



EAS

Education Achievement Service
for South East Wales
Gwasanaeth Cyflawni Addysg
i Dde Ddwyrain Cymru

Schools Causing Concern

Operational appendix for meetings of
Schools Causing Concern

Updated September 2020

Schools Causing Concern Meetings:

A Schools Causing Concern meeting can be requested by the local authority when a school is considered to be a 'school which causes concern' or is at risk of 'becoming a school which causes concern'. A School Causing Concern meeting will be arranged when a school:

- Is placed in a red or amber category;
- Has received a local authority warning notice;
- Is placed in an Estyn statutory category of requiring Significant Improvement or Special Measures;
- Evidences that enhanced support and challenge is required linked to grounds 1-6 of the Schools Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 for Schools Causing Concern.

Meetings may be arranged when a school;

- Is placed in a yellow or green category but its capacity to improve is not secure and / or the pace of improvement is too slow.
- Is in an Estyn review category.
- Is identified as a risk in relation to a review or audit, which has been conducted by the LA or EAS. This may include for example; Finance, Health & Safety and Safeguarding Audits or Leadership and ALN Reviews.
- Demonstrates evidences that enhanced support and challenge is required linked to grounds 1-6 of the Schools Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013.

Within the Welsh Government guidance on Schools Causing Concern, the six grounds for intervention are:

Ground 1	The standards of performance of pupils at the school are unacceptably low.
Ground 2	There has been a breakdown in the way the school is managed or governed.
Ground 3	The behaviour of pupils at the school or any action taken by those pupils or their parents is severely prejudicing, or is likely to severely prejudice, the education of any pupils at the school.
Ground 4	The safety of pupils or staff at the school is threatened (whether by a breakdown of discipline or otherwise).
Ground 5	The governing body or head teacher has failed, or is likely to fail, to comply with a duty under the Education Acts.
Ground 6	The governing body or head teacher has acted or is proposing to act unreasonably in the exercise of any of its, his, or her functions under the Education Acts.

Terms of Reference

Membership of a Schools Causing Concern Meeting

A Schools Causing Concern meeting is a collaborative meeting between a school, the local authority and the EAS. Key individuals are essential to the meeting. Essential members are listed below:

Director of Education / Chief Education Officer (or representative of)
Head of School Standards (LA)
Head Teacher
Chair of Governing Body or Vice Chair (in exceptional circumstances)
EAS Representative

The following members will attend at the request of the Executive Member / Cabinet Member for Education, Chief Education Officer or Managing Director of the EAS:

Executive / Cabinet Member for Education
Managing Director / Director / Assistant Director EAS

On occasions, additional school, LA or EAS staff will be required to attend. Additional members may include:

Additional Senior Leaders or Heads of Department from schools
Additional EAS Representatives
Additional Senior Leaders, HR, Finance or Health and Safety Offices from the local authority.

Aims of a Schools Causing Concern Meeting

School Causing Concern meetings form part of a wider drive by SEWC LAs and EAS to improve educational outcomes for all children and young people. The local authority and EAS roles will be principally:

- To review and evaluate pace and progress in relation to identified School Development Plan priorities.
- To challenge the Headteacher and Governing Body on the rates of progress in their school.
- To recommend and monitor actions aimed at accelerating improvement.
- To consider the extent to which the school has been successful in achieving required improvement. This will determine future actions by the LA and EAS. This may encompass:

Schools Causing Concern Progress Judgements:

1. The school has made strong progress and will not be required to attend Schools Causing Concern meetings. *The support level of the school will be reduced.
2. The school has made *satisfactory/ *strong progress but will need to continue to attend Schools Causing Concern meetings to enable the impact of improvements to become consistent and embedded.
3. The school demonstrates limited progress. *It is advised that the local authority determine appropriate next steps of action agreed with the agreed Schools Causing Concern policy.

*delete as appropriate

Process

- The local authority will determine the venue for meetings*. Generally, meetings will be held in local authority offices unless there is a specific reason for holding the meeting at the school.
*Meetings will be held virtually via Microsoft Teams where this is deemed appropriate for 2020-2021
- The Director of Education or Cabinet Member / Executive Member for Education will chair the meeting.
- The local authority will facilitate the meetings. The local authority will take minutes of the meeting.
- The agenda will be agreed at least 2 weeks in advance of the meeting. The local authority should ensure that further notice is given whenever possible, enabling the school to fully prepare for the meeting. Ideally, the next agenda should be discussed at the end of a Schools Causing Concern meeting. This discussion will include details of specific areas the local authority and EAS wish to focus upon and those persons required to attend.
- Schools will be requested to present evidence to demonstrate progress linked to their School Development Plan / PIAP. Therefore, all reports presented at Schools Causing Concern meetings must practically align to the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning processes. Local authorities reserve the right to request first hand evidence linked to specific reports. This may include pupil data, pupil books, minutes of departmental meetings, SLT meetings and reports to Governing Bodies. (This list is not intended to be exhaustive).
- Schools will prepare and submit progress reports or updates of their School Development Plan to the local authority 5 working days prior to the meetings. All documents to be distributed to all attendees at least 3 working days in advance of the meeting.
- School may use the meetings to discuss brokered support, their on-going challenges / barriers to improvement and any additional support requirements.
- The school will be expected to discuss its progress, obstacles to improvement, and any further planned actions.
- The LA and EAS will provide a view on a range of aspects relating to the school's key successes and barriers. These aspects may include the school's level of engagement, its pace and progress, its capacity to improve and required future support from the LA and EAS.
- Where a school is requested to attend a Schools Causing Concern meeting, the local authority may choose to discuss and focus on a range of issues, which can contribute to successful school performance and pupil outcomes. This should include a focus on pupil exclusions, attendance, wellbeing, vulnerable group data, performance management arrangement, parent engagement etc. (This list is not intended to be exhaustive).
- Confidential items will not be recorded within minutes. The nature of confidential discussion will be agreed between the school, local authority and the EAS. The local authority reserves the right to see either the Headteacher or Chair of Governors individually by request.
- The LA will provide a view of the schools' improvement and its need for further support using Schools Causing Progress Judgements 1-3 (indicated on page 3).
- Local authority and EAS staff will participate in a pre-briefing and debriefing session before and after a Schools Causing Concern meeting.

Schedule /Timings of Meetings

For schools requiring the highest levels of support, monthly meetings will be established. All Schools Causing Concern will be requested to attend a meeting every half term.

It is expected that a School Causing Concern meeting will last no longer than 1.5 hours.

The local authority will aim to agree and issue meeting dates at least 6 weeks in advance. The local authority will invite EAS representatives, the Head Teacher and Chair of Governors. The Head Teacher will invite any additional staff or Senior Leaders whose attendance has been requested.

The local authority will record and circulate minutes of meetings. All minutes should be circulated to the school, LA and EAS within 10 working days.

Agenda

The standing agenda for all Schools Causing Concern meetings is:

1. Welcome and apologies.
2. Specific actions or matters arising from the previous meeting.
3. Head teacher led discussion* based around the school's progress against the School Development Plan priorities (agreed prior to the meeting), including any reports verifying evidence of progress. Other Senior Leaders or Heads of Department may lead specific / appropriate reports by request. * This discussion should include any plans for managing the context of the school in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic and plans for blended / distance learning should this be required.
4. School led discussion* linked to the progress of all learners, including vulnerable groups. *This should include plans for intervention and support following the extended absence of many pupils from school during the Covid 19 pandemic and the progress this group are making.
5. EAS overview of support provided and commentary of progress made by the school.
6. Conclusions / next steps.
7. A.O.B / Future agenda items.
8. Confidential matters to be discussed in the presence of the local authority, EAS, the Head and/ or the Chair of Governors.
9. Meeting close.

A 15-minute LA and EAS pre-brief / debrief will take place before and after each meeting. The school will not be invited to participate.

Improvement Conferences:

It is recognised that a Schools Causing Concern meeting is time limited which can restrict the length of the agenda. On occasions an extended meeting will be required to consider:

- The pace of progress linked to School Development Plan priorities and the identified support required.
- Why a school is not improving and has become 'stuck'.
- The level and range of support a school has received and its impact.
- The use of local authority statutory powers.

An improvement Conference will act as an extended and focussed meeting. This could be considered as an escalation of concern. The meeting will be scheduled over at least half a day and will be chaired and by either:

- The Executive/ Cabinet Member for Education
- The Chief Education Officer
- A Chief Education Officer from within the region but not from within the LA
- The Managing Director / Director of the EAS

At this stage the local authority will determine the agenda in conjunction with the school with at least 3 weeks' notice. Minutes will be kept as a record of the meeting and shared with all in attendance.

Persons Present:
 Apologies:
 Date of meeting:

School Development Priorities
•
Local Targets
•

Actions completed since last Schools Causing Concern Meeting (School / LA / EAS)
•
Main issues arising from Meeting
•
Schools Causing Concern Progress Judgement (1-3):

Actions for the school (to include timescales):

Actions		Timescales
1.		
2.		

Actions for the LA (to include timescales):

Actions		Timescales
1.		
2.		

Actions for the EAS (to include timescales):

Actions		Timescales
1.		
2.		

Next Meeting: (Date)

Next Agenda Items: (Draft)