



Welshpool High School
Ysgol Uwchradd Y Trallwng

Raising Achievement By Raising Expectations

Codi Cyrhaeddiad Trwy Godi Disgwyliadau

Welshpool High School

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

Date Reviewed: March 2026

Date for Review: March 2027

Signed:
Chair of Governing Body

Date: 19/03/2026

Signed:
Headteacher

Date: 19/03/2026

DESIGNATED STAFF MEMBER WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR MONITORING ATTENDANCE

NAME: MR JAMIE LOXAM
CONTACT NUMBER: 01938 552014

DEPUTY STAFF MEMBER WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR MONITORING ATTENDANCE AT THE SCHOOL

NAME: MISS JULIE HAYCOCK
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NOMINATED MEMBER OF THE GOVERNING BODY FOR MONITORING ATTENDANCE

NAME: MR GRAHAM BREEZE (Link Governor)

Contacts within the Local Authority

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Reporting pupil absence

ATTENDANCE CONTACT NUMBER: 01938 552014 (extension line 4)

MISSION STATEMENT

Welshpool High School is committed to ensuring the highest standards of attendance and punctuality for all pupils, in order to fulfil our vision of 'raising attainment by raising expectations'.

RATIONALE

- The school bases its attendance policy on the guidelines as set out by the PCC.
- Whilst the legal responsibility for regular school attendance rests with parents, the school shares with them, and the local authority (LA), responsibility for encouraging good attendance and improving poor attendance.
- Statutory obligation apart, the school is committed to improvements in attendance standards as a direct stimulus to raising pupil achievement.
- Poor attendance is destructive to educational achievement, undermines the well-being of each pupil and demoralises staff.

OBJECTIVES

- To promote good attendance as this is vital to educational achievement.
- To convey clearly to parents and pupils that:
 - regular attendance is essential.
 - unauthorised absence and/or persistent lateness is not acceptable.
 - only the Headteacher in the context of the law can approve absence.
 - parental condoned, unjustifiable absence will be investigated and will be recorded as unauthorised absence.
- The school is required by law to keep records of attendance which:
 - clearly distinguish between authorised and unauthorised absence by pupil.
 - provide accurate information on actual attendance to enable monitoring and evaluation of school attendance rates through centrally held statistics.
- To build on existing good practice that fosters a positive attitude to good attendance by:
 - responding rapidly to pupil absence.
 - recognising pupils who maintain 'excellent', 'good' and 'improving' attendance records.
- To be sensitive to situations where regular attendance patterns are disrupted by external factors such as family bereavement.

STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES

The legal framework governing attendance is set by the Education Acts and their associated regulations (which relate to schools and Pupil Referral Units).

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that "...the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/ her to receive full time education suitable to his/ her age, aptitude and ability and to any special education needs he/she may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise...".

Section 444 further states "...the parent of a child of compulsory school age registered at school and failing to attend regularly is guilty of an offence punishable by law...".

Compulsory school age means that children and young people should attend school from the start of the first term commencing after their fifth birthday and remain compulsory school age until after the last Friday in June of the school year in which they have their 16th birthday.

An offence is not committed if it can be demonstrated that:

- the pupil was absent with leave (authorised absence).
- the pupil was ill or prevented from attending by an unavoidable cause.
- the absence occurred on a day set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil/parent belongs.
- the school is not within the prescribed walking distance of the pupil's home and suitable transport arrangements have not been made by the LA. The law relating to walking distance effectively is defined as two miles for pupils under eight and three miles for all other pupils. Distance will be measured by nearest available walking route.

Absence from the school will be authorised if it is for the following reasons:

- sickness of a severity meaning the pupil cannot attend school.
- unavoidable medical or dental appointments.
- days of religious observance.
- exceptional family circumstances.

Absence from school will not be authorised for (this is not an exhaustive list):

- shopping.
- haircuts.
- missed bus.
- oversleeping.
- no uniform.
- looking after brothers, sisters or unwell parents.
- minding the house.
- birthdays.
- holidays/day trips taken in term time.

The Welsh Government (WG) Education (Penalty Notice) (Wales) Regulations 2013 states that Local Authorities (LAs) are required by law to adhere to the Education Act 1996 section 444 to include Penalty Charge Notices as one of the interventions to promote better school attendance.

Sections 444A and 444B of the Education Act 1996 provide that certain cases of unauthorised absence can be dealt with by way of a Penalty Charge Notice. A Penalty Charge Notice is a financial penalty of up to £120 and may be issued to parent(s)/carer(s) as a result of a pupil's regular non-attendance at school/education provision.

PRACTICE, PROCEDURES AND PROMOTING GOOD ATTENDANCE

Monitoring and improving attendance need a whole-system approach. Improving attendance is a continuous process that begins with developing trusting relationships between school staff and pupils and fostering a strong partnership with parents and carers.

Clear systems and procedures will govern response to all pupil absence. The school adheres to the descriptors received from PCC. See Appendix 1.

The school encourages good attendance and punctuality by:

- Ensuring that our pupils are aware of the importance of good attendance and how this will benefit them, both now and in the future.
- Offering reward schemes for pupils who have high levels of attendance, no unauthorised absence and/or have shown to significantly improve their attendance rates.
- Using a variety of strategies to intervene at an early stage to encourage improved attendance of individual pupils and assist to overcome any barriers that may be preventing the expected level of attendance.
- Creating a caring and nurturing environment whereby pupils' feel safe and appreciated as young adults.
- Developing positive relationships with parents/carers and external agencies working with the family/pupil.
- Working closely with multi agency colleagues and the Education Inclusion Service.
- Working closely with feeder primary schools to support transition.
- Monitoring and evaluating the strategies adopted by the school.
- Making its policy for attendance clear to parents and pupils.
- Communicating the importance of attendance through assemblies, the school prospectus, newsletters and the school website.

SPECIFIC ACTIONS

The school will also:

- Ensure that all staff are aware of the registration procedures, registration regulations and education law relating to school attendance.
- Complete school registers at the start of the morning session and afternoon session
- Promote positive staff attitudes to pupils returning after absence.
- Use their interventions to improve individual pupil/sub-group attendance.
- Have 'eyes on' a pupil who has been absent from school for more than ten school days. This includes undertaking home visits where contact is not possible at school or in the community.
- Make a referral to the Education Welfare Service for support, advice and guidance when the school has exhausted all other reasonable methods. Ultimately, if an attendance matter cannot be resolved by the school and the appropriate steps have been followed, then a referral will be made to the EWS for further investigation.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS AND CARERS

Parents and Carers are responsible in law for ensuring that their children attend the school at which they are registered, regularly, on time, properly dressed and in a fit condition to learn (they are also responsible for ensuring that their children stay at school once they have registered).

Parents and Carers can do a great deal to support the regular and punctual attendance of their children. They can:

- a) take an active interest in their child's school life and work.
- b) attend parents' evenings and other school events.
- c) ensure that their child completes homework and goes to bed at an appropriate time.
- d) be aware of letters from school which are sent home.
- e) ensure that their child arrives at school on time (8.55 am) each day.
- f) make all medical and dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible.
- g) ensure that their child only misses school for reasons which are unavoidable or justified, such as illness or days of religious observance.
- h) always notify the school as soon as possible - preferably on the first morning of any absence.
- i) avoid booking family holidays during term-time.
- j) talk to the school if they are concerned that their child may be reluctant to attend.

FIRST DAY ABSENCE PROCEDURES

- Parents and carers are reminded that they should contact the school by 8.55 am if their child is not able to attend school on that day. Parents and carers must state the full reason for the child's non-attendance (not just "feeling unwell") and indicate the likely date they will return to school.
- Parents and carers should be prepared for the members of school staff to ask questions about the pupil's condition, the patterns or trends in their absences and any treatment they may be receiving.
- If a parent or carer does not contact the school, staff will try to find out the specific reason for non-attendance as soon as possible on the first day of absence. Once the specific information is received, the register will be amended to reflect the appropriate absence code (see Appendix 1).
- If no appropriate reason is given for the absence, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

ABSENCE - SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

- Supporting evidence or communication received from parents/carers explaining the reason for the absence will be recorded.
- Parents and carers should be made aware that only the Headteacher (or an appropriately delegated member of the Strategic Leadership Team) can authorise an absence.
- Further information (such as a letter from a GP or consultant) may be requested to support reasons given for absence.

MEDICAL AND ILLNESS ABSENCE

- Where a pupil requires a routine medical appointment (such as a dentist appointment), these should be made outside of the school day. If this is not possible, a copy of the appointment letter should be provided to the school ahead of the appointment date. The parent/carer should try to ensure that the pupil attends school some of the day, where possible.
- If a pupil is repeatedly absent due to illness, the school may request supporting evidence that the pupil is receiving the necessary medical treatment. An appointment card, consultant letter, photograph of prescription medication, would all suffice as medical evidence. Without the necessary evidence, the school may notify the parent or carer that all future absences will be unauthorised until the necessary medical evidence has been provided, and a referral to the Education Welfare Service may be made.
- In addition, some pupils may require additional provision and support where their known medical needs have a long-term and persistent impact on their attendance. Examples could include, but are not limited to:
 - Recuperation following a hospital stay or operation.
 - A longer period of illness (such as glandular fever).
 - Conditions for which regular appointments or treatments are unavoidable (such as kidney dialysis, chemotherapy, radiotherapy, etc.).
- The school will provide appropriate support on a case-by-case basis. This may include seeking additional advice, guidance, support or provision from the local authority.

REINTEGRATION FOLLOWING LONG TERM ABSENCE

- The school will welcome back all pupils returning from an absence. This will include supporting the pupil to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other pupils.
- If the pupil has been absent for a considerable period of time, a meeting will be organised to ensure that they are well supported with the transition back to school. In some cases, a reintegration plan will be used to meet the needs of the individual.

ATTENDANCE INITIATIVES

- The school will raise the awareness of school attendance, promote good attendance and tackle unauthorised absence.
- The school will use a recognition and rewards system to promote high levels of attendance by rewarding pupils who have excellent or improving attendance.

- The school will work with other agencies, including the local authority, on general school attendance matters. Additionally, the school will seek advice and guidance from, and make referrals to, appropriate agencies to support individual pupils.
- The school will work closely with feeder primary schools to support transition

REGISTRATION

- Schools are required under the Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 to take an attendance register twice a day, at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. The accuracy of the register is important to support any statutory interventions that may be required. It should be noted that it is an offence not to maintain accurate registers.
- The register is a legal document and must be kept accurately. The register may be requested in a court of law as evidence in a prosecution for non-attendance. It will also be used for end of term reports, records of achievement and reference requests, and information for other schools, LAs and external agencies.
- Any pupil who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period will have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity (attendance out of school). Only the Headteacher, or a member of staff acting on their behalf, can authorise absence.
- No pupil should be marked present unless actually in attendance at school or other agreed educational activity.
- The register should not have missing marks.
- When a pupil misses registration, they should be marked as an unauthorised absence, unless a medical letter/phone call by parent is received and deemed to be genuine.
- Pupils should not have access to the register.
- The Headteacher is the only person who can authorise that a pupil be removed from the register - this can only be done with the agreement of the LA.
- In addition to twice daily registration in form groups, a class register is taken for every lesson throughout the day. These are referred to/checked by the Head of Year to identify possible truancy and any pupil found to have missed a lesson will receive a sanction.

LATENESS

- A pupil's punctuality is a legal requirement and the parent of a pupil who is persistently late is guilty of an offence. The law treats persistent lateness in the same way as irregular attendance and parents can be prosecuted if persistent late arrival is not resolved.
- Morning registration will take place at the start of school at 8.55am. The registers will remain open for a maximum of 30 minutes from this start time, in accordance with Welsh Government guidance.
- Pupils arriving after the start of school but before the end of the 20-minute registration period will be coded as late (L code). Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence (U code) unless there is an acceptable explanation i.e. school transport was delayed. In addition, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered (M code).
- Afternoon registration will be at 1.50 pm and any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as present but late (L code) if they arrive within 30 minutes or an unauthorised absence (U code) if they arrive more than 30 minutes after the start of the afternoon session.
- The school will follow-up on lateness with the pupil and/or their parent/carer via email/telephone/letter home.
- If a pupil is persistently late, the school will communicate with home, call parental meetings, apply sanctions and/or offer support to the pupil.
- If a pupil continues to be persistently late, a fixed penalty notice could be issued.

HOLIDAYS

- Holidays during term time should be avoided as they can have an impact on learning.
- Parents/carers should apply in advance to take holidays in term time: the fact that holiday has been booked does not automatically give permission. If the Headteacher doesn't agree and the family goes anyway, it's an unauthorised absence. The Headteacher is not obliged to authorise holiday absence, and there is no minimum entitlement of holiday absence.
- The Headteacher has the discretion to authorise absences for up to 10 days in a school year. Part of the decision-making process will include a review of the pupil's absences to date. If a pupil is away for longer than agreed, the period outside the agreed dates will be an unauthorised absence. There is no right to appeal: the decision of the Headteacher is final.
- Parents and carers are advised that a fixed penalty notice may be issued by the local authority when a holiday or leave of absence has been taken which has not been authorised by the school. The local authority's Code of Conduct for issuing Fixed Penalty Notices can be obtained from the local authority's website or the Education Welfare Service.

PERSISTENT ABSENCE

- The school will work proactively to identify emerging persistent absence. Where a pattern begins to develop, the school will arrange a meeting and offer strategies to support the pupil/family.
- The Welsh Government defines persistent absence as below 90%.
- The local authority defines severe persistent absence as below 50%.
- The use of the terms persistent and severe absence helps to clearly define the difference between those pupils who are occasionally absent and those pupils who are seen in school far less frequently. This supports schools to target interventions and responses effectively as well as understand where safeguarding risks may be heightened.

MULTI-AGENCY WORKING

The Local Authority has a statutory duty to ensure that any pupil for whom they are responsible is receiving suitable education and, if a registered pupil at school, this means attending school regularly and on time.

The Education Welfare Service (EWS)

- The EWS is committed to the fundamental principle, that early intervention strategies and partnership working, is crucial to ensure the protection and wellbeing of all children and young people.
- Sometimes it will be necessary for the school to contact the EWS about an individual pupil to seek advice, guidance and support to improve their attendance. This may involve the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) contacting the family and/or making a home visit. Parents/carers, and the pupil where appropriate, may also be invited to a meeting with the school and the Education Welfare Officer.

Youth Service (Secondary Schools)

- The Youth Service will focus on working with young people aged 11 years and above to raise self-esteem, build confidence, support peer-to-peer working, to assist integration into education. The Youth Service will support a young person to overcome social and emotional barriers they are facing that are preventing them from fully engaging in school life and may be limiting their attendance.

Our school will also work with other agencies which may include:

- School-based counselling service (Area 43)
- Family Liaison Officer
- CAMHS In-reach
- Early Help
- School Nursing

- Integrated Disability Service
- Educational Psychology Service (in cases of Emotionally Based School Avoidance)
- Youth Justice Service

FIXED PENALTY FOR NON-ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL

The school may, in line with the local authority's Code of Conduct, request the local authority to issue a fixed penalty notice where a parent/carer has failed to secure their child's regular attendance at school. Welshpool High School will follow the Attendance Pathway (see Appendix 2) to support pupils and parents/carers to help avoid fixed penalty notices.

DUAL REGISTRATION

- Where a pupil attends another school, the Pupil Referral Unit or receives medical tuition, they will be dual registered with both the school and the other provider. The main school will be whichever the child attends for more than 50% of their time. The other will be the subsidiary.
- Both schools and provisions must maintain an accurate register. The school will liaise with the other education provider daily to identify pupils who are absent and mark the register accordingly.
- If the pupil attends the setting, the provider where they attend will mark them as present (/ or \ code) and the school will mark the register with a D code (which counts as present). If they are absent, the education provider and the school will both mark the register with the appropriate absence code.
- If a pupil attends a college course or alternative provision, or has extended work experience, this is not a dual registration. The school will liaise with the college, provider or work experience placement on a weekly basis to identify pupils who are absent and mark the register accordingly. If the pupil attends the course or provision, the register will be marked with a B code, or a W code for work experience. If they do not attend, the appropriate absence code will be used.

THE DESIGNATED MEMBERS OF STAFF

Attendance is the responsibility of all staff. There is, however, a designated member of staff for attendance matters and all staff can discuss individual pupil attendance with this person.

The Designated Member of Staff for Attendance:

- monitors the school's registers.
- liaises with teaching staff, in particular Heads of Year.
- meets with the EWO on a regular pre-arranged basis.
- refers to other agencies if appropriate.
- refers to the school nurse if there are doubts about the validity of an illness.
- oversees the use of standardised letters to parents addressing specific aspects of attendance and requiring parental response.
- arranges for an attendance meeting in the case of repeated, unexplained absences (school will consider inviting the named governor for attendance to such a meeting).
- ensures that the LA Officer's role is known and understood in school.
- Gathers and scrutinises attendance data.
- Monitors trends and patterns across cohorts of pupils.
- Identifies individuals or groups requiring interventions and helps evaluate their impact.
- Informs the Designated Safeguarding Person if a pupil on the child protection register is absent from school; this must be on the first day of absence.
- Contribute to directing resources for the best possible outcomes.

Form Tutors

- Are responsible for completing the morning registers fully and accurately.
- Record any details known to them about reasons for absence.
- Hold 'return to school' discussions with pupils after periods of absence to ascertain the reason and to understand if there are any barriers to the pupil fully engaging in their education or if they require any additional support.

Subject Teachers

- Be responsible for completing lessons registers accurately at the start of the lesson.
- Supporting pupils by giving them opportunities to catch up on work missed through absence

Attendance Officer/Attendance Administrator

- Undertake the daily operational duties of the attendance team.
- Follow up on any unmarked registers.
- Escalate concerns about registers to the attendance lead.
- Undertake first day calling every day for a pupil whose family has not made contact; collate and log any supporting evidence.
- Flag any first-day absences of pupils on the child protection register or are Looked After with the designated safeguarding person.
- Chase any outstanding forms, absence notes, holiday request forms etc.
- Compile data for analysis by the attendance lead, form tutors and heads of year/progress leads.
- Make referrals to the Education Welfare Service where appropriate.

Designated Safeguarding Person

- If a pupil is registered as a Child Looked After or on the Child Protection Plan and is absent from school without reason, then the school should contact the allocated Social Worker or Social Services as soon as possible.

Designated Teacher for Children Looked After

- Ensure that the workers for pupils who are looked after are informed of any absences on the first day of absence.
- Ensure that the home authority's virtual school/children looked after, education co-ordinator are kept informed of the attendance of children looked after in the school.

Headteacher

- Make the final decision on coding, including authorisation or not of holidays.

TARGET SETTING, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

A system for analysing school attendance has been established where the Headteacher will present attendance data in each of the termly reports to the Governing body and/or Local Authority. The school and Governing body will make use of a range of attendance data (including sub-groups and relevant trends) when reviewing its performance.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

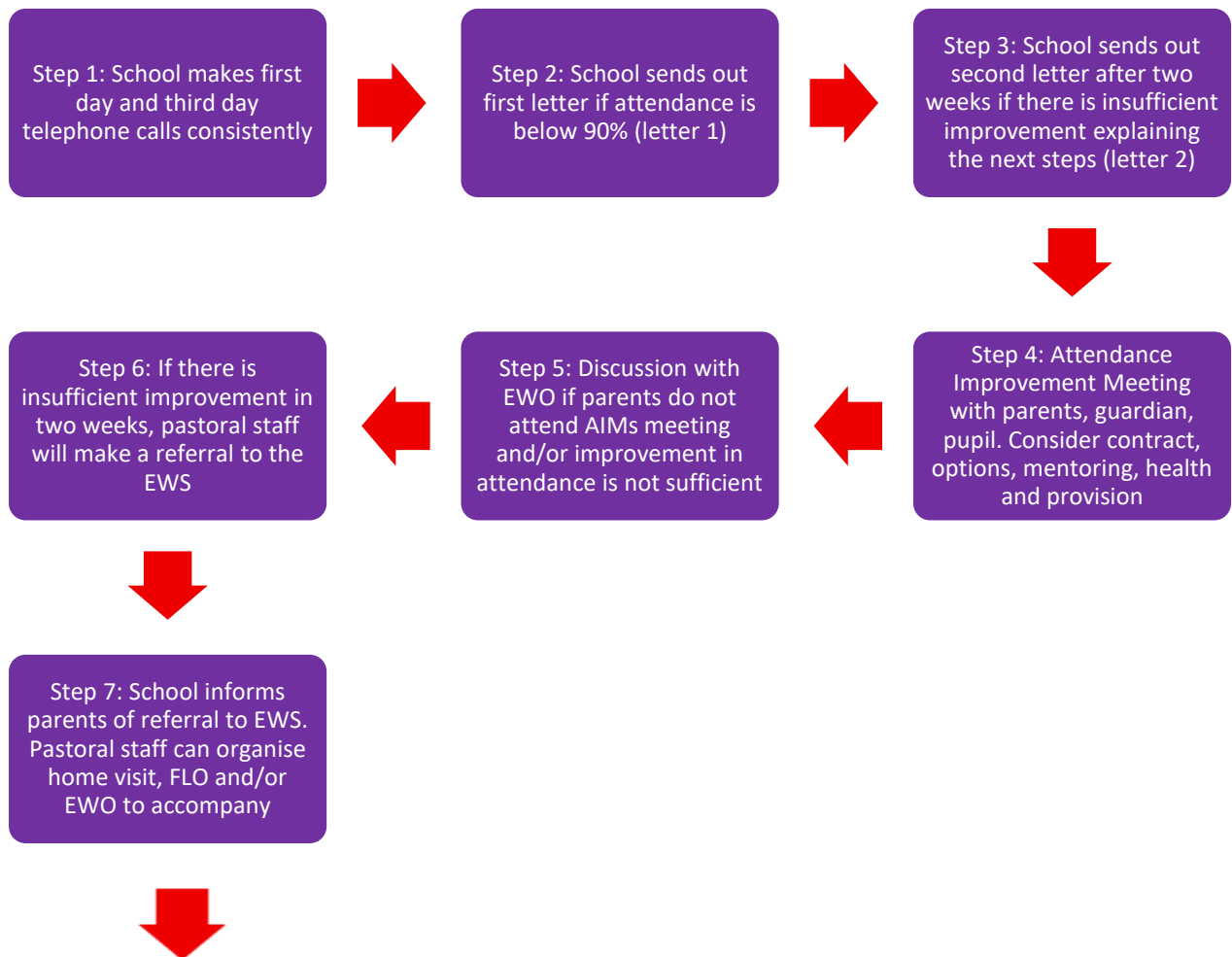
APPENDIX 1: Registration Codes

The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	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)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	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	Un-timetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	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

APPENDIX 2: Attendance Pathway

Welshpool High School - Attendance Pathway



Step 8

When the EWS is unable to support/see improvement, the EWO will communicate with the school and key pastoral staff to ask if the school would like to proceed with an FPN.

Equally, the school can also make this request.

Both the school and the EWO to collate and share data that will be submitted to the FPN panel.

Attendance Overview



Opportunities for Support/Interventions

