staff, earners, parents/carers and anyone with a legitimate interest in the school. The school governing body decides what they want the school to achieve.

The Welsh Government expects that it should establish the strategic framework by:

- setting aims and objectives for the school,
- adopting policies for achieving those aims and objectives,
- setting targets for achieving those aims and objective,
- reviewing progress towards achieving the aims and objectives.

Historically the LA had developed strategy and a toolkit for use within school setting and this policy supersedes this.

Key Activities

All school, youth and community settings need to develop, implement, monitor and review whole-school/community anti-bullying policies effectively.

- All agencies are encouraged to nominate a positive relationships/ anti-bullying lead,
- All agencies are encouraged to monitor the effectiveness of their own respective policies.

Strand 2: Awareness and Communication

All children, young people, parents and professionals need to have an understanding of what bullying is and why it happens. Events such as Anti-Bullying initiatives are important for

raising awareness, but regular work throughout the year needs to be done to celebrate diversity and respect difference. Curriculum for Wales can play a key part in securing this and the approach to healthy schools is key aspect in facilitating respectful, positive relationships.

Social media and the Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council website will be utilised to raise the profile of positive relationships/anti-bullying practice across the borough. Equally schools play an important role in their respective communities.

Key Activities

Raise the profile of positive relationships/anti-bullying practice in school, youth and community settings.

Work with parents/carers to raise awareness and understanding of issues surrounding bullying.

Encourage full engagement and coordinate evidence-based activities for positive relationships/Anti-Bullying initiatives.

Strand 3: Evidence-based Initiatives

All work designed to prevent and challenge bullying needs to be informed by good practice, and all staff working with children and young people need to understand the underlying causes of bullying and have the ability to promote positive life and social skills. Research has identified a number of pro-active preventative and reactive initiatives that can be used effectively to combat bullying and promote positive peer relations. All children and young people should have access to a choice of methods for reporting incidents of bullying without feeling threatened and information on different reporting options should be promoted and made readily available.

Wherever possible, an anti-bullying message needs to be reinforced. Assemblies for example can be used to promote positive peer relations, celebrate diversity and respect diversity. School councils play a crucial role in identifying work that needs to be done, and peer support schemes harbour an anti-bullying ethos, provide direct assistance for those who need it, and promote the development of social skills and confidence in those who participate with clear links to schools' equality plans.

Key Activities

- Continue to promote professional learning for all settings.
- Continue to signpost information to schools and other settings on how to access support.

Strand 4: Involving Children and Young People

It is our collective responsibility to ensure that all children and young people are given the opportunity and encouragement to speak out and have their voices heard on matters that directly affect them. This right is formerly recognised in Article 12 of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child.

Curriculum for Wales will provide children and young people with opportunities to be capable and confident individuals and enable them to develop the skills needed to forge positive relationships, prevent bullying, deal with it and support others. School Councils and other youth and community settings are encouraged to involve children and young people as far as

possible in developing and reviewing anti-bullying policies. Bullying is a complex, ever changing issue, and children and young people will have many of the answers. They can tell us what the most important issues are and provide some insight into how best to solve them.

Key Activities

- Invite representative Blaenau Gwent Grand School Council to discuss bullying issues to inform further work.
- Continue to identify resources to support positive relationships/anti bullying initiatives.

Strand 5: Collaboration and Partnerships

Without collaboration and partnership working, we will not be able to deliver a consistent anti-bullying approach in Blaenau Gwent.

A Strategic Safer School Partnership approach is established that will ensure that equality within education and timely support for bullying issues continues to be embedded across the educational landscape within Blaenau Gwent. All anti-bullying policies should continue to be made available to parents/carers, because trusting communicative relationships are essential if families are to work together with school, youth and community settings. Governors also have an important role to play in informing school policy and ensuring effective implementation

Key Activities

Communicate key developments and encourage collaborative and partnership working

- Ensure that schools are able to access professional learning
- Provide support and advice in the development of strategic equality plans relevant to schools
- Through the Strategic Safer Schools Partnership Board quality assure equality and diversity matters, including respectful relationship and the effectiveness of approaches to anti bullying behaviours.

Strand 6: Monitoring

All education and children's services have a duty of care, to safeguard and protect the welfare of children and young people. It is therefore critical that the local authority, school, youth and community settings record all instances of bullying, along with actions undertaken and outcomes. Arising from school rights, respect and equality returns a FADE is completed and submitted to Education DMT. This informs the Self Evaluation and the Safeguarding Performance Report.

Every setting is responsible for recording, reporting and acting upon incidents of bullying that occur in their care and bullying in the community needs to be reported to the Education Directorate, Gwent Police and/or the Community Safety Partnership. Agencies that are aware of bullying occurring in settings other than their own should ensure those in charge are aware of the situation. On occasion, it may be necessary a duty to report form may need to be completed to IAA within Social Services in order to safeguard individuals.

A suggested recording protocol for schools and youth settings can be found in Appendix 1. A termly overview of all incidents are to be completed by each school along with an incident form for every bullying incident being submitted at the time of the alleged incident. Every alleged incident needs to be recorded and logged accordingly. Schools should use My Concern to record confirmed incidents where possible. Within Youth settings any incidents of

bullying should be reported to the relevant line manager. Schools must have in place mechanisms for reporting and recording bullying which are clearly communicated to the whole school community with specifics to the governing body. The Authority expects the information schools record and monitor to relate directly to their school's definition of bullying and broader provisions outlined in this policy.

Effective record maintenance enables schools to review an incident, check whether there are other reports concerning the learners involved and make a decision in the light of what is recorded in a holistic and informed way. Monitoring incidents of bullying enables a school to identify patterns of behaviour and the extent of bullying; the Authority expects schools to then take proactive steps to challenge it. Schools must ensure that the information they record, maintain and monitor complies with data protection laws, such as the EU GDPR and the UK DPA 2018.

5) Data Collection and Protection

By law all schools are required to have in place a data protection officer (DPO) to ensure that the school is aware of and able to meet their obligations under GDPR and DPA 2018. The Authority expect schools to work with their DPO to ensure that all personal data is processed lawfully and with appropriate protection for individuals' rights.

As part of schools' broader responsibilities regarding the collection and monitoring of data, schools will need to determine an appropriate lawful basis from those listed in GDPR Article 6 and – if data is special category – Article 9, before beginning the processing of information on bullying. Schools will also need to ensure that they are not collecting more data than they need and have a clear retention schedule for the information. Processing of information for anti-bullying measures will need to be reflected within each school's fair processing information. Data protection impact assessments (DPIA) will be required by individual schools in determining what data they need to collect to ensure that it is proportionate and that any appropriate steps that may be necessary to mitigate risks to individuals' rights are taken. For those schools who have purchased the GDPR SLA guidance and advice can be provided.

From April 2011, all public bodies, including schools and local authorities, have obligations under the PSED. In Wales, there are specific duties on public bodies to develop and publish equality objectives and a strategic equality plan and to collect, analyse and publish information about the progress they are making in achieving their obligations under the PSED.

This policy sets out the expectation that schools will record all incidents of bullying, outlining the specific types of bullying, including bullying around the protected characteristics. The Authority expects schools to monitor processes regularly. This will enable schools to modify their bullying policies to respond to specific trends and emerging issues in a swift and effective manner. Schools are likely to find this helpful in the context of their PSED under the Equality Act 2010. This information could also be used by schools when reviewing their equality objectives and monitoring the impact of their anti-bullying policies.

It is for individual schools to determine what data and information they collect in the context of the specific issues within their school and in compliance with data protection law. The Welsh Government expects this to be done by:

- Implementing an ongoing cycle of school-level data recording, monitoring and analysis of anti-bullying information,
- Using school-level anti-bullying data to identify priority areas for implementing, whole-school improvement,
- Taking action to make those improvements, ensuring the cycle of improvement continues through analysing data as part of self-evaluation.

Through regular evaluation schools will be responsive to the trends in their school and community. It will be easier to be aware of improvements needed or the changes in procedures required if schools are in touch with changes in context.

Inclusion Data – Prejudice and Bullying Incidents

School Name:			
			****Term 2022
Number of recorded incidents of bullying	Total number of recorded incidents		
	Total number pupils involved in bullying		
	Number of boys / girls responsible		
Number of recorded bullying incidents	Racist (focused on race, religion or culture)		
	Homophobic (LGBT+)		
	Sexual		
	Transphobic		
	Sexist		
	Related to gender identity		
	Related to ALN or disability		
	Related to family status or child looked after child (CLA) status		
	Related to disadvantage		
	Focussed on appearance		
	Physical		
	Verbal		
Indirect, including exclusion and isolation			

	Online	
	Relational	

APPENDIX B

Bullying Incident Recording Form

Name of person reporting incident (please note anonymous if this is an anonymous report):	
Name of person recording incident:	
Date of report:	

Type of bullying incident (please tick all that apply):

Physical	<input type="checkbox"/>	Relational	<input type="checkbox"/>
Verbal	<input type="checkbox"/>	Prejudice-related	<input type="checkbox"/>
Indirect	<input type="checkbox"/>	Exclusion and isolation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Online or via mobile	<input type="checkbox"/>	Face to face	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please state):			

For prejudice-related incidents please select the category which best describes the prejudice involved:

Racist (focused on race, religion or culture)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Related to gender identity	<input type="checkbox"/>
Homophobic (LGBT+)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Related to SEN or disability	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual	<input type="checkbox"/>	Related to family status or looked after child (LAC) status	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transphobic	<input type="checkbox"/>	Related to disadvantage	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexist	<input type="checkbox"/>	Focused on appearance	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please state):			

Safeguarding Considerations:

If there is or might be a significant risk of harm, talk to your school's designated safeguarding lead (DSL).

Under Section 89, (5) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 the school has powers to discipline for incidents that occur off the premises.

The Education Act 2011 gives schools powers to search and confiscate a device but please have regard for protocols on the safe handling of evidence or mobiles/devices. Do not view, store or share material that contains intimate images of a learner without consulting the DSL.

Brief summary of incident:

Name of alleged target:

Class/form/age: Year group/house:

Name of alleged perpetrator(s) (if known):

Class/form/age: Year group/house:

Date(s) of incident(s):	Day		Month		Year	
Approximate time(s):	Before school	Morning	Afternoon	After school		

Is this incident linked to previous incidents of victimisation of the target? Yes No

If yes, how long has victimisation of this person being going on? Please provide details

What occurred?

Who was involved?

Has any intervention been tried? Yes No

Does this case require the serious incident protocol to be activated? Yes No

Do the police need to be informed? Yes No

Does a device or evidence need to be confiscated/isolated as evidence? Yes No

Does online material need to be taken down? Yes No

Have parents/carers been informed? Yes No

Who has taken responsibility for these steps?

Action taken:

Follow-up required?:	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
----------------------	------------------------------	-----------------------------

Case resolved? If so please note date:	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
---	------------------------------	-----------------------------

Outcome summary:

Learning opportunities:

Would you recommend any changes to approaches, policies or procedures as a result of this incident?

Signed..... Date

PHYSICAL INTERVENTION POLICY

Inclusion Service
Review September 2022



Cyngor Bwrdeisdref Sirol

Blaenau Gwent

County Borough Council

BLAENAU GWENT COUNTY COUNCIL

POLICY ON PHYSICAL INTERVENTION IN SCHOOLS

The Council recognises the importance of ensuring good order and discipline in schools. To achieve this, it is recognised that, in extreme circumstances, it may be necessary for school staff to intervene physically to manage inappropriate behaviour by pupils.

1. It is the Council's policy that physical intervention, will be used as a last resort, normally after non-physical strategies have failed to manage a pupil's behaviour. While staff must use the minimum force for the shortest time, it is recognised that minor injuries such as bruises and scratches may occur during incidents. Such minor injuries will not, by themselves, be regarded as evidence of misconduct.
2. Physical intervention must be:
 - Reasonable
 - Proportionate
 - Necessary
 - In the best interest of the child.
3. Physical intervention will only be used to prevent pupils:
 - Harming themselves or others
 - Committing a criminal offence
 - Causing serious damage to property
 - Engaging in behaviour which is seriously prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline.
4. Schools will have their own policies on Physical Intervention, based on a model school policy (a copy of which is attached as Appendix A) which will be approved by the school's Governing Body and reviewed annually.
5. Parent/Carers will be informed of the school's policy on Physical Intervention.
6. Head Teachers will keep an up-to-date list of staff who they authorise to use physical intervention to manage the behaviour of pupils, which will be reported to their Governing Body annually.
7. All incidents that result in restraint (where a child has to be held) will be recorded both in the school's 'Bound and Numbered Book' and in detail using the **Serious Incident Reporting Form** within 24 hours and reported to the Local Authority: bsinclusionsupport@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk within 72 hours.

8. The Council will review all reported cases of physical intervention within schools on a termly basis providing statistical information to relevant reports.
9. A completed accident form must be sent to the Health and Safety Officer if a member of staff is injured during an incident. Sample forms are attached in Appendix B.
10. Any injury to a pupil must be recorded in the school's accident book.
11. The school's Bound and Numbered Book will be reviewed termly by the Head Teacher and the Governor with responsibility for Child Protection issues, and will be monitored annually by an LA representative.
12. A **Positive Handling Plan** must be drawn up by the school in cases where it can be pre-determined that a pupil is likely to require positive handling. This will be done with the agreement of parent/carers and in consultation with relevant agencies and the child, and will be reviewed regularly.
13. Head Teachers will determine the training needs of their staff after assessing the likely need and scope of physical intervention that might be required in their schools and arrange training as appropriate.
14. This policy will be effective from September 2022 and will be reviewed annually.

***POLICY
ON THE USE
OF
PHYSICAL INTERVENTION***

Date Agreed:

Chair of Governors:

Headteacher:

Contents

1. Policy Statement
 2. What is the legal use of force?
 3. Objectives of this policy
 4. Who can use physical intervention?
 5. When might physical intervention be appropriate?
 6. Procedures and practical considerations
 7. Responding to specific incidents
 8. Recording and reporting incidents
 9. Debriefing following serious incidents.
 10. Planning for incidents and meeting training needs
 11. Complaints
 12. Review
-
- | | |
|------------|--|
| Appendix 1 | Risk Assessment of Challenging Behaviour |
| Appendix 2 | Positive Handling Plan |
| Appendix 3 | Serious Incident Reporting Form (Form R) |
| Appendix 4 | Accident Form |

Policy on the use of Physical Intervention

1.0 Policy Statement

- 1.1 This policy should be read in conjunction with:
- the Council's Physical Intervention Policy
 - the Safe and Effective Intervention – Use of Reasonable Force and Searching for Weapons WG Guidance Document 097/2013 issued March 2013.
 - The Violence and Aggression at Work Policy issued January 2018
- 1.2 At (*Insert school name*) we work to ensure each individual pupil is able to reach his or her potential. Every child is entitled to learn and every teacher is entitled to teach in an environment that is safe, secure and free from disruption.
- 1.3 Staff of (*Insert school name*) are committed to providing the highest standards in protecting and safeguarding the welfare of children and young people entrusted to its care. We recognise there is a need, in line with Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, to intervene when there is an obvious risk of safety to pupils, staff and property. All school staff members have a legal power to use reasonable force to prevent pupils committing a criminal offence, injuring themselves or others, or damaging property; and to maintain good order and discipline amongst pupils.
- 1.4 For the most part this is achieved through the fostering of good relationships, and the normal application of positive behaviour management to support and intervene. However, in exceptional or extreme circumstances this may involve the use of reasonable force.
- 1.5 It should be emphasised that if used at all, restraint (referred to in this document as **physical intervention**) should be seen in the context of a further positive action of care and concern. In line with WG guidance 2013, it is used as a 'last resort' option and in the most extreme cases, other strategies will always have been attempted first.
- 1.6 As best practice regarding physical intervention, this policy should be considered alongside other relevant school policies, specifically those involving behaviour, health and safety and child protection.
- 1.7 At (*Insert school name*), the named member of staff responsible for monitoring incidents of physical intervention is (*Insert name*).

2.0 What is the Legal Use of Reasonable Force to control pupils?

Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, replaced Section 550A of the Education Act 1996 and enables school staff to use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do, any of the following:

- committing any offence (or, for a pupil under the age of criminal responsibility, what would be an offence for an older pupil);
- causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil himself); or
- prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among any pupils receiving education at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise

The staff to which this power applies are defined in section 95 of the Act. They are:

- any teacher who works at the school, and any other person whom the head has authorised to have control or charge of pupils. This:
 - i) includes support staff whose job normally includes supervising pupils such as teaching assistants, learning support assistants, learning mentors and lunchtime supervisors.
 - ii) can also include people to whom the head has given temporary authorisation to have control or charge of pupils such as paid members of staff whose job does not normally involve supervising pupils (for example catering or premises-related staff) and unpaid volunteers (for example parents accompanying pupils on school-organised visits).
 - iii) does not include prefects.

Those exercising the power to use force must also take proper account of any particular special educational need (SEN) and/or disability that a pupil might have. Under the Equality Act 2010 schools have key duties:

- not to treat a disabled pupil less favourably, because of his/her disability, than a non-disabled pupil;
- not to treat a disabled pupil unfavourably because of a reason related to their disability, without justification;
- not to apply a provision, criterion or practice that puts or would put a disabled pupil at a particular disadvantage compared with a non-disabled pupil, without justification; and to take reasonable steps to avoid putting a disabled pupil at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with a non-disabled pupil (known as the reasonable adjustments duty).

- 2.1 The power may be used where the pupil (including a pupil from another school) is on school premises or elsewhere in the lawful control or charge of the staff member (for example on a school visit).

- 2.2. There is no legal definition of when it is reasonable to use force. That will always depend on the precise circumstances of individual cases. To be judged lawful, the force used would need to be in proportion to the consequences it is intended to prevent. The degree of force used should be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result. Use of force could not be justified to prevent trivial misbehaviour. However, deciding whether misbehaviour is trivial also depends on circumstances. For example, running in a corridor crowded with small children where there is a real danger of knocking them into walls or down steps may be dangerous enough not to be regarded as trivial.
- 2.3 Teachers and other persons authorised by the Headteacher to have charge of pupils, may use reasonable force to prevent pupils:
- causing injury to themselves or others
 - committing a criminal offence (including behaving in a way that would be an offence if the pupil were not under the age of criminal responsibility)
 - causing damage to property
 - causing disruption by engaging in behaviour which is seriously prejudicial to good order and discipline.

3.0 Objectives of this Policy

- 3.1 To provide all staff, governors, parent/carers and pupils with an understanding of care and control and the use of force.
- 3.2 To emphasise that the use of physical intervention is:
- part of a positive care and control approach to discipline and welfare
 - last resort, or a necessary expedient option to be used in extreme circumstances.
- 3.3 To ensure that all members of staff or authorised persons who may have to positively handle pupils clearly understand the options and strategies open to them.
- 3.4 A section about the school's legal duty to maintain a safe environment and the possible use of physical intervention will be included in the school brochure/prospectus/website.

4.0 Who can use Physical Intervention?

- 4.1 We recognise that most of the time physical intervention will be used infrequently, that is, as a last resort to maintaining a safe environment.
- 4.2. All teachers have a legal power to use reasonable force to prevent pupils committing a criminal offence, injuring themselves or others, or damaging property; and to maintain good order and discipline amongst pupils.
- 4.3 Any other persons whom the Headteacher has authorised to have control or charge of pupils. A list of authorised staff is maintained by the school.

5.0 When might Physical Intervention might be appropriate

- 5.1 The focus should be on preventing, as far as possible, the need for the use of force on pupils, by creating a calm, orderly and supportive school climate that lessens the risk and threat of violence of any kind. The use of force should only be a last resort, schools should minimise the possibility of force being needed. However, this may not always be possible and in such circumstances staff need to be aware of sensitivities associated with any form of physical contact with pupils.
- 5.2 Strategies other than force will be considered, for example (not exhaustive):
- The use of a range of de-escalation strategies, especially those which have been identified as effective through an individual pupil's positive handling plan (where one exists);
 - Providing the disruptive pupil with a choice of locations to exit to;
 - Giving clear directions;
 - Change of face – calling a staff member who is known to have a positive relationship with the pupil;
 - Allowing 'take-up' time thus allowing a 'face-saving' opportunity;
 - Removing the audience, i.e. requesting that other pupils leave the room
 - Implementing Team Teach help protocols so that another member of staff takes over the strategic lead of the incident, if he/she feels it is appropriate to do so.

5.3 Some examples (not exhaustive) of situations where physical intervention might be used are:

- to prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff, or another pupil, or to stop a fight between two or more pupils;
- to prevent a pupil causing serious, deliberate damage to property;
- to prevent a pupil causing injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of dangerous materials or objects;
- to ensure that a pupil leaves a classroom where the pupil persistently refuses to follow an instruction to do so; to prevent a pupil behaving in a way that seriously disrupts a lesson; or
- to prevent a pupil behaving in a way that seriously disrupts a school sporting event or school visit.

5.4 Wherever possible, early support from colleagues will be sought. Single-handed intervention increases the risk of injury to both parties and does not provide the person intervening with the support of a colleague acting as a critical friend.

6.0 Procedures and practical considerations

6.1 Wherever practicable staff are expected to:

- Use a calm and measured approach;
- Tell the pupil to stop, remind the pupil of consequences, tell the pupil what will happen if she/he does not stop;
- Seek assistance from other colleagues at as early a stage as possible;
- Staff who become aware that another member of staff is intervening physically with a pupil have a responsibility to provide a presence, and to offer support and assistance should this be required;
- Try to defuse the situation verbally and prevent escalation;
- Try to remove the pupil from the peer audience;
- Attempt to communicate with the pupil throughout the incident;
- In as calm a manner as possible, explain that the reason for intervention is to keep the pupil and others safe;

- Make it clear that physical intervention will stop as soon as the pupil calms and the risk assessment indicates it is no longer necessary;
- If it is not possible to control the behaviour without risk of injury to yourself or others, remove the other pupils who may be at risk and summon assistance.

6.2 It is good practice to:

- Remain calm;
- Do not lose your temper or act out of anger or frustration;
- Do not give the impression you are trying to punish the pupil;
- Call for assistance;
- Intervene with the support of a colleague acting as a critical friend.

7.0 Responding to specific incidents

7.1 Considerations in *non-urgent situations* where the risk to people or property is not imminent:

- Consider carefully whether physical intervention is the right course of action. Staff must be sensitive to matters relating to culture and gender issues and any known individual characteristics or special circumstances relating to pupils.
- Try to deal with the situation through other strategies before using force;
- Try to defuse and calm the situation to establish good order, the use of positive handling could lead to an escalation of the problem;
- Take into account the age, understanding, personal characteristics of the pupil;
- The use of positive handling to enforce compliance is likely to be increasingly inappropriate with older pupils;
- Never use force as a substitute for good behaviour management;
- In non-urgent situations force should only be used when all other methods have failed.

- 7.2 Methods that staff **may use** in appropriate circumstances where a risk assessment judgement supports this:
- passive physical contact such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path;
 - active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the hand or arm, ushering a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back;
- 7.3 In more extreme circumstances, using appropriate restrictive holds, **which require specific expertise or training.**
- 7.4 Should an injury occur as a result of an incident at school, immediate steps will be taken to secure appropriate medical attention. This will be reported and recorded in accordance with Blaenau Gwent policy.

8.0 Recording and Reporting Incidents

- 8.1 All incidents that result in restraint (where a child has to be held) will be recorded both in the school's 'Bound and Numbered Book' and in detail using the **Serious Incident Reporting Form.**
- 8.2 If a Positive Handling Plan is in place, then a record of the incident will also be recorded and the Positive Handling Plan reviewed accordingly.
- 8.3 The member of staff concerned will report the matter verbally to the Head or a senior member of staff as soon as possible. The incident will be recorded by staff at the earliest opportunity and always within 24 hours.
- 8.4 Staff may wish to seek advice from a senior colleague or their professional association when compiling a report. A written report should be completed within 24 hours of the incident's occurrence, and should be signed and dated, and provided to a designated person.
- 8.5 Other witnesses to the incident, staff, pupils, should also complete witness accounts with 24 hours (this would usually be in the case of a serious incident). These will be signed and dated and provided to a designated person.
- 8.6 The Head or his/her representative will tell parent/carers about the incident by the end of the school day. However, if parent/carers cannot be reached a letter will be sent to inform them of the incident and offer them the opportunity to discuss the matter.
- 8.7 A copy of the **Serious Incident Reporting Form** will be placed in the pupil's file.

8.8 The Bound and Numbered Book will be reviewed by the Headteacher and relevant staff to consider control measures and possible training or further training needs etc.

8.9 **Reporting to Governors**

The WG guidance document Safe and Effective Intervention (March 2013) states that monitoring information should be reported on a regular basis to school governors. This information should include:

- number of restraints
- training needs
- any significant issues involving restraint.

This information should be included in the Headteacher's report to the Governing Body.

9.0 **Debriefing Following Serious Incident**

9.1 Pupils and members of staff will be checked for any sign of injury and first aid will be administered if required.

9.2 The child must also be given the opportunity to debrief in a manner suited to his/her individual needs. The debrief must be undertaken with the child at a time when the child is able to listen, wherever possible within 48 hours of the incident. The debrief should be done wherever possible with a member of staff not involved in the restrictive physical intervention. The purpose of this is to provide opportunity for the child to express their own views of the incident and raise any concerns.

9.3 If a serious incident has occurred, this will be dealt with by a senior member of staff in accordance with the school's behaviour policy.

9.4 The child may wish to make a complaint following an incident or discuss the incident further with a member of staff, parent/carer or Independent Person. If a complaint is made the complaints procedure must be followed.

9.5 All members of staff involved will be allowed a period to debrief and recover from the incident. This may involve access to external support. A senior member of staff will provide support to the member of staff involved.

10.0 Planning for Incidents and meeting training needs

- 10.1 If the school is aware that a pupil is likely to require physical intervention on more than one occasion in a term the school will plan how to respond in line with protocols and guidance. This will include full discussion with parent/carers to ensure they are clear about what specific action the school might need to take and obtaining medical advice if the child has any specific health needs. A risk assessment and a positive handling plan will be drawn up.
- 10.2 In cases where it is known by the school that a pupil is likely to require physical intervention, appropriate training will be provided.

11.0 Complaints

- 11.1 This policy is in accordance with the 'Safe and Effective Intervention – Use of Reasonable Force and Searching for Weapons WG Guidance Document 097/2013' and Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.
- 11.2 All complaints will be dealt with in line with the schools agreed policy and procedure.

12.0 Review

- 12.1 This policy will be regularly monitored by the Head and reviewed and updated annually.

Appendix 1

Risk Assessment of Challenging Behaviour

School:	NC Year group:
Pupil name:	DoB:
Completed by	ON
Hobbies/interests	
Health/medical considerations	

Behaviour	Who is at risk S-self P-other pupils A-adults V – Visitors, supply staff	Risk Factor – High, Medium or Low (consider likelihood and severity)
Verbal aggression		
Physical aggression		
Scratching/ spitting/ biting		
Hair pulling		
Pushing / Pulling		
Damage to property		
Running from immediate environment		
Running off site		
Refusal to co-operate		
Throwing classroom equipment		
Refusal to move		
Other (please specify)		

Environmental factors influencing likelihood of behaviour occurring	Tick if applicable
Transition times	
Periods of unstructured activity	
Availability of potentially hazardous equipment	
Times of increased pressure - school eg assessment	
- home factors	
Working in close proximity to others	
Particular pupils / adults – specify	

Proactive measures to prevent occurrence of behaviour	In place	Activate
Ignore negative behaviour whenever possible		
Emphasis on ensuring child's understanding of instructions- rephrase /reiterate if necessary		
Breaking down of task into smaller targets with staged praise/ reassurance		
Adapt seating plans to ensure provision of good role models		
Establishment of a reward system for pupil to manage		
Provision of frequent change of task / reward mechanism		
Providing regular positive feedback to pupil- end of session end of am end of day		
Adapting curriculum arrangements to ensure appropriate challenge to pupil's needs		
Provision of adult support at difficult times		
Allocate role of responsibility to child to be undertaken at trigger points(specify)		

Reactive strategies to respond to early warning signs of escalation	In place	Activate
Praise partial compliance		
Stage 1 and 2 of Discipline Plan- distract/ reassure/remind of instruction/ expectation		
Stages 2 and 3 of plan- repeat instruction, give choice with consequence set out		
Divert to alternative activity- (specify)		
Signal need for intervention to other adult- verbal or card system		
Withdraw to allow time and space to pre- determined spot in room		

Challenging Behaviour Risk Assessment Summary Sheet

Pupil:

Yr:

Date established:

By: (Staff names and signatures)

Behaviour causing concern	Where /When is behaviour shown?	Risk factor	Key proactive measures	Key reactive measures	Action -by whom By when

Review date set:

This assessment needs to be distributed to all appropriate members of staff involved with this pupil.

School may wish to keep a record of to whom and when this information was circulated.

Appendix 2

Positive Handling Plan

School:		NC Year group:	
Pupil name:		DoB:	
Positives- What is the pupil good at and what do they like doing?	Triggers- What situations have led to problems in the past?	Successful approaches- What proactive interventions have been effective in preventing the pupil's anxiety rising?	
Health/medical considerations that should be taken into account before physically intervening:			
Describe any modifications to the environment or client routines that can be implemented to prevent anxieties rising?			
Topography of Behaviour: (Describe what the behaviour looks / sounds like?)			
Stage of crisis.	What does the behaviour look like?	What should the adult try? (or avoid?)	Anything else?
Stage 1 – Anxiety behaviours.			
Stage 2 – Defensive behaviours.			
Stage 3 – Crisis behaviours.			
Preferred Supportive & Intervention Strategies (Other ways of C.A.L.M.ing such behaviours - strategies that, where and when possible, should be attempted before positive handling techniques are used)			

Expected Practice	
Strategy	What does the practice look like?
Firm clear directions	
C.A.L.M. talking/stance	
Summoning Assistance	
Verbal/Symbolic guidance	
Limited Choices	
Reminders of consequences	
Distraction	
Diversion	
Humour	

Describe any additional strategies that have worked in the past or should be avoided.

Strategy	Try	Avoid	What does the practice look like?
Negotiation			
Reassurance			
Planned ignoring			
Contingent touch			
Take up time			
Withdrawal offered			
Withdrawal directed			
Change of face			
Success reminders			
Others			

Preferred physical intervention approach for dealing with incidents

Potential incident (see risk assessment)	Specific location	Preferred Physical intervention Strategy

Praise Points / Strengths: (Areas that can be developed and built upon) Please state at least 3 'bridge builders'.

- 1:
- 2:
- 3:

D- DEBRIEFING arrangements

Recording and notifications required – Bound and numbered book, Serious Incident Report Form sent to LA, Parent/carers informed – how?
 Staff member with whom the client has a good relationship:

Please print:		Please sign:	
Headteacher:			
Class teacher or ALNCo:			
Parent/Guardian:			
Date:	___ / ___ / _____	Review Date:	___ / ___ / _____

Appendix 3

Serious Incident Reporting Form – Form R

SECTION A – Basic Data		
School:		
Name of pupil:	D.O.B.	Age:
Full names of staff involved:		
Date of incident:	Location of incident:	
Time:	Duration of incident:	Minutes
Full names of staff /pupil who witnessed the incident:		
SECTION B - Reason for Intervention		(Please tick appropriate)
Risk of personal injury to pupil		
Risk of injury to another person		
Risk of significant damage to property		
Compromising good order and discipline		
At risk of committing criminal offence		
SECTION C - Details of Incident		
Antecedents: (Where did incident start, what was happening at the time?)		
<p>De-escalation: Please tick all used</p> <p>Humour <input type="checkbox"/> Verbal advice and support <input type="checkbox"/> Firm clear directions <input type="checkbox"/> Negotiation <input type="checkbox"/> Limited choices <input type="checkbox"/> Distraction <input type="checkbox"/> Diversion <input type="checkbox"/> Reassurance <input type="checkbox"/> Planned ignoring <input type="checkbox"/> Contingent touch <input type="checkbox"/> Calm talking <input type="checkbox"/> Patience <input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawal offered <input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawal directed <input type="checkbox"/> Swap adult <input type="checkbox"/> Reminders about consequences <input type="checkbox"/> Success reminders <input type="checkbox"/></p>		
Description of Incident		
SECTION D: Method of Physical Intervention		
How was the pupil held?		
How long did the pupil need to be held?		Minutes
Has the pupil been physically restrained before?		Yes / No

How many times at your school?	
How effective was the intervention?	
How was the intervention in the best interest of the young person?	
SECTION E: Outcome of incident	
Was anybody injured? (Please give details (nature of injuries, treatment required))	Yes / No
Response and view of pupil	
Does pupil have a behaviour programme Do any changes need to be made If yes please specify	Yes / No Yes / No
How was the incident resolved and what were the consequences?	
SECTION F: - Follow up action	
Do other agencies need to be contacted? If yes please specify who and with what aim.	Yes / No
Parent/carer informed by	Direct Contact <input type="checkbox"/> Letter <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone <input type="checkbox"/>
Follow up support/interview for	Pupil <input type="checkbox"/> Staff <input type="checkbox"/>
SECTION G: Additional comments	
Form completed by:	(Print) (Signed)
Date:	Designation:
Head Teachers signature:	Date:
Countersigned by: Role: Signature: Names (please print): Date:	

Appendix 4 Accident Form

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

ACCIDENT/INCIDENT REPORT FORM

Please ensure all sections are completed

INJURED PERSON

Name: _____ Age: _____

Home Address: _____ Postcode: _____

Home Telephone: _____

Employee Agency Worker Trainee Contractor

Member of public

Occupation (if employee): _____

Department: _____ Section / School: _____

ACCIDENT DETAILS

Location of Accident:

_____ Postcode: _____

Day: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____

Type of Injury: (E.G. Cut to Head).

What Happened?:

Signature of Injured Person: _____ Date: _____
(If Possible)

WITNESS

Name: _____ Occupation: _____

Address: _____

Did Witness actually see the accident?: YES NO

If No, How was witness made aware of the accident?:

Signature of Witness: _____ Date: _____

SUPERVISOR / MANAGER / HEAD TEACHER ETC

Was treatment given: On Site Hospital Doctors None
Not Known

Comments: _____

Supervisors signature: _____ **Date:** _____

WARNING: False / Misleading Information may Result in Disciplinary Action. This form to be returned immediately to:
Safety Section, Civic Centre, Ebbw Vale, Gwent. NP23 6XB. Tel: 01495 355230

-----End of sample school policy-----

This page is intentionally left blank

Agenda Item 11

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 12.10.22

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 13.10.22

Committee: **Executive Committee**
Date of meeting: **26th October 2022**
Report Subject: **Improving Schools Programme**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr S Edmunds, Executive Member for People and Education**
Report Submitted by: **Lynn Phillips, Corporate Director of Education**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
	29.09.22	11.10.22			18.10.22	26.10.22		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Members with an update on the Blaenau Gwent Improving Schools Programme, in line with national changes to school evaluation, improvement and accountability changes.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 The report covers all schools and settings within the County Borough identified by the Education Directorate, supported by the Education Achievement Service (EAS) and/or Estyn as needing to improve. The Blaenau Gwent (BG) Improving Schools Programme operates within the regional arrangements for supporting schools across South East Wales.
- 2.2 During 2021-22 the majority of BG's schools participated in a Professional Discussion with the Local Authority (LA), EAS and other partners. This discussion focussed on the school's priorities for improvement, the support it requires and identified practice that is worth sharing. Schools have received a series of briefing sessions across a range of forums, to enable them to prepare for the above new ways of working. This approach has continued for the 2022-23 academic year and all schools have been notified of the dates of their Professional Discussion session. Importantly, there has been an incremental reduction in Schools Causing Concern from 6 schools in 2019 to only 2 schools in 2022. Abertillery Learning Community has been removed from Estyn Significant Improvement category

3. Options for Recommendation

- 3.1 This report will be considered by the People Scrutiny Committee on 18th October 2022, and any feedback will be reported verbally to the Executive.

3.2 Option 1

Members to consider and accept the report as provided.

3.3 Option 2

Members to scrutinise the information detailed within the report and contribute to the continuous assessment of effectiveness by making appropriate recommendations.

4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

4.1 Education remains a priority in the Corporate Plan. The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 consolidates, clarifies, and reforms the law in relation to intervention in schools causing concern. The Welsh Government's statutory guidance for schools causing concern (February 2014) details the local authority powers of intervention in schools causing concern, the grounds on which those powers can be invoked and the procedures governing the intervention process.

4.2 Through our education provision we seek to ensure that provision is appropriate and able to meet the needs of children and young people so that their progress and performance is ambitious and raises aspirations levels.

4.3 These key plans inform business planning arrangements at an Education Directorate level which when coupled with the findings of self-evaluation enables the right support to be put in place to support school to improve at an appropriate pace.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 **Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)**

There are no direct financial implications for this report. However, the Council allocates approximately £50.4 million to schools via the Individual Schools Budget (ISB) to provide high quality education and to improve pupil outcomes. Blaenau Gwent continues to make a financial contribution to the regional EAS arrangements of approximately £350,000 from the core Education Directorate Budget and this is a decrease of 0.4% on the previous financial year.

5.1.2 There will be financial implications in supporting schools to improve and this is identified in the individual school support plan.

5.2 **Risk Including Mitigating Actions**

Risk is associated with ineffective processes to ensure good progress against priorities in identified schools. Failure to raise standards features in the corporate risk register of the Council, particularly in relation to schools causing concern. This risk is also reflected in the Education Directorate and EAS risk registers. Mitigating actions include the routine monitoring of quantitative and qualitative information, regular Securing Improvement Partnership meetings between the Council and the EAS, regular quality assurance meetings within the Education Directorate and across teams as well as school inspection findings.

5.2.1 There is regular review of a school's progress towards its priorities. For most schools not in a category this is achieved through professional discussions. As a result of the relaxation of the accountability framework, which culminated in the suspension of the routine collection of qualitative data by Welsh Government, this has created an inherent risk associated

with making informed judgements on school performance. School attendance and exclusion figures are monitored on a fortnightly basis. School's safeguarding processes are also closely monitored. The quality assurance arrangements that are in place include the safeguarding matrix, keeping learners safe audit tool and the quality assurance visits which the Safeguarding in Education Manager completes and reports findings through a FADE approach to Education DMT. Holistic support packages are devised via regular intra Council services meetings between OD, finance, health and safety, education, and school governor support services. The quality of provision i.e., the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms is monitored and supported via the EAS. The quality of school leadership is also supported extensively by the EAS via a range of programmes and school-to-school networks.

5.3 **Legal**

The Improving Schools Programme operates within the legal framework of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013.

5.4 **Human Resources**

There are implications arising from the action identified to support those schools identified as a school causing concern and/or in an Estyn category. This information is in the support plan for the school, the post Inspection plan and the Local Authority Statement of Action.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

6.1.1 **Schools in an Estyn Category**

6.1.2 **Brynmawr Foundation School (Appendix 1)**

- The school was inspected in October 2019 and placed within the category of schools requiring Special Measures.
- The school continues to be subject to a LA statutory warning notice to improve and intervention is now in place. The LA reviewed the statutory warning notice in the autumn term.
- Governance and the work of the Governing Body has significantly improved.
- The school now has an established Senior Leadership Team in place.
- A strong support plan continues to be implemented as part of the EAS Learning Network School model, working closely with Cardiff High School, with the Headteacher of Cardiff High School undertaking the role of School Improvement Partner. Coaching and mentoring of leaders forms a core aspect of this support.
- The school continues to be part of the Welsh Government's national pilot for multi-agency support for schools in special measures, which involves a range of partners supporting the school and monitoring its progress in a systematic and responsive way, tailored to the specific needs of the school. The next LA led meeting is in October 2022.

- Estyn has undertaken two monitoring visits since the last report to the former Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee with one visit occurring in the autumn term 21 and a further visit in the summer term 2022. In the most recent monitoring visit that occurred in the summer term 2022, inspectors reviewed two recommendations. 'R2 Improve pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning' and 'R4 Strengthen leadership at all levels to improve leaders' ability to identify areas for development and to plan effectively for improvement. Estyn noted the progress made and concluded that 'Brynmawr Foundation School is judged to have made insufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the most recent core inspection.
- In particular, within the feedback, it was noted that for R2 - there are behaviour improvements. which have been sustained that are particularly around high tariff pupils. The new Assistant Headteacher role has had a positive impact although there is a concern as to whether the workload is too operational. The school now has a more systematic approach to behaviour but it needs to develop: -
 - The role of the pastoral Middle leaders
 - Focus on pupils' attitudes to learning and increase the challenge around the quality of teaching.
- R4 – Senior and middle leaders have undergone useful training and are developing in the right direction. Outcomes of the reviews are too generous, particularly judging the effectiveness of teaching in relation to its impact on learning. Some of the planning for improvement is still too broad and needs to be more whole-department level. Senior leaders should decide what is important and have a clear focus. There needs to be a relentless focus on teaching.
- As a result, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales is maintaining the level of follow-up activity.
- Estyn will re-visit the school in around four - six months' time to monitor progress against a sample of the recommendations.'
- A further Estyn monitoring visit is anticipated later this Autumn term.

Progress Update:

From evidence seen there is still work to be done, but the school is making progress against its recommendations although as set out above the pace of these improvements needs to progress. The school continues to be supported by Cardiff High School and a further monitoring visit is expected later this term. The next multi-agency meeting will focus on teaching and learning and will consider the role and impact that both senior and middle leaders will play in this area for improvement.

6.1.3 **Abertillery 3-16 Learning Community (Appendix 2)**

- The school was inspected in February 2018 and placed in the category of schools requiring significant improvement.
- The school received an Estyn monitoring visit in February 2022 and all six Recommendations were inspected:
 - R1. Improve standards, in particular outcomes at the end of key stage 4
 - R2. Improve standards of behaviour in the secondary phase
 - R3. Improve the quality of teaching
 - R4. Improve planning for progression of skills, including the Welsh language, and the breadth of the secondary phase curriculum
 - R5. Improve the quality and impact of leadership at all levels, including in self-evaluation and planning for improvement
 - R6. Provide robust financial management to address the deficit budget
- Estyn concluded that Abertillery Learning Community was ‘judged to have made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the most recent core inspection in February 2022. As a result, Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales is removing the school from the list of schools requiring significant improvement.’
- Following the outcome of the Estyn inspection the Local Authority formally withdrew the statutory warning notice under which the school had operated since 2018. However, the Local Authority will continue to support the school moving forward through the ALC Corporate Group continuing to function in supporting financial sustainability planning. The Learning Community will also be subject to regular Team Around the School (TAS) meetings to ensure that the school receives appropriate support to continue to improve. This support is particularly relevant as the experienced Headteacher that led the school out of significant improvement has recently advised the Governing Body and Local Authority of her intention to retire at the end of the Spring term 2023.

Progress Update:

- Arrangements are underway to secure a new Headteacher for the start of the summer term.
- The Learning Community will continue to receive support from the LA and the EAS, its commissioned school improvement service.
- This will include twice yearly professional discussions facilitated by the Local Authority and continuation of the ALC Corporate Group, which focuses upon the schools’ financial situation. The Resource Bases located at the setting will also be included in the LA review that is scheduled for this term.

6.1.4 River Centre (Appendix 3)

The previous report to the Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee in October 2021 identified that:

- The LA is concerned that the school does not engage with key statutory LA functions and services. The pre-warning letter of Spring 2021, which set out the LA's concerns, particularly- relating to ALN Panel engagement and school improvement shortcomings e.g., the School Development Plan (SDP).
- Schools Causing Concern/TAS meetings have not provided the LA or EAS with the assurance of the effectiveness of the school's provision/admissions for learners. As a result of a lack of progress in addressing the issues identified in the Pre-Warning letter; a Statutory Warning letter was issued to the Governing Body in September 2021. This set out the statutory grounds for intervention as follows:
 - **Ground 2:** there has been a breakdown in the way the school is managed or governed in that:
 - 1. The Headteacher and the Governing Body have been unable to share effective self-evaluation and a school development planning cycle based on regular and robust first-hand evidence of both provision and standards, both within the SIP cycle and the Schools Causing Concern protocols.
 - It is the view of the School Causing Concern panel that the Headteacher does not provide governors with all the information they need in a timely fashion for those governors to comply with their obligations to challenge the Headteacher.
 - **Ground 5:** the governing body or Headteacher has failed, or is likely to fail, to comply with a duty under the Education Acts as set out in Ground 2 and,
 - **Ground 6:** the Governing Body or Headteacher has acted unreasonably in the exercise of any of its functions as set out in Ground 2.
- Over the past 18 months, there has been much needed significant changes to governance leadership and staffing. This has included a paid LA appointed Chair of Governors being appointed, additional governors to bring further capacity and expertise.
- Staffing has been in a state of flux and there is a need to stabilise the continuity of staff predominantly in the secondary campus. A new senior leader with a focus on wellbeing will start October 2022 and recruitment for a Head of Campus Secondary and two additional teaching staff has begun.
- The Headteacher remains absent from work and the school has benefited from two experienced Headteachers undertaking an Executive Headteacher role, with the most recent appointment commencing in April 2022. This has provided additional capacity to

the setting through the release of experienced members of that schools' senior leadership team.

- Team Around the School meetings since the last report have predominantly focused upon consolidating the setting following the Safer School's response. The Safer Schools approach was implemented in February 2022 in response to an incident that culminated with the implementation of three key work streams to support the setting:
 - Building safety and security – building and infrastructure around the River Centre, particularly around the secondary site;
 - Staffing – staffing workforce issues with regards to safety and cultural development within the setting; and,
 - Vulnerable learners – support and understanding associated with the needs and complexities of the learners.

- The group was chaired by the Corporate Director of Education and the purpose was to secure a partnership approach to ensure that the setting is fit for purpose for learners and staff, with the primary goal being for the River Centre to become a safe setting for all its learners and staff, particularly the secondary setting.

- In the summer term, the LA/EAS sourced an experienced School Improvement Partner with track record of working in a Special School similar to the River Centre to work closely alongside the school.

- Furthermore, during the summer term the school received an Estyn Inspection, which placed the setting into Estyn's Special Measures category. There were 7 recommendations included in the report which are:
 - R1 Address those issues identified in the health and safety letter
 - R2 Establish a clear purpose and vision for the school and implement a staffing structure that is fit for purpose and adequately reflects roles and responsibilities
 - R3 Ensure that the curriculum is sufficiently engaging, broad and balanced and prepares pupils well for their next stage in life and learning
 - R4 Improve the behaviour of pupils, particularly on the secondary campus
 - R5 Improve the quality of the learning environment and culture, particularly on the secondary campus
 - R6 Improve the outcomes for pupils, particularly those on the secondary campus
 - R7 Establish systems, procedures and routines across the school that are clearly understood by staff and relevant partners

Progress Update:

- The LA and EAS continue to work alongside school leaders to respond to the setting's Estyn Health and Safety Letter and develop a Post Inspection Action Plan (PIAP).
- During the summer period significant work has been completed in respect of building works that has seen the following improvements to the suitability of the secondary campus. e.g., toilet improvements, fencing and site safety.
- There is a need to ensure that the staffing at the secondary setting stabilises and sufficient capacity is in place.
- The Safeguarding in Education Manager continues to support the setting in progressing the required actions in the Keeping Learners Safe audit tool. Termly progress reports will be provided to the Governing Body and Education DMT on any work in this area.
- The Education Transformation and Business Change Manager is exploring funding avenues to develop a further programme of building improvement works to improve the learning environment.
- Meetings are in train with the newly appointed School Improvement partner.
- The Corporate Director is reviewing the statutory warning notice in the light of the recent Estyn inspection.
- The placement of pupils at the secondary setting recommences at the start of the spring term. ALN Panel will utilise the risk matrix when determining future placements that will assess the known intelligence, context and inherent risks.

6.1.5 **Schools Causing Concern**

6.1.6 **Sofrydd Primary School**

In the Autumn term 2021, a formal review of progress against the recommendations of the review that took place in 2020, with the new Headteacher and the leadership team. The review concluded to: -

- to remove Sofrydd PS from the SCC/TAS protocol arrangements, but the Local Authority and EAS will arrange a visit that falls outside of SCC requirements.
- the Panel congratulated the Headteacher and the Chair of Governors on the significant progress made in such a relatively short period of time.

6.1.7 **School Inspections**

6.1.8 **Georgetown Primary School (Appendix 4)**

Georgetown Primary School was inspected in June 2022. The school received a positive Estyn report and has been asked to prepare a case study on its work in relation to how it has developed the indoor and outdoor environment to improve pupils' well-being and learning, for dissemination on Estyn's website. There were three recommendations for improvement that were identified:

- R1 Ensure that self-evaluation processes identify the aspects of teaching and learning most in need of development and focus precisely on the difference actions make to pupils' progress and skills.
- R2 Improve older pupils' standards of writing.
- R3 Improve teachers' understanding of effective classroom assessment, including feedback, so that they can evaluate pupils' progress, and identify how best to support their next steps in learning.

The school has drawn up an action plan to address the recommendations from the inspection.

6.2 **Expected outcome for the public**

6.3 **Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)**

The regional pilot of new ways of working to reflect the new national arrangements for school evaluation, improvement and accountability has been evolved through the engagement of a variety of stakeholders including schools and members of governing bodies. A range of Council services and external partners are involved in delivering programmes to support schools requiring improvement. Monitoring progress towards targets enables effective targeting of support.

6.4 **Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)**

Monitoring school progress against priorities facilitates support for schools to ensure that they achieve and maintain high quality outcomes in the long term

6.5 **Preventative Focus**

Through effective monitoring and evaluation of school performance, early identification of emerging areas for improvement can be achieved with consequent early intervention to secure improvement. The effectiveness of the LA's monitoring, evaluation and intervention programmes ensure that preventative action is taken early in order to minimise the escalation of concerns.

6.6 **Collaboration / partnership working**

The LA collaborates with neighbouring local authorities through the South East Wales Consortium for the provision of School Improvement services through the Education Achievement Service (EAS).

The LA also secures a range of pupil support services such as Hearing Impaired, Visually Impaired, Speech and Language, and Ethnic Minority support services through regional collaboration. Within the LA, the school improvement and inclusion leadership teams ensure that there is a coordinated approach to supporting schools in the Education Directorate and across the Council as a whole.

6.7 Integration (across service areas)

The LA commissions its school improvement function on a regional basis.

6.8 Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions

There are no implications arising from this report.

6.9 Integrated Impact Assessment

There are no implications arising from this report

7. Monitoring Arrangements

7.1 Monitoring of improvement pathways is an important mechanism for ensuring that Members of the People Scrutiny Committee and the Executive are sufficiently informed to enable them to hold the authority to account effectively for the quality of education provision and hence pupil progress and outcomes.

Background Documents / Electronic Links

- Appendix 1 – Brynmawr Foundation School
- Appendix 2 – Abertillery Learning Community
- Appendix 3 – River Centre 3-16 Learning Community
- Appendix 4 – Georgetown Primary School



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

Report following monitoring

Level of follow-up: Special measures

**Brynmawr Foundation School
Rhydwr
Intermediate Road
Brynmawr
Blaenau Gwent
NP23 4XT**

Date of visit: July 2022

by

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and
Training in Wales**

Outcome of visit

Brynmawr Foundation School is judged to have made insufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the most recent core inspection.

As a result, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales is maintaining the level of follow-up activity.

Estyn will re-visit the school in around four - six months' time to monitor progress against a sample of the recommendations.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

The Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that an induction period may **not** be served in a school requiring special measures i.e. as described in grounds 6 or 8 in section 2 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 (1). The presumption is that schools requiring special measures are not suitable for providing induction for newly qualified teachers, other than in exceptional circumstances. Therefore, schools requiring special measures should not normally appoint a newly qualified teacher (NQT) to their staff.

Progress since the last inspection

R1. Improve pupils' standards across the school, including their literacy and numeracy skills

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

R2. Improve pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning

Since the last monitoring visit, the school has continued to develop its approaches to support pupils' behaviour and well-being. This is having a positive impact on behaviour in classes and around the school. Most teachers develop positive relationships with pupils and manage classroom behaviour suitably. However, the school has not focused closely enough on the impact that improving teaching has on pupils' attitudes to learning. As a result, teaching does not always engage pupils sufficiently to develop positive attitudes to learning.

The school's behaviour policy is well understood by staff and pupils and generally pupils respond positively to these expectations. Leaders have recently revised the policy around rewards for good behaviour and attendance, but it is too soon to

evaluate the impact of these changes. The school has further developed its 'Reset' strategy sensibly to respond to incidents of poor behaviour in lessons. This ensures that pupils reflect promptly on their behaviour in sessions with designated members of staff. In addition, the school has improved its graduated 'Stage 2 and Stage 3' provision to make available worthwhile targeted support and intervention in response to the needs of individual pupils.

Pastoral leaders monitor behaviour and interventions for individuals' needs carefully. This helps the school to evaluate the impact of interventions on pupils and decide how best to support them further. The school is developing positive relationships with parents and guardians through regular meetings and communication. Staff also work beneficially with a range of outside agencies, including providing an on-site space to allow them to support vulnerable pupils.

Most pupils are courteous towards each other, staff and visitors to the school. They behave sensibly at break and lunch times and when moving around the school building. These pupils are punctual to lessons and settle quickly. However, a few pupils are rowdy when moving between classes and arrive late to lessons.

A majority of pupils have generally positive attitudes towards their work. They listen appropriately to their teachers' instructions and complete the tasks set. These pupils engage suitably with classroom discussions and are willing to contribute when asked questions or allowed opportunities to work in pairs or small groups. They concentrate suitably to complete short tasks. A minority of pupils do not settle well to independent work. These pupils tend to waste time and are slow to complete tasks. They struggle to maintain their concentration when listening to instructions and when working independently. This leads to pupils producing brief or incomplete work in class. A few pupils talk over the teacher or disrupt learning with off-task behaviour.

In a few lessons, teachers provide challenging tasks and probe pupils' thinking through effective questioning, and this helps pupils to become enthusiastic and eager to learn. They show diligence and persistence and are eager to develop the standard of their work.

R3. Improve the effectiveness of teaching to motivate, engage and challenge pupils to make good progress in lessons

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

R4. Strengthen leadership at all levels to improve leaders' ability to identify areas for development and to plan effectively for improvement

Since the monitoring visit in October 2021, senior leaders have continued to develop their sense of shared vision and direction. They hold twice-weekly meetings, focused alternately on strategy and day-to-day work, which has helped to bring greater clarity. There is now a coherent distribution of roles within the senior leadership team and lines of responsibility are well understood.

Senior leaders have undertaken worthwhile professional learning with external partners and this has enabled them to begin to identify specific areas for improvement and plan appropriately. Middle leaders have also benefited from support to improve their leadership, for example on how to coach members of their teams and how to hold difficult conversations. This includes recently leading faculty reviews, with the support of senior leaders and external partners. Senior and middle leaders use a range of suitable processes to gather first-hand evidence and evaluate provision and learning. They have improved pupil behaviour by developing systems that are well understood and introducing additional provision to support more vulnerable learners. However, overall, evaluations of teaching and learning are over-generous and do not consider sufficiently how provision impacts on pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. This limits leaders' ability to plan precisely for improvement. Leaders do not always identify clearly enough the priorities for improving teaching or plan well enough to secure consistent improvements.

The school provides an appropriate range of professional learning opportunities for all staff, including those supported by external partners. Senior leaders have recognised the need to pause the number of new teaching strategies being introduced in order to consolidate those that are already in place.

Governors are supportive of the school. They have altered the governing body sub-committee structure this year to align more closely with the school's main priorities for improvement and this is helping them to focus their work appropriately.

© Crown Copyright 2022: This report may be re-used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re-used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

Report following monitoring

Level of follow-up: Significant improvement

**Abertillery Learning Community
Alma Street
Abertillery
Blaenau Gwent
NP13 1YL**

Date of visit: February 2022

by

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and
Training in Wales**

Outcome of visit

Abertillery Learning Community is judged to have made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the most recent core inspection.

As a result, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales is removing the school from the list of schools requiring significant improvement.

Progress since the last inspection

R1. Improve standards, in particular outcomes at the end of key stage 4

Since the core inspection, the school has developed and implemented successful strategies to raise pupils' standards. During the Covid-19 pandemic, staff ensured that pupils had access to suitable provision to continue with their learning. This has contributed towards maintaining pupils' literacy and numeracy skills as well as enhancing their information communication and technology (ICT) skills. As a result, standards of pupils' work seen in lessons and books during this visit are better than at the time of the core inspection, particularly in the secondary phase.

Many pupils make sound progress in lessons and over time. They recall previous information well, for example by applying their understanding of the character of Eric in 'An Inspector Calls' to subsequent work on the play. Most pupils listen attentively to the teacher and their peers and respond eagerly to questions. Many respond to the teacher's questions accurately, using a range of appropriate vocabulary. A few pupils make strong progress in lessons. These pupils develop their verbal responses well, especially when encouraged by teachers' questions

Many pupils take pride in the presentation of their work. A majority extract relevant information from texts and summarise their findings well. In a few lessons, pupils simply copy the text into their written responses without exploring its meaning. Most pupils write at length with an appropriate sense of audience across many subjects. Many reflect carefully on their writing and redraft and refine their work well to make improvements. More able pupils write at length, express themselves fluently and use a wide range of vocabulary. A majority of pupils make basic errors in their spelling and a few struggle to express their ideas suitably in their writing.

The majority of pupils apply their numeracy skills in subjects other than mathematics appropriately. For example, they calculate energy released from chemical reactions accurately in science. Pupils draw appropriate graphs to display data but, in a few cases, do not take enough care in labelling and plotting. In addition, they do not choose the appropriate type of graph to display data for different purposes. Pupils'

use of ICT in subjects across the curriculum has developed well and they are now suitably confident in, for example, constructing spreadsheets and producing animations.

R2. Improve standards of behaviour in the secondary phase

Since the core inspection, standards of behaviour have improved considerably in the secondary phase. Most pupils behave well in lessons, when moving around the school and during lunch and break times. In lessons, they adopt positive attitudes to learning and engage well in their work. They are respectful to each other and to adults in the school.

The 'ready to learn' behaviour policy is well established and understood clearly by nearly all staff and pupils. It is used consistently in most faculties and generally applied consistently by teachers. The policy was recently relaunched following pupils' return to school after a prolonged period at home due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This has supported the improvements in behaviour across the school well and reduced disruption of pupils' learning by others.

The use of an internal exclusion area, the 'ready to learn' room, is effective in dealing with more challenging behaviour. The staff in this area ensure pupils are engaged in meaningful activities during their withdrawal from usual lessons. Since the core inspection, the overall number of fixed term exclusions has reduced considerably and the number of pupils that attend the 'ready to learn' room for poor behaviour has also declined.

The school has recently reviewed its pastoral staff structure to improve efficiency and accountability. Pastoral leaders record and monitor pupils' behaviour closely. They identify issues of concern regarding behaviour and implement suitable support strategies to address these concerns. They communicate their actions and strategies clearly with other staff.

R3. Improve the quality of teaching

Since the core inspection, the school has established a suitable range of helpful processes and systems to support the development of teaching. As a result, teaching in the secondary phase has improved overall, and has had a positive impact on pupils' progress, behaviour and attitudes to learning.

The school now monitors teaching rigorously. There is a structured approach to the quality assurance of teaching which includes lesson observations and work scrutiny. This is helping the school to identify strengths and areas for improvement more precisely. However, in a few areas, the evaluation of teaching is too positive, and this means that actions to improve teaching are not specific enough.

Senior leaders provide valuable support for teachers who need to improve. This includes careful action planning and supportive coaching. The school is also

beginning to share good practice in teaching and learning across subjects and phases. As a result, teachers demonstrate a willingness to explore new ideas and this is contributing to the development of a learning culture in the school.

Most teachers establish and maintain a productive learning environment in their classes. They start their lessons purposefully, help pupils settle to their work swiftly and manage behaviour positively. Overall, teachers, have much higher expectations of pupils than at the time of the core inspection. They plan more challenging work and use a wider range of teaching approaches to maintain pupils' interest and concentration. However, in a minority of subjects, teachers use worksheets too frequently which restricts how well pupils can develop their ideas and extend their writing.

In the majority of lessons, teachers plan activities that build pupils' learning sequentially and effectively. The school has focused on developing pupils' independent learning skills, and overall, this has had a positive impact, particularly on the quality of pupils' extended writing. However, in a few instances teachers place too much emphasis on developing independence by allowing pupils to continue working without appropriate input or monitoring. This leaves pupils unable to improve their skills, knowledge and understanding sufficiently.

A majority of teachers use questioning suitably to help pupils recall previous learning and to check their understanding. They prompt pupils to improve their answers, but do not promote extended verbal responses, or encourage discussion well enough. A minority of teachers provide helpful written comments that help pupils to improve. In a few subjects, for example in English, pupils are encouraged to reflect on their work and then make improvements. This has had a positive impact on their writing. Overall, improvements to feedback to pupils are at an early stage of development.

R4. Improve planning for progression of skills, including the Welsh language, and the breadth of the secondary phase curriculum

Since the core inspection, the school has taken effective steps to plan for skills progression across the curriculum. The co-ordinators, who work across phases, have implemented a strategic plan and introduced beneficial opportunities to develop pupils' skills. They have provided useful professional learning and support for staff to strengthen the provision for skills. Through appropriate monitoring and evaluation, they measure the impact of planned rich skills tasks.

The school focuses on providing suitable opportunities for pupils to develop their writing, and this is having a positive impact on the standards of pupils' written work. However, teachers' assessment of pupils' skills does not always help pupils to improve.

The school has a suitable programme to develop pupils' reading skills in key stage 3 and provides appropriate support for basic reading and numeracy skills across the

whole school. These programmes have been evaluated carefully and are having a beneficial impact on many of the pupils who access this support.

Since the core inspection, the school has continued to increase the expectation of pupils' progress in learning Welsh. Nearly all pupils in key stage 4 follow the GCSE full course in Welsh. Many teachers use everyday Welsh in their lessons, and this means that pupils hear Welsh frequently. However, pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to develop their spoken Welsh within and outside of Welsh lessons.

The school offers a suitably broad curriculum for key stage 4 pupils. Pupils now benefit from vocational courses at levels 1 and 2 and more choices that suit their needs. This has contributed to pupils being more engaged and interested in their learning than at the time of the core inspection. For pupils with specific needs, the school has begun to implement a curriculum that is tailored suitably .

R5. Improve the quality and impact of leadership at all levels, including in self-evaluation and planning for improvement

Abertillery Learning Community now has stability in leadership that serves the school well. The headteacher provides strong leadership across the school and is committed to securing high quality teaching and provision for all pupils. With the full support of the senior leadership team, she has established useful cross-phase working and ensured that this is central to effective strategic planning across the school. As a team, they have led the school well through the considerable challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic, while at the same time focusing firmly on school improvement and addressing the recommendations from the core inspection.

Staff roles and responsibilities are clear and concise and as a result, staff have a good understanding of what is expected of them and what they can expect from leaders. This has helped to improve the morale of staff, create a sense of teamwork across the school and raise expectations around what pupils can achieve.

Leaders have strengthened arrangements for self-evaluation and improvement planning across the school. All leaders have received appropriate professional learning to help them carry out their responsibilities. This has been particularly helpful to middle leaders in developing their confidence and leadership skills. They are involved in a suitable range of evaluation activities, including a robust and consistent process of lesson observations. This process has been successful in raising the expectations of staff and promoting worthwhile professional reflection and dialogue. Leaders' feedback to teachers highlights their strengths and areas for improvement and encourages personal reflection. Leaders tailor professional learning specifically to suit the needs of individual teachers and support staff. They follow up on any targets for improvement routinely. Whilst there are notable improvements in the way leaders evaluate the work of the school, there remains inconsistency amongst middle leaders. This means not all have sufficiently high expectations of staff and pupils.

Leaders and teachers have strengthened their use of pupil voice across the school to support improvement. Pupils of all ages elect a representative for the school council. Class ambassadors provide valuable feedback on issues taken forward to the whole school council meetings. Their input has led to notable changes such as changing provision in the school canteen and the implementation of gender neutral changing rooms and improving transition arrangements for Year 6 pupils. This gives pupils a sense of ownership of important aspects of the life and work of the school.

Governors have a secure understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They receive regular reports from leaders about the school's progress against the core inspection recommendations. In addition, they are involved in gathering first-hand evidence, such as when joining school leaders on learning walks and talking to pupils about their learning. Governors use their skills effectively to provide a suitable level of challenge to school leaders.

R6. Provide robust financial management to address the deficit budget

The school has implemented an agreed recovery plan and addressed the deficit budget appropriately. It is forecast that the school will hold a healthy surplus by the end of the current financial year. Careful financial management by the business team, headteacher and governors and benefits from the redistribution of the individual schools budget has decreased the budget deficiency year on year. They consider carefully the impact of any planned spending in order to reduce unnecessary costs. A strategic budget plan aligns closely with a workforce plan to ensure that spending is affordable and contributes towards meeting the schools' priorities. Substantial restructuring of staffing and a review of service level agreements have contributed to making significant and savings.

The school has planned appropriately this financial year for its use of grant funding, including the pupil development grant. The school's use of significant grant funding, including the pupil development grant, is beginning to impact positively on pupils' outcomes and better engagement by pupils eligible for free school meals.

© Crown Copyright 2022: This report may be re-used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re-used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

River Centre 3-16 Learning Community

**Pontygof
Ebbw Vale
Blaenau Gwent
NP23 5AZ**

Date of inspection: June 2022

by

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education
and Training in Wales**

About River Centre 3-16 Learning Community

Name of provider	River Centre 3-16 Learning Community
Local authority	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Special
Religious character	*
Number of pupils on roll	53
Pupils of statutory school age	53
Number in nursery classes	*
Percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average (The national percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average in [SECTOR] is [xx]%)	54.7%
Percentage of pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a) (The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in [SECTOR] is [xx]%)	100%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	*
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	*
Date of headteacher appointment	01/01/2018
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	
Start date of inspection	27/06/2022
<p>The River Centre 3-16 Learning Community is a day special school in Blaenau Gwent. It provides education for children between the ages of 3 and 16. Following the closure of the local authority pupil referral unit (PRU), the school opened in January 2018. The school's catchment area is predominantly Blaenau Gwent. However, a very few pupils are placed by other local authorities in south Wales and a very few pupils are placed by English authorities.</p>	

The school is based on the two main sites that were the location of the PRU. The primary campus in Tredegar provides education for children from the foundation phase through to Year 7 and the secondary campus in Ebbw Vale provides education for pupils from Year 8 to Year 11. In addition, pupils who have high levels of anxiety and are unable to attend school attend Tŷ Afon, a converted house close to the secondary campus.

The school currently provides a home tuition service. Since the pandemic, this service has been provided remotely.

The majority of pupils have statements of special educational needs, and all have needs in relation to their social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Just over a quarter of pupils have learning difficulties and very few are identified as having speech and language needs.

The majority of pupils are expected to attend the school over a short period of time to receive specific support to address their special educational needs and then return to mainstream school.

The majority of pupils are eligible to receive free-school meals. All pupils are from predominantly English-speaking backgrounds. A very few pupils are looked after by their local authority.

The school employs 11 teachers and 31 support staff.

Over the past 18 months the school has experienced significant and widespread changes in leadership and staffing and has been supported, at different times, by three interim executive headteachers.

The substantive headteacher has been in post since the school opened and was previously the headteacher of the PRU. This is the first inspection of the school.

At the time of the inspection Year 11 pupils had left school. However the attendance of pupils on the secondary campus, over time, is poor.

Data reported is sourced from the latest available Pupil Level Annual School Census. These figures may be slightly different to those observed during the inspection.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website: mylocalschool.gov.wales

- a. The term 'additional learning needs' is being used to describe those pupils on the SEN/ALN register of the school.

Overview

The River Centre 3-16 Learning Community was established following the closure of the local authority PRU. Based on two main campuses the school largely operates as separate entities. The result is that there are significant differences in systems, procedures, and processes between sites. The school does not operate as a cohesive organisation. The systematic collection, collation and analysis of key school performance information is extremely under-developed. This seriously impedes the ability of leaders to both report to, and be held accountable by, the governing body.

Pupils that attend the school have faced significant challenges in mainstream settings. Overall, the progress that pupils make in their learning and well-being is stronger for pupils that attend the primary campus and Tŷ Afon, than for those that attend the secondary campus. The positive aspects of provision that are found on the primary campus and Tŷ Afon are generally not found on the secondary campus. For example, the curriculum on the secondary campus is not sufficiently broad or balanced and does not prepare pupils well enough for their next stage of life and learning. In addition, the quality of the learning environment, including the culture, varies considerably across the campuses.

Over the past 18 months, there have been significant and wholesale changes to governance, leadership and staffing and these have had a detrimental impact on the learning experiences, well-being and outcomes for pupils. Staff too have been affected by these changes but generally remain committed to the pupils.

Pupils at the secondary campus experienced significant disruption to their education during the spring term of 2022. Senior leaders at the time determined that for health and safety reasons pupils should not attend the school and arrangements were made for them to attend alternative providers. Overall, attendance at these providers was low. Year 11 pupils missed a crucial part of their education whilst preparing to sit examinations. This is a significant cause for concern.

Overall, the school has failed to provide an acceptable standard of education for some of the most vulnerable pupils in Wales.

Recommendations

- R1 Address those issues identified in the health and safety letter
- R2 Establish a clear purpose and vision for the school and implement a staffing structure that is fit for purpose and adequately reflects roles and responsibilities
- R3 Ensure that the curriculum is sufficiently engaging, broad and balanced and prepares pupils well for their next stage in life and learning
- R4 Improve the behaviour of pupils, particularly on the secondary campus
- R5 Improve the quality of the learning environment and culture, particularly on the secondary campus
- R6 Improve the outcomes for pupils, particularly those on the secondary campus
- R7 Establish systems, procedures and routines across the school that are clearly understood by staff and relevant partners

What happens next

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that special measures are required in relation to this school. The school will draw up an action plan showing how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the school's progress on a termly basis.

Main evaluation

Learning

Many pupils at the secondary campus make very limited progress in their learning. They do not always progress as well as they should or use their skills to a level that matches their ability. The disruptive behaviours of a minority of older pupils during lessons interrupt their own learning and that of their peers. However, despite the challenges faced by staff and pupils, nearly all pupils at the primary campus make suitable progress from their initial starting points.

At the primary campus, pupils settle quickly into the warm and caring environment which most pupils respond to well. This supportive environment is helping pupils, particularly those who previously found it hard to engage in education, to make suitable progress both academically and socially. This is due to the skilled support and encouragement they receive from teaching staff.

Many younger pupils develop their social skills effectively. They work in pairs or small groups, they follow instructions, take turns, co-operate with teaching staff and with each other and listen and respond appropriately to others in class discussions. This is a significant achievement for pupils when considering their prior educational experiences. For example, they commend their peers' successes and responses to questions in class. However, many older pupils do not engage well with their learning and do not listen well enough to teachers and support staff or when other pupils are speaking. They do not use their communication skills appropriately in a range of contexts throughout the day.

Over time, across the school, the majority of pupils develop their oracy skills in line with their ability. They are confident in responding to questions and share their opinions suitably. A few pupils extend and develop their ideas successfully. For example, in a science experiment, they discuss enthusiastically the reasons why their home-made boats may float or sink.

A majority of pupils develop suitable reading skills in line with their ability. They skim and scan texts and can locate information appropriately. Many younger pupils enjoy listening to a range of genres such as factually based materials and fiction texts. However, the majority of pupils do not get appropriate opportunities to develop their progressive reading skills across the curriculum and this hinders their progress in developing these skills.

The standard of writing across the school is variable. Many younger pupils, particularly those on the primary campus, develop their independent writing skills progressively. They improve their letter formation, spacing and legibility and are able to spell words and write short sentences successfully. In addition, a minority of pupils across the school develop an awareness of writing for different purposes. For example, they use effective adjectives to describe an imaginary character or use appropriate language and structure to analyse poetry. However, a majority of pupils, particularly those at the secondary campus, do not develop their writing skills well enough over time. These pupils make frequent careless errors and struggle to write at length.

Across the school, a majority of the pupils make suitable progress in developing their numeracy skills. For example, in mathematics they apply their understanding to work out the perimeter measurements for a variety of shapes, they understand coordinates and learn to budget for a shopping trip.

The majority of pupils are beginning to develop appropriate digital skills. For example, they produce simple spreadsheets, use coding programmes and use search engines to research and produce information sheets.

Many pupils improve their physical skills appropriately. For example, pupils enjoy activities such as basketball to develop their self-confidence and team working skills. Younger pupils develop their physical skills well with resources such as bikes and trikes available during break times.

A majority of pupils develop their creative skills appropriately. In their art lessons, pupils use different tools to create an attractive night sky painting as well as aboriginal art drawings. Younger pupils develop both their fine motor skills and their creativity by using clay to create a monster from a story book.

A minority of older pupils achieve a very narrow range of qualifications appropriate to their abilities. Overall, the qualifications offered are not relevant to pupils' age, additional learning needs, abilities, and interests.

Historically the proportion of pupils progressing into education, training or employment, at the end of key stage 4 has not been strong and has worsened over time. For the academic year 2020-2021 half of the pupils leaving key stage 4 did not progress into any form of education, training or employment

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Overall, many pupils feel safe in school and nearly all feel as though the school deals well with incidents of bullying. However, the behaviour of a minority of pupils at the secondary campus is disruptive. They frequently verbally abuse staff, each other, and damage property. At times, the secondary campus is not a safe environment for either pupils or staff. This is a significant and serious concern.

Overall, the majority of pupils are respectful and polite and interact well with staff and their peers. However, pupils on the secondary campus have fewer opportunities to interact and collaborate with each other. As a result, relationships between a minority of pupils are less well developed.

Relationships, particularly on the primary campus are supported very well when pupils attend the breakfast club. They sit together, chat with friends and reflect on their experiences from the previous day.

Many pupils respond well to motivating reward and sanction policies which help them to self-regulate. However, this is more effective on the primary campus. On the secondary campus, the curriculum and approaches to teaching and learning do not meet the needs of learners well enough. As a result, there are high numbers of unacceptable and inappropriate behaviour incidents which lead to a large number of recorded exclusions.

Pupils benefit from a developing range of educational visits which seek to enhance the well-being of pupils. This is particularly strong for pupils from the primary campus where most benefitted from experiences including alpaca walking and visits to National Museum Cardiff. These pupils are becoming increasingly aware of their role in their local community and the wider world. For example, pupils in the primary provision have established an effective 'pen pal' link with pupils in Norway. Pupils at Tŷ Afon are beginning to benefit from visits to places of cultural importance such as the Big Pit and also the local gym. This is particularly significant progress considering their high levels of anxiety.

Overall, many pupils are developing an appropriate knowledge and understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles. They can distinguish between healthy and non-healthy choices and about half recognise the importance of physical activity. On the primary campus for example, most eat fruit and drink water during their morning break and learn about the importance of healthy choices and living through the curriculum. Across the school, pupils develop good skills in preparing healthy food such as fruit kebabs and healthy smoothies.

Pupils on the primary campus contribute well to decisions in school that affect them, through their participation in the school council and eco committee. For example, pupils decided on which clothing from a particular era they would wear for their recent celebrations of the Queen's platinum jubilee and have more recently planned an outside forest learning area.

Owing to the Coronavirus pandemic, inspectors will not report pupils' rates of attendance during the academic years 2020-2021 and 2021-2022. Inspectors will, however, consider the school's provision for monitoring and improving attendance as part of inspection area 4.

Teaching and learning experiences

Overall, the school does not provide a broad and balanced curriculum that meets the needs of pupils. The curriculum in the primary campus is suitable and takes into consideration the individual needs of pupils well. This campus is making appropriate progress in planning for the Curriculum for Wales. This approach is supporting pupils to develop creative and thinking skills, for example, when making mythical sea creatures out of clay.

However, there is no meaningful curriculum in place for the secondary campus. Policies and plans for key curriculum areas are not in place and the current timetabling arrangements do not provide the recommended 25 hours of full-time education for pupils. As a result, important subject areas are not routinely taught, for example, there is no delivery of personal and social education (PSE). Arrangements on the secondary campus do not provide pupils with appropriate accreditation opportunities. The range is too limited, and pupils are entered into examinations at inappropriate times of their education. As a result, pupils do not leave school with the skills and knowledge that prepare them for their next stage of learning. This is a significant shortcoming of the school.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the school introduced a suitable online curriculum offer for pupils who receive home tuition. This offer enables pupils to gain

a small range of accreditations. However, due to disruptions to leadership and staffing, a few of these pupils experienced inconsistent access to education over time.

The school offers a suitable range of beneficial activities for pupils to develop their physical skills and emotional well-being as part of the curriculum as well as within a positive reward programme. These include attending a local gym, mountain biking, swimming, trampolining and quad biking. In addition, the school provides a budget for pupils to purchase ice cream from a local shop, which strengthens their numeracy skills and understanding of money and change.

On the secondary campus, a minority of pupils' access education delivered by an external provider as part of their weekly timetable. For those pupils that attend, this offers valuable opportunities to develop practical and work-based skills. Over time a very few pupils progress onto an apprenticeship. However, leaders have limited oversight of the impact of the provision on pupils' learning at this provider. In addition, planning does not allow pupils to access the learning missed at the school when attending these sessions. As a result, these pupils miss important learning opportunities in core subject areas.

Staff at the school develop positive and caring relationships with pupils. Many staff demonstrate a good understanding of pupils' well-being needs which underpins learning. Support staff provide an invaluable role in supporting pupils learning and well-being. They are caring and empathetic and have shown great resilience and determination over a period of significant challenge and uncertainty. However, in part due to the high staff turnover on the secondary campus, not all staff have consistently high expectations of pupils' learning and behaviour.

Around half of staff have a good understanding of pupils' needs and adopt successful teaching strategies to ensure pupils are ready to learn. On the primary campus, this has a clear impact on reducing the number of incidents of challenging behaviour with most pupils showing a reduction throughout their time in school. However, on the secondary campus, significant and ongoing disruption in the staff team has meant many pupils lack opportunities to develop meaningful relationships with important adults which impacts negatively on their behaviour and well-being.

The quality of teaching across the school is too variable. Where teaching is good, staff use questioning effectively to support pupils to recall their prior learning and apply this to new contexts. In these lessons, there is a suitable pace of learning and teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge. For example, when teaching poetry, staff are effective language models for pupils and have good subject knowledge. However, where teaching is less effective, staff lack the appropriate subject knowledge to deliver lessons well, there is limited use of questioning and the pace of the lesson is slow, leading to significant disengagement from pupils.

The quality of teachers' planning across the school is inconsistent. Within the secondary campus it does not systematically reflect the needs of pupils, their individual education plan targets or build progressively on skills over time. This has a significantly negative impact on pupil progress.

There is inconsistent teaching of skills at the school. Where this is suitable, teachers provide engaging learning experiences that develop pupils' creative skills. For example, pupils use recycled materials to make jellyfish mobiles that are proudly displayed in classrooms. Across the school there is an over reliance on worksheets. Generally, these do not provide stimulating and authentic learning experiences for pupils and inhibit pupils' independence and creativity. Pupils are provided with opportunities to read as part of comprehension activities, but there are limited opportunities for pupils to develop a love of reading.

Assessment and feedback methods across the school are too variable. Within the primary campus teachers use baseline assessments of well-being and academic achievement to inform planning and monitor pupil progress. The use of assessment information on the secondary campus is weak. As a result, staff have an insufficient understanding of the progress pupils from this campus make.

Staff across the school provide pupils with generous praise to engage and motivate them in their learning. Where this is effective, feedback moves pupils forward in their learning successfully. However, overall, written feedback is poor and ineffective. As a result, pupils do not know what they need to do to improve.

Annual reports to parents are appropriate and provide useful information on attitudes to learning and progress made by pupils but do not indicate expected levels of progress well enough

Care, support and guidance

Overall, the lack of any routine collection of pupil information is a substantial shortcoming. The school does not possess necessary and valuable information on pupils' learning and well-being before they are placed at the school, this is particularly true of the secondary campus. This impedes the schools' ability to plan for the needs of its pupils. In addition, the school does not consistently take sufficient account of the requirements of pupils' statements of special educational needs. As a result, it is failing to meet its statutory duties to these pupils.

Over time, the school has produced detailed and informative individual learning plans for pupils. However, there is little evidence that these are used routinely across the school to adapt provision and approaches to meet the needs of pupils.

The school has employed a range of baseline assessments such as health and well-being, reading, spelling and numeracy which are used on entry to the school. However, the school does not use this information well enough, and approaches are not consistent across the campuses. In addition, teaching staff do not have ready access to the baseline assessment information for pupils. As a result, approaches to support pupils are not always specific enough to meet their individual needs. In addition, the school cannot demonstrate well enough the progress that pupils make across all aspects of the curriculum including their social and well-being skills.

Overall provision to support the well-being, social skills, literacy and numeracy needs of pupils is too variable and approaches to evaluating impact on pupils is under-developed. As a result, the school cannot demonstrate the impact of approaches on the progress made by pupils.

Staff on the primary campus successfully support parents in developing their understanding of the impact that trauma has on their child and modelling how to develop reading skills. There are well developed plans for a family engagement day at a local park.

The school has recently re-established links with Careers Wales to provide independent careers advice and guidance for Year 11 pupils. However, there are no secure transition plans in place for the current cohort of pupils, all of whom are due to leave the school in the current academic year. This is a significant shortcoming and impacts on pupils' progression into further education, training or employment when they leave the school.

The school does not have a consistent plan for supporting pupils in their transition from one campus to the other. At the time of the inspection, pupils from Year 7 remained on the primary campus due to health and safety concerns on the secondary campus.

Overall, on the secondary campus there are limited structured activities for pupils to engage with, particularly on arrival to the school, during break and at lunch times. As a result, a significant minority of pupils become disengaged quickly and their behaviour rapidly deteriorates. They become verbally abusive to one another and staff. Many staff do what they can to "talk pupils down", however the lack of overall structure has a substantial detrimental impact on pupils. Disruption to and within lessons is commonplace. The extent to which the secondary campus provides positive learning experiences for all pupils is limited.

Important school policies do not reflect recent changes within the school such as the implementation of new software to monitor behaviour and concerns. As a result, they lack clarity and guidance for staff on how to log concerns or incidents within the school. In addition, there is no guidance about how information on incidents across the school is used to promote safeguarding and acceptable behaviour.

Procedures for monitoring attendance across the school are inconsistent. Although the school retains statutory information on attendance of individual pupils, overall patterns in attendance and identification of issues are not analysed well enough.

Nearly all staff are fully aware of safeguarding procedures and believe that pupils are safe, however a few non-teaching staff are not sufficiently aware of procedures for safeguarding pupils. Procedures for ensuring staff have suitable training to safeguard children are not robust enough. In addition, leaders cannot provide evidence that mandatory safeguarding training, such as about Prevent, have taken place.

From the limited data available, the majority of the primary-aged pupils placed at the school on temporary placements have been subsequently placed in other specialist settings. This raises serious questions around the appropriateness of their placement at the River Centre

Leadership and management

Over the past 18 months, the school has experienced significant and wholesale changes in governance, leadership, teaching and support. Just under half the current

staff, including senior leaders, are on temporary contracts or in positions where they are undertaking additional responsibilities for colleagues that have resigned or are absent from work. The culmination of events over this period has had a very marked negative impact on the learning experiences, well-being, and outcomes for pupils, particularly those on the secondary campus. The situation has been unsettling for all staff.

Throughout this period of uncertainty, the school has been supported by three interim executive headteachers, each bringing their own perspectives on the work of the school. The current interim executive headteacher has worked very closely with the acting deputy headteacher and a senior leader from a local secondary school. Together they have determined appropriate priorities for the school. Staff and governors have been included in this process. School priorities largely focus on operational considerations for example, ensuring the safety of pupils and developing a safeguarding culture, developing staff understanding of trauma in children, and improving the quality of the learning environment, particularly on the secondary campus. Staff are beginning to feel more confident and secure with the current leadership team.

Several key policies are not in place, and this seriously impedes the ability of the school to make provision. Again, this impacts negatively on provision, including the learning experiences, well-being and outcomes for pupils. In addition, concerns relating to safeguarding arrangements were brought to the attention of school leaders during the inspection.

The interim executive headteacher has been gently and appropriately introducing support from his colleagues at a local school. However, it is too early to judge the impact of this.

Despite being established as a school in January 2018, the campuses largely operate separately. There are significant and substantial differences in processes and procedures across the school. The routine collection, collation and analysis of key school performance information is extremely under-developed, and this seriously impedes the ability of leaders to both report to, and be held accountable by, the governing body. Overall, the lack of systems and shared understanding of key roles has meant that the school is left with significant knowledge gaps when staff either leave their post or are absent. For example, the school is unable to account well enough for the progress that pupils make, particularly those that attend the secondary campus.

Formalised arrangements to value the contributions that individual staff make and plan for their professional learning are inconsistent and underdeveloped. Overall, the school does not comply with its statutory duty to undertake performance management of teachers. Teachers on the primary campus benefit from performance management but this arrangement is not in place for teachers on the secondary campus. There are no arrangements in place for performance management of support staff, yet around 70% of staff employed at the school are in support roles.

The school now benefits from governors that are highly experienced and able to offer extremely well-placed support and challenge on a range of strategic and practical matters. Governors are committed to the school and passionate about improving

provision. They accept that the school needs to make considerable improvements to achieve this and have been actively engaged with the current interim leadership team and staff in developing a clearer, shared understanding of the function and role of the school. However, it is difficult to judge how effective governors have been in both their support and challenge to leaders as minutes of historical governing body meetings have been recently amended. Neither governors nor staff fully understand their role or the purpose of the school when it comes to reintegrating pupils into either other specialist settings, such as special schools, or mainstream schools.

Governors do not comply with their statutory duty to provide annual reports to parents. Neither do they publish or understand how grants such as the pupil development grant are used.

Overall, the governance and leadership at the school has failed to deliver an education that meets the needs of pupils

Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent/carer and pupil questionnaires and consider the views of teachers and the governing body through their questionnaire responses

During an inspection, inspectors normally:

- hold a meeting with parents/carers to hear their views on the school and its effectiveness
- meet the headteacher, governors, senior and middle leaders (where appropriate) and individual teachers to evaluate the impact of the school's work
- meet pupils to discuss their work, to listen to them read and to gain their views about various aspects of their school
- meet groups of pupils in leadership roles, such as representatives from the school council and eco-committee
- visit a broad sample of classes, including learning support groups and undertake a variety of learning walks to observe pupils learning and to see staff teaching in a range of settings, including classrooms, support groups and in outdoor areas
- where appropriate, visit the specialist resource base within the school to see pupils' learning
- observe and speak to pupils at lunch and break times and at a sample of after-school clubs, where appropriate
- attend assemblies and daily acts of collective worship
- look closely at the school's self-evaluation processes
- consider the school's improvement plan and look at evidence to show how well the school has taken forward planned improvements
- scrutinise a range of school documents, including information on pupil assessment and progress, records of meetings of staff and the governing body, information on pupils' well-being, including the safeguarding of pupils, and records of staff training and professional development

After the on-site inspection and before the publication of the report, Estyn:

- review the findings of the inspection alongside the supporting evidence from the inspection team in order to validate, moderate and ensure the quality of the inspection

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.wales)

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

Publication Section

Estyn

Anchor Court, Keen Road

Cardiff

CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: www.estyn.gov.wales

© Crown Copyright 2022: This report may be re used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified.

Publication date: 12/09/2022

This page is intentionally left blank



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

Georgetown C.P. School

**Oakfield Road
Tredegar
Blaenau Gwent
NP22 4LJ**

Date of inspection: June 2022

by

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education
and Training in Wales**

About Georgetown C.P. School

Name of provider	Georgetown C.P. School
Local authority	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	464
Pupils of statutory school age	329
Number in nursery classes	74
Percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average <i>(The national percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average in the primary sector is 21.3%)</i>	14.4%
Percentage of pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a) <i>(The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in the primary sector is 22.2%)</i>	10.6%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	3.6%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	1.5%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2017
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	
Start date of inspection	06/06/2022
The percentage of pupils currently eligible for free school meals is 19.0%.	

Data reported is sourced from the latest available Pupil Level Annual School Census. These figures may be slightly different to those observed during the inspection.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website:
mylocalschool.gov.wales

- (a) The term 'additional learning needs' is being used to describe those pupils on the SEN/ALN register of the school.

Overview

Georgetown Community Primary School is a happy school, where staff, governors, parents and pupils all work together to create a safe and stimulating environment for learning. Pupils' well-being is at the heart of the school's work. Leaders have been very successful in improving the indoor and outdoor spaces to support pupils' emotional and social needs, as well as their physical skills, which are very good. This has been particularly important following the pandemic.

Through exciting learning activities, staff often engage and inspire pupils to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding well. Teachers make good use of the local area to help pupils to learn about their heritage, to think about issues that affect their community and to prepare them for the world of work. Most pupils make strong progress in listening, speaking and numeracy, including those who are vulnerable and have additional learning needs. From a young age, they become chatty, independent learners who collaborate well and take care of each other. By the time they leave Year 6, nearly all pupils have outstanding digital skills that support their learning across the curriculum. Their writing, however, is underdeveloped.

The headteacher and her deputy provide strong leadership for the school. They work together effectively, providing support and guidance to staff and parents through a time of great change and challenge in schools. There is a strong culture of trust within the school community. Parents know that leaders and governors make decisions in the best interests of their children. The current leadership team is fairly new but it has identified most of the important areas of the school's work that it needs to improve. This includes how teachers and pupils use assessment effectively to move learning forward. In general, the school's improvement processes do not focus precisely enough on identifying what impact its actions have had on pupils' progress and skills' development.

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that self-evaluation processes identify the aspects of teaching and learning most in need of development, and focus precisely on the difference actions make to pupils' progress and skills
- R2 Improve older pupils' standards of writing
- R3 Improve teachers' understanding of effective classroom assessment, including feedback, so that they can evaluate pupils' progress, and identify how best to support their next steps in learning

What happens next

The school will draw up an action plan to address the recommendations from the inspection.

Estyn will invite the school to prepare a case study on its work in relation to how it has developed the indoor and outdoor environment to improve pupils' well-being and learning, for dissemination on Estyn's website.

Main evaluation

Learning

During their time at Georgetown Primary School, many pupils, including the vulnerable and those with additional learning needs, thrive. They make strong progress in learning from their starting points, particularly in developing their speaking, digital and physical skills. Since returning to school following the disruption of the pandemic, pupils' development and application of their knowledge, understanding and skills across most areas of the curriculum is progressing well.

A few pupils start school with lower-than-expected communication skills and relatively poor personal and social skills. Due to the exceptional quality of the provision offered to the youngest children, most quickly become independent, as staff engage them in active play and learning experiences that inspire them. For example, they concentrate for a long time when cutting up a fish to explore its texture and when making sandwiches for a picnic. They are curious to explore their environment and staff react effectively to their changing interests.

By reception, most pupils instigate conversations with friends and adults, expressing their likes and their wonder at events, such as when a very important person came to visit for the school's recent Jubilee celebrations. As pupils move through the school, their listening and speaking skills improve very well. Nearly all express themselves confidently, and they clearly articulate their enjoyment of school. By the time they reach Year 6, many discuss challenging ethical issues maturely. They present strong opinions but agree or disagree respectfully with other pupils' views. Nearly all pupils greet people in Welsh confidently. They are proud of their heritage and many pupils across the school enjoy and participate eagerly in Welsh lessons. In the younger years, they make strong progress in the development of their communication skills in Welsh. For example, many pupils in Year 2 provide extended responses to a wide range of questions. However, the pandemic has hampered the confidence of a minority of older pupils and they struggle to sustain a conversation.

Overall, younger pupils' reading skills develop well. Nursery and reception pupils show an interest in books and enjoy listening to stories, joining in enthusiastically with rhymes and actions. By Year 1, many acquire a good understanding of the relationship between letters and sounds, and how sounds combine to form words. As pupils move through the school, they read with increasing fluency and understanding, although a minority of older pupils do not develop an effective range of strategies to support their reading of challenging words and texts. This hinders their ability to infer or deduce meaning when reading independently.

From a young age, most pupils show enthusiasm for writing when experimenting with mark making. They go on to write well, expressing their ideas with increasing freedom and independence. Older pupils develop a sound understanding of the characteristics of different genres and apply this knowledge appropriately in their work across the curriculum, for example to write arguments for and against keeping animals in zoos as part of their topic work. However, older pupils' writing often lacks craft, and for many, their written work does not reflect the quality of their spoken language. As a result, their ability to extend their ideas when writing for different

purposes, to redraft their work to improve its quality, and to use a range of punctuation, is underdeveloped. Due to the pandemic, a minority of pupils' spelling skills are not secure, and staff have recognised the need to improve these. Pupils' presentation of their work is variable and does not always show the pride they have in their learning.

Most pupils develop strong mathematical skills and apply these well to problem-solving in authentic learning contexts. For example, Year 2 pupils use containers to measure capacity accurately to the nearest 25 millilitres, when investigating how the amount of water in a bottle affects the pitch of the sound it makes when they blow into it. In Year 3, pupils use number skills competently to re-calculate the cost of buying items from a sandwich bar menu, when prices are reduced. By the time pupils reach the end of their time in the school, most apply their well-developed numeracy skills confidently in a range of creative situations. For instance, Year 6, pupils use bearings to track the route of a stranger washed up on a fictional island, using a computer-generated three-dimensional environment they have developed themselves.

By Year 6, pupils' digital skills are a strength. From an early age, they use digital cameras to record their learning experiences. Younger pupils log into mobile devices and access a range of programs independently to support their learning. Older pupils create databases, write simple codes to program a robot and use 'green screen' technology to create high-quality multi-media presentations linked to their topic work. Year 6 pupils apply their knowledge of software development to create an innovative 'app' about their local area. They use their digital skills ably to track where people are making downloads of this across the world.

Nearly all pupils develop their physical skills very well. Young pupils develop their hand-to-eye coordination, fine motor skills and balance effectively. They ride two and three-wheeled vehicles and climb using hand grips and foot holds confidently. Older pupils move nimbly and show controlled coordination, such as the Year 4 pupils who are able to side step at speed, and repeatedly bend to pick up, move and place down cones from one point to another during an outdoor game.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Pupils in Georgetown are proud of their school. They feel safe and valued, and enjoy a strong sense of belonging. This helps them to develop as confident individuals who, from a young age, care for each other. Nearly all pupils are chatty, welcoming and courteous. They are confident and keen to share their learning experiences with visitors. Pupils trust leaders and staff to do their best for them and they appreciate the experiences and support they provide. Following the disruption to their learning caused by the pandemic, most pupils have successfully adapted to school life again.

Pupils are comfortable to share their thoughts and feelings with adults in the many supportive well-being spaces the school has created. Many pupils use the cleverly adapted spaces in their classrooms for individual reflection time, which has a positive impact on their well-being. Younger children engage well with the readily available resources that help them with specific concerns. Older children talk positively about how the recently developed class gardens create opportunities for high-quality collaborative work, as well as quiet time, which benefits their emotional and physical

health. Pupils enthusiastically discuss the well-being opportunities that teachers provide, such as small group support, where they learn about positive relationships and how to manage their feelings. They also enjoy listening to the school's popular radio station during break and lunchtimes, while they relax in the outdoors.

Pupils relish the varied opportunities to undertake a range of leadership roles that allow them to tackle issues that affect their community and influence school decisions. For example, the 'Heddlu Bach' pupil group works closely with local police officers to monitor traffic and parking where pupils cross the road between the school's two sites. Pupils remind drivers of how they should behave to keep pedestrians safe and provide valuable updates for parents and governors. Notably, the pupil council has strongly influenced the development of the school's behaviour policy. Pupils have a mature understanding of its value in supporting the school rules, rewards and sanctions that they have developed themselves. Because of this high level of ownership, most pupils' behaviour across the school is excellent. This has a positive effect on their ability to engage and concentrate on their learning. Pupils understand their rights and feel strongly about fairness and equity.

There is an overwhelming feeling of positivity towards learning in the school and most pupils engage enthusiastically with their tasks. Nearly all pupils have well-developed independent learning skills. They sustain concentration from an early age and focus well when completing tasks alone or collaboratively. Although older pupils make occasional improvements to their work during lessons, for example to correct spellings or punctuation, they do not have a secure enough understanding of their next steps in learning.

Older pupils develop their creative and entrepreneurial skills exceptionally well as part of exciting business projects where they design, produce and sell highly professional items to the public. As well as developing their knowledge of the world of work, this has a positive impact on pupils' team working and budget management skills. Most pupils are confident individuals who participate keenly in the extra-curricular sports activities that the school has recently re-introduced. They enjoy making healthy meals and drinks as part of their curriculum experiences. Nearly all make healthy choices at snack and lunchtimes, explaining why a balanced diet is important. Most pupils have a strong understanding of how to keep themselves safe online.

Owing to the coronavirus pandemic, inspectors will not report pupils' rates of attendance during the academic years 2020-2021 and 2021-2022. Inspectors will, however, consider the school's provision for monitoring and improving attendance as part of inspection area 4.

Teaching and learning experiences

The school has established appropriate mixed-phase teams to consider how best to provide pupils with stimulating learning experiences across the areas of learning and experience as it introduces a Curriculum for Wales. This whole-school approach to planning has improved teachers' understanding of curriculum design and informed their collaboration with local schools about how best to progress pupils' skills and behaviours for learning. To broaden pupils' interests, develop their wider skills and support them towards meeting the four curriculum purposes, staff, parents and pupils

have identified ten common learning opportunities that every pupil should experience in Georgetown.

The school has worked highly successfully to develop the learning environment and support the provision for skills through authentic learning experiences. Staff use outdoor areas for younger children very effectively to stimulate pupils' engagement in their learning. For instance, the youngest pupils develop skills in collaboration and problem-solving as they recreate their own beach in the outdoors. Throughout the school, staff maximise the use of indoor spaces to promote pupil learning. For example, they use corridor space to create a role play doctor's surgery and provide breakout areas for pupils to work independently, with access to a wide range of useful resources that help them to develop their digital and communication skills.

Teachers' use of immersion days at the start of each curriculum topic has been a valuable tool in engaging pupils in their learning and developing a wide range of skills. For instance, after meeting with local employers, Year 5 pupils set up their own business to create and sell scented wax melts. This real-life context was effective in developing pupils' cross-curricular skills, as well as the skills of creativity, innovation, planning and organising, that underpin the four purposes. In addition, staff use visits successfully to support pupils' understanding of different areas of learning and experience, as well as the development of their entrepreneurial skills. After visiting the nearby cenotaph as part of their humanities topic, older pupils successfully applied for funding to create their own Georgetown World War One memorial garden, which is highly valued by the local community.

The school provides well-planned opportunities for pupils to develop their listening, speaking and numeracy skills in meaningful contexts across the curriculum. These build coherently on pupils' existing knowledge and skills. Provision for the development of their digital skills is particularly strong. For instance, older pupils have developed apps combining digital and literacy skills successfully to provide information on the history of the local area. The school has made positive steps in improving the teaching of reading so that pupils decode words accurately and read with expression and fluency. In general, provision for the development of pupils' advanced reading skills, and the creation of a culture of reading for enjoyment, is at an earlier stage of development. Currently, planning for the teaching of writing does not ensure that pupils develop their skills well enough.

Teachers use daily Welsh language lessons and informal situations to promote the benefits of being multilingual to pupils. In the best instances, Welsh lessons help pupils to become secure in using language patterns to talk about themselves. Teachers in Key Stage 2 recognise that pupils' confidence has diminished as a result of the pandemic and are taking suitable steps to consolidate previous language learning.

Nearly all teachers and support staff manage pupils' behaviour very well. All staff show care and respect for pupils which has a positive impact on their wellbeing and engagement in learning. In most cases, there is a clear focus for pupils' learning. Pupils benefit from the strong subject knowledge that most teachers have and, in a few instances, staff develop pupils' knowledge and understanding particularly well. For example, older pupils learn about acids and bases, and apply this knowledge as part of a challenge to create invisible ink within an imaginative scenario linked to a

picture book they are reading. Most staff make effective use of questioning to promote pupils' thinking and reasoning skills, such as when discussing the challenging issues of migration, xenophobia and human rights as part of their cross-curricular work. When pupils need extra help, they often benefit from learning assistants' high-quality support. However, teachers do not always plan to meet the needs of all pupils well enough. This means, on occasions, activities are either too easy or difficult for pupils, and this limits the progress that they make.

Teachers provide worthwhile opportunities for pupils to use success criteria to assess their own and others' work. They use suitable methods to provide feedback to pupils on their day-to-day learning and, in the best examples, they offer useful guidance on how pupils can improve the quality of their work. However, too often feedback does not focus well enough on helping pupils to move forward in their learning. Opportunities for pupils to respond to feedback are inconsistent and, as a result, pupils are unclear about their next steps.

Care, support and guidance

The quality of care, support and guidance of pupils is a strength of the school. It adapted sensitively to varying circumstances throughout the pandemic to provide highly effective support for children and their families. There remains a strong emphasis on securing high levels of well-being for pupils since their return to school, with leaders prioritising support for their emotional and physical health as part of the school's strategic plans.

There is high-quality provision to support pupils' social and emotional well-being. For instance, staff have developed calm spaces and support areas in classrooms and around the school, to help children experiencing personal challenges. They understand each pupil's needs and individual circumstances well. Skilful learning assistants use a range of well-designed intervention activities to provide effective enhanced support to meet pupils' needs. Teachers and leaders track the progress of these pupils effectively to ensure they engage successfully in all aspects of school life. The school has developed a specialist programme which provides outstanding support for young carers, allowing them time to support each other, while engaging in fun, enrichment activities that develop their confidence and resilience.

From a very early age pupils are taught how to make healthy food choices. They benefit from extensive opportunities to discuss healthy eating, handle fruit and vegetables, and prepare their own meals as part of carefully planned authentic learning experiences. The school's canteen staff take pride in the nutritious, well-balanced lunches they provide. Pupils have excellent opportunities to develop their physical skills. This includes younger children being able to access a wide range of apparatus to improve their balance, movement and co-ordination. Extra-curricular after-school and lunchtime clubs, including choir, basketball, mindfulness and photography, successfully enable pupils to develop a wide range of skills.

There are many opportunities for pupils to influence their own learning and to make decisions about the school's work. For example, teachers ask pupils to think about aspects of learning they would like to investigate further. Staff encourage parents to discuss these ideas with their children and invite them to share their own suggestions for pupils' topic work too. The pupil leadership groups make valuable contributions to

school improvement planning and help to review the school's progress. They provide purposeful feedback about recent initiatives in whole-school assemblies and present regular updates for governors on their work. Most recently, pupils led the organisation of celebrations for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and organised fundraising events for people affected by the war in Ukraine. This helps to develop all pupils' awareness of world events and supports them to become good citizens, who have empathy and are compassionate towards others.

The school's provision for developing pupils' understanding of Welsh heritage and culture is good. For instance, pupils create expressive art work linked to local places of interest, such as Bedwellty House. They carry out interesting research about the Cholera Cemetery in nearby Cefn Golau and consider the pioneering work of Aneurin Bevan, in the context of the Coronavirus pandemic. This helps them to reflect on the impact significant events and people, in the past and present, have had on their community. During daily acts of collective worship, staff provide pupils with valuable opportunities to think about the values that are important to them and how they apply them in their everyday actions and words. They share carefully-chosen children's books to explore issues of diversity and inclusion with pupils, which help to broaden their understanding of the needs and rights of others.

The school has effective strategies to identify and respond to pupils' additional learning needs. The additional learning needs co-ordinator and staff work closely with pupils and their parents to agree precise learning targets and match learning resources carefully to pupils' individual needs. There are rigorous systems for monitoring and tracking pupils' progress as they move through the school. Where appropriate, the school liaises well with specialist external agencies to provide effective support for pupils and their families.

There is a strong safeguarding culture in the school. Pupils and parents report that incidents of bullying are rare but, when they do occur, leaders and staff take swift action and resolve issues appropriately. The school monitors pupils' attendance effectively and systems to support and challenge low attendance are robust.

Leadership and management

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school, which prioritises pupils' well-being and achievement, to help all be successful in life. Working closely with her deputy, they provide effective and supportive leadership. The strong professional relationships between all staff help to create a happy school for pupils and their families. During the pandemic, leaders set clear expectations for the school community and established systems that supported the continuity of pupils' learning well and helped them to cope with any challenges that affected them. Communication and individualised practical support for families is very effective. Parents speak highly of the commitment leaders and staff have shown to helping them and their children during this difficult time. The partnership between the school and parents is a considerable strength.

Leaders model well the professional values and behaviours that contribute positively to effective collaboration among staff and to developing a whole-school culture of self-improvement. They support the professional learning of all staff effectively to ensure they have an increasingly positive influence on the school's work. For

example, in small teams, staff participate in research-based inquiry to consider further developments in teaching, linked to one of the school's priorities for improvement. Most recently, this has had a positive impact on pupils' learning in mathematics.

The school's professional learning website provides a wealth of useful information to help staff to audit their practice in line with the professional teaching standards, to reflect on their progress and to seek out their own professional learning opportunities. Leaders ensure that all staff, including supply teachers, are very well supported in following their personal career goals. For example, learning support assistants pursue relevant higher qualifications through employment-based study routes and aspiring leaders have opportunities to take on additional responsibilities, as part of the school's flexible leadership structure.

There is a varied calendar of self-evaluation activities that provide leaders with first-hand evidence about the school's work. This secure understanding of the school's strengths and most of its areas for development has helped leaders to improve important aspects of the school, such as the indoor and outdoor learning environment. This has had a notable impact on pupils' well-being and their communication, physical and independent learning skills. The school gathers the opinions of a wide range of stakeholders as part of its approach to self-evaluation and improvement. Since the headteacher's appointment, all staff are involved in monitoring activities. This ensures that everyone feels part of the improvement process. Staff work together well in curriculum teams to review what they have achieved and to consider where and how further developments to provision can be made. However, monitoring and review processes often focus too heavily on aspects of compliance, rather than identifying the impact actions have on pupils' learning, progress and skills' development. In a few cases, the school's evaluations are overly positive and do not identify the areas in greatest need of improvement, for example standards of writing in Key Stage 2.

Governors are supportive, experienced and knowledgeable about the school's work. Prior to the pandemic, they gathered first-hand evidence through activities, such as listening to learners and learning walks, to help them fulfil their role as critical friends. In place of this, they use 'showcase events', where staff and pupils present their recent work to them, online. This enables governors to question pupils and staff about the school's progress towards its improvement goals, including national priorities such as a Curriculum for Wales.

Leaders and governors manage the school's finances well. They monitor expenditure closely and balance short-term and longer-term needs appropriately. They ensure that the pupil development grant is used effectively to benefit eligible pupils, for example by employing skilful support staff that deliver high-quality well-being support. Leaders and governors ensure that the school has robust safeguarding arrangements and they work successfully with the local authority to mitigate risks through careful risk assessment and control measures, for instance by managing safe routes for pupils moving between the school's two sites. Governors ensure that arrangements to promote pupils' healthy eating and drinking are highly effective.

Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent/carer and pupil questionnaires and consider the views of teachers and the governing body through their questionnaire responses

During an inspection, inspectors normally:

- hold a meeting with parents/carers to hear their views on the school and its effectiveness
- meet the headteacher, governors, senior and middle leaders (where appropriate) and individual teachers to evaluate the impact of the school's work
- meet pupils to discuss their work, to listen to them read and to gain their views about various aspects of their school
- meet groups of pupils in leadership roles, such as representatives from the school council and eco-committee
- visit a broad sample of classes, including learning support groups and undertake a variety of learning walks to observe pupils learning and to see staff teaching in a range of settings, including classrooms, support groups and in outdoor areas
- where appropriate, visit the specialist resource base within the school to see pupils' learning
- observe and speak to pupils at lunch and break times and at a sample of after-school clubs, where appropriate
- attend assemblies and daily acts of collective worship
- look closely at the school's self-evaluation processes
- consider the school's improvement plan and look at evidence to show how well the school has taken forward planned improvements
- scrutinise a range of school documents, including information on pupil assessment and progress, records of meetings of staff and the governing body, information on pupils' well-being, including the safeguarding of pupils, and records of staff training and professional development

After the on-site inspection and before the publication of the report, Estyn:

- review the findings of the inspection alongside the supporting evidence from the inspection team in order to validate, moderate and ensure the quality of the inspection

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.wales)

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

Publication Section

Estyn

Anchor Court, Keen Road

Cardiff

CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: www.estyn.gov.wales

© Crown Copyright 2022: This report may be re used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified.

Publication date: 08/08/2022

Agenda Item 12

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 12.10.22

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 13.10.22

Committee: **Executive Committee**
Date of meeting: **26th October 2022**
Report Subject: **Review of Highway Capital Works Programme 2017 – 2022**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr. Helen Cunningham, Deputy Leader / Executive Member
Place and Environment**
Report Submitted by: **Head of Community Services, Clive Rogers**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
23/08/22	25/08/22	11.10.22			26.10.22			

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide members with an update on the previous Highway Capital Works programme 2017 – 2022 and present options around a potential future 2022/23 works programme, subject to the availability of Funding.

2. Scope and Background

Highways Capital Works Programme 2017 – 2022

- 2.1 Building on the success of a previous Highways Capital Works Programme, which improved the nature and condition of the classified network, a programme targeting unclassified/ residential roads was approved by the Authority in 2017.
- 2.2 A capital sum of £2.115million was generated from a 20 year prudential borrow based on revenue contributions of £130k per year.
- 2.3 This Capital Sum has been augmented by Welsh Government Highways Refurbishment grant funding over the period 2017 to 2022 as detailed below:

Funding	Amount
Prudential Borrowing	£2,115,000
WG Grant 2017-2018	£553,000
WG Grant 2018-2019	£380,065
WG Grant 2019-2020	£409,776
WG Grant 2020-2021	£383,000
WG Grant 2021-2022	£602,000
BG Capital Programme Contingency 2021-2022	£310,000
WG Refurbishment Grant 22/23	Nil
Total	£4,752,841

Additionally, Council made available £317,000 from General Reserves in 2021/22 to undertake some additional patching works across all 16 wards within Blaenau Gwent, targeting around 400 sq. metres of highways repairs per ward covering residential roads.

Network

- 2.4 The current gross replacement value of the Highway Network is estimated at £1.093 billion and is the Authority's most valuable material asset.
- 2.5 Un-classified roads make up 74% of the total Highway network [198 miles] and forms the majority of the local road network – residential roads & rear lanes. The majority of reactive maintenance and insurance claims relate to the unclassified network.
- 2.6 Public perception of highways normally relates to the condition of local residential roads [un-classified roads]. Reactive repairs to pot holes and rutted surfacing are costly and the less effective way of maintaining the highway.
- Planned maintenance works as against reactive maintenance are the more cost effective way of maintaining the highway network.
- 2.7 The overall % of poor conditioned Un-classified roads pre-commencement of works was 17%. As a result of the previous four years this figure has been subsequently reduced to 11.4%.
- 2.8 To date 103 Residential highways have been resurfaced along with priority works to the A & B Classified Network.

A schedule of Works completed to date can be found in **Appendix A:**

2018/19 Phase 1 Programme of Works

2019/20 Phase 2 Programme of Works

2020/21 Phase 3 Programme of Works

2021/22 Phase 4 Programme of Works

Highway Capital Works Programme 2022-23 – Priorities & Options

- 2.9 It is appropriate that any capital expenditure made available for highway related improvement works will be expended in line with Authority's Highways Asset Management Plan [HAMP].
- 2.10 In accordance with the HAMP, with its identified priorities & risks to the Blaenau Gwent Highways Network, it is proposed that should funding be made available, any new 2022/23 programme will continue to pay due attention to high priority works to the Network whilst retaining a focus around improving the residential/ unclassified network.
- 2.11 Following on from the previous works programme it is proposed that a priority ranking of residential streets is determined, utilising the assessment matrix criteria that was developed in line with the specific features associated with residential highways as follows:

See **Appendix B:** Highway Assessment Matrix – Residential Roads

See **Appendix C:** Highway Assessment Matrix – Residential Roads: Worked Example

3. Options for recommendation

- 3.1 This report was considered by the Place Scrutiny Committee on 6th September 2022, and the Scrutiny Committee recommended **Option 2b** be considered for approval by the Executive Committee.

3.2 Option 1: No New Highways Capital Works Programme be undertaken in 2022/23 (preferred option)

This is recommended since there is no capital funding currently available or any indication that Wales Government will provide specific capital grants in future.

3.3 In the event that funding does become available the following options are proposed: -

Option 2a: Highest Priority Classified Roads (ranked in order of priority)

Estimated Total Cost £500,000

1. A467 Warm Turn Carriageway Resurfacing	£75k
2. Tafarnaubach Ind Est (Top Road) Resurfacing	£175k
3. Blaenant Ind Est Roundabout Resurfacing	£75k
4. Big Arch / Steelworks Road / GO Resurfacing	£50k
5. A4046 - Waun-Y-Pound Road, Ebbw Vale	£25k
6. College Road, Ebbw Vale	£100k

Option 2b As Option 2a plus 5 worst Residential Roads & Other Highway Related Works – Estimated Total Cost £1,000,000

Residential Roads: 5no priority residential roads £350k

Other Highway Related Works: -

○ Crash Barriers	£50k
○ Road Markings, signs and bollards	£35k
○ Speed Humps	£50k
○ Traffic Order Reviews	£15k

Options 2a & 2b may vary subject to the level of available funding that may be made available.

4. Evidence of how does this topic support the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan

4.1 The report has been developed to provide an update on progress of the current Highway Capital Works programme 2017/22 and supports the key priorities identified in the Corporate Plan namely – “reinvestment in highways and improvements to the residential network”.

5. Implications Against Each Option

5.1 Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)

Option 1- With no capital budget currently available no 2022/23 Highways Capital Programme of Works is proposed.

Option 2a is subject to the potential availability of Capital funding being provided at a later date (£500,000)

Option 2b is subject to the potential availability of Capital funding being provided at a later date (£1,000,000)

5.2 Risk including Mitigating Actions

There are risks associated with not maintaining the highway infrastructure in terms of highway safety and increased insurance claims, increased reactive maintenance and public perception.

5.3 Legal

There are no legal implications associated with this report.

5.4 Human Resources

There are no staffing implications associated with this report.

6. Supporting Evidence

6.1 Performance Information and Data:

The overall % of poor conditioned Un-classified roads pre-commencement of works was 17%. As a result of the previous years investment this figure has been reduced to 11.4%.

6.2 Expected Outcome for the Public

Improved quality of residential and classified highways. Improved safety to highway network.

6.3 Involvement (Consultation, Engagement, Participation)

Where relevant, consultation, engagement and involvement with the public, members and interested parties have been carried out as part of the delivery requirements of the programme.

6.4 Thinking for the long term (forward planning)

Investment in the residential highway network in Blaenau Gwent is identified to ensure sustainability for the future, bringing our roads up to a good standard and improving our highway infrastructure to meet the service requirements of the future.

6.5 Preventative Focus

By investing now will prevent problems getting worse with our infrastructure, thus making prudent decisions to invest now rather than later when the costs are likely to be higher through further deterioration and inflation.

6.6 Collaboration / partnership working

N/A.

6.7 Integration (across service areas)

6.8 Decarbonisation and reducing Carbon Emissions

N/A.

6.9 *Integrated Impact Assessment*

N/A

7. Monitoring Arrangements

7.1 These works are bi-annually reported to Corporate Overview Scrutiny (Contracts over £500k) and Annual Progress report to The Chair and Members of Place Scrutiny.

Background Documents / Electronic Link

Appendix A: 2018 – 2022 Phases 1 - 4 Completed Programmes of Works

Appendix B: Highway Assessment Matrix – Residential Roads

Appendix C: Highway Assessment Matrix – Residential Roads: Worked Example

This page is intentionally left blank

Appendix A

2018/19 Phase 1 Programme of Works

Total Cost: £1,861,800

Summary:

Work Package 1:

- 4 Residential Highways,
- 2 Class A roundabouts
- Total Resurfaced Highway Area/length: 24,125m² / 2.5 miles

Work Package 2:

- 20 Residential Highways:
- Total Resurfaced Highway Area/length: 49,830m² / 5.2 miles

Work Package 3:

- 28 Residential Highways:
- Total Resurfaced Highway Area/length: 33,196m² / 3.5 miles

Other Highway related Works:

- Replaced 7 no. Vehicle containment systems (crash barriers).
- 4no. new bus shelters.
- Civil Parking Enforcement Traffic Order Survey Works

2019/ 20 Phase 2 Programme of Works

Total Cost: £1,254,041

Summary:

Work Package 4:

- 6 Residential Highways
- Total resurfaced Highway Area: 12,918m² / 1.5 miles

Other Related Works:

- Tredegar By-Pass surface dressing
- Six Bells Highway Improvement Traffic Signal Scheme
- Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE)
- Industrial Estates Street Lighting Upgrade
- Development of HAMP, Highway Maintenance Plan & Winter Maintenance Plans [WG/WLGA/CSS[W] collaboration]

2020/21 Phase 3 Programme of Works

Total Cost: £725,000

Summary:

Work Package 5

- 24 residential highways (40,937m² / 5.1 miles)
- Tafarnaubach Ind Est (7000m² / 0.6 miles)
- Llangynidr Road (3650m² / 0.3 miles)
- Total resurfaced highway area: 51,587 / 6.0 miles)

Other Related Works:

- Crash Barriers
- Illuminated Traffic Signs
- Traffic Management Features

2021/22 Phase 4 Programme of Works

Total Cost: £912,000.00

Summary

Work Package 6

Variable Speed Residential Roads: 16 schemes – 1 per Ward

- Southend and Walter Street, Georgetown
- Mount Pleasant Road, Ebbw Vale North
- Institution Terrace, Ebbw Vale South
- Maes-y-Cynw Terrace, Llanhilleth
- Jubilee Road and Graig Road, Six Bells
- Powell Street and High Street (section), Abertillery
- Glanstruth, Blaina
- South and Hereford Street, Beaufort
- Aneurin Crescent, Brynmawr
- King Street, Cwm
- Railway Terrace, Sirhowy
- Stable Lane & Parkville, Tredegar C&W
- School Road, Rassau
- Waunheulog, Nantyglo
- Victoria Street, Cwmtillery
- Rhyd Y Blew Roundabout, Badminton
- Walters Street, Georgetown
- Greenwood Avenue, Tredegar C&W

Other Related Works `

- Blaenant Ind Est Resurfacing
- Refurbishment of Big Arch, Steelworks Road, Ebbw Vale
- Emllyn Avenue & Badminton Grove Speed Humps (EV)
- Safety Signage

Appendix B: Highway Assessment Matrix – Residential Roads

1A Highway Condition (50%) - FRONT / MAIN LANES		
Category / Score	Square Area / Score	Total Score / %
4 (5)	Plus 2000 (5)	10 (50%)
4 (5)	1000 - 2000 (4)	9 (45%)
4 (5)	1000 - 500 (3)	8 (40%)
4 (5)	less than 500 (2)	7 (35%)
3 (4)	Plus 2000 (5)	9 (45%)
3 (4)	1000 - 2000 (4)	8 (40%)
3 (4)	1000 - 500 (3)	7 (35%)
3 (4)	less than 500 (2)	6 (30%)

1B Highway Condition (50%) - REAR LANES x 0.5 = (25%)		
4 (5)	Plus 2000 (5)	10 (25%)
4 (5)	1000 - 2000 (4)	9 (22.5%)
4 (5)	1000 - 500 (3)	8 (20%)
4 (5)	less than 500 (2)	7 (17.5%)
3 (4)	Plus 2000 (5)	9 (22.5%)
3 (4)	1000 - 2000 (4)	8 (20%)
3 (4)	1000 - 500 (3)	7 (17.5%)
3 (4)	less than 500 (2)	6 (15%)

Example: Location A Street	
1A - very poor condition	45%
2 - High Maintenance cost	24%
3 - 3 insurance claims in last 10 years	3%
4 - serves 50 - 99 properties	10%
TOTAL	82%

2 Maintenance Costs (30%)	
Costs over 5 years	Score / %
Plus £10,000	10 (30%)
£9,999 - £5,000	8 (24%)
£4,999 - £3,000	5 (15%)
£2,999 - £1,000	3 (9%)
Less than £1,000	1 (3%)
£0.00	0 (0%)

3 Insurance Claims (10%)	
No. in last 10 years	Score / %
plus 5	10 (10%)
4	8 (8%)
3	5 (5%)
2	3 (3%)
1	1 (1%)
0	0 (0%)

4 Property Location (10%)	
No. of Houses	Score / %
*150 +	10 (10%)
* 100 - 150	8 (8%)
50 TO 99	5 (5%)
20 TO 49	3 (3%)
1 TO 19	1 (1%)
0 / rear access	0 (0%)

* Also linked with other highways and can be combined in to one scheme

Appendix C: Highway Assessment Matrix – Residential Roads: Worked Example

PRUDENTIAL BORROWING SCHEME																															
	(1A) HIGHWAY CONDITION FRONT LANE (50%)					(1B) HIGHWAY CONDITION REAR LANE (25%)					(2) MAINTENANCE COSTS (30%)					(3) No. INSURANCE CLAIMS (10%)					(4) PROPERTY LOCATION (10%)										
	SCORES	10	9	8	7	6	9	8	7	6	5	10	8	5	3	1	0	10	8	5	3	1	0	10	8	5	3	1	0	TOTAL	F %
PERCENTAGE %	50%	45%	40%	35%	30%	25%	23%	20%	18%	15%	30%	24%	15%	9%	3%	0%	10%	8%	5%	3%	1%	0%	10%	8%	5%	3%	1%	0%			
STREET / ROUTE																															
EXAMPLE STREET		X																											30	82%	

Agenda Item 13

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 12.10.22

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 13.10.22

Committee: **Executive Committee**
Date of meeting: **26th October 2022**
Report Subject: **Corporate Safeguarding Performance Report, including Information for Social Services 1st April to 30th June 2022 and Education Summer Term–2022**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr Haydn Trollope, Executive Member People & Social Services**
Cllr Sue Edmunds, Executive Member People & Education
Report Submitted by: **Tanya Evans, Interim Corporate Director of Social Services**
Lynn Phillips, Corporate Director of Education

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
20.09.2022	04.10.22	11.10.22			18.10.22	26.10.22		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with corporate safeguarding performance information and analysis from Children's and Adults Social Services from 1st April 2022 to the 30th June 2022, and the Education summer term. Monitoring and reporting systems are well developed to ensure the Council can track information and evidence that the safeguarding agenda remains a priority for the Local Authority, and to identify Safeguarding areas within the Authority which require further development to improve Safeguarding practices and procedures.
- 1.2 The information provided will enable members to identify safeguarding trends and areas within the Authority that may require further development, to improve safeguarding practice in order to meet the safeguarding needs of the people within Blaenau Gwent.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 The report contains corporate safeguarding information as well as information from social services from 1st April 2022 – 30th June 2022 and education information from 1st April to 31st July 2022.
- 2.2 This report is written in order to provide a greater focus on the safeguarding agenda. It has been agreed that this report should be reported to the People Scrutiny Committee under the new political administration. These safeguarding reports have for many years been presented to a Joint Social Services and Education and Learning (Safeguarding) Scrutiny Committee, however there is strong recognition that safeguarding is everybody's business across the Council and this report should include corporate safeguarding activity as well as specific information in relation to Social Services and Education.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 This report will be considered by the People Scrutiny Committee on 18th October 2022, and any feedback will be reported verbally to the Executive Committee.

Option 1

3.3 Accept the approach and information detailed in the report provided.

Option 2

Consider the information provided and make recommendations on where improvements can be made to the current monitoring processes.

4. **Evidence of how this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

4.1 The Safeguarding agenda is considered as part of the Council's Corporate Strategies that includes:

- Corporate Plan
- Corporate Risk Register
- Safe Reduction of CLA Strategy
- Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy

4.2 The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 places a statutory duty on all local authorities to produce an annual report on the discharge of its social services functions. Social Services work to a number of regional and national safeguarding procedures which can be located on the South East Wales Safeguarding Children's Board website: <http://sewsc.org.uk>

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 ***Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)***

There is no impact on the budget both in the short and long term.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

The Corporate and Directorate Risk registers identify the highest risks for the Social Services Directorate, the Education Directorate as well as Corporate Services. These safeguarding risks are monitored as part of the quarterly report of the Director of Social Services.

5.3 ***Legal***

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act came into force on 6 April 2016. The Act provides the legal framework for improving the well-being of people who need care and support, and carers who need support, and for transforming social services in Wales.

5.4 ***Human Resources***

There are no human resources implications attached to this report.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information**

Performance and data is provided within the report and the accompanying data pack.

6.2 **Corporate Safeguarding information**

6.2.1 **Overview**

The Corporate Safeguarding Leads Group is well established and has maintained a regular core group of senior representatives from across the Council. The Group meets four times per year.

6.2.2 The group consists of all leads/managers in all departments across the Local Authority and is in place to ensure the Council is meeting its corporate safeguarding responsibilities. The group ensures its activity is aligned to the Welsh Government's recently published Corporate Safeguarding Good Practice Guidance. The Group is chaired by the Children's Safeguarding Lead; whilst the chairing responsibilities should be managed by a rota basis it was agreed that following the COVID pandemic Children's Services would continue to chair for an additional twelve-month period.

6.2.3 The Corporate Safeguarding group has been responsible for driving forward the recommendations made following an inspection by Audit Wales. The recommendations are as follows:

1. To Improve corporate leadership and comply with Welsh Government policy on safeguarding
2. Ensure there is a corporate-wide policy on safeguarding covering all council services to provide a clear strategic direction and clear lines of accountability across the Council.
3. Strengthen safe recruitment of staff and volunteers
4. Improve accountability for corporate safeguarding by regularly reporting safeguarding issues and assurances to scrutiny committee(s) against a balanced and council-wide set of performance information
5. Establish a rolling programme of internal audit reviews to undertake systems testing and compliance reviews on the council's safeguarding practices
6. Include safeguarding within the internal audit programme to strengthen accountability and challenge.
7. Ensure the risks associated with safeguarding are considered at both a corporate and service level in developing and agreeing risk management plans across the council.

6.2.4 All these recommendations have been followed up with appropriate action being undertaken. Audit Wales returned to Blaenau Gwent Council in May 2022 to review this work; the Council awaits confirmation of their findings.

6.2.5 As part of the Corporate Safeguarding Leads forward work plan and in line with the recommendations from Audit Wales, each directorate has been requested to complete a Self-Assessment. These assessments have been completed and the Chair of the Corporate Safeguarding Leads group, is currently in the process of collating the findings from the self-assessment

evaluations and will feed back these findings to the next Corporate Safeguarding Leads meeting which is scheduled for October 2022.

6.2.6 In order to achieve regional consistency, the regional Safeguarding Leads have been working on developing a unified Self-Assessment Tool. This is in the final stages of development.

6.2.7 A Corporate Safeguarding Training Framework has been developed and signed by CLT. The Corporate Safeguarding Leads are responsible for ensuring the framework is implemented and the uptake of the mandatory training, across the Council.

6.3 **Referrals to Social Services**

6.3.1 **Figure 1:1** Shows the number of referrals made to social services. The chart demonstrates an increase in referrals between Q3 (1,297), Q4 (1,550) and Q1 (1702). The data indicates no levelling off of referral rates although there was a slight decrease in Q2. However, despite this, referrals remain high across all Q's compared to previous years. The referral rates are currently being monitored and similar pictures have been observed across neighbouring authorities.

6.3.2 **Figure 1.1A** Shows the number of individuals associated with the referrals, the number of individuals who have had 2 or more referrals during the month and the highest number of referrals received by an individual during the month. This is a significant increase compared to the number of referrals in Q3 and Q4. This increase can be attributed to and correlates to the increase in the overall referrals received.

6.3.3 **Figure 1.2:** Shows the source of the referrals. As in previous quarters, police remain the highest referring agency (44% in Q3, 41% in Q4 and 41% in Q1), followed by Health and Education (both with 14%). In relation to Police being the highest referring agency, this has been the position for many years as Gwent Police Policy dictates that all incidents attended where children are present or linked, results in an automatic referral to Children's Services. As part of the Service Manager's forward working plan, this will be reviewed to understand the nature of the referrals. Currently a Detective Sergeant from Gwent Police is co-located in Children's IAA, to quality assure all PPNs received.

6.3.4 **Figure 1.3:** Shows the numbers of referrals received into the department on open cases. During Q4 the number increased to 1554 from 1116 in Q3, with a further increase to 1643 in Q1. This increase in referrals on open cases correlates with the overall increase in referrals generally into Children's Services. Again, this situation continues to be monitored regularly, especially in light of the current staffing crisis.

6.4 **Child Protection**

6.4.1 **Figure 2.2:** Gives a summary of the number of children on the child protection register and the numbers of registrations and deregistration is also included.

There were a total of 64 children on the child protection register in Q4 from 34 families. This was a decrease of 1 child from the previous quarter, but an increase of 5 in the number of families involved. The numbers of children on the child protection register increased by 13 to 77 in Q1 involving 41 families which represents a further increase of 7 in the number of families involved.

Children's services have been using a strengths based model of assessment and intervention and this has proved very successful in how social workers intervene with families. The strengths based model requires assessments to consider what is working well within the family and what matters to families in respect of change. Risk management is a contributing factor in the assessments and is having a very positive outcome when engaging with all family members. Whilst we have seen a small rise in Q2 there is nothing to suggest the LA need to review its practice as the numbers have remained stable throughout all the Q's. This will continue to be monitored closely and any fluctuation trends will be reported into the Service Managers Meetings which are held on a monthly basis.

6.4.2 **Figure 2.3:** shows the categories of abuse linked to children on the Child Protection register over the past year. Neglect and Emotional/Psychological abuse remain the highest category of abuse.

6.4.3 **Figure 2.4:** relates to the age and gender breakdown of children on the child protection register with Males aged 10-15 being the highest (16), followed by females in the 5-9 and 1-4 age brackets (14).

6.5 **Adults Social Services**

6.5.1 **Figure 2.1:** relates to the number of reports received of an 'adult suspected of being at risk'. During the given period the total was 139. During the same period for the previous year (2020/21) there was a total of 146. This evidences that the figures are fairly static year on year with only a very slight increase.

6.5.2 **Figure 2.2:** The number of referrals received within the different categories of abuse or neglect are shown below. As in previous years the most referrals are received for females over the age of 65. The category of abuse most reported is one of neglect and the least reported is sexual which has been the situation for the last three years.

6.5.3 **Figure 2.3:** This relates to the places where the alleged abuse takes place. The majority of referrals were split between the alleged abuse taking place in the person's own home and in Care Home Settings. The alleged perpetrators in these cases could be paid carers going into the home or friends and family, or within a care setting including a health environment - this could be residential, nursing or respite care and again the alleged perpetrators could be paid carers, family and/or other service users.

6.5.4 **Figure 2.4:** Relates to persons alleged to be responsible for the abuse. Paid employees being alleged perpetrators for 26 in quarter 1, 25 being a relative or friend. To progress the referral, consent is needed from the alleged victim, but that consent can be overridden when a paid employee is the alleged

perpetrator. In the domestic abuse cases a high proportion of alleged victims do not consent to the referral progressing through safeguarding. These referrals are submitted to the police for further discussion and action as required.

6.5.5 **Figure 2.5:** Demonstrates that referrals received are from a variety of sources. The majority of the referrals were submitted from provider agencies. This is a trend every year and something to be expected as the provider agencies have a duty to report to social services if they suspect someone they work with is at risk of abuse or neglect. The category marked other includes referrals from DWP, fire and rescue, anonymous referrals and banks.

6.5.6 Safeguarding is an important part of the commissioning function and requires a substantial resource commitment from the Commissioning Team. The Commissioning Team provide crucial information in respect of commissioned services and providers, which contributes to informed decision making in relation to safeguarding cases. A member of the Commissioning Team attends every strategy meeting held for commissioned services to offer advice, guidance and perspective. The Contracts and Commissioning Team Manager and the three Contract Monitoring Officers are all fully trained non-criminal investigators and undertake investigations independently or jointly with colleagues, depending on the complexity and size of the investigation, or with health colleagues if there are nursing issues involved. Whether referrals progress to strategy meetings and/or investigation, or are closed down as inappropriate safeguarding referrals, there is very often some preliminary investigation work and/or recommendations/performance issues with providers to be acted upon and followed up by the Commissioning Team.

6.5.7 **Figure 2.6:** Referrals of domestic abuse are captured as part of the data return for the Welsh Government. During Quarter 1 there were 30 reports received for domestic abuse, 23 female and 7 male.

6.5.8 Each of the five local authorities have different structures in place to respond to concerns about domestic violence, however GWASB partner agencies are represented on local and regional domestic abuse forums. There are strong links between practitioners in safeguarding and domestic abuse fields of practice and domestic abuse training is available and is well attended by all agencies across Gwent in a variety of formats.

6.5.9 **Section 04 Fig 3.1/3.2** – Referrals from Education - The number of referrals to children's services is increasing. It is clear that when schools were re-purposed due to Covid, and closed to the majority of learners, the number of referrals to Children's Services was much lower and decreased significantly during the second lockdown period, though this was not as great as the decrease seen in the first lockdown period from March 2020. During the Summer term, there was a significant increase in referral rates into IAA, higher than the rate seen when schools re-opened to all learners following the first lockdown period. The number of referrals made directly to Families

First from education has remained stable but has not returned to pre-pandemic levels.

6.6 **Education**

- 6.6.1 Members will be aware that Blaenau Gwent Council and the Education Directorate is committed to ensuring that Safeguarding in Education processes are robust, fit for purpose and are being consistently applied. Through this report Scrutiny Members are provided with an overview of the work that is undertaken in ensuring that safeguarding arrangements are managed effectively and fulfil the requirements as set out in the Estyn framework for Local Government Education Services (LGES). This report is the first report that captures the broader data sets which will include training take up, safeguarding arrangements for vulnerable learners etc. Not all data will be reported to each meeting but over the course of the year all data will be reported so that Members can appropriately scrutinise the safeguarding arrangements.
- 6.6.2 The data presented within this written report is done so on an exception basis to bring key aspects of information to Members' attention and as such not all evidence in the supporting performance report will be included in this narrative.
- 6.6.3 **Section 05 Fig 1.1.1/1.1.2** - The Education Directorate risk register identified an increased risk during the period, in part because of the Corporate/Directorate's response to a critical incident in one school.
- 6.6.4 **Section 05 Figure 1.3.1/1.3.2: Safeguarding Policy** - The Local Government Education Services Safeguarding policy is reviewed annually. For 2021-22, all schools adopted the safeguarding policy. Partner agencies working with schools have a Safeguarding Policy in place which is reviewed annually by the Safeguarding in Education Manager.
- 6.6.5 **Section 05 Figure 2.2.1: Keeping Learners Safe audit tool** - In 2021-22, the Keeping Learners Safe audit tool was used as the model in Blaenau Gwent across the school estate for the self-evaluation of safeguarding. All schools completed this audit tool during 2021-22. One school needed a high level of support and work is on-going to support this setting.
- 6.6.6 **Section 05 Figure 3.1.1: Out of County Placements (OOC)** – A quality assurance process is in place to assess the suitability of placement prior to any placement being decided upon. This considers a review of the settings safeguarding policy and latest Estyn/ Ofsted report. Intelligence is shared across regional networks for local authority-maintained settings.
- 6.6.7 As at the Summer term 2022, one independent setting was identified as red i.e. safeguarding quality assurance processes gave cause for concern. The setting is presently not admitting any further pupils. There are two pupils currently in year 11 at this setting. This setting is monitored on a two-weekly basis by the CLA Education Coordinator.
- 6.6.8

Section 05 Figure 4.1.1: DBS Position Statement - There were 22 DBS/EWC escalations throughout the year: 3 for new DBS checks, all of whom were working from home; 2 were EWC registrations and the remaining 17 were for renewal DBS checks. Of these renewals, 5 were for exam invigilators whose services were not required and 3 were for long term absentees from the workplace. Other factors contributing to renewal escalations were ID verification difficulties and longer time taken for the return of renewal certificates.

6.6.9

Section 05 Figure 4.2.1/4.2.2: Training - There has been a very slight decrease in the number of school staff completing the VAWDASV Group 1 online training over 2021-22 from 72% in the Autumn term to 70% in the Summer term. Designated staff are expected to undertake group 2 VAWDASV 'Ask and Act' training and all staff are expected to complete PREVENT training. Attendance at termly meetings for the Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP) in schools has remained stable throughout the year, with attendance during the Summer term at 64%.

6.6.10

Section 05 Figure 5.2.1/5.2.2/5.2.3: Electively Home Educated Pupils Annual visits by LA Officers to EHE pupils provides valuable information regarding the efficiency of the education provided and also allows for intervention if the education being provided is not suitable

6.6.11

The number of children EHE in Blaenau Gwent is below the Welsh Mean average (Figure 5.2.1)

6.6.12

Section 05 Figure 5.2.2 identifies at a secondary level the number of pupils becoming EHE. Two of these schools during the year have recorded 13 pupils each becoming EHE.

6.6.13

Section 05 Figure 5.2.4 When July 22 is compared to March 22 across all year groups there is an increase in pupils becoming EHE. The level of increase rises at key stage 4.

6.6.14

Support is offered to reintegrate pupils back into school or to signpost to other agencies where necessary. Home visits are offered, parents who refuse are few. Neutral venues are offered, and School Attendance Orders are used appropriately. Multi-agency meetings take place for pupils for whom there are concerns.

6.6.15

Section 05 Figure 5.3.1/5.3.2: Children Missing in Education - The Children Missing in Education Policy has been implemented across the local authority and tracking processes are embedded. Figure 5.3.1 identifies an increase in the number of children missing, it has increased from 14 in the autumn term 2021 to 17 in the Summer term 22. For pupils that move into the local authority welfare visits are undertaken and support to complete in-year transfers is given. Where pupils move out of the local authority, links are made with the receiving authority to ensure that the pupils are supported into school.

6.6.16

6.6.17 The data identifies that nearly all children are located, and Common Transfer Files (CTF) files are sent to the destination school when located in the UK. The occasions where their destination has not been confirmed are where children have moved back to their home country.

6.6.18 **Section 05 Figure 5.4.1: Youth Offending Referrals** identifies that during the Summer term 32 children were accessing support from the Youth Offending Service with a range of different interventions being provided. Most of these pupils are in mainstream secondary schools. The Education Welfare service works with schools to try and ensure that pupils receive their full entitlement to education. There is also representation at YOS resettlement and reintegration panel, which discusses pupils with unmet needs.

6.6.19 **Section 05 5.5: Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)**
The Council's Community Safety team chairs a multi-agency Anti-Social Behaviour Case Group. The Group receive referrals about the anti-social behaviour of named individuals from a range of partners, though mainly the Police, which identify concerns about persistent and/or escalating anti-social behaviours in neighbourhoods across Blaenau Gwent. A well-established 4 Strike process is used to deal with the child and each case is assessed on the frequency and severity of the anti-social behaviour and its impact on victims and/or the community.

6.6.20 **Section 05 Figure 5.5.1** shows the number of children identified in the 4-Strike ASB Process, broken down by gender and age. Generally, more males have been involved in anti-social behaviour, this is the same for secondary school age children. The Education Welfare Service ensures that relevant information is shared with schools so that appropriate support can be put in place.

6.6.21 **Section 05 Figure 5.5.2** shows the types of anti-social behaviour incidents identified from children who have received Strike 1 and Strike 2 Warning Letters. Many issues are in relation to being part of a group, nuisance behaviour and setting fires. Schools have been provided with information on the SWFRS Reflect programme which would address fire setting. There is also an ASB policy in schools, which mirrors the 4 strike ASB process in the community.

6.6.22 **Section 05 Figure 5.5.3** shows the number of children identified in each stage of the 4-Strike ASB process. Most individuals do not progress past Strike 1. However, in Q1 there is an escalation in the number of Strike 3 cases, this is attributable to anti-social behaviour in one of our Town Centres. No Strike 4 cases were seen across all Quarters.

6.6.23 **Section 05 Figure 5.6.2: Child Employment** - There were 3 investigations undertaken because of illegal child employment. In the first case the employer was spoken to, and a warning issued. The child did not undertake any further employment. In the other 2 cases parents were spoken to.

Section 05 5.9: Attendance

Officers from the Education Welfare Service are in schools to enable intervention to take place where concerns are raised regarding pupil non-attendance.

6.6.24

Section 05 Figure 5.9.2 identifies that during the Summer term, as a result of poor attendance which fell below 80%, two fixed penalty notices were issued, 6 cases were referred to court via the single justice process and no higher-tier cases were referred directly to court.

6.6.25

Section 05 Figures 5.10.1 to 5.10.3 provides data on exclusion levels. Data is analysed on a regular basis and advice is given to schools to ensure that appropriate interventions/support is in place. Where pupils have been permanently excluded pupils are supported into new educational provision.

6.6.26

Section 05 Figure 5.11.2: Physical Interventions

Systems are in place within the Local Authority to report when Physical Interventions are used in school to manage pupils' behaviour. Following each incident, the school is required to record the incident in a Bound and Numbered book and complete an incident form. The incident form is sent to the Local Authority Education Directorate where it is recorded on a central recording system. During the pandemic, very low rates were reported. The number of incidents has increased over the three terms during 2021-22 and are now similar to pre-pandemic levels. Throughout 2021-22, nearly all physical interventions were reported by the two Special Schools in Blaenau Gwent and in the Summer term, no incidents were reported from mainstream schools.

6.6.27

Section 05 Figure 5.12.1– 5.12.2 Bullying / Racist Incidents

There are established arrangements in place for the reporting of bullying within schools. At the time of writing, the Summer term information is not available for inclusion, but an update can be provided at the committee meeting. The spring term data identified:

- 27 incidents of bullying recorded from 6 schools with all secondary/ all age settings submitting a positive return.
- From the above verbal abuse had the highest rating of incidents (5) followed by racist, homophobic and physical bullying (4).
- 16 schools confirmed that there were no reported bullying incidents.
- This data will be enhanced e.g., the gender of perpetrators and victims, this will improve when using 'MyConcern' safeguarding package now deployed at all our schools.

6.6.28

The three schools who did not complete a return have been supported and reminded of the importance of completing returns. Strategic equality plans continue to be collated on a quarterly basis. Funding has been secured from WG and WLGA for further training to secondary schools on the equality and diversity considerations.

6.6.29

As can be seen from **Fig 5.13.1** very few bullying incidents lead to a pupil being excluded from school.

6.6.30

Section 05 Figure 5.14.1: Peer-on-peer sexual harassment. In response to the Estyn report, 'We don't tell our teachers – experiences of peer-on-peer sexual harassment among secondary school pupils in Wales', a BG action plan has been developed to address the recommendations in the report.

- 6.6.31 **Figures 6.1.1 and 6.1.2 DBS Compliance** evidences all those within the Council who require a DBS and those who do not. Currently over 72% of Council employees require a DBS check. It is evident that this is an area in which we are performing exceptionally well. All directorates are performing at over 98% and those where no DBS is in place, there is a clear escalation process in place to ensure that managers and leads are aware and can take necessary action to resolve. Operational Teams receive fortnightly reports of all DBS applications currently in progress to enable Safeguarding escalation where required.
- 6.6.32 **Figure 6.2.1 VAWDASV Corporate Online Training** evidences that Corporate training has been provided to staff in respect of Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence with 58% of staff having completed the VAWDASV online training.
- 6.6.33 All Wales Safeguarding Training online for staff was included in the online corporate induction module in 2019.
- 6.6.34 In terms of the wider workforce a suitable module is currently being evaluated by the corporate Safeguarding group which has been delayed due to the impact of the pandemic.
- 6.6.35 **Figure 6.4 Risk Register.** All data relating to the Risk Register will continue to be monitored and reviewed.

7. **Expected Outcome for the Public**

Quarterly reporting provides the public with the opportunity to view progress of the Directorates and ensure accountability.

Those children who are assessed to be at risk of harm are protected and safeguarded, and the Local Authority adheres to legislation regarding statutory intervention.

7.1 **Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)**

The development of the Corporate Safeguarding Policy and the Departmental Safeguarding Leads meetings have been reconvened in 2021 and will help to ensure all departments within the Authority are aware of their responsibilities for safeguarding and are kept updated with any emerging issues or trends within safeguarding.

Termly meetings also take place with the Safeguarding Leads from all the schools and monthly meetings take place between the safeguarding team and lead education staff.

The SEWSCB local Safeguarding Network group also reviews the safeguarding information to ensure all partner agencies are as fully aware as possible.

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 looks to build and strengthen on existing arrangements by involving service users, carers and other key partners where possible in helping shape and influence future design of services

7.2 **Thinking for the Long Term (forward planning)**

The Annual Council Reporting Framework (ACRF) enables Social Services and corporate services to plan for the future as spend, risk and performance is continuously reported on and provides a baseline of service provision currently and where it needs to be in the future.

The rigorous self-evaluation processes ensure that key areas for development are identified and then embedded within business planning arrangements.

7.3 **Preventative Focus**

The work undertaken by the Social Services Directorate and the Education Directorate looks to promote a preventative approach to practice through early identification and intervention. Having a proactive rather than reactive approach to service planning can also help with planning resources.

Providing detailed safeguarding information to Scrutiny Committee enables Members to ensure risks are identified and acted on. The Gwent wide Adult Safeguarding Board has developed a new partnership agreement between local authorities and agency partners including Gwent Police, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, Wales Probation Trust, Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations, which sets out a clear and shared vision to ensure all adults in Gwent are safeguarded effectively through partnership working and community engagement.

7.4 **Collaboration / Partnership Working**

The South East Wales Safeguarding Children's Board and its sub groups ensure a multi-agency collaborative approach to safeguarding. Blaenau Gwent fully participates in the Children's and Adults Safeguarding Boards.

Additionally, the Corporate Safeguarding Policy ensures each department has safeguarding leads and these meet together on a quarterly basis looking at safeguarding across the whole Authority. The Leisure Trust lead also participates in this meeting. Throughout the Q's partnership working with the police and statutory partners continued to progress. The Hub model is working well, with multi agency safeguarding meetings happening in a timely manner

7.5 **Integration (across service areas)**

All local authorities and partner agencies work together on safeguarding through the South East Wales Safeguarding Children Board and Gwent wide Adult Safeguarding Board.

The development of the Corporate Safeguarding Policy and the Departmental safeguarding leads meetings helps ensure all departments within the Authority are aware of their responsibilities for safeguarding and are kept updated with any issues/trends within safeguarding.

EqlA

7.6 N/A

Monitoring Arrangements

7.7 The Local Safeguarding Network Group is a subgroup of the South East Wales Safeguarding Children Board and Gwent wide Adult Safeguarding Board. This group is made up of multi-agency representation from within Blaenau Gwent who monitor and review the safeguarding information and performance. This group has direct links with the Youth Forum to ensure the voice of the child is fully considered and heard on safeguarding issues.

The performance of the services across the Council is monitored throughout the financial year from April to March and reported to Scrutiny/Executive Committees.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

*Appendix 1 – BG Safeguarding Data Pack Oct22 Final
Containing data relating to April 2022-June 2022 Social Services, April 2022
– July 2022 for Education*

The following hyperlink provides further details on the governance and Structure: www.gwentsafeguarding.org.uk

This page is intentionally left blank

Safeguarding Performance Report

Social Services

1st April 2022 to
30th June 2022

Education

Summer Term 2022

Corporate Services

1st April 2022 to
30th June 2022



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol

Blaenau Gwent

County Borough Council

00 | Table of Contents

00

Foreword	4
Community Profile - Demographics	5

01

Children's Social Services

Number of referrals received by social services (on new and closed cases)	6
Number of individuals linked to referrals	6
Percentage of referrals received by source	6
Additional Multi Agency Referrals (on open cases)	7
Part 5	

02

Child Protection

Number of children on the Child Protection Register	8
Age Breakdown	8
Categories of Abuse	8

03

Adults' Social Services

Adults suspected of being at risk	9
Categories of abuse or neglect	9
Place alleged abuse took place, alleged Person responsible, Source of Referral	10
Domestic abuse referrals	10

04

Referrals from Education

Contacts by Source (Primary)	11
Contacts by Source (Secondary)	11
Contacts by Source (Other)	11
Referrals from Youth Services	11

00 | Table of Contents

05

Education

Page 509

Regulatory - Risk Register, Estyn Judgements	12
Policy – Compliance, Safeguarding	15
Systems/Quality Assurance – My Concern, Keeping Learners Safe audit tool	16
Independent Settings – Out of County	17
EWC Registrations	18
Safe Workforce – DBS, Training, Professional Concerns, Threat to Staff	19
Vulnerable Children – Pregnant, EHE, Children Missing in Education, Youth Offending, Anti-social behaviour, Child Employment, Child Performances	21
Operation Encompass	22
Attendance	24
Exclusions	31
RPI Incidents	32
Racial, Bullying and Sexual Harassment incidents	33
Sexual Harassment	34
Safer Schools	35
Trips and Visits	36

06

Corporate

DBS Compliance	38
Corporate Training	40
Risk Register	41
Regulatory Proposals	42

Purpose of the report

The Council is committed to creating an environment which enables people to maximise their independence, develop solutions and take an active role in their communities whilst feeling safe and protected.

We believe that all children, adults and young people have the right to be safe from harm and it is a corporate objective to put effective safeguarding arrangements in place to protect people from harm.

We recognise our responsibilities in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk, and this includes the contribution we make to working together with other agencies so that all children and young people reach their full potential and we continue to look after the most vulnerable people in our communities.

The purpose of this report is to provide safeguarding information that is recorded and monitored to ensure that we are indeed delivering this objective.

Monitoring and reporting systems are well-developed to ensure the department is able to track information and evidences that the safeguarding agenda remains a priority for the local authority.

Performance information is collated from Social Services, Organisational Development and Education information systems which identifies activity, demands and trends of data. This includes a number of items that are statutory requirements as part of the Welsh Government Performance Framework.

The report includes information on the following:

- Referrals received and their outcomes
- Children who are being safeguarded and analysis
- Quality assurance arrangements with education settings
- Broader issues within education that impact upon safeguarding
- Corporate progress on recommended proposals for improvement
- DBS Compliance
- Safeguarding Corporate Risk Register

This report will be shared with Senior Management Teams and presented to the Safeguarding Scrutiny Committee for Social Services, Education and Active Living.

00 | Community Profile - Demographics

Community Profile



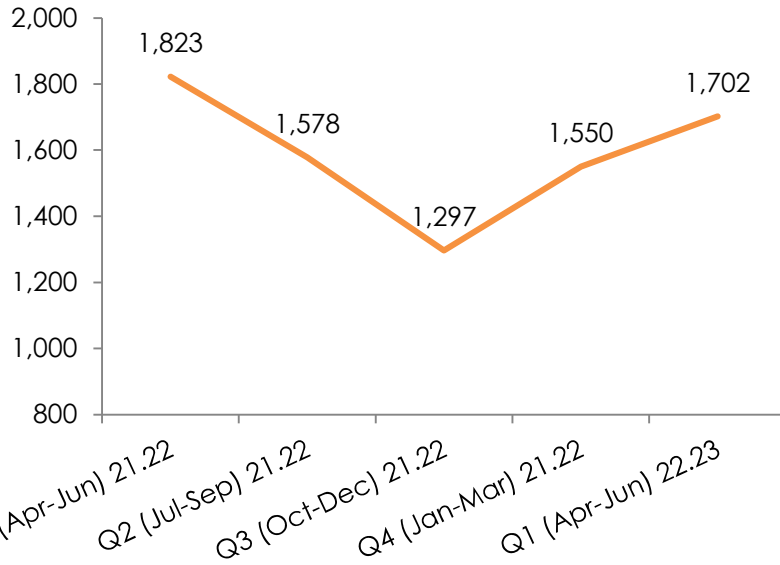
– key benefit claimants August 2014 - 23.2% in Blaenau Gwent compared to all Wales level of 16.4%)

- The total rate of Blaenau Gwent's recorded offence levels was higher than comparative areas. For the year ending December 2014 Police recorded crimes - 76.89 crimes per thousand population in Blaenau Gwent compared to its most similar group of areas average (as defined by the Home Office) of 69.03 per thousand population.
- Total Population: **70,020** Number of 0 – 17 year olds: **13,619** (2020 Population Estimates)
- Number of Open cases to Children's Social Services as at 31st December 20: **1,108**
- Number of pupils attending primary schools: **6,123**
- Number of pupils attending secondary schools: **3,245**

- 45% of Blaenau Gwent's local areas are amongst the top 20% deprived areas in Wales. (Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019)
- The proportion of benefit claimants amongst people of working age was higher in Blaenau Gwent than the proportion across the comparable authorities (working-age client group

01 Children's Social Services Referrals

Fig: 1.1 Number of referrals received by Social Services



Page 512

Fig 1.1a Number of individuals linked to referrals

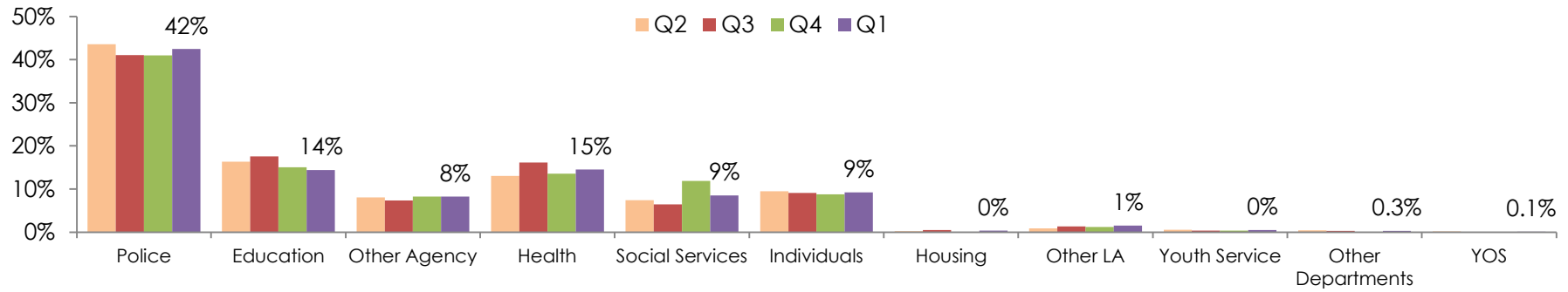
	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22
Referrals	428	495	329	458	501	591	506	655	464
No of Individuals	386	442	330	410	459	525	444	568	481
2+ Referrals	31	42	32	37	33	58	44	51	41
Highest No. of Referrals for an individual	6	6	7	8	5	3	7	8	6

Fig: 1.2 Number and Percentage of Referrals by Source (Q1, Q2, Q3 & Q4)

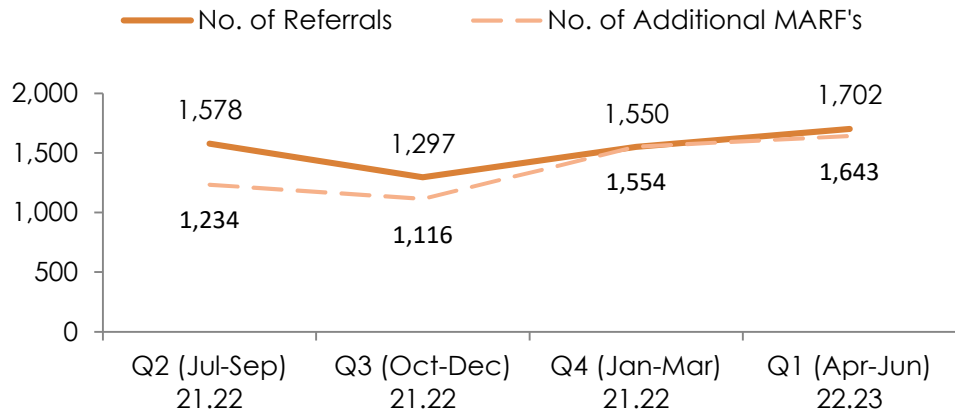
	Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4		Quarter 1	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Police	702	44%	565	44%	636	41%	698	41%
Education	141	9%	202	16%	260	17%	243	14%
Other Agency	148	9%	104	8%	114	7%	140	8%
Health	241	15%	169	13%	250	16%	230	14%
Social Services	124	8%	96	7%	100	6%	202	12%
Individuals	152	10%	123	9%	141	9%	149	9%
Education - Post 16		0.0%	0	0%	12	1%		0.0%
Education - OOC		0.0%	10	1%		0%	13	0.8%
Housing	9	1%	3	0%	7	0%	1	0%
Other LA	40	3%	11	1%	20	1%	20	1%
Youth Service	11	1%	7	1%	5	0%	6	0.4%
Other								
Departments	7	0.4%	5	0%	4	0%	0	0.0%
YOS	3	0.2%	2	0%	1	0%	0	0.0%
Total	1,578	100%	1,297	100%	1,550	100%	1,702	100%

01 | Children's Social Services Referrals

Graph showing the source of referrals and the percentage



Page 513
Fig: 1.3 Multi-agency referral forms (MARF's) received on open cases



03 | Adults' Social Services

Fig 2.1 Children on the Child Protection Register

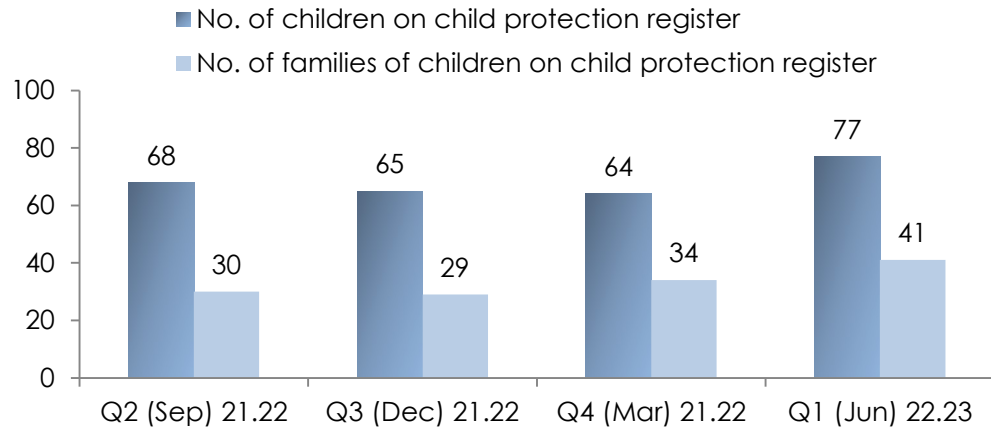


Fig 2.3 Categories of abuse

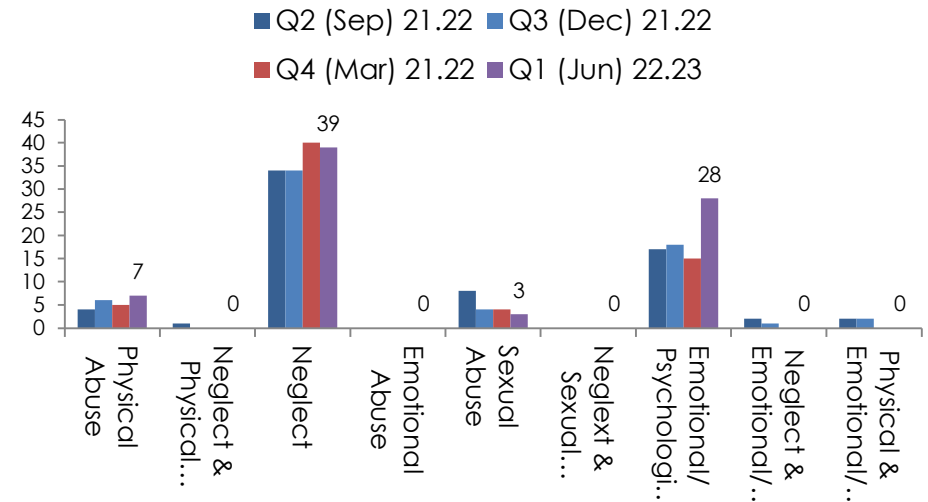


Fig 2.2 Child Protection Register Summary

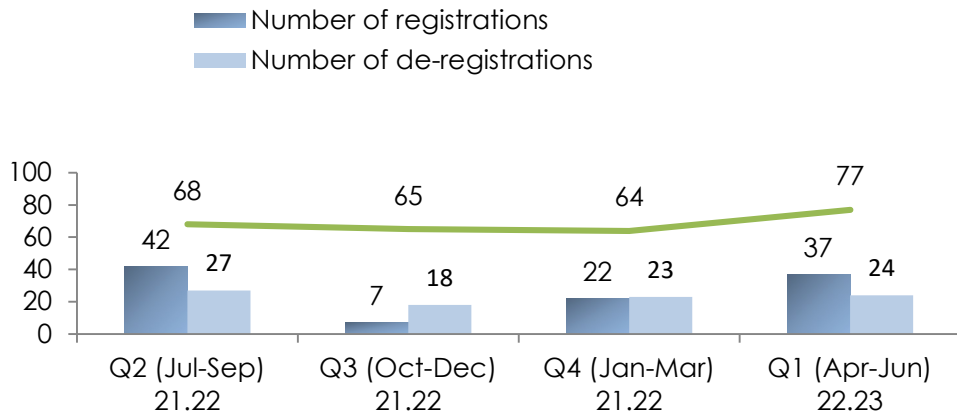
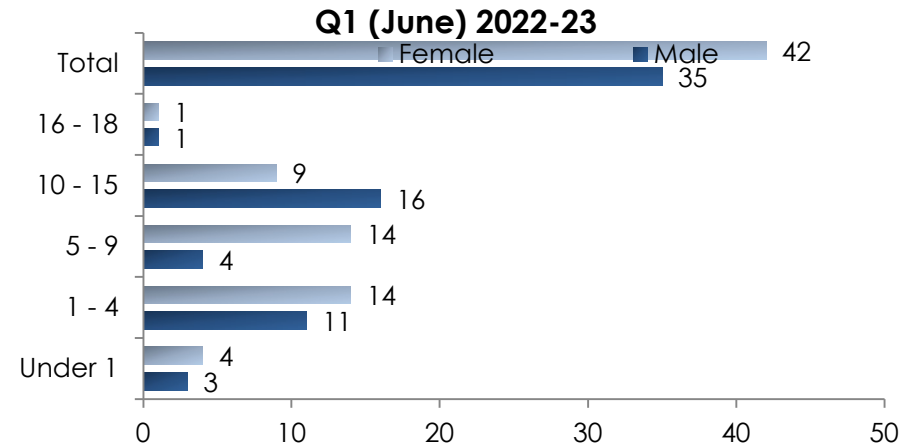


Fig 2.4 Age Breakdown of children on child protection register



03 | Adults' Social Services

Fig 2.1 Adults suspected of being at risk

Number of reports of an adult suspected of being at risk received during the fourth quarter of 2019/2020	1/4/22-30/6/22 (Q1)	139
Number of reports of an adult suspected of being at risk received during 2019/2020	1/4/21-31/3/22	553

Fig 2.2 Categories of abuse or neglect

Category of Abuse	Gender	1/4/22-30/6/22 (Q1)	1/4/22-30/6/22 (Q1)	1/4/21-31/3/22	1/4/21-31/3/22
Physical	Male	3	4	19	22
	Female	8	17	37	55
	Transgender	0	0	0	0
Sexual	Male	0	0	5	1
	Female	2	1	19	7
Emotional/Psychological	Male	1	3	24	7
	Female	6	4	53	23
	Transgender	0	0	0	0
Financial	Male	1	3	22	12
	Female	3	6	19	31
Neglect	Male	7	15	27	52
	Female	7	48	22	96
	Transgender	0	0	0	0
Total	Male	12	25	97	94
	Female	26	76	150	212
	Transgender	0	0	0	0
	Total	38	101	247	306

03 | Adults' Social Services

Fig 2.3 Place alleged abuse/neglect took place

Place alleged abuse	1/4/22-30/6/22 (Q1)	1/4/21-31/3/22
Own Home	48	248
Community	13	59
Care Home Setting	70	219
Health Setting	8	27
Other	0	0
Total	139	553

Fig 2.4 Person alleged responsible

Page 516

Person alleged responsible	Total	Total
	1/4/22-30/6/22 (Q1)	1/4/21-31/3/22
A spouse	8	35
A son or daughter	6	33
A family member who is not a child or spouse	10	47
A professional	26	131
A volunteer or unpaid worker	0	0
A friend	1	31
A neighbour	2	2
Another service user	3	49
Other Person	3	32
Not known	80	193
Total	139	553

Fig 2.5 Source of Referral

Source of Referral	Total	Total
	1/4/22-30/6/22 (Q1)	1/4/21-31/3/22
Self-reported	2	19
Relative / friend	5	32
Local authority	11	13
Police	3	23
Local health board	14	89
Independent hospital	2	0
Ambulance service	3	14
Care regulator	0	9
Provider agency	57	220
Probation	0	2
Third sector	4	35
Advocate	0	0
Education	2	4
Housing	4	11
Internal (Social Worker, Other Team)	17	60
Other	15	22
Total	139	553

Fig 2.6 Domestic abuse referrals

	Age 18-64	Age – 65 and over	Age 18-64	Age – 65 and over
	1/4/22-30/6/22 (Q1)	1/4/22-30/6/22 (Q1)	1/4/21-31/3/22	1/4/21-31/3/22
Male	0	1	2	4
Female	5	0	22	8

04 | Referrals from Education

Fig 3.1 Contacts by Source – Primary School

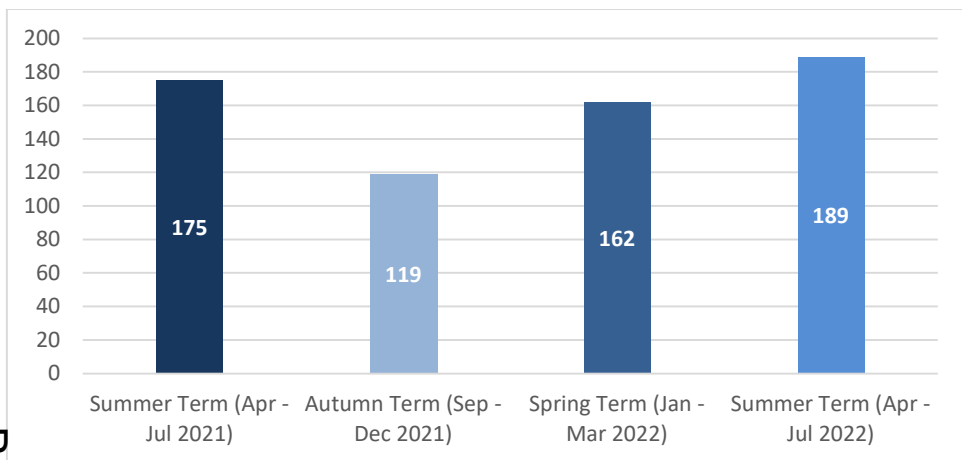


Fig 3.2 Contacts by Source – Secondary School

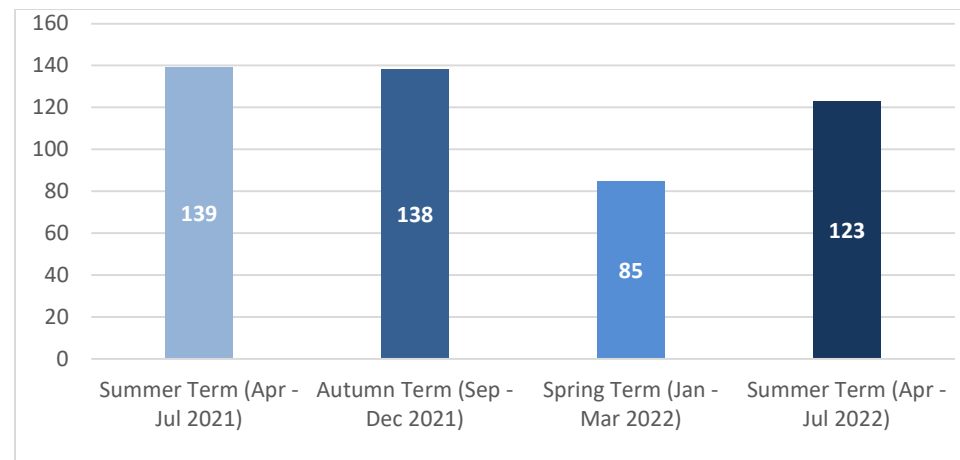


Fig 3.3 Contacts by Source - Other

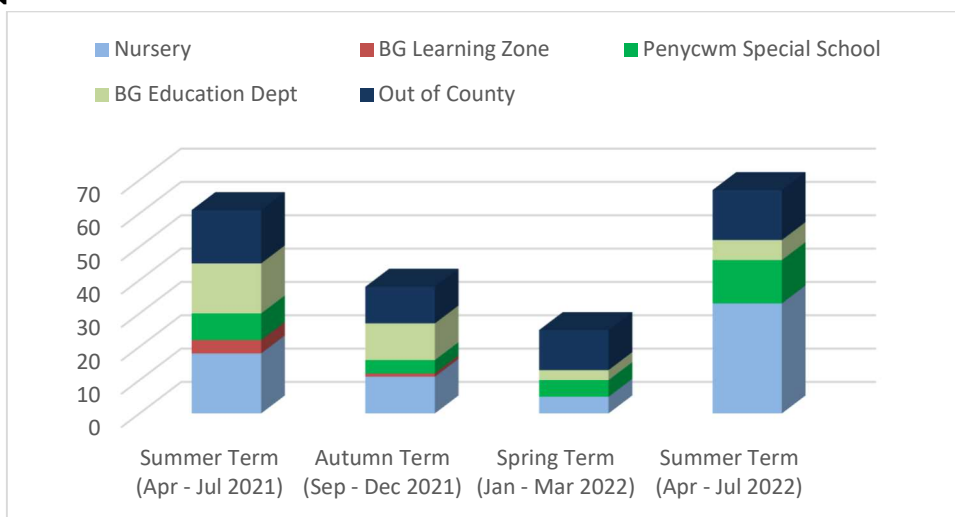
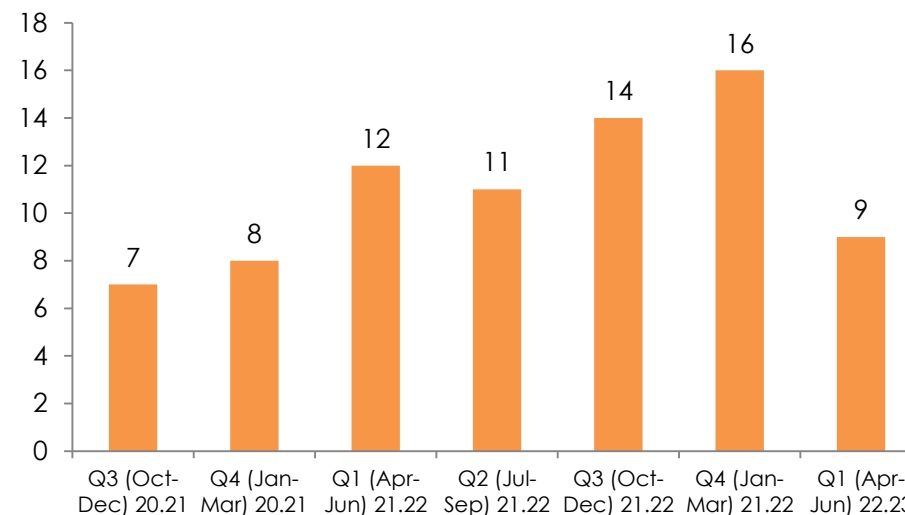


Fig 3.4 Referrals received from Youth Services



1. Regulatory

1.1 Education Directorate Risk

1.1.1 Education Risk Register

Page 518

Ref No.	Description of Risk	Triggers	Consequences	Likelihood	Impact	Status	Current Controls	Likelihood	Impact	Status	Proposed further controls to mitigate / reduce risk	Progress Update
				3	4			C	1			
Directorate Risk EDRR3 Corporate Risk Register CRR4	Safeguarding - Failure to ensure adequate. Safeguarding arrangements are in place for children & young adults in Blaenau Gwent.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate assessments and monitoring Lack of documentation Increasing demand for services Lack of appropriate guidance and training Poor communication between all parties (internal / external) High turnover of staff Varying capacity as a result of the pandemic so routine activities do not take place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential significant harm / loss of life Long term reputational damage and confidence in the Council undermined Increase in complaints / Potential litigation / prosecution External intervention Increased pressure on budgets Low staff morale 	3	4	Critical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint Social Services and Education Scrutiny established Education Designated Lead and Deputy Officer nominated Education Safeguarding Officer established and in post Gwent Adult Safeguarding Board SE Wales Safeguarding Children's Board Safeguarding is a standing item on CMT agenda Lead Executive Member has been identified for having responsibility for safeguarding Senior leadership have received Level 1 training. Programme of training for schools underway. Corporate leads established for each directorate who have been requested to identify staff for Level 1 training (3 dates have already been set) Safeguarding in Education matrix regularly updated *Use of MyConcern software in schools will be used to gather data, monitor positive cases and create consistency across the school estate. The roll-out project team is fully established. 	1	4	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved reporting systems and databases in place Inclusion protocol in place Education Safeguarding Manager close working with School Improvement and Inclusion Close working relationships with Social Services Directorate Youth Services safeguarding arrangements are effective and monitoring is through the corporate arrangements. Half termly meetings to be diarised * DMT receive regular QA reports from Safeguarding in Education Manager 	<p>Quarter 3 and 4 Progress Update October 2021 to March 2022</p> <p>As part of the forthcoming LALI meeting there is a focus on safeguarding and this area will also be considered as part of the WAO review. Within the Spring term the safeguarding matrix the following areas are identified to be continued to be progressed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The take up of safeguarding training by governors; and, DBS compliance to be improved at a governing body level <p>The self-evaluation for 2021/22 is nearing completion and this has highlighted areas for development and these were verbally reported to DMT in May 2022. Arising from this it has been agreed that a paper of safeguarding priorities and fwp of activities to be brought to a future DMT to make the most effective use of the resources available. Analysis of the schools' self-evaluation returns is ongoing and will inform a report to DMT and ultimately to Safeguarding Scrutiny.</p> <p>Moving forward, it is proposed that this Directorate risk will be included in the performance report. The data set for which has been extended to better mirror the Estyn framework.</p> <p>There is only one school that has to date not taken up the opportunity to use MyConcern and a meeting is arranged to discuss this further with the individual school.</p> <p>All schools are now using the 360 degree tool.</p> <p>The Safeguarding in Education Manager is leading on the action plan to respond to Estyns Sexual abuse report and this has three main work streams which are in train.</p> <p>There is a need to update the Directorate's prevent action plan and the Directorate has agreed to establish a Safer School Strategic Board and this first meeting is presently being arranged.</p> <p>The risk has increased from its present level and plans are in place to mitigate this but there is invariably a link to the risks identified in Social Services. In terms of capacity</p> <p>DMT 12th May 2022</p>

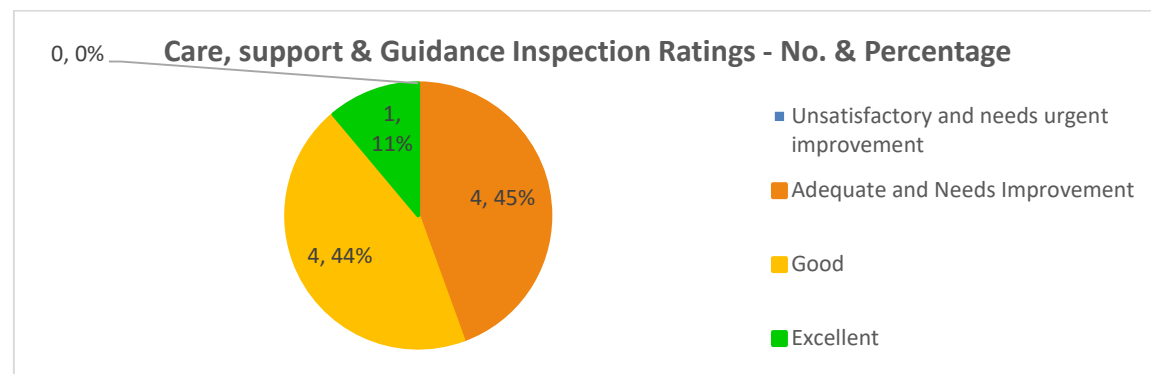
1.2 Estyn

1.2.1 The table below provides an overview of the Estyn judgements for schools inspected under the new arrangements from September 2017 up until **Error! Reference source not found.**

Phase	School#	School	Date report published	Follow-up Activity	Monitoring Visit 1	Standards	Wellbeing and Attitudes to Learning	Teaching and Learning Experiences	Care, Support and Guidance	Leadership and Management	Out of Follow-up Activity
Primary	6772074	Georgetown C.P. School	Jun-22	Action Plan							
Secondary	6775401	Brynmawr Foundation School	Dec-19	SM		Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Adequate	Unsatisfactory	
Primary	6773309	St Mary's CIW Primary School	Mar-19			Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	
Primary	6772310	Rhos y Fedwen Primary**	Feb-17	Estyn Review		Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Jul-18
Primary	6772306	Blaenycwm Primary	May-18			Good	Good	Good	Excellent	Good	
Secondary	6774074	Abertillery Learning Community	01/02/2018 (revisit Jun-19)	SI	SI	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Unsatisfactory	
Primary	6773316	St Joseph's RC Primary	Jan-18			Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	
Primary	6772312	St Illtyd's Primary	01/10/2017 (revisit Mar-19)	Estyn Review		Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Mar-19
Primary	6772309	Glyncoed Primary*	Nov-17			Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	
Primary	6772070	Glanhowy Primary*	Feb-18			Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	

Page 520

1.2.2 Care, Support and Guidance Inspection Ratings



1.3 Policy

1.3.1 Compliance Statements

Partner Agency Safeguarding Policies in Place	Ac Year 21-22
No of Partner Agencies	4
Policies in Place	4
% Compliance	100%

1.3.2 Safeguarding Policies released and Governing Body Compliance

Safeguarding Policy Compliance	21-22
No of Schools in BG	25
Governing Body Compliance	25
% Compliance	100%

2. Systems/Quality Assurance

2.1 My Concern

2.1.1 My Concern Safeguarding Systems in Use

Safeguarding System	No. of Schools Using	% of Schools Using
My Concern	22	81%

2.2 Keeping Learners Safe audit tool

2.2.1 School Returns

	21-22
No of Schools in BG	25
No of Schools who have used the KLS Safeguarding Toolkit to review procedures in the last 12 months?	25
% of Schools who have Reviewed	100%

3. Independent Settings

3.1 Pupils in Out of County Placements - LA and Independent Settings

3.1.1 – Out of County Placements

	Spring 2021	Summer 2021	Autumn 2022	Spring 2022	Summer 2022
LA	15	15	9	9	9
Independent	18	18	10	11	11

3.1.2 Overview of Safeguarding arrangements.

Page 523

Summer term 2022	No of Pupils	Of which are CLA	No of Settings	Green	Amber	Red
Independent	11	5	4	1	2	1
Other LA Maintained Schools	9	4	7	7	0	0

Green – SG QA gives no cause for concern

Amber – SG QA identifies actions required/further clarification

Red – SG QA gives cause for concern

3.2 Education Workforce Council (EWC) Registrations

3.2.1 EWC Registrations on Appointment

	Autumn 2021	Spring 2022	Summer 2022
No. of Incomplete EWC Registrations	5	0	0

4. Safe Workforce

4.1 DBS Position Statement:

4.1.1 New Starter/Rolling Programme DBS Checks Schools

Criteria	Total
Staff requiring a DBS	1263
Staff with a valid DBS	1262

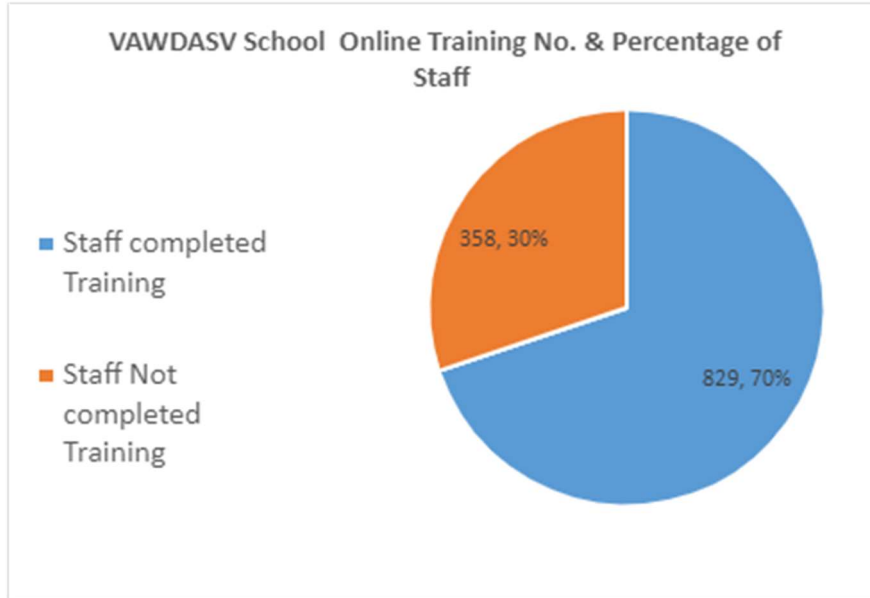
Out of Compliance	Less than 4 weeks		More than 3 months	Total
New Starters currently out of compliance	0		0	0
Rolling Programme currently out of compliance	0		1	1
Totals	0		1	1

Page 525

Appt Comments	Awaiting Certificate		Total	Escalation	
				Chased with Employee	Escalation to Operational Team
Awaiting ID documents	0		1	0	1
	0		1	0	1

4.2 Training

4.2.1 Basic/Enhanced VAWDA SV



4.2.2 Designated Safeguarding Persons (DSP) Meetings

DSP Meetings	Aut 21	Spr 22	Sum 22
No of Schools Represented	16	17	16
% of School represented	64%	68%	64%

4.3 Professional Concerns

4.3.1 Professional Concerns Review

Professional Strat Meetings	Autumn 21	Spring 22	Summer 22
Total Number of PSMs	5	1	3
Number of Substantiated Concerns	2	1	1
% of Substantiated Concerns	40%	100%	33.33%

5. Vulnerable Children and Specific Incidents

5.1 Pregnant Schoolchildren

5.1.1 Numbers by Academic Year

No. by Academic Year	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
No. of Pregnant Schoolchildren*	1	1	2

*As numbers are so small, there are too few to report termly.

5.2 Electively Home Educated Pupils

5.2.1 Total Number of EHE Pupils

Page 528

	PLASC January 2022 No.	PLASC January 2021	PLASC January 2020 No.
Children electively home educated in BG	132	89	70
Children electively home educated in Wales (mean average)	197	180	132

5.2.2 The table below sets out the number of secondary age pupils who have become EHE or who have returned to school from being EHE during the summer, autumn, spring and summer terms.

Month	School 1		School 2		School 3		School 4	
	Out	In	Out	In	Out	In	Out	In
Apl – Jul 2021	3	0	1	0	3	2	3	0
Sept - Dec 2021	4		5	1	6		3	
Jan - Mar 2022	7	2	1		4		0	
Apr - Jul 2022	2	0	5	0	3	0	2	0
Total	16	2	12	1	16	2	8	0

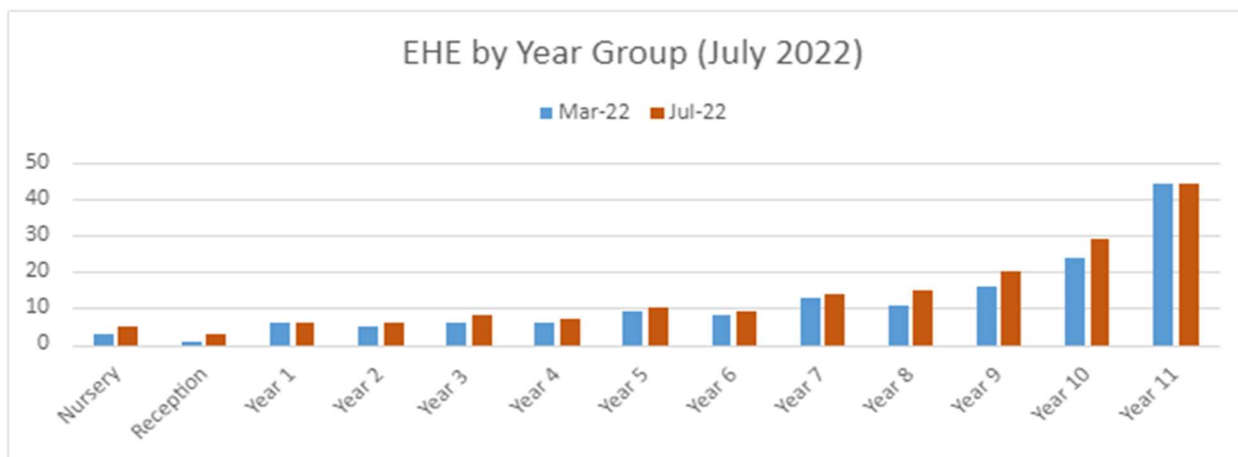
05 | Education

5.2.3 The table below sets out the number of additional pupils who have become EHE or who have returned to school from being EHE during the summer, autumn, spring and summer terms.

Month	Primary		College		Did not transition		Moved into/out of Borough (including BG pupils that were in OOC schools)		School place unavailable		Special School	
	Out	In	Out	In	Out	In	Out	In	Out	In	Out	In
Apl – Jul 2021	7	1			1		6					
Sept - Dec 2021	5	9			1		11				1	
Jan - Mar 2022	2	2					7				1	
Apr - Jul 2022	7	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	0
Total	21	12	0	0	2	0	31	0	0	0	2	

Page 529

5.2.4 EHE Breakdown per year group



*Please note that all year 11 pupils are removed on the last Friday of June when they end compulsory school education.

5.3 Children Missing in Education

5.3.1 Referrals

No. of CMIE Referrals	Autumn 2021	Spring 2022	Summer 2022
CMIE in to BG	3	3	5
CMIE out of BG	11	10	12

5.3.2 Number of Children Missing

	Autumn 2021	Spring 2022	Summer 2022
No. of Children Missing	14	13	17

5.4 Youth Offending Referrals

5.4.1 Number of children accessing the Service

	Autumn 2021	Spring 2022	Summer 2022
No of Schoolchildren accessing YOS	23	34	32

5.4.2 YOS pupil Placement by Setting and Access

	Autumn 2021	Spring 2022	Summer 2022
Access			
FT	14	34	30
PT	3	0	3
Setting			
EHE	0	0	0
Special Schools	5	9	5
Mainstream - Primary	1	4	4
Mainstream - Secondary	11	21	23
Employed	3	0	0
NEET	3	0	0

5.4.3 REACH Interventions

	Autumn 2021	Spring 2022	Summer 2022
Prevention Programme	5	16	19
Community Resolution	12	13	10
Youth Caution	0	1	0
Youth Conditional Caution	1	2	1
Referral Order	2	2	2
Youth Rehabilitation Order	2	0	0
Remanded in Custody	1	0	0
Detained	0	0	0

5.5 Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

Data recorded in Quarters due to the team working through the summer.

5.5.1 Number, Age and Gender of Children Identified and Managed through Community Safety Team

	Q3	Q3	Q3	Q4	Q4	Q4	Q1	Q1	Q1
	21-22	21-22	21-22	21-22	21-22	21-22	22-23	22-23	22-23
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
No. of Schoolchildren Identified and Managed through CS Team	16	10	26	9	6	15	10	4	14

Age of Schoolchildren Identified and Managed through the CS Team	Q3	Q3	Q3	Q4	Q4	Q4	Q1	Q1	Q1
	21-22	21-22	21-22	21-22	21-22	21-22	22-23	22-23	22-23
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
Primary Aged Pupils	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Secondary Pupils Aged 11-14	10	9	19	4	2	6	3	4	7
Secondary Pupils Aged 14-16	4	1	5	5	4	9	7	0	7
Total	16	10	26	9	6	15	10	4	14

5.5.2 Types of ASB Incidents

Incident	Q1 21-22	Q2 21-22	Q3 21-22	Q4 21-22	Q1 22-23
Nuisance behaviour – part of a group	15	28	24	4	3
Setting fires – part of a group	2	7	0	6	4
Swearing	2	1	0	0	0
Possession of alcohol	1	0	0	0	0
Inappropriate use of an electric scooter	0	1	0	0	0
Trespass in a derelict building	0	4	0	0	0
Verbally abusive	0	4	0	3	0
No. of Individuals	20	45	24	13	6

NB Arson is treated as criminal not ASB

5.5.3 Warning Letters Issued

	Q1 21-22	Q2 21-22	Q3 21-22	Q4 21-22	Q1 22-23
No of Warning Letters Issued					
1st Strike	19	43	24	13	6
2nd Strike	1	2	0	0	1
Strike 3 (multi-agency ASB Case Management Group)	4	3	2	2	7
Strike 4 (multi-agency ASB Case Management Group)	0	0	0	0	0

05 | Education

5.5.4 Cases by Agency to demonstrate Co-ordinated Intervention

Cases by Agency (involved in cases discussed at Strike 3 (multi-agency meeting))	Q1 21-22	Q2 21-22	Q3 21-22	Q4 21-22	Q1 22-23
Youth Offending Service	1	2	1	1	4
Social Services	0	2	1	1	6
Families First	0	2	0	1	1
CAMHS	0	1	1	0	0
Youth Services	0	0	1	2	3
Registered Social Landlord	0	5	0	2	3
NxtGen Project	0	0	1	0	0
Fire Intervention Service	2	0	0	0	0

5.6 Child Employment

5.6.1 Number of Permits Issued

	Autumn 2021	Spring 2022	Summer 2022
No. of Permits Issued	4	0	2

5.6.2 Number of Investigations relating to Illegal Child Employment Activities

	Autumn 2021	Spring 2022	Summer 2022
No. of Illegal Child Employment Activities	0	1	2

5.7 Child Performances

5.7.1 Number of Licences Issued to Children and Chaperones

	Autumn 2021	Spring 2022	Summer 2022
No. of Licences Issues to Children and Chaperones	4	20	56
No of licences for chaperones	20	18	5
Body of persons approvals - group licences	10	6	7

5.7.2 Number of Chaperones attending Training

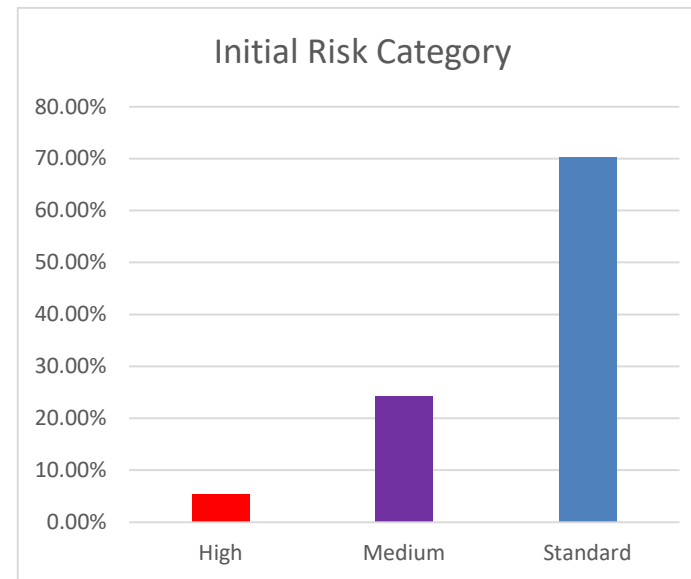
	Autumn 2021	Spring 2022	Summer 2022
No. of Chaperones	20	18	5
No of Chaperones attending Training	29	24	15

5.8 Operation Encompass

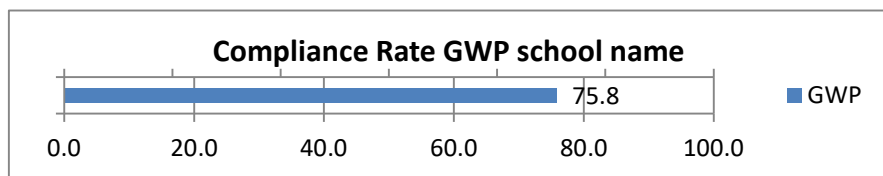
5.8.1 Number of Incidents in Period and Repeat Incidents

Term	Occurrences	CYP	Repeat Incidents
Autumn 2021	265	330	22.40%
Spring 2022	211	266	24.10%
Summer 2022	246	333	21%

5.8.2 Risk Level



5.8.3 % Compliance by Police



5.8.4 Comparative Data

	Spring 2021	Summer 2021	Autumn 2022	Spring 2022	Summer 2022
No. of Occurrences	296	141	265	211	246
No. of Children and Young People Involved	371	185	330	266	333
Average No. of CYP per Occurrence	1.25	1.31	1.25	1.26	1.35

5.9 Attendance

5.9.1 Primary and Secondary Attendance

	Autumn 2020	Spring 2021	Summer 2021	Autumn 2021	Spring 2022	Summer 2022
Primary Attendance	88.4	89.6	89.9	89.3	89.3	89.0
Secondary Attendance	84.3	83.0	84.8	85.3	85.3	84.8

5.9.2 Low Attendance and Implementation of Neglect Policy

Page 538

	Autumn 2021	Spring 2022	Summer 2022
Fixed penalties	0	0	2
Single Justice Process	5	0	6
Court Notices	0	3	0

5.10 Exclusions

5.10.1 Exclusions by Setting and Type

	Autumn 21			Spring 22			Summer 22		
	No. Fixed	Average No. of Days	Permanent	Fixed	Average No. of Days	Permanent	Fixed	Average No. of Days	Permanent
Primary	32	1.8		30	2.1		25	2.4	
Secondary	228	1.6	3	323	1.8	3	193	1.4	
Special	23	2.0		5	1		12	1.1	
Total	283	1.5		358	1.8		230	1.5	

5.10.2 Exclusions Linked to Bullying

Page 539

	Autumn 21		Spring 22		Summer 22	
	Fixed	Permanent	Fixed	Permanent	Fixed	Permanent
Primary	0		0		0	
Secondary	0		2		1	
Special	0		0		0	

5.10.3 Pupils with Multiple Exclusions

No of Exclusions	Autumn 21			Spring 22			Summer 22		
	No. Pupils	No of Exclusions	Average No. of Days	No. Pupils	No of Exclusions	Average No. of Days	No. Pupils	No of Exclusions	Average No. of Days
1	95	95	1.9	137	137	1.8	91	91	1.3
2	30	59	1.3	42	84	1.4	13	26	2.9
3	10	30	1.3	15	45	1.8	8	24	5.5
4	9	36	1.7	11	44	2.7	6	24	4.9
5	2	10	1.0	7	35	1.2	8	40	8.1
6+	8	53	1.8	2	13	2.5	4	25	10.4
Total	154	283	1.6	214	358	1.8	130	230	1.5

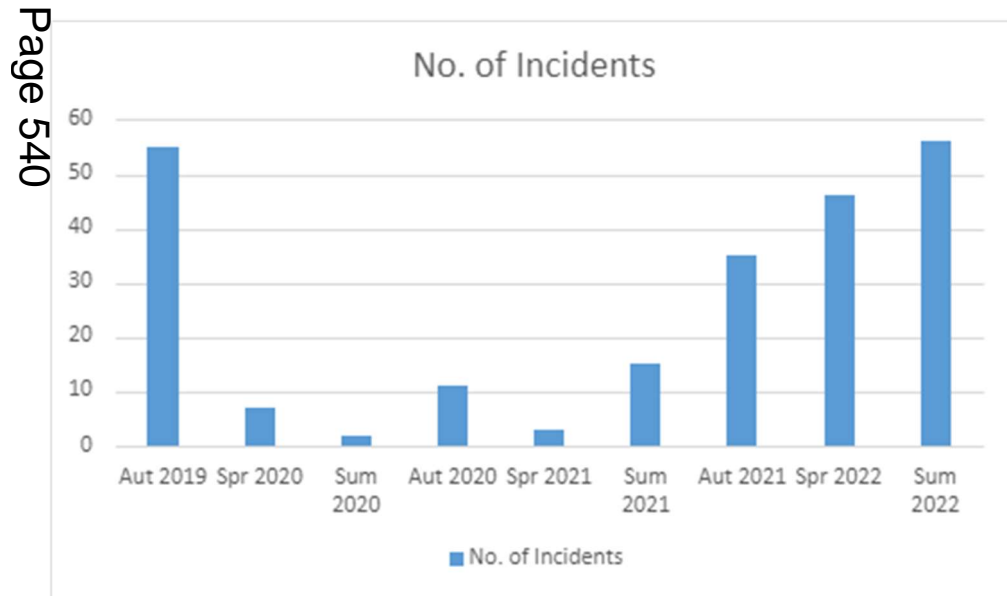
05 | Education

5.11 RPI Incidents

5.11.1 Number of RPI Incidents by Setting

<u>School</u>	<u>Number of incidents</u>
Special schools	55
Mainstream schools	0

5.11.2 RPI Trends



5.12 Racial Incidents and Bullying

5.12.1 Bullying Incidents (Rights Respect Equality returns)

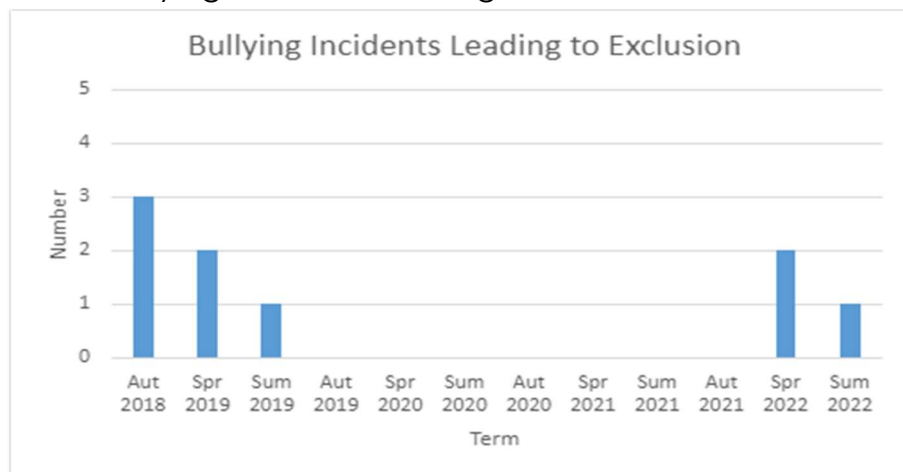
Spring Term 2022	
No of Schools submitting	22
No of schools submitting positive returns	5
No of incidents	27
No of Pupils involved	30

5.12.2 Bullying incidents by Setting

Spring Term 2022	
Top categories of reasons for bullying	
	Total
Verbal	8
Appearance	6
Physical	5
Homophobic	4

5.13 Bullying

5.13.1 Bullying incidents leading to exclusion



5.14 Sexual Harassment

5.14.1 Progress of the Peer on Peer Sexual Harassment Action Plan

This is a Data Development Item – please see report item 6.5.24

5.15 Safer Schools

5.15.1 Number of Safer Schools Tactical Meetings called under the Crime & Disorder Act

	Summer 22
No of Issues	1

5.15.2 Issues that hit the trigger for Safer Schools e.g. Criminal Exploitation, Violence, Threat to kill/of serious harm, Use of weapons

	Summer 22
No of Issues that hit the trigger for Safer Schools	1

5.16 Trips and Visits

5.16.1 Overview of Trips and Levels of Compliance

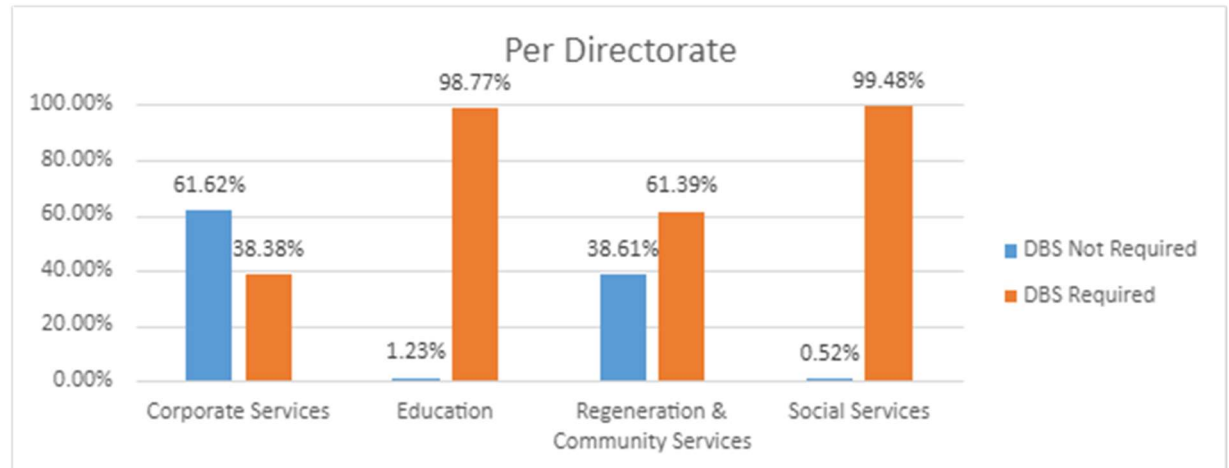
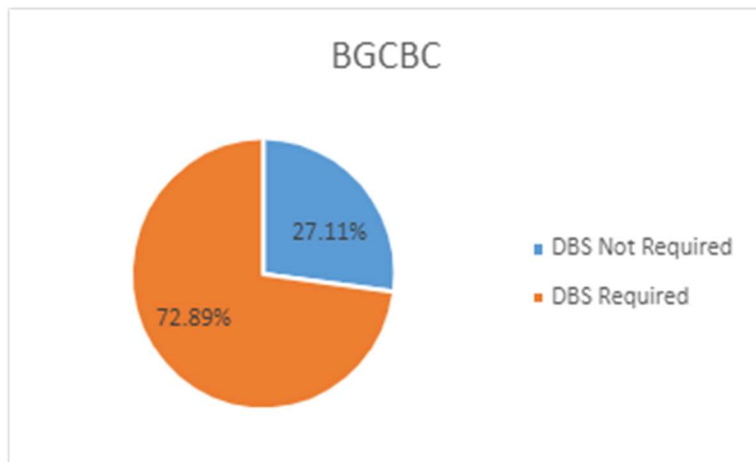
No. of Compliant Trips	Aut 21	Spr 22	Summ 22
All Schools	880	719	1105
% Compliance to policy	100%	100%	100%

6.1 DBS Compliance

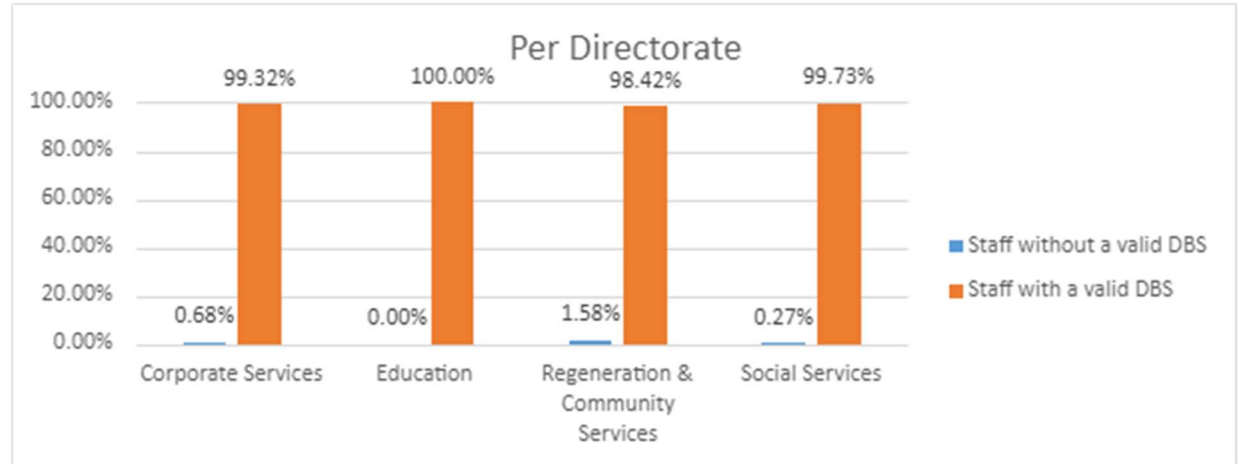
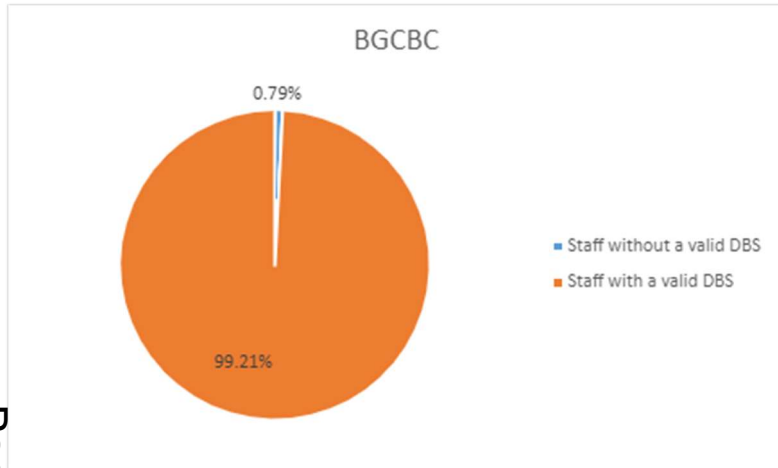
Managers are required to identify the requirement of a DBS check utilising the eligibility criteria, all DBS checks are renewed on a 3 yearly basis. Organisational Development co-ordinates this DBS process for new starters and 3 yearly rolling programme along with monitoring the compliance of these checks and we have formal escalation processes in place. The updates on the compliance with DBS are provided annually to Corporate Leadership Team but monitoring and escalation continues on a regular basis.

The latest submission to CLT was in April 2022 and is shown below:

6.1.1 Position Statement: Breakdown of Positions that require a DBS Check as at 31st March 2022



6.1.2 Breakdown of those employees in compliance with DBS requirements as at 31st March 2022



Escalation Process

Employees and Managers receive automated e-mails from the DBS system reminding that the process has not been completed.

Operational Teams receive fortnightly reports of all DBS applications currently in progress to enable Safeguarding escalation where required

6.2 VAWDASV Corporate Training Online

Corporate Training

Domestic abuse Training

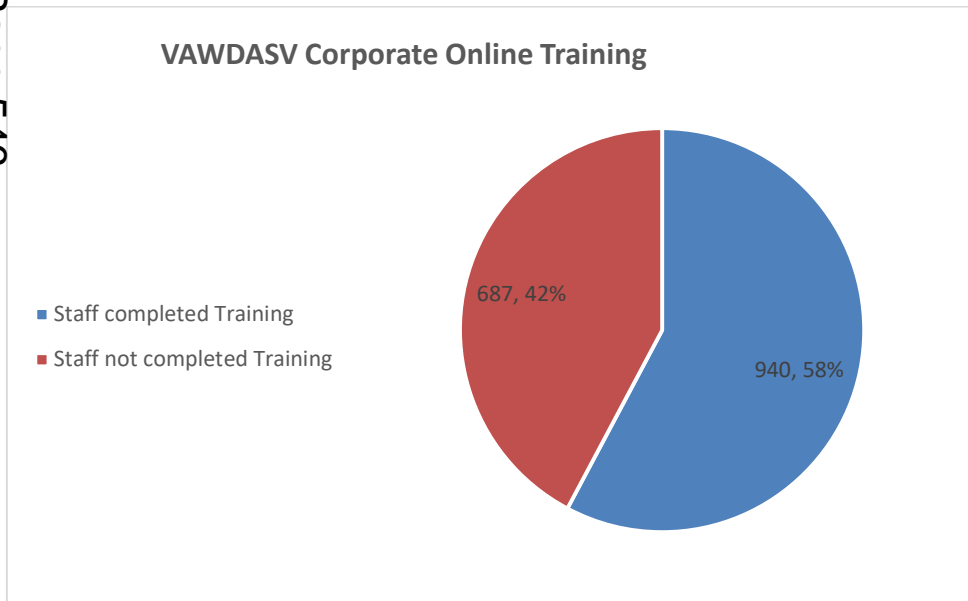
Corporate training has been provided to staff in respect of Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence with **58%** of staff having **completed** the **VAWDAS online training**.

All Wales Safeguarding Training on line for staff

Online Safeguarding training was included in the online corporate induction module in 2019.

In terms of the wider workforce a suitable module is currently being evaluated by the corporate Safeguarding group which has been delayed due to the impact of the pandemic.

6.2.1 VAWDASV Corporate



6.3 Risk Register

Ref No.	Description of Risk	Triggers	Consequences	Likelihood	Impact	Status	Current Controls	Likelihood	Impact	Status	Proposed further controls to mitigate / reduce risk	Risk Owner
CRR4	Safeguarding - Failure to ensure adequate safeguarding arrangements are in place for vulnerable people in Blaenau Gwent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If there is inadequate assessments and monitoring • If there is a lack of documentation • If there are increasing referrals for services • If there is a lack of appropriate guidance and training • If there is poor communication between all parties (internal / external) • If there is a high turnover of staff and difficulties in recruiting staff. *If there are increased levels of sickness in key areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential significant harm / loss of life • Long term reputational damage and confidence in the Council undermined • Increase in complaints / Potential litigation / prosecution • External intervention • Increased pressure on budgets • Low staff morale 	3	4	Critical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gwent Adult Safeguarding Board • SE Wales Safeguarding Children's Board • Standing item on CMT agenda • Safeguarding Network • Director of Social Services has a corporate responsibility for safeguarding • Lead Executive Member identified for safeguarding • Adult protection co-ordinator and process in place in line with All Wales process. • Manager's report consistently on safeguarding to elected Members and the Corporate Leadership Team • Joint Education and Social Services Safeguarding Team • Joint Social Services and Education Safeguarding scrutiny meeting held 3 times a year • Joint Business unit and subgroups for adults and children • Quality assurance processes embedded in adult safeguarding • Corporate Safeguarding Leads established for each directorate. • Staff induction contains safeguarding training • Corporate Safeguarding Training Programme in place. • Corporate Safeguarding Policy updated 	2	4	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Plans will further embed risk assessment tools • Training for all staff on Domestic Abuse Corporately in progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Director of Social Services Director of Education Councillor Haydn Trollope

Progress Update as at Quarter 1 (April – June 2022)

Social Services - Vacancy rates are improving which was anticipated. Staff turnover is still an issue, this has affected the number of experienced staff in post. There is a robust induction programme for newly qualified staff and for staff that started during COVID. Induction programme covers basic training on all aspects of social work tasks.

Education – During the period there was a critical incident in one of the schools involving an alleged racist incident that continues to be investigated by the police. An overview of schools’ self-evaluation returns identified one school with significant areas to be addressed which is presently a SCC. implementation of MyConcern has continued to progress and work is ongoing with schools with one school yet to sign up to using this software.

There remains an invariable link to the risks identified in Social Services. The risk level remains unchanged.

6.4 Regulatory Proposals

Page 548

88	WAO	Follow-up review of Corporate Arrangements for the Safeguarding of Children Document Reference: 1521A2019-20	01/10/2019	<p>1. Corporate Safeguarding Policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update the Policy • Update the structure • Include updated information from the All Wales Policy • When adopted in April 2020, include information from the All Wales Safeguarding Procedures <p>Completion Date April 2020</p>	Alison Ramshaw (Corporate Safeguarding Group) T1 Families First, IAA 14+ and Safeguarding	Social Services	The Corporate Safeguarding Leads mtg were on hold during the first stage of the pandemic but reconvened during the latter part of the year. The chair of the CSL group wrote a report to CLT and the Audit Committee seeking approval to extend the completion dates of the WAO Safeguarding Review recommendations as the pandemic meant that no progress could be made. Extended dates were agreed and a further 12 months was approved. Work was completed on the updating of the Corporate Safeguarding Policy and a Corporate Safeguarding Training Framework has been developed. Both pieces of work are currently awaiting CLT approval prior to implementation. The Wales Safeguarding App is available to all those staff who have a works mobile and communications have gone out to alert those staff without a works mobile of the App which is available to all via Google search engine. Lead officers with responsibility for safeguarding are still to be identified
----	-----	--	------------	--	---	-----------------	--