

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, SPORT AND CULTURE  
BY DEPUTY M.R. HIGGINS OF ST. HELIER  
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 9th DECEMBER 2014**

**Question**

Will the Minister provide members with the following information regarding students who are absent from school without permission, and not related to illness:

- (a) any legislation which applies and the powers of the Department;
- (b) the Department's policy in respect of repeated and extended absences from school;
- (c) the number of staff directly employed in monitoring and dealing with such absence;
- (d) details of any liaison that takes place between the Department, schools, police and social workers in respect of this area;
- (e) a table showing the name of each school, the number of students in each school, and the number of children who have been absent without permission for:
  - (i) one week;
  - (ii) two weeks;
  - (iii) three weeks;
  - (iv) four weeks;
  - (v) four weeks or more;

during the school term from September 2013 to June 2014, together with the percentages of truancy for each school.

**Answer**

**(a) any legislation which applies and the powers of the Department;**

Good attendance is recognised as a major factor in a child's success in education so every effort is made by schools and ESC, working with families, to maximize attendance for every student. Unauthorized absence in Jersey is lower than the UK national average.

Under Article 12 of the Education (Jersey) Law 1999 parents or guardians are responsible for ensuring that any child of compulsory school age receives a full-time education. The law states:

*A parent of a child of compulsory school age shall ensure that the child receives full-time education appropriate to the child's age, ability and aptitude, and any special educational needs the child may have, either by regular attendance at a school at which the child is a pupil or otherwise.*

The law also states that a parent who fails to comply is guilty of an offence and liable to a fine not exceeding level 2 on the standard scale.

Under Article 14 the ESC Minister can seek an Education Supervision Order (ESO). This power is delegated to the ESC Attendance Panel, which can also recommend a referral to the Parish Hall with a view to prosecution.

**(b) the Department's policy in respect of repeated and extended absences from school;**

The aim of the Education Welfare Service (EWS) at Education, Sport and Culture is to prevent any absence from becoming repeated or extended where possible. Prosecution under the law is a last resort. The EWS works in close partnership with schools and families to provide support, advice and guidance to determine the appropriate action needed where concerns emerge regarding a child's attendance. The policy and procedure for dealing with absences is as follows:

**Stage 1: School monitoring**

Attendance is recorded twice a day in school and reasons for absence are monitored.

**Stage 2 & 3: Initial assessments and multi-agency meetings**

Where school strategies have been unsuccessful advice is sought from the Education Welfare Officer (EWOs) for primary schools, or Attendance Officers (AOs) in secondary schools.

Contact is made with parents/carers to establish the cause of absence. This often involves home visits to support the family and identify strategies to improve attendance. Where underlying problems exist, an assessment meeting is arranged and where necessary a multi-agency approach is taken to help meet the needs of the child and support the family to enable regular school attendance.

**Stage 4: Warning Letter**

If there is no significant improvement in attendance, a warning letter is sent by school to remind parents/carers of their legal responsibility to ensure their child attends school. If there is still no improvement the Senior Education Welfare Officer (SEWO) will send a formal warning letter.

**Stage 5: School Attendance Meeting**

Parents/carers are invited to a meeting in school to discuss their child's attendance and to explore ways of working together to improve the situation. An individual Action Plan (IAP) may be drawn up to assist the parents and the pupil in reaching agreed targets. Progress will be reviewed after an agreed period of time

**Stage 6: Attendance Panel**

If there is no significant improvement in attendance by a certain date the IAP can be reviewed or the case can be referred to an Attendance Panel at ESC. The criteria for referral to a panel include:

- Sporadic attendance below the level expected for the student's age
- Long term record of school refusal
- Where the parent/carer has not cooperated with actions designed to improve attendance
- Where poor punctuality is impacting significantly on school attendance

The panel consists of the Senior Education Welfare Officer, Head of Inclusion or Senior Manager from ESC, external agency manager, school staff and representatives of other departments as required

The parent/carer and child/children, if age appropriate, will be required to attend the Attendance Panel Meeting.

The panel has delegated powers to recommend a referral to the Parish Hall with a view to prosecution. It can also apply to the court for an Education Supervision Order.

**(c) the number of staff directly employed in monitoring and dealing with such absence;**

Primary schools: Four Education Welfare Officers work with the States primary schools as well as some of the private schools and they monitor and deal with absences as part of their role. One

of the four also supports D'Hautree House School and the Alternative Curriculum. The team is managed by the Senior Education Welfare Officer.

Secondary schools: There is an Attendance Officer in each of the four 11-16 schools.

**(d) details of any liaison that takes place between the Department, schools, police and social workers in respect of this area;**

The circumstances of each child vary and a range of professionals will be consulted according to the needs of each individual student.

There is daily contact between the department and schools. This can include headteachers, heads of year, special educational needs co-ordinators and teachers who are designated safeguarding leads.

The role of the EWOs and AOs involves a high level of interagency working including liaison with social workers where children have an assigned social worker.

The four EWOs each work with the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) for a full week on a rota basis. This involves close liaison with all schools, colleges, police and social workers. More recently a community police officer has also been assigned to secondary schools.

**(e) a table showing the name of each school, the number of students in each school, and the number of children who have been absent without permission for:**

- (i) one week;**
- (ii) two weeks;**
- (iii) three weeks;**
- (iv) four weeks;**
- (v) four weeks or more;**

**during the school term from September 2013 to June 2014, together with the percentages of truancy for each school.**

**Answer**

Table 1 below shows attendance and absence (authorised and unauthorised) rates by school in Jersey. Please note that for secondary schools, sessions missed due to 'study leave' (authorised absence) have been removed from all calculations to provide an objective and fair comparison of attendance/absence behaviour; secondary schools in Jersey have different policies regarding the number of sessions that pupils are permitted to spend out of school in preparation for KS4 examinations.

**Table 1: Attendance and absence rates by school in Jersey; academic year 2013/2014**

|                                 | <b>Attendance</b> | <b>Authorised absence</b> | <b>Unauthorised absence</b> |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Secondary schools</b>        |                   |                           |                             |
| Grainville Secondary School     | 93.6              | 4.9                       | 1.5                         |
| Haute Vallee Secondary School   | 93.3              | 4.9                       | 1.8                         |
| Les Quennevais Secondary School | 93.3              | 5.3                       | 1.4                         |
| Le Rocquier Secondary School    | 93.9              | 4.7                       | 1.4                         |
| Hautlieu School                 | 95.3              | 4.6                       | 0.1                         |
| Jersey College for Girls        | 95.5              | 4.3                       | 0.2                         |
| Victoria College                | 96.4              | 3.3                       | 0.3                         |

| <b>Primary schools</b>              |      |     |     |
|-------------------------------------|------|-----|-----|
| Bel Royal Primary School            | 95.4 | 4.5 | 0.1 |
| d'Auvergne Primary School           | 96.2 | 3.7 | 0.2 |
| First Tower Primary School          | 96.2 | 3.7 | 0.1 |
| Grands Vaux Primary School          | 95.3 | 4.3 | 0.4 |
| Grouville Primary School            | 96.2 | 3.8 | 0.1 |
| Janvrin Primary School              | 96.0 | 3.5 | 0.5 |
| JCG Preparatory School              | 97.1 | 2.6 | 0.4 |
| La Moye Primary School              | 96.4 | 3.2 | 0.4 |
| Les Landes Primary School           | 96.4 | 3.6 | 0.1 |
| Mont Nicolle Primary School         | 96.2 | 3.7 | 0.1 |
| Plat Douet Primary School           | 96.1 | 3.8 | 0.1 |
| Rouge Bouillon Primary School       | 94.8 | 4.7 | 0.5 |
| Samares Primary School              | 95.8 | 3.9 | 0.3 |
| Springfield Primary School          | 95.5 | 4.1 | 0.4 |
| St Clement's Primary School         | 96.0 | 3.9 | 0.1 |
| St John's Primary School            | 96.9 | 3.0 | 0.0 |
| St Lawrence Primary School          | 95.9 | 3.9 | 0.2 |
| St Luke's Primary School            | 96.3 | 3.6 | 0.2 |
| St Martin's Primary School          | 96.4 | 3.6 | 0.0 |
| St Mary's Primary School            | 95.5 | 4.5 | 0.0 |
| St Peter's Primary School           | 95.8 | 4.1 | 0.1 |
| St Saviour's Primary School         | 96.1 | 3.9 | 0.1 |
| Trinity Primary School              | 96.3 | 3.7 | 0.0 |
| Victoria College Preparatory School | 96.7 | 3.2 | 0.1 |

❖ All numbers have been independently rounded to one decimal place

### Primary schools

Table 2 shows the number of pupils that were absent from school without permission, during academic year 2013/2014, as well as the average number of pupils on roll throughout the year. Data reflects pupils in years 1 to 6 (reception class is not included because students do not all start at the same time) in Jersey primary schools. In the interests of disclosure control any number less than 10 (including 0) has been denoted by an x.

Please note that unauthorised absence includes;

- Family holidays that were not agreed or were in excess of any prior agreement
- No reason for the absence was provided
- Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)
- Late (more than 30 minutes after registration closed)

**Table 2: Average number of pupils on roll and number of pupils that took unauthorised absence during academic year 2013/2014, by primary school in Jersey**

|                            | <b>Number of pupils</b> | <b>Between 1 &amp; 2 weeks</b> | <b>Between 2 &amp; 3 weeks</b> | <b>Between 3 &amp; 4 weeks</b> | <b>More than 4 weeks</b> |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Bel Royal Primary School   | 154                     | x                              | x                              | x                              | x                        |
| d'Auvergne Primary School  | 286                     | x                              | x                              | x                              | x                        |
| First Tower Primary School | 293                     | x                              | x                              | x                              | x                        |
| Grands Vaux Primary School | 121                     | x                              | x                              | x                              | x                        |

|                                     |     |    |   |   |   |
|-------------------------------------|-----|----|---|---|---|
| Grouville Primary School            | 312 | x  | x | x | x |
| Janvrin Primary School              | 309 | 10 | x | x | x |
| JCG Preparatory School              | 285 | 19 | x | x | x |
| La Moye Primary School              | 275 | 18 | x | x | x |
| Les Landes Primary School           | 143 | x  | x | x | x |
| Mont Nicolle Primary School         | 153 | x  | x | x | x |
| Plat Douet Primary School           | 299 | x  | x | x | x |
| Rouge Bouillon Primary School       | 319 | 15 | x | x | x |
| Samares Primary School              | 215 | x  | x | x | x |
| Springfield Primary School          | 153 | x  | x | x | x |
| St Clement Primary School           | 152 | x  | x | x | x |
| St John's Primary School            | 146 | x  | x | x | x |
| St Lawrence Primary School          | 154 | x  | x | x | x |
| St Lukes Primary School             | 155 | x  | x | x | x |
| St Martin's Primary School          | 152 | x  | x | x | x |
| St Mary's Primary School            | 142 | x  | x | x | x |
| St Peters Primary School            | 171 | x  | x | x | x |
| St Saviour's Primary School         | 158 | x  | x | x | x |
| Trinity Primary School              | 155 | x  | x | x | x |
| Victoria College Preparatory School | 287 | x  | x | x | x |

### Secondary schools

Table 3 shows the number of pupils that were absent from school without permission, during academic year 2013/2014, as well as the average number of pupils on roll throughout the year. Data reflects pupils in years 7 to 11 in Jersey secondary schools. Years 12 and 13 are not included because this is not part of compulsory education. In the interests of disclosure control any number less than 10 (including 0) has been denoted by an x.

There are 39 weeks in the school year (187 school days) and 4,118 students in these schools in these year groups.

**Table 3: Average number of pupils on roll and number of pupils that took unauthorised absence during academic year 2013/2014, by secondary school in Jersey**

|                                 | No. of pupils | Between 1 & 2 weeks | Between 2 & 3 weeks | Between 3 & 4 weeks | More than 4 weeks |
|---------------------------------|---------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Grainville Secondary School     | 542           | 36                  | x                   | x                   | 13                |
| Les Quennevais Secondary School | 716           | 26                  | x                   | x                   | 15                |
| Haute Vallee Secondary School   | 643           | 38                  | 13                  | x                   | 26                |
| Le Rocquier Secondary School    | 883           | 33                  | 10                  | x                   | 25                |
| Hautlieu Secondary School       | 265           | x                   | x                   | x                   | x                 |
| Jersey College for Girls        | 525           | 19                  | x                   | x                   | x                 |
| Victoria College                | 544           | x                   | x                   | x                   | x                 |

It is not possible to determine from the data currently held within the department the proportion of sessions missed by pupils due to 'truancy' however a proxy for this measure is the unauthorised absence rate i.e. the percentage of all sessions missed by pupils due to unauthorised absence.

Unauthorised absence includes;

- Family holidays that were not agreed or were in excess of any prior agreement
- No reason for the absence was provided
- Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)
- Late (more than 30 minutes after registration closed)