



Ysgol yr Hafod Johnstown

Attendance Policy

Head teacher- Alison Heale

Chair of Governors: David A Bithell

Adopted by governing body.....

Signed

Introduction

Regular school attendance is essential for all children and young people. Failure to attend regularly can increase the risk of leaving school without any qualifications, and can also increase the likelihood of pupils being drawn into criminal and anti-social behaviour.

This attendance policy reflects the local authority's Attendance expectations and is intended to set out an over-arching statement of appropriate protocols and practices relating to the management of and promotion of school attendance in our school and across Wrexham.

Aims

This policy aims to ensure that attendance and punctuality remains a key focus for all, including governors, teachers, parents, pupils and partner agencies. Working with WCBC we will strive to:

- Offer a safe and friendly environment which welcomes children regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation or ability.
- Raise standards and ensure all pupils reach their full potential, through a high level of school attendance and punctuality.
- Ensure all stakeholders receive communication about information on the importance of regular school attendance.
- Identify those pupils with irregular attendance at an early stage and to work with partner agencies to try and address any barriers that stop pupils from attending school regularly.
- Keep accurate and up to date attendance data.
- Ensure all pupils are safe, and that we follow the local authority's 'Children Missing Education' guidance.
- Support parents and carers in their duty of ensuring high attendance.

This document is supported by the All Wales Attendance Framework.

<http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/pupilsupport/framework/?lang=en>

Legal Framework

The law outlining attendance is:

The Education Act 1996 Section 7:

'The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient, full time education suitable to his/her age, aptitude and ability and to any special educational needs he/she may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'.

Section 444 further states that:

'The parent of a child of compulsory school age registered at school and failing to attend regularly is guilty of an offence punishable in law'.

School Attendance Orders (SAO):

Under the Education Act 1996 section 437- 443 a School Attendance Order applies when a parent of a child of compulsory school age fails to prove that the child is receiving a suitable education and where the authority believes the child should attend school. A School Attendance Order may be used to direct a parent to send their child to a specified school, and should be used when a pupil is not on roll at any school.

The Education (Penalty Notice) Wales Regulations 2013:

This legislation came into force in September 2014 and gave local authorities new powers to issue fixed penalty notices (FPN). A code of conduct has been agreed by Wrexham County Borough Council on the issuing of the FPN which allows Head Teachers to apply for a £60 FPN when they have recorded:

- Minimum of 10 unauthorised absences in the current term which do not have to be consecutive.
- Minimum of 10 sessions of lateness after the close of registration.

Parents/carers who choose to take their children out of school on holiday during term time without authorisation from the Head teacher will have those absences recorded as unauthorised sessions.

The Head Teacher will inform the parent by letter that a request for a fixed penalty notice will be completed and sent to the Education Lead (Formerly Education Social Worker Team Manager) for the local authority. The Education Lead will consider the request, taking into account levels of absence, level of parental engagement, any equality implications, history of attendance and also any statement of special educational needs before issuing a FPN of £60.

A penalty notice is £60 if paid within 28 days in receipt of the notice, increasing to £120 if not paid within 28 days. If payment is not received by 42 days then the local authority can prosecute parents for the child's absence.

For further information please see the WCBC website.

www.wrexham.gov.uk

Definitions

Compulsory school age – under section 8 of the Education Act 1996, children and young people should attend school from the start of the first term commencing after their fifth birthday.. A young person ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they have achieved their 16th birthday.

'Parents' are defined in section 576 of the Education Act 1996 as:

- All natural parents whether married or not.
- Any person who although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person, and any person, who although not a natural parent has care of a child or young person.

Meanings:

ESWS – Education Social Work Service

CME – Children missing education'

CTF - Common Transfer File – pupil file transferred to relevant school.

Role of Head Teacher:

- To be responsible for overall management and implementation of this policy.
- To work closely with the school's governing body.
- To set attendance targets with the governors, and take advice from the local authority if needed.
- To use discretion when receiving applications for holiday requests and to provide reasons to parents.
- To share regular attendance reports with governors.
- To work closely with the local authority's Education Lead and nominated school ESW, and other support services.
- To notify the local authority when a 'child is missing education' and follow the local authority's CME procedures.
- To ensure the school's own attendance policy is readily available for stakeholders including in the school, and on the schools website.
- To provide a comprehensive plan in terms of attendance processes and targets in accordance with the WG All Wales Attendance Framework expectations.
- To support any legal action brought as required, including either attending in person or nominating a senior member of staff to attend court as a witness in a trial if called.

Governing Body:

- Approve the policy and amend if necessary.
- Receive reports from the Head Teacher on a regular basis.
- Attend meetings as and when required.
- Ensure policy is shared with all relevant stakeholders.

Senior Leadership Team:

- To work with all staff responsible for attendance and punctuality.
- To look at attendance data on a regular basis, linking in with schools ESW.
- To check registers regularly.
- To ensure all absences are recorded in line with the guidance of codes document, including those unauthorised absences and no reasons provided.
- To raise issues of those staff not compliant with the completion of registers.
- To discuss any initiatives with all staff and promote the use of incentives for improved attendance.

Class Teacher:

- To carry out the statutory role of completing attendance registers twice a day, once in the morning and once in the afternoon in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010. The register is a legal document and must be kept accurately.
- To raise concerns with the headteacher
- To continue to raise the profile of attendance to all pupils.

Pupils:

- To attend regularly and on time unless unwell or received an authorised absence.
- To inform teacher of planned absences.
- To work with school staff and the ESW service to address any issues preventing punctual and regular attendance at school.

Parents:

(For the purposes of the Education Act 1996, 'parent' means all natural parents/carers whether they are married or not. It includes any person who although may not a natural parent, has day-to-day care of a child or young person.)

- To ensure a good home routine is in place to prepare their child for the following school day (for example promoting a good bedtime routine, uniform ready, school bag packed and an early start in the morning including breakfast).
- To ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually.
- To notify the school if their child is unable to attend, on the first day of absence and regularly thereafter.
- To keep the school updated on parents/guardians contact details, including mobile numbers and new addresses.
- To work with school and partner agencies to address any issues of irregular attendance of their children.
- To provide evidence for absences if requested. For example proof of medical appointments, dated prescriptions or a letter from a recognised medical service explaining periods of absence.
- To be aware that legal action can be taken to address unauthorised absence from school including a Fixed Penalty Notice, Education Supervision Order or Parental Prosecution.

The Head Teacher will remove the child from their school roll if a parent requests to take their child on an extended absence (i.e. longer than four continuous weeks, including exceptional circumstances). On return to Wrexham, the parent would need to reapply to the Local Authority for a school place.

The school business manager or admin support will:

- To text parents on a daily basis to establish reasons for pupil's absence, especially for pupils who are known to be poor attenders or who might otherwise be at risk.
- To record absences daily on registers, as and when required.
- To 'mop up' missing marks, providing reasons and inputting reasons on the red flag system on SIMS.
- To work closely with ESW and support staff in school.

- To work with the Head Teacher closely and produce reports as required.
- To ensure transfer of Common Transfer Forms of pupils are completed in a timely manner and pupils are not removed from roll unnecessarily.
- To check messages, if necessary, either on the school's answerphone, email account or text messaging system.

Education Social Work Service

- To complete visits to families and provide support and assistance when appropriate.
- To Facilitate Attendance improvement plans.
- To act on behalf of the Local Authority who has a duty to provide appropriate education to all statutory school age pupils in the county.
- To enforce the Local Authority's statutory duties in relation to school attendance and taking legal action where appropriate.
- To provide support and challenge to schools and families through analysing attendance data and targeting resources as appropriate.

The ESW team are centrally based and schools referral via the ESW referral form (Appendix 12). Families can contact the ESW service for support through their helpline number 01978 295571.

Once school has followed the process documented in the All Wales Attendance Framework the ESW service can support school with a home visit.

Parents have a legal duty to ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually, or otherwise, under the Education Act 1996. Where parents fail to ensure the regular attendance of their child or otherwise are committing an offence and the ESW will need to be informed.

It is unfortunate, but on occasions recourse to statutory powers may be required which may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice application or in the prosecution of parents. It is WCBC policy to prosecute all unpaid FPN cases. However the ESW does not take this action lightly and will endeavour to work and support parents, schools and pupils to improve attendance levels until all of these avenues have proved to be ineffective.

Types of absences

It is important for parents to understand the definition of the different types of absences. Absences may be classed as either unauthorised absence or authorised absence.

The schools Head Teacher is the only person that should decide on whether an absence should be classed in either one of these categories, parents cannot.

Absences may be authorised for the following reasons:

- Illness.
- Religious observance.
- Medical/Dental appointments during school hours.
- Fixed term and permanent exclusions.
- Holiday agreed by the Head Teacher.

Examples of what are classified as unauthorised absence are the following, however they are not limited: Absences may be unauthorised for the following reasons:

- Truancy.
- Late after the close of registration.
- Staying at home for no reason – condoned absence.
- Going shopping.
- Birthdays.
- Holiday not agreed by the Head Teacher.

In addition there are several codes classed as a present mark which include the following:

- Late before the close of register.
- Educated off site, pupils attending vocational courses at college/pupils attending alternative provision agreed by school.
- Sporting activity.
- Educational visit.
- Traveller absence.
- Interview.
- Work experience.
- Where pupils are on roll at school and also at another education establishment.

Punctuality

Punctuality is a legal requirement and pupils must attend on time. A Fixed Penalty Notice or a Prosecution can be sought in cases where persistent lateness after registers have closed are recorded as an unauthorised absence. Persistent lateness has a detrimental effect on a child's learning and also disrupts other pupils within the class and throughout the school.

Those parents of pupils who are persistently late will be contacted by the Senior Leadership Team. Lateness is recorded on SIMS by school staff.

Medical absences

Where a child is continually absent from school for medical reasons, the school will offer support to help a pupil attend regularly. A referral may be made to the Community Paediatrician for assessment in cases of persistent absences due to illness or medical issues. There may be times where a reintegration / Attendance Improvement Plan may be necessary which will be a partnership agreement between the family, pupil, ESW service and school.

Holidays during term time

Parents do not have an automatic right to withdraw pupils from school during the school term for a holiday. Under the Education (pupil registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010, headteachers have discretion to authorise a holiday of up to 10 days during term time; more than 10 days can only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

All requests for holidays must be completed on the school's holiday request form and completed by the parents/carers. (Please see Appendix 2 for model form).

The Head Teacher will make the decision and may include the following contributory factors:

- Time of year.
- Length of time.
- Overall percentage of attendance.
- Impact on the child's learning.

Criteria for Exceptional Circumstances

- Other compassionate circumstances e.g. family illness or family crisis. Proof may be requested.
- Where a holiday is recommended as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issues. Evidence must be provided from a qualified professional such as a doctor.
- Where there are other factors which the Head teacher may consider exceptional circumstances, this may be referred to the Local Authority for advice.

School procedures

Parents are expected to contact school on the first day of absence and to provide reasons for their child's absence.

If parents fail to notify school, then the school will make every effort to contact the parents and also other persons listed as a point of contact. The absence will be recorded as unauthorised if no reason for the absence is provided within two weeks. A letter may then be sent out Failure to receive any contact on the third day of absence may result in the involvement of the ESW Service.

Children Missing Education

Schools have a duty to safeguard all pupils. The Education & Inspections Act 2006, requires the Local Authority to make arrangements to enable them to establish the identities of children residing within WCBC who are not receiving an education. For example these may be pupils who have not attended school for an excessive amount of time without any contact or reason for the absence. The duty lies with the Local Authority to investigate further. The Common Transfer File will be sent to the forwarding school once they have been notified.

Pupils should not be removed from the school register until the pupil has been admitted to another school/ PRU or until the CME document has been completed and recorded by the LA.

For further information either email cme@wrexham.gov.uk or visit www.wrexham.gov.uk (CME document)

Attendance Procedure:

- Once a pupil hits a level of absence which is a cause for concern (this would depend on the time of the year, the reasons for absence and the child's attendance history) a first attendance letter will be sent.
- If there is no improvement then a second attendance letter is sent out.
- If the absences are due to a significant amount of illness, then the school will consider asking the ESW for a medical referral.
- After the second letter a third letter will be sent out. This requests medical proof for all future absences in order to be authorised.
- If attendance does not improve, a letter is sent arranging a meeting with the parent/carer, School representative and Education Social Worker or Attendance Officer for an attendance meeting to take place. Consideration will be given to attendance improvement strategies, including the introduction of an Attendance Improvement Plan.
- If attendance does not improve, consideration will be given to implementing legal action – FPN or Prosecution depending on attendance history, level of absence and past compliance.

Schools Strategies to improve attendance

Our strategies include:

- Mentioning attendance on the school website/Facebook page/newsletter
- Celebrating good attendance in assemblies
- Support from a named member of staff
- Start of day activities
- Intervention of the attendance officer or ESW team
- Regular monitoring of attendance data

Appendix 2

Holiday in term time request

Section A

To be completed by the Parent/Guardian at least 2 weeks in advance.

Name of Child:	Class	dob	Address	Tel no.
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				

Holiday dates: (including possibility of late flight arrivals if possible)

From: to

Destination

(NB – This is for child protection reasons ensuring all our children are safeguarded)

Declaration:

I understand that this holiday request may be authorised or not authorised and the Head Teacher will use his/her discretion in making the decision based on my child's circumstances. If the Head Teacher does not authorise this holiday, this may lead to a request for a Fixed Penalty Notice to the Local Authority Lead ESWTM which will be determined in line with the schools attendance policy. (Please ask for a copy at school or the schools website)

Parent/Guardian

Section B

To be completed by the Head Teacher within at least 1 week from the request.

Reasons for refusal to authorise absence

.....

.....

Reasons for authorising

.....

.....

The Head Teacher has authorised/unauthorised (* delete) the following holiday request for the reasons specified above.

Please see attached attendance registration certificate.

Signed

Appendix 3 – No Reason Provided Letter

«date_of_printing»

«addressee»

«address_block»

Dear Parent / Guardian,

«chosen_forename» «chosen_surname» - «date_of_birth»

According to our records, «chosen_forename» has recently been absent from school. You will be aware that it is the parent's responsibility to notify the school on the first day of a pupil's absence to explain the reasons why the «he_she» is unable to attend school. Unfortunately we have not received any contact from you.

I am therefore writing to you to give you an opportunity to explain the recent absences. Please complete the tear off slip below and return it to the school as soon as possible or alternatively call the school on **SCHOOLS PHONE NUMBER** or email on **XXXXX**. Any absence that has not been explained within two weeks will be categorised as an Unauthorised Absence.

Yours sincerely,

School Attendance Officer

.....
Please complete this slip and return to the **School Attendance Officer** as soon as possible.

«forename» «surname» - «date_of_birth»

Dates of unexplained absence:

«dyddiadau_absenoldeb_heb_eglurhad»

Explanation for the above dates of unexplained absence:

Parent/Carer Signature.....

Date.....

Appendix 4 – Letter 1

«salutation»

«address_block»

«date_of_printing»

Dear «salutation»

Name of Pupil: «chosen_forename» «chosen_surname» «reg»

I am aware that «chosen_forename» has been absent recently and I am becoming concerned about «chosen_forename»'s attendance, and felt that I should draw your attention to it as soon as possible.

The attendance level is «percentage_attendance»%.

Your child's academic attainment suffers if they miss school frequently. There may be reasons why this is occurring and if you felt that it would help to discuss the matter with me, then please contact me and let me know when you are available and I will make arrangements to see you.

Otherwise I hope to see an improvement in «chosen_forename» «chosen_surname»'s attendance.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

Appendix 5 – Letter 2

«salutation»

«address_block»

«date_of_printing»

Dear «salutation»

Name of Pupil: «chosen_forename» «chosen_surname» «reg»

Further to my previous letter regarding «chosen_forename» attendance I have noticed that further absences have occurred. I am becoming concerned about «chosen_forename»'s attendance, and felt that I should draw your attention to it as soon as possible.

The attendance level is only «percentage_attendance»%.

Your child's academic attainment suffers if they miss school frequently. There may be reasons why this is occurring and if you felt that it would help to discuss the matter with me, then please contact me and let me know when you are available and I will make arrangements to discuss this matter with you.

In the meantime, I hope to see an improvement in «chosen_forename» «chosen_surname»'s attendance.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

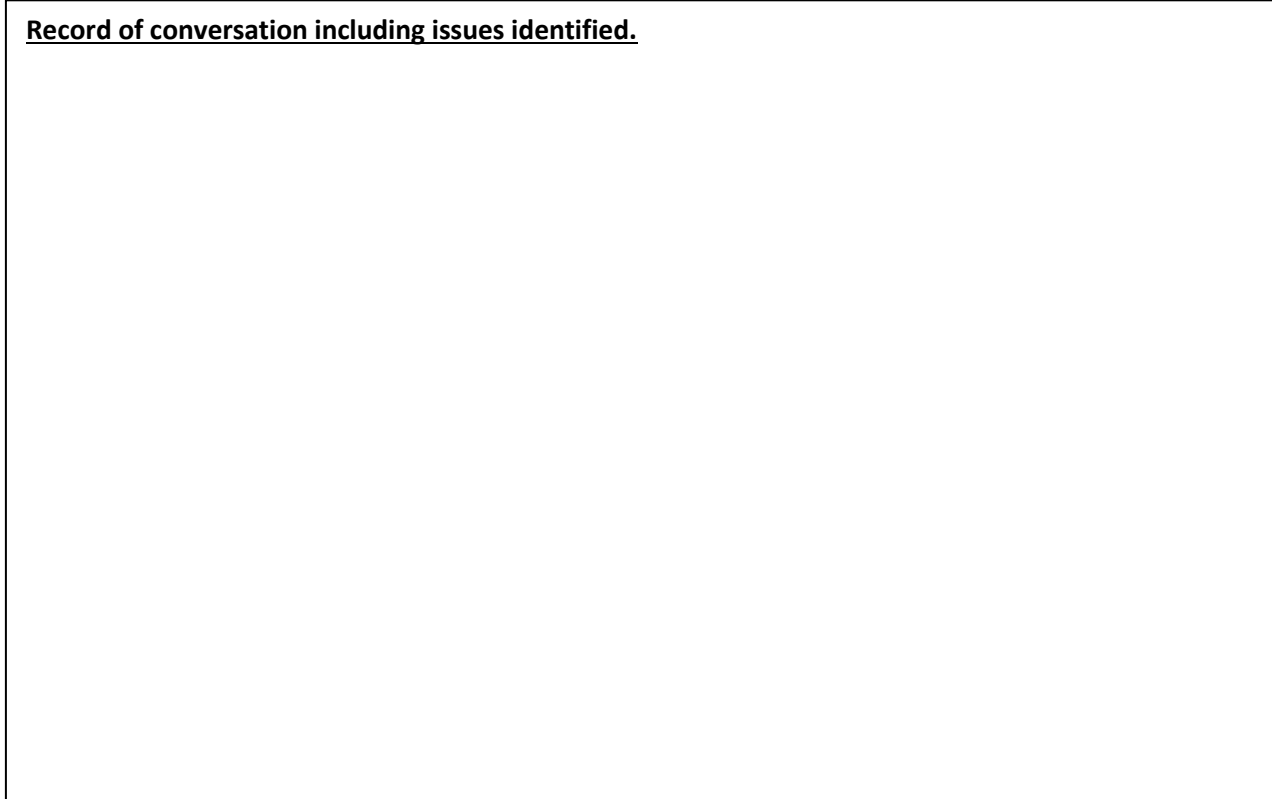
Appendix 6 – Record of conversation

Pupil Name: _____ Staff Member: _____

Attendance: _____ School: _____

Date: _____

Record of conversation including issues identified.



Outcome and advice given:



Appendix 7 – Letter 3 Medical Proof

«salutation»

«address_block»

«date_of_printing»

Dear «salutation»,

Re: «chosen_forename» «chosen_surname» «year_reg»

I am writing to you regarding «chosen_forename» as there are continuing concerns about «his_her» non-attendance at school which has not seen an improvement despite two previous letters.

Due to the level of illness and/or medical absence, I must ask that if any further absence occurs, evidence must be received by the school that shows that the pupil's absence has been supported by a Doctor or suitably qualified medical professional. Some examples of evidence that could be used are: Prescriptions, Appointment Cards, Doctor's Notes, etc.

If this evidence is not supplied when your child returns after an illness or medical absence, your child's absence will be recorded as an **unauthorised** absence.

Should you wish to discuss any of the points raised in this letter, please contact the school office. We really want to see XXXXX in school every day and would like to support in any way we can.

Yours sincerely,

Head Teacher

Appendix 8 – Meeting letter

«salutation»

«address_block»

«date_of_printing»

Dear «salutation»,

Ask for/Gofynner am –
Direct Dial/Rhif Union -
E-mail/E-bost –

**Re: «chosen_forename» «chosen_surname»
«year_reg»**

I am writing to you regarding «chosen_forename» as I continue to have concerns about «his_her» non-attendance at school. A meeting to discuss these concerns will take place at **XXXXXXXXX on at**

The Law states that parents must ensure that their children receive appropriate full-time education according to their age, ability and aptitude. This means that whilst your child is registered at school, you have a responsibility to make sure that they attend regularly and on time.

Where a pupil of compulsory school age fails to attend school regularly, the Local Education Authority can prosecute a parent unless the parent can demonstrate that:-

- the pupil was absent with leave granted by the school
- the pupil was ill or prevented from attending by some unavoidable cause
- the absence occurred on a day set aside for religious observance
- the nearest appropriate school with available places is beyond the prescribed walking distance and no transport has been provided by the LEA. (The limits for walking distance are 2 miles for children under 8 and 3 miles for children aged 8 and over).

Failure to ensure regular attendance in such a case is a criminal offence that carries a maximum penalty of a fine of £1,000 per parent, per child, or, in more serious cases, a fine of up to £2,500 per parent, per child and/or up to 3 months imprisonment.

Alternatively a Fixed Penalty Notice can be issued by the Local Authority to address persistent unauthorised absence. If paid within 28 days the fine is £60. If paid after 28 days but within 42 days the fine is £120. If the penalty is not paid in full by the 43rd day then legal action can result.

The Education ~~Support~~[Social Work](#) Service wishes to support you to bring about an improvement in your child's attendance, without the need to take legal action against you.

If this date is inconvenient please contact the school on XXXXXXXX to arrange a mutually convenient date.

I look forward to meeting you.

Yours sincerely,

Head Teacher

Appendix 9 – Record of meeting

Attendance Support Meeting

Date of meeting:	Name:	Date of birth:
School:	Year	Attendance: Sessions late:
What are the specific issues impacting upon school attendance in each of the following areas?		
<u>School</u>	<u>Home</u>	<u>Community</u>
<u>Strengths</u>		
Actions/services to address the specific issues identified above.	By Whom	When
1.		
2.		

3.		
4.		
5.		

Signatures

School	Parent/carer	Pupil	Other agency

Date of review meeting:

Appendix 10 – End of term absences letter

«salutation»

«address_block»

«date_of_printing»

Dear «salutation»

Name of Pupil: «chosen_forename» «chosen_surname» «reg»

I am aware that «chosen_forename» has been absent recently at the end of the last half term and felt that I should draw your attention to it as soon as possible.

The attendance level is «percentage_attendance»%.

Your child's academic attainment suffers if they miss school frequently. There may be a valid reason why this absence occurred but we as a school are keen to work with both pupils and parents to avoid absences becoming regular, especially at the end of half-terms. There are only 190 school days with 175 non-school days, therefore every day in school is vital.

If you felt that it would help to discuss the matter with me, then please contact me and let me know when you are available and I will make arrangements to see you.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

Education Social Work Service Attendance meeting Referral form

Electronic Version

The information contained on this form is confidential to the child, individuals with parental responsibility for the child, and those people professionally involved with the child.

Information on this form will be kept in line with Wrexham's Data Protection Policy.

When completed please send to ESW@wrexham.gov.uk

Please note incomplete forms will not be processed and will be returned to the referrer



School: - _____

Name	Date of Birth	Attendance %	Attendance letters 1, 2& 3 sent and phone call attempted? Yes or No

For information as to how Wrexham County Borough Council handles personal data, please see our Privacy Notices on our website: www.wrexham.gov.uk

I gael rhagor o wybodaeth am sut mae Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Wrecsam yn trin data personol, darllenwch ein Hysbysiadau Preifatrwydd ar ein gwefan: www.wrecsam.gov.uk

Education Social Work Service

Referral form

Hard Copy version

The information contained on this form is confidential to the child, individuals with parental responsibility for the child, and those people professionally involved with the child.

Information on this form will be kept in line with Wrexham's Data Protection Policy.

When completed please send to ESW@wrexham.gov.uk

Please note incomplete forms will not be processed and will be returned to the referrer



Name of pupil:

Date of birth:

Age:

School:

Address:

Any known risk at the address: Yes No

Details:

Home Telephone:

Looked After Child: Yes No Free school meals: Yes No

Details of any Additional Learning Needs:

Details of any current involvement with Children's Services:

Please include name of social worker if known:

Names of those with parental responsibility:

Name	Relationship to child	Address (if different to above)	Telephone number

Parents' preferred language of communication:

PSP in place: Yes No

Current attendance figure:

Number of day's exclusion and reason for exclusion this academic year:

Reason for referral: Attendance Exclusion Safeguarding/Wellbeing

What is being requested and why?

Referral completed by:

Name: Designation:

School: Date:

Contact email: Contact number:

Outcome (to be completed by office staff)

Referral number:

Allocated to ESW

Further information requested

Advice given – no need for allocation

For information as to how Wrexham County Borough Council handles personal data, please see our Privacy Notices on our website: www.wrexham.gov.uk

I gael rhagor o wybodaeth am sut mae Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Wrecsam yn trin data personol, darllenwch ein Hysbysiadau Preifatrwydd ar ein gwefan: www.wrecsam.gov.uk