

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT POLICY

TITLE: SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

DATE: MAY 2016

1. Overview

This document describes procedures and processes relating to school attendance, punctuality and welfare of all pupils of compulsory school age. It sets out the arrangements that must be implemented to enable pupils to fully benefit from the educational opportunities available and in addition to support families to fulfil their statutory obligations.

This policy has been updated to take into account the changes in procedures and processes due to the development of an 'Operational Guidance for the Delivery of Education Welfare Services in Jersey 2015'.

The Education Welfare Service currently consists of 3 centrally based Education Welfare Officers (EWOs) and 4 school based EWOs for the 11 – 16 schools.

2. Scope

This policy provides a framework which underpins the role of Education settings and parents/carers. It also upholds the principle that children attend school regularly, as stated in the Education (Jersey) Law 1999, article 12, para 1.

'ensure that the child receives a 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 school at which the child is a pupil or otherwise, in accordance with Article 13 of the Education (Jersey) Law 1999.'

3. Responsibilities and distribution

It is the responsibility of head teachers to ensure that all staff tasked with recording pupils' attendance are made fully aware of the legal requirement placed upon them in regard to these procedures. Furthermore, head teachers should encourage all staff to maximise pupil attendance and work proactively to that end.

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The Responsibility of the Education Department

It is the responsibility of the Education Department (Education Welfare Service) to work in partnership with schools, parents/ carers and pupils to provide support, advice and guidance.

The Education Welfare Service (EWS) acts on behalf of the States of Jersey in enforcing a parents'/carers' legal duty to provide appropriate education. The main function of the EWS is to improve overall attendance and reduce persistent absence and punctuality concerns in all schools and alternative education providers. In addition the EWS also undertake other 'core' duties such as transition support, supporting student's welfare and support for families requiring 'early help'. To address this, the EWS provides all schools with a regular visiting service, delivered by a named EWO or a school based EWO.

The main role of the EWS is to:

- Contribute to the Department's and school's drive for school effectiveness;
- Work in partnership with schools, pupils, parents/carers and communities to ensure educational entitlement and regular attendance and;
- Link with services and agencies providing education, health and social care services for individuals with additional or specific needs.

This is achieved through:

- Promoting and supporting whole school attendance policies;
- Attendance and Punctuality target setting for schools (outlined in the Education Welfare Service's annual Attendance Strategy with effect from September, 2016);
- Providing advice on evidence based good practice;
- Advice and support on initiatives and strategies to improve 'whole school' attendance;
- Contribution to the school's annual self-evaluation in the area of attendance and punctuality concerns;
- Work with parents/carers and pupils to promote, raise and maintain individual pupil attendance/punctuality and prevent absence from school;
- Compiling termly data checks and informing schools of any trends or areas that require improvements as well as carrying out monitoring checks on school registers throughout the year;
- Targeted monitoring of the attendance of highly vulnerable learners (LAC/NEET/EBNA/CP/at risk of CSE);
- Consultative support on matters of attendance and welfare. This would include phone and email advice;
- Direct support for families requiring early help with identified attendance, punctuality and/or welfare concerns;
- Undertaking individual work with pupils;
- Undertaking family centred work;
- Liaison between primary and secondary schools and other services during the year 6 to year 7 transition phases (refer to ED Transition Policy);
- The delivery of Child Protection Training (SPB Foundation Level);
- An 'oversight' of the statutory and legal components relating to non-attendance. This would include (for e.g.) warnings for non-attendance, initiating Parish Hall enquiries, legal processes and attending court;
- Recognising and working within the requirements of both the legislation and underlying principles relating to information sharing;

- Collating, interpreting and presenting data on issues relating to relevant aspects of the work of the EWS and use it to plan and manage the work of the service.

A Service Level Agreement (SLA) between the EWS and schools underpins the EWS and school's responsibilities laid out in this Policy. The SLA defines expectations of stakeholders in promoting positive school attendance and punctuality. EWO hours allocated to each school will include time spent in school as well as time spent on home visits or attending meetings relating to the school/pupil.

The school's named EWO will attend termly Planning and Review Meetings (PARMs) and will in addition agree a schedule of consultation visits throughout the academic year. These meetings are an opportunity to discuss, negotiate and agree priorities for the term ahead on a rolling basis.

Schools' Responsibilities – (including schools with post 16 students)

It is the responsibility of the school to record and monitor attendance, punctuality and the general welfare of the pupils. Each school should possess its own Attendance Policy that is familiar to all school staff.

Each school should:

- Encourage, promote and maintain positive individual pupil attendance and punctuality;
- Implement strategies and initiatives to improve 'whole school' attendance;
- Ensure that registers are accurate and up to date;
- Regularly audit school registers to identify any pupils with attendance and/or punctuality concerns;
- Monitor and promote the welfare of every child and young person;
- Ensure that all appropriate information and records are available to the EWO as part of a schools' request for EWS involvement.

Schools' Attendance Policies

All schools should develop their Attendance Policies in line with the States of Jersey School Attendance Policy which should be reviewed annually. School Attendance Policies should ensure:

- A high priority is given to attendance and punctuality;
- There is a named senior member of staff as part of the Senior Leadership Team with overall responsibility for attendance, punctuality and welfare;
- Clear guidance for all staff on the process of registration, including the appropriate categorisation of absence;
- Compliance with statutory requirements;
- Information is regularly communicated to parents/carers and pupils;
- Clear procedures to identify and follow up all absences and lateness;
- Schools collate and utilise attendance data effectively;
- Recognition of the importance of early intervention, including first day response in contacting parents/carers;
- Monitoring of post registration truancy;
- That children and young people with chronic/long term illness are supported in accessing their learning needs.
- Consideration is given to critical times (for e.g.) Key Stage 2-3 transition;

- A range of strategies are in place to deal with absenteeism, lateness;
- The provision of a clear hierarchy of sanctions;
- The use of attendance incentive strategies;
- Procedures are in place for identifying and reintegrating longer term absentees;
- Regular structured meetings between the schools and the EWO;
- Reasonable steps are taken by the school before requesting the involvement of the EWO;
- Regular communication with parents/carers to highlight the importance of continuity of learning, particularly in relation to family holidays during term time;
- The use of parent/carer evenings and other opportunities to remind parents of the school policy on attendance;
- The involvement of Governors (where applicable).

Response to Absences, Lateness and Welfare Concerns

Absences and Punctuality

Schools should adopt their own strategies such as first day response when responding to absences and lateness.

- *Independent research has shown that 'first day response is the single most effective initiative in improving rates of attendance' – in some schools by as much as 10%.*

Early intervention can have positive effects on poor attendance and punctuality therefore, when concerns begin to emerge it is the responsibility of the school to raise these concerns with the parents/carers and students (age appropriate) in the first instance (Appendix 1 Flow Chart). Schools should make every effort to engage with parents/carers and in doing so, where appropriate, introduce an Attendance Plan (Appendix 2). Review dates should be agreed with a view to improvements being made. Where there are no significant improvements, the school have exhausted all their strategies and absence and/or punctuality continues to deteriorate, schools should engage with parents/carers to agree to the support of the Education Welfare Service. A Request for Involvement (RFI) form will then be completed (Appendix 3).

RFI forms must be completed by the school with an opportunity provided to parents/carers to also sign their agreement to the involvement of the EWS. Should a parent/carer not wish to sign the RFI form, the reason will be recorded on the form. A RFI form is the mechanism that confirms that a case will be opened to the EWS and that an EWO will actively become involved in some capacity. In addition it is the RFI form which provides the EWS with a mandate to keep records and information such as chronologies on pupils and families.

Attendance Panel Meetings

If there is no subsequent improvement in attendance and punctuality despite the input from the school and the EWS, in consultation with the Team Manager, warning letters with the intent to refer to Attendance Panel will be sent by the EWO. No further improvements will initiate an invitation from the Team Manager to parents/carers and student (age appropriate) to attend an Attendance Panel Meeting.

Attendance Panels are required to address persistent concerns around school attendance and punctuality. Panel Meetings represent a platform for professionals to

meet with parents/carers and student (age appropriate) to receive and review reports from the EWS, schools and other services, and as part of this, to consider and agree suitable next steps to achieve improvements in this area.

Parents/carers are invited to submit their own reports/information and in conjunction with the pupil (age-appropriate) are encouraged to contribute to any discussions. Should the parents/carers fail to attend, the meeting will continue and a decision will be made in their absence.

The decision to progress a case to a Panel Meeting is made by the Team Manager of the EWS and would typically include evidence of the following:

- Persistent and long term concerns in the area of attendance and/or punctuality;
- School-led intervention;
- Direct involvement from the school's EWO/school-based EWO as evidenced by relevant documents (e.g. Attendance Plans);
- Case oversight from the Team Manager of the EWS;
- Appropriate involvement of other agencies;
- Parental non-engagement/non or disguised compliance.

The Panel will consist of a Senior Manager of the Education Department, the Team Manager of the EWS and a Senior Manager from Social Services, an EWO and a representative from school and/or other relevant service/s.

Possible outcomes of the Attendance Panel include:

- A review period for parents/carers and pupil to evidence significant improvements. This will sit within an Attendance Plan or TAC/F Plan and may include the involvement of further professionals;
- An Enquiry to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH);
- A referral to the Parish Hall with a view to prosecution;
- Application to the Court for an Education Supervision Order (refer to the Education (1999) Jersey Law).

Once the case has been referred to the Parish Hall, it is the responsibility of the Parish Connétable to contact the parents/carers and student (age appropriate) and invite them to attend a Parish Hall Enquiry. This may result in a deferred decision to allow for a review period, the parents/carers may be charged at Parish Hall level or required to attend Court under article 12 of the Education (1999) Jersey Law.

Welfare Concerns

In such cases where the welfare of the child is of a concern, schools should make every effort to engage with the parents/carers with a view to the situation improving. If this is not the case, schools should consider an 'Early Help' assessment. The outcomes of this assessment will determine the needs of the family, which will in turn dictate the need of internal/external and third sector services. The EWO may or may not be required to be part of the assessment and/or outcomes.

Emotionally Based Non Attendance (EBNA)

It is important to distinguish between non-school attendance, truancy and emotionally based non-school attendance, the latter being considered an emotional need. There could be a number of contributing factors to EBNA. Schools should refer to the EBNA

Assessment Tool to establish the route of the problem (refer to EBNA Policy). Once this process has been completed schools, along with parents/cares, should request the appropriate involvement of services such as Education Psychologists, in order that the appropriate support can be put in place to support the pupil.

Looked After Children (LAC)

Each school is responsible for supporting, monitoring and raising concerns in relation to attendance and/or punctuality and welfare for Looked after Children. The EWS are tasked with supporting schools by consistently raising LAC children during EWO/school consultation meetings. Attendance and punctuality data will be collated at the end of each academic year.

Attendance Procedures and Recording Attendance and Punctuality

The following procedures underpin the principles in this Policy and generate good practice in matters concerning attendance and punctuality.

Attendance Registers

Attendance registers are legal documents and particular attention should be paid to accuracy. Incomplete registers are not acceptable.

Registration

Staff and pupils should be aware that registration is a key part of the school day. **Attendance registers must be called twice daily**, at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon.

Pupils must be marked as:

- Present,
- Engaged in approved educational activity off site,
- Absent.

In the case of an emergency evacuation, school policies must contain processes to enable staff to account for all students on the premises. Head teachers are responsible for ensuring that all staff, including supply staff, have up-to-date knowledge of this process.

Absences should be authorised by way of written or verbal communication with the parent/carer. The appropriate code should be entered into the register and a reason for absence entered into the school's electronic data base. In the event of any absences school should make first day contact with parents/carers and make every effort to ascertain the reason for any absences/lateness, where parents/carers have not made contact.

Punctuality

Schools should actively discourage late arrivals due to the disruption this causes not only to the individual but also to the remainder of the class. Patterns of lateness can develop into non-school attendance if left unchallenged. Schools should be flexible where local conditions such as weather or local transport have an adverse effect on pupils arriving on

time. Schools should have a consistent approach to lateness so as not to differentiate between classes/form groups and siblings.

Pupils who arrive

- Up to 30 minutes after the registration has closed should be marked as late – **(L)**
- More than 30 minutes after the registration has closed will be marked as a **(U)**. This will be counted as an unauthorised absence.

Pupils who arrive up to half an hour late as a result of a medical appointment can be marked as present. The school must have prior notification of such appointment and be recorded in the CMIS data base.

Pupils arriving late must sign in at the school office, recording the reason and time of arrival.

Schools are not obliged to accept reasons for absences or late arrivals to school.

Should any doubts remain after investigations have been made the absence could then be recorded as unauthorised and in the cases of late arrivals the appropriate code will be applied.

Alternative Educational Provisions

A pupil who is receiving part time/temporary education or training away from the school site but is retained on the register of the school should be marked as **(B)** in the register. This also applies to pupils on work experience who will be marked as **(W)** in the register. The supervising member of staff responsible for these students must check that the student is at the appropriate place of instruction prior to completing the register. Modified time tables and re-integration in to school must be planned and agreed by all parties and the register completed appropriately.

Pupils who are receiving all of their education in a separate provision to that of an education setting must be marked as 'left' on the register.

In the case where a student is attending an alternative school setting for an agreed period of time, the receiving school should register that student and they should be registered as **(B)** (educated off site) by the school of origin. Should the student return or not return to the school of origin they should be marked as on roll or left.

Transfer

Where pupils transfer to another school, the receiving school must notify the relinquishing school that the pupil has been admitted on the first day in the new school. The relinquishing school can then mark the pupil as left.

Study Leave

Study leave should be closely monitored and only used for pupils in Year 11 during mock and public exams. Study leave should not normally exceed 15

days prior to the exam period. Regard should be paid to the individual pupil's ability to manage study leave and benefit from it.

Unsupervised study leave is not an 'approved educational activity' and must be counted as authorised absence. The code **(S)** should be applied for study leave.

Children Missing from Education

Please refer to the Education Department's Policy for CME, Children Missing from Education.

Parents/carers Responsibilities

Parents/carers are required by law to ensure that all children of compulsory school age (aged 5 to 16) receive a full time education either by registering a child at a school or be arranging an alternative to school in line with the Education Departments' Policy.

These responsibilities extend beyond ensuring regular attendance and punctuality, it requires parents/carers to make certain that each child arrives at school on time, appropriately dressed with the correct equipment and prepared for learning.

Parents/carers can support their child/ren by keeping requests for absence to a minimum. It should not be automatically assumed that schools will agree to absence requests. Nor should unjustified absences from school be condoned. If a student is unable to attend school for whatever reason, parents/carers are responsible for notifying the school on the first day of absence and to keep the school updated on subsequent days.

Parents/carers should work in partnership with schools in all matters concerning their child/ren's education by actively supporting school policies on attendance, punctuality, behaviour and homework.

Parents/carers should avoid taking their child/ren out of school during term time. Such absences can seriously disrupt continuity of learning. It is at the discretion of the Head teacher to grant leave, only in exceptional cases.

Leave during Term Time

The Education Department does not, at any time, support leave during term time, however, in exceptional circumstances head teachers have the discretionary power to grant leave in accordance with this Policy.

Each case should be considered carefully taking into account:

- The age of the child;
- The time of year;
- The nature and purpose of the trip;
- Family circumstances;
- Attendance pattern of the pupil;
- Previous requests.

Head teachers can refer to the guidance for exceptional circumstances (Appendix 4):

Whilst each case is unique, the guidance strives for consistency across all schools. To further support consistency, where siblings are concerned, primary and secondary schools should endeavour to liaise with each other prior to a decision being made.

Parents do not have the automatic right to withdraw their child/ren from school and must request permission in advance from the head teacher.

Furthermore, parents must make a strong case to justify taking pupils out of school during term time as the absence can seriously disrupt continuity of learning. It is expected that parents will support their child's education by arranging all leave to coincide with school holidays.

Where a pupil is absent for longer than the agreed time, s/he should be marked as taking unauthorised leave. The same applies to those parents/carers who remove their child/ren from school without permission.

Parents/carers who wish to take their child/ren out of school for longer than **four weeks** will have to re-apply for their school placement. It should not therefore be considered that a pupil has the automatic right to return to their departing school. Should the departing school be full upon the student's return to the island, the Education Department will support parents/carers to enrol their child/ren in an alternative school setting.

Codes for Absence

When applying codes for absences or late arrivals, schools are required to refer to Appendix 5 of this document.

Attendance Data

Attendance data will be collated centrally by the EWS at the end of each term. This information will be broken down into year groups, allowing the EWS to direct their services appropriately. Furthermore, all information will form part of schools' JSEDs.

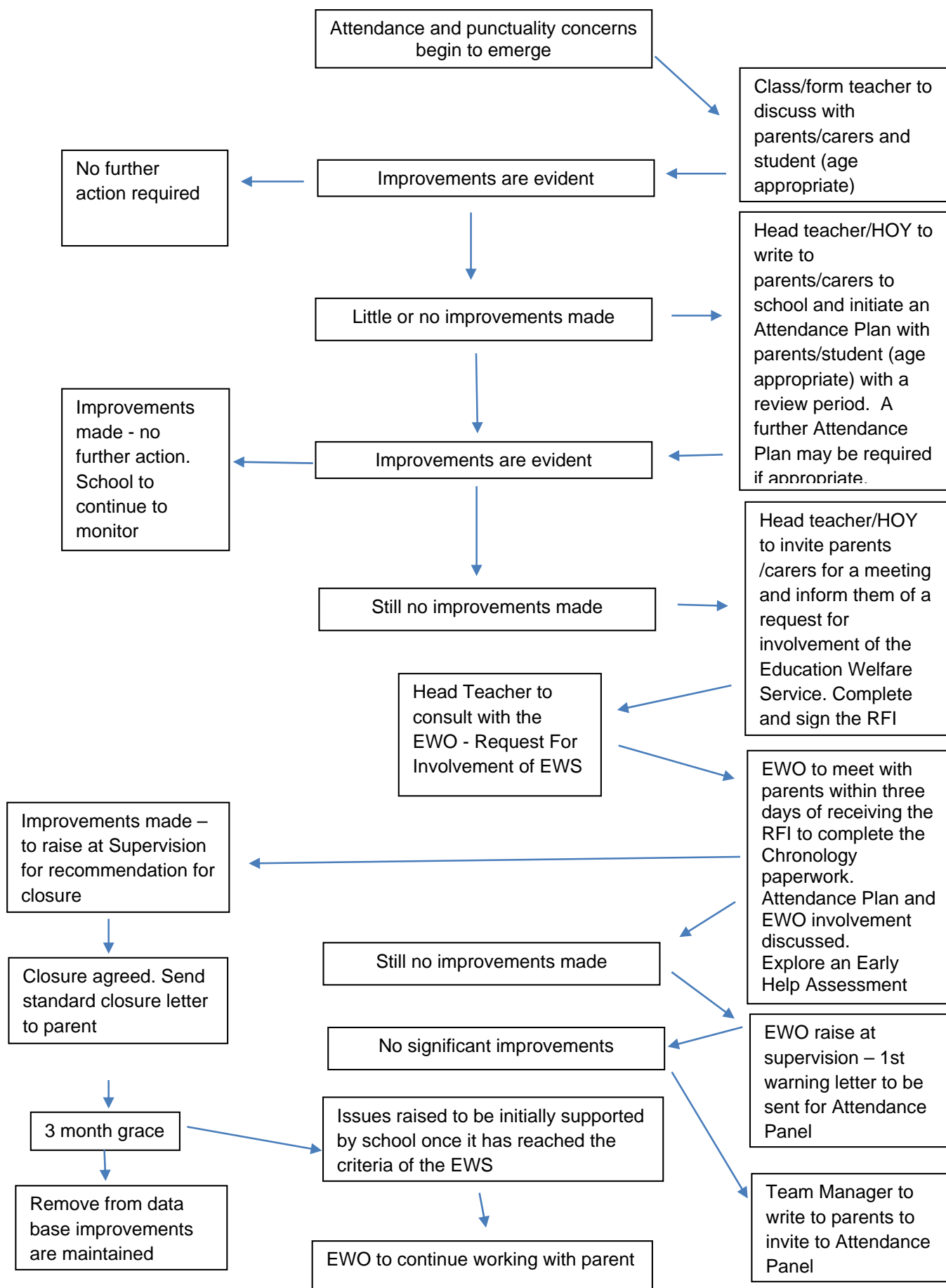
This information will provide:

- The number of pupils attending schools;
- The number of authorised/unauthorised absences;
- The number of absent days broken down into year group;
- The average number of late arrivals (including after the close of registration);
- The number of authorised/unauthorised holidays;
- The number of Emotionally Based Non Attendance (EBNA) pupils;
- Pupils with a diagnosed significant illness impacting on their attendance.

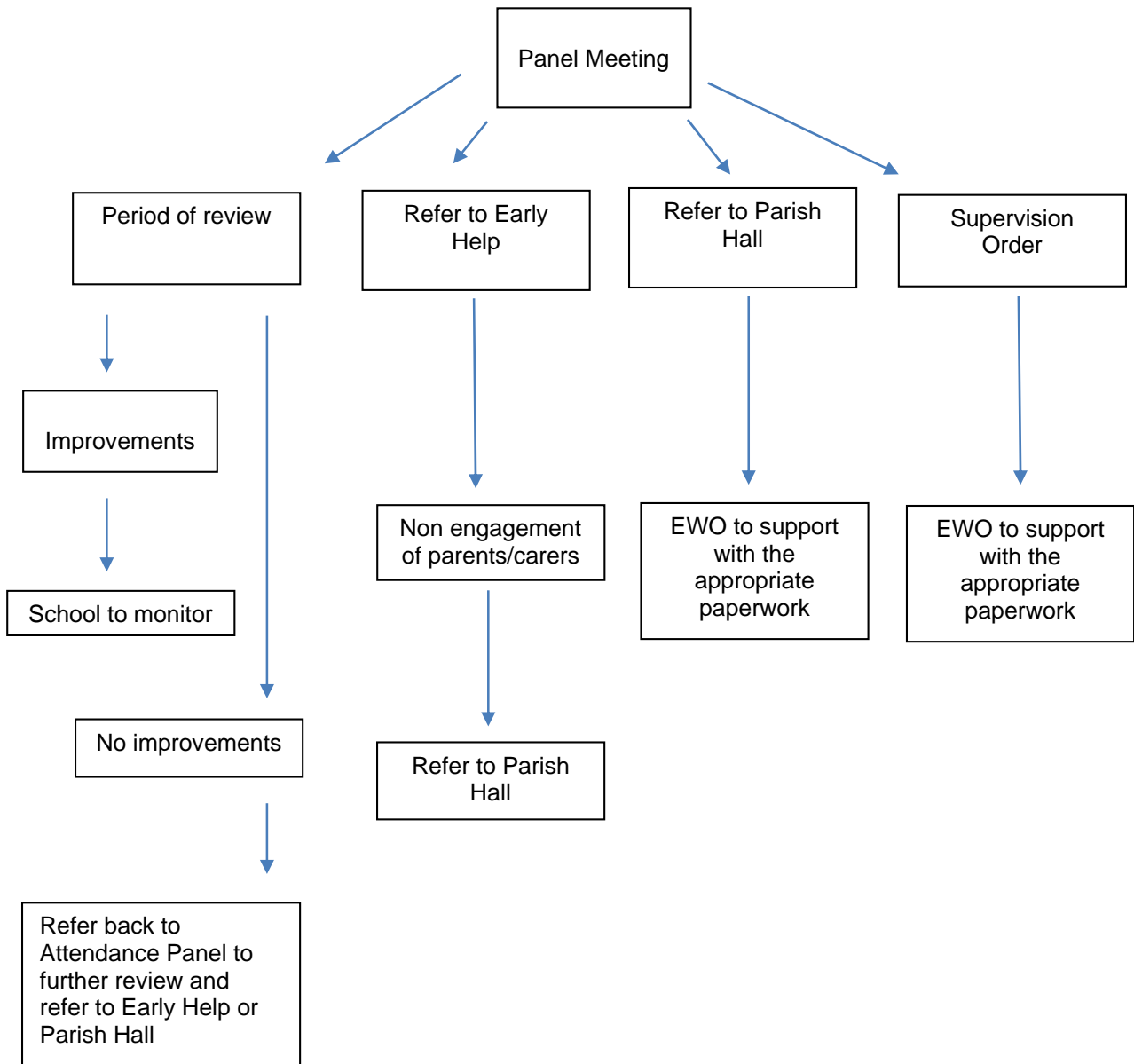
LAC Attendance Data

- Attendance Data will be collated at the end of each academic year.

Appendix 1
Flow chart for Education Welfare Service involvement



ATTENDANCE PANEL



Appendix 2



This attendance Plan should be developed following initial consultations with the parent/carer, the school setting and other agencies as appropriate

ATTENDANCE PLAN

Date of Plan:	
Name:	D.O.B: Yr.:
School:	School Contact:
Education Welfare Officer :	
Parents/Carers:	Tel:
Address:	
Agreed Plan:	
Pupil:	
Parents/carers:	
School:	
Education Welfare Officer:	
Other Agency (as appropriate):	
Agreed Target Dates:	
Review Date:	

Signed: Parents/carers

Pupil

Education Welfare Officer

Appendix 3



Education Welfare Service

Request for Involvement

The information on this form will be used to determine if involvement of the Education Welfare Service is an appropriate next step.

Please only submit this form after initial discussion with your allocated Education Welfare Officer.

When completed, the signed form must be discussed with the child's/young person's parent(s)/guardian(s).

Name:	DoB:	M / F	School:	Yr:
% School Attendance:	Class teacher's name/contact:		Other adults involved within school:	
No. of Lates:	Head of Year: (if applicable)			
No. of 'U's	Parents/Carers Names:		Is this child/young person looked after? Yes No	
Address(es) of parents/carers:	First Language:		If yes, please provide the named Social Worker:	
Home Tel:				
Mob:				
Do both parents have Parental responsibility? Yes: No:				
Any other person(s) with parental responsibility? Yes No		Address of other/s with parental responsibility:		
		Home Tel:		
		Mob:		
Medical Information: (e.g. hearing, vision, medication, diagnosed conditions)				
Please state which other agencies...	Are involved:	Have been involved:	Date:	
Speech and Language Therapy				
Occupational Therapy				
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service				
Children's Services				
Outreach (e.g. MAL, or Social Communication/ASC)				
Wellbeing Support				
Educational Psychology				
Parenting Support/Service (The Bridge)				
Police or Youth Service				
Health Visiting				
Voluntary Services				
School Nursing Services (Name)				
Family GP				

Paediatrician (Name)		
What is the nature of your concern?		
<u>Attendance</u>		
<u>Punctuality</u>		
<u>Welfare/Early Help</u>		
<u>Transition</u>		
Date of initial contact with Parent/carer		
Outcomes of discussion:		
Timescales for improvement agreed:		
Date(s) of discussions/written contact with parent/carer		
Outcome:		
Date of meeting with parent/carer		
Outcomes of discussions:		
How do you hope your EWO can support you in meeting this pupil's needs?		

For head teachers: I have discussed the contents of this form with parent/carers of the child/young person.

Head Teacher **Date:**

Print Name:

For parents/carers: I agree with this request. I give my consent for this information to be shared with the Education Welfare Service and for this Service to access confidential records from agencies previously or currently involved. I also agree that written reports produced by the Service may be shared with relevant professionals from other agencies.

Parent/Carer Signature(s): **Date :**

Young Person's Signature **Date :**

Parent does not wish to sign the RFI form **Date :**

For EWS use only:	Please Tick:
Attendance	
Punctuality	
Welfare/Early Help	
Transition	

Appendix 4

Leave in Term Time Guidance for Head teachers

The following is to support Head teachers when considering requests for authorised leave.

Whilst each case is unique, this guidance strives for consistency for schools and families across the Island.

It starts from the premise that **every day counts** and that permission is only authorised in Exceptional Circumstances. Furthermore, leave is not granted as a reward for good attendance.

Examples of Exceptional Circumstances for Holidays:

- No alternative to flights (e.g. Tuesday flight to/from Madeira);
- Changes to flight/ferry time (parents must provide original ticket information);
- Significant family event (e.g. wedding, graduation, christening, significant birthday of a member of the family);
- Inflexible work patterns of parents;
- Research for family re-location.

Examples of Exceptional Circumstances for Non-Holiday Leave:

- Island or Club Representative (with evidence);
- Family crisis (e.g. funeral, illness);
- Off-Island medical appointment (with evidence).

Examples of Rejected Requests for Leave:

- Concerts/shows/'treats';
- Cheap Travel;
- Convenience.

Appendix 5
Attendance Codes, Descriptions and Meanings

CODE		
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed) (extended defined as greater than 10 school days)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed) (up to a maximum of 10 school days)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence

T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances