

Education Other than at School (EOTAS) Policy

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Blaenau Gwent
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Contents

Introduction and Context

Legal Background

Excluded Pupils

Full-time and appropriate provision

Supporting Learners with Healthcare Needs

Pupils who are hard to place

Responsibilities

Partnership Working

Funding

Monitoring and Evaluation

Links to other key strategies/key documents

Appendix 1 Placement Review Form

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 Smart Education. 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 and will be delivered on-line, either 1-1 or on small groups. 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. To support reintegration back into school at the earliest opportunity and reduce isolation, tuition may be supplemented with an offer of wellbeing or youth service support.

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.

Wellbeing support 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 and other key professionals, which will include some or all the following, medical professional, Educational Psychologists, Education Welfare Officers, Smart Education and Careers Wales.

Provision will be reviewed every 6 weeks 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 6 weeks with 6 weekly 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).

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.

Smart Education 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 tutors 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 tuition 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.

Re-integration back into school

It is recognised that, whenever possible, pupils should receive their education within a mainstream school and the aim of the provision will be to reintegrate pupils back into mainstream education at the earliest opportunity and when it is appropriate for the individual learner. Reviews are carried out on a 6-weekly basis. Arrangements for reintegration will be discussed with school staff and each child will have a personalised reintegration plan.

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)
- Appendix 1 – Placement Review Form

Appendix 1

Placement Review Form

Monitoring and review form

Name of Pupil				
Date of Birth				
Year Group				
Gender				
Home Address				
Parents/Carers Contact No.				
Original School				
Current provision				
Has the placement been successful?	YES		NO	
Initial Period of placement	From:		To:	
What was the reason for placement and the desired outcomes				
Have the outcomes been met?				
Is the pupil ready to reintegrate back into school?				
If yes, what does the transition plan look like?				
If no, what are the next steps?				
Please state reasons why placement was / was not successful?				

Signed..... Date.....
Pupil

Signed **Date.....**
Parent/Carer

Signed..... **Date.....**
Original School

Signed..... **Date.....**
Current Provision

Signed..... **Date.....**
LA representative