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THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL

Attendance Policy and Procedure

Education, Children and Families Committee

25 January 2011

1 Purpose of report

1.1 To seek agreement to the attached Attendance Policy and Procedure.

2 Summary

2.1 The policy replaces Head Teacher Guidelines 10 and has been drawn up to take account of legislation to promote school attendance and manage absence. It was drawn up by a partnership working group representing head teachers, education psychologists, social work, central managers, education welfare service and outreach teaching service.

2.2 This is one of a range of strategies which are being put in place to manage attendance and monitor absence. In doing this our aim is that all of our children and young people have the opportunity to become successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens who make positive contributions to their communities.

2.3 The progress made in managing attendance and monitoring absence shows significant commitment from headteachers, teachers and partnership agencies to meet the needs of all children including those with additional support needs.

3 Main report

3.1 The policy strengthens guidance and provides a clear and consistent framework, using a pathways approach, for all staff to promote attendance and manage absence in line with "Getting it Right for Every Child". It is intended that the policy will bring greater clarity to schools and other agencies in working with children and young people.

3.2 Other changes clarify and/ or strengthen the pathways to support in the managing and monitoring of attendance and absence.

4 Financial Implications

4.1 There are no financial implications at present.

5 Environmental Impact

5.1 There are no adverse environmental impacts arising from this report.

6 Recommendations

Committee is requested to:

6.1 Agree the policy and that it is disseminated.

6.2 Receive a progress report in March 2011 on improving attendance in Edinburgh Schools.

Gillian Tee
Director of Children and Families

Appendices	Appendix 1 - Attendance Policy Appendix 2 - Attendance Procedure
Contact/tel	Maria Plant Inclusion Coordinator Tel: 0131 469 6107 Moyra Wilson Head of Inclusion and Pupil Support Tel: 0131 469 3066
Wards affected	All
Single Outcome Agreement	Supports National Outcome 4- 'Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.' Supports Local Outcomes – 'Children and young people are successful learners.' 'Young people are confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.'
Background Papers	Attendance Policy and Procedure

POLICY

Getting It Right for Every Child

Promoting Attendance and Managing Absence

1. PURPOSE

This policy sits within a suite of policies which all promote a positive ethos of inclusion. The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear and consistent framework for all staff to promote attendance and manage absence in line with 'Getting it Right for every Child' and 'Included Engaged and Involved – part 1: attendance in Scottish schools"

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all Children and Families department staff, parents and pupils.

3. DEFINITIONS

Throughout the policy the following terms apply:

- **Looked After Children** describes all children and young people who are **Looked After at home[LAC]** i.e. subject to a supervision requirement with no condition of residence through the Children's Hearing system or where they are **Looked After away from home[LAAC]** i.e. subject to a supervision requirement with a condition of residence through the Children's Hearing system, or are provided with accommodation under section 25 [voluntary agreement] or is the subject of a Parental Responsibility Order [section 86].

- **Parents/Carers** describes all those with direct responsibility for the care and welfare of children and young people, this would include an unmarried father who is caring for a child, a parent who is liable to maintain a child, a foster parent [for the duration of the child's foster placement].

- **Pupils** describe all children and young people who are in our schools.

- **Schools** describes all schools and early years' establishments managed by City of Edinburgh Council, partner providers and school placements commissioned by the authority.

- **Staff** describes all Children and Families staff.

- **Getting it Right for Every Child** promotes a shared approach to working and building solutions around children and families. It enables children to get the help when they need it. It also supports a positive shift in culture, systems and practice.

- **Included engaged and Involved** promotes what schools and local authorities can do to promote attendance and manage absence to make sure all young people are included engaged and involved in their education

4. POLICY STATEMENT

Attendance should be clearly linked to schools overall approaches to promoting positive behaviour and approaches to providing guidance and pastoral care.

The aims of the policy and procedures are to:

- improve the attendance of all pupils

- make certain engagement and attendance is a priority for pupils, parents and school staff to ensure that all pupils are successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors

- guarantee consistency in dealing with issues of attendance and absence

- ensure the accurate recording of pupils' attendance and absence in accordance with Scottish Government guidance.

4.1 Promoting Attendance

Our vision is that all schools will promote attendance, manage absence and support every pupil to achieve their full potential. All schools should:

- Have an attendance policy

- Have rigorous and reliable attendance monitoring and recording processes

- Have an early and staged response /intervention to school absence

- Promote, celebrate and reward positive attendance patterns

- Promote an ethos of safety, support and care for all pupils and families

- Engage in partnership working with pupils and parent to raise awareness of responsibilities and expectations regarding school attendance

- Engage in partnership working with community services, voluntary agencies to provide alternative learning experiences and Further Education

4.2 Managing Absence

High standards of pastoral care will enable staff to respond quickly to and follow up on absence, ensure children are safe and well, develop positive relationships and be aware of Children Missing within Child Protection procedures. For example

Recording absence and pupil records

Accurate and timely recording of attendance and absence is a key responsibility of schools.

These records are a legal obligation and also in the generation of management information. They constitute the certificate of attendance presented in any court proceedings and may form part of the evidence to the Children's reporter which could constitute grounds for compulsory supervision

If a parent has not advised the school their child will be absent then it must be assumed they are unaware of the absence and the pupil is missing or truanting. This should be recorded as an unauthorised absence until an explanation is received.

Lateness
Persistent lateness may be a sign of difficulty that the school can then try to support

Authorised absences
Schools may authorise absence when families are experiencing exceptional domestic circumstances

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Ill Health
To ensure that children can access education alternative arrangements must be in place, through outreach teaching or other provision.

Gypsies and Travellers
These children may travel as part of their tradition, their absence should be authorised at their "base school".

Religious Observance
Children of all faiths may take authorised absence to enable them to participate in religious observance

Holiday during term time
Schools will not normally give a family permission to take pupils out of school for holidays.

Unauthorised absences
Schools must record absence as unauthorised when there is no satisfactory reason

Looked After at home[LAC] / Looked After away from home[LAAC]
The designated senior manager within the school should be aware of any particular issue which may impact on attendance and should look to find ways of supporting the young person through these.

Family returning to country of origin

If this lasts for more than 4 weeks the school would normally remove the pupil from the roll in order not to be penalised in terms of its attendance record. However in these circumstances, pupils should be considered as "Extended leave with parental consent". this allows them to remain on the school register, without the school being penalised.

Children Missing from Education

Where there is strong suspicion that the family's whereabouts are not known and extensive local authority searches and risk assessments have been carried out, the case should be referred to the Children Missing in Education service. If there were child protection concerns, the child protection protocols would be followed.

4.3 GIRFEC

Getting it right for every child is Scotland's national change programme for improving outcomes for children. In Edinburgh joined up services will ensure "children, young people and families get the right help at the right time, for the right length of time".

Multi Agency Planning

In the first instance the named person or delegated practitioner will be made aware of any persistent or unexplained absence.

The named person or delegated practitioner will offer support to the pupil and their parent/ carer. At this stage the EWO may be involved. Consideration should be given to the core questions on the named person check list to decide whether to continue monitoring or initiate an Integrated Assessment. The results of the Integrated Assessment may be to, continue to monitor, refer to a specialist assessment or call a child/ young person's planning meeting. If the pupil becomes the subject of a planning meeting a Lead Professional will be appointed to co-

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ordinate their support and ensure that this is regularly reviewed. The planning meeting will be solution focused and will be held with full participation from the pupil and their parent/carer.

4.4 Equalities

Full consideration is given to promoting equality and preventing discrimination with regard to children's needs arising from their gender, ethnicity, religion, culture, sexual orientation, health abilities and disabilities.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

The Scottish Government sets out the legislative position and provides advice on the roles and responsibilities of local authorities with respect to attendance and absence in "Included, Engaged and Involved ". This policy and related procedures sets out roles and responsibilities for the, authority, school staff, parents and pupils.

5.1 General Principles

- The City of Edinburgh Council acknowledges the essential partnership between schools and parents for support, behaviour and guidance of pupils. Pupils' views must also be taken into account in accordance with the principles set out in the Lothian Children's Family Charter.

- In implementing council guidelines and procedures, Head Teachers and other agencies must act in the child's best interests. The welfare of the individual pupil is paramount.

- The Authority's attendance rules apply to all schools

- The Authority's arrangements for leaving dates for pupils who have reached age sixteen between 1st March and the and 30th September is the 31st May and the end of the Christmas term for those who have reached age sixteen between 1st Oct and the end of February.

5.2 Authority responsibilities

- All schools use SEEMIS the school management information system to record attendance and absence

- Schools have in place policies and procedures regarding the management of pupils' attendance and absence

- A consistency of approach to help pupils and parents understand expectations through transitions

- Alternative arrangements to support the learning of children with prolonged ill-health are in place

- That a child or young person with additional support needs and has adequate and efficient provision and co-ordinate plans to meet those needs.

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- Annual information on attendances and absences in schools is provided to the Secretary of State

- Parents are provided with information regarding attendance.

5.3 Children and Families responsibilities

- Monitoring levels of attendance at schools

- Publishing data on school attendance and school leaver destinations as required by the Scottish Executive Education Department (SEED)

- Supplying the SEED with ScotXed data.

- Managing a support service which aims to prevent non-attendance and take appropriate action where such behaviour has developed;

- Taking legal action where necessary in cases of persistent non-attendance at school.

5.4 School responsibilities

- Attendance and absence are recorded per half day session, including the attendance of pupils who are late.

- Secondary schools with attendance monitoring taking place in every period, monitor absence "hotspots" effectively.

- Information recorded should be followed up immediately to ensure pupils are safe and well

- Parents are contacted as soon as an absence is noted to help ensure that immediate action can be taken to find any pupils 'missing' from school. If attempts to contact the parent are unsuccessful then emergency contacts should be used.

- The SEEMIS system is used to record absence. This school information will be required to substantiate the Authority's case in a court of law and may be used by the Reporter to the Children's Panel to establish grounds for a Children's Hearing.

- Social Work are notified by telephone of the absence of any child who is on the Council's Child Protection Register. It will be for the Duty or case Social Worker to decide on the required subsequent course of action and to inform the school of that decision.

- Be aware of early signs of concern which may lead to absenteeism and allow preventative support to be arranged

- Develop positive relationships with pupils and parents to ensure difficulties are discussed and resolved

- Support reintegration into learning from absence.

- Send regular and positive communications of the expectations on attendance to Parents.

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- The collaborative working of a range of services and agencies at an early stage is vital.

5.5 Education Welfare responsibilities

- The welfare officer reports to and attends , Attendance Committees and meetings with the Children's Panel.

- The welfare officer has a key role in linking between home and school to assist in re-engaging the child and parent/carer with school.

- Where appropriate the welfare officer will make a home visit.

5.6 Parental responsibilities

- The responsibility for a child's education rests with their parent. Once a child/young person is enrolled at an authority school the law states that the child must attend school unless permission has been given by the authority to withdraw the child / young person from school.

- Inform the school if their child will be absent and provide current emergency contact information.

5.7 Pupils responsibilities

- Pupils are required to attend regularly and on time.

6. LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

Acts and Regulations:

- The Schools General (Scotland) Regulations 1975 as amended by Education (Scotland) Act 1976

- The Education (Schools and Placing Information) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 1993, and

- The Education (Scotland) Act 1980 Sections 30-44,135

- Education (Provision of Information as to Schools) (Scotland) Regulations 1993.

- Standards in Scotland's Schools Etc Act 2000

Under this Legislation:

- It is the parent's duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly. The legislation details the action to be taken by an authority where a parent does not ensure their child's regular attendance.

- It shall be the duty of the parent of every child of school age to provide efficient education suitable to his age ability and aptitude either by causing him to attend a public school regularly or by other means.

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- The Authority is required to provide the Secretary of State with information on attendances and absences in schools annually.

- The Authority is required to provide parents with information on absences of their child's regular attendance.

- The Authority is required by law to have two leaving dates: 31 May and the end of the Christmas term.

- It shall be the right of every child of school age to be provided with school education by, or by virtue of arrangements made, or entered into, by, an education authority.

- The authority shall have due regard, so far as is reasonably practicable, to the views of the child or young person in decisions that significantly affect that child or young person, taking account of the child or young person's age and maturity.

- The definition of a parent "includes guardian and any person who is liable to maintain or has parental responsibilities (within the meaning of section (13) of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995) in relation to, or has care of a child or young person"

7. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS
Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
Schools Regulations Scotland Act 1974
Disability Discrimination Act 1995 as amended
Children Scotland Act 1995
Sex Discrimination Act 1975, 1986
Race Relations Act 1976 and Race Relations Amendment Act 2000
European Convention of Human Rights 1998
Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000
European Equal Treatment Directive 2000
Better Behaviour Better Learning 2001
Education [Disability Strategies and Pupils' Educational Records] [Scotland] Act 2002
Exclusion from Schools in Scotland: Guidance to Education Authorities Circular 08/03
CEC Violence to Employees Policy 2003
Education [Additional Support for Learning] [Scotland] Act 2004
In On the Act
Happy, Safe and Achieving their Potential 2005
A Curriculum for Excellence 2004
Ambitious, Excellent Schools 2004
Getting It Right for Every Child 2005
The Safe and Well handbook 2005
Positively Challenging Bullying, Racism and Discrimination 2006
Equality Act 2006
CEC Head teacher Guidelines: Admissions to Schools 2006
Getting it Right for Every Child 2004 - 2009
Parental Involvement Act 2007
Skills for Scotland, A Life Long Skills strategy 2007
Head teacher Guidelines on Making Reasonable Adaptation for Disabled Pupils
Included Engaged and Involved Part 1: attendance in Scottish Schools 2007
These Are Our Bairns 2008
Looked After Children: We can and must do better 2008
CEC Alternatives to Exclusion, Exclusion Procedures and Appendices
Included Engaged and Involved Part 2: a positive approach to managing school exclusions 2010

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Procedure

Promoting Attendance and Managing Absence

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1. PURPOSE

To provide a clear procedure for all staff on the promotion of attendance and the managing of absence

2. SCOPE

The procedure applies to all Children and Families department staff, parents and pupils

3. DEFINITIONS

- **Parents/Carers:** describes all those with direct responsibility for the care and welfare of children and young people, this would include an unmarried father who is caring for a child, a parent who is liable to maintain a child, a foster parent [for the duration of the child's foster placement].

- **Pupils:** describes all children and young people who are in our schools.

- **Schools:** describes all schools and early years' establishments managed by City of Edinburgh Council, partner providers and school placements commissioned by the authority.

- **Staff:** describes all Children and Families staff.

- **CME:** Children Missing in Education

- **S2S:** School 2 School transfer system facilitates the transfer of children's data when the receiving school is known

4. ACTIONS

4.1 Register of Admission and Withdrawal (School Roll)

4.1.1 A register of admission and withdrawal must be kept for each school. Although SEEMIS holds all information required, an information sheet showing brief details of admission and withdrawals should be kept for back-up. **A pupil may only be entered on one school register at any one time. Every new pupil is provisionally enrolled until they have physically arrived in the school.**

4.1.2 Where a pupil has been admitted to the school, the register should be entered with the full name and date of birth of the pupil. Where a secondary pupil attends another school for certain classes, **s/he should appear only on the register of her/his base school.**

4.1.3 Where a pupil has been withdrawn from the school, the register should be entered with the full name, date of birth and reason for withdrawal.

4.1.4 A pupil should be entered on the register as "withdrawn" from school:

(a) If s/he is known to be attending another school and confirmation has been received;

A pupil's name should normally be removed from the school roll once confirmation has been received from another school that the pupil has enrolled. Where the pupil has had a background of irregular attendance, the Head Teacher may wish to ask the Education Welfare Service to investigate or identify the support pathway to manage the absence. (Appendix A)

Promoting Attendance and Managing Absence

(b)   If s/he is of school age and has been withdrawn from the school by her/his parent with the consent of the Education Authority e.g. to be educated at home;

(c)   If s/he has been absent for a period of four consecutive weeks. This action should be taken **only on the advice of the Education Welfare Service;**

[The Education Welfare Service should be informed of all absences that appear to be for no satisfactory reason. It is the duty of the Education Welfare Service to assist in tracing the pupil and, at the earliest stage; consideration should be given to a possible referral to 'Children Missing from Education' (CME). Details of any child deemed as 'missing' from education should be passed to the CME Local Authority Designated Officer for their information before any investigation is carried out. This investigation would normally involve making contact with those named in Emergency contact details held in the school, enquiries with neighbours, and possibly Social Work and Housing, if they have been involved with the family. A report should then by forwarded to the Head Teacher and updated information passed to the Local Authority Designated Officer for full referral to CME to be actioned if necessary.]

(d)   Where special arrangements have been made for her/him by the Authority to receive her/his education elsewhere due to extraordinary circumstances (other than at an educational establishment);

(e)   S/he is attending college with no expectation that s/he will return to her/his base school;

(f)   S/he starts a college course in August/September, qualifying from the course after S/he has attained school leaving age (withdrawn from the register from the starting date of the college course).

4.1.5   A pupil should not be entered as "withdrawn" in the register where:

(a)   S/he is admitted to a hospital or to one of the Authority's support centres;

(b)   S/he attends an approved course, out with her/his base school (e.g. where a Secondary pupil attends another school or college for certain classes, see 4.1.2 and 4.3.3);

(c)   S/he has not reached the school leaving age, but is attending a college course and is expected to return to school (e.g. a college bridging course). The Education Welfare Service must be informed of this arrangement.

4.2   Removal from the Register

4.2.1 Removal from the school register will only be authorised when:

- It has been confirmed that a pupil has been enrolled in another school. This confirmation should be sought from others, e.g. the enrolling school, as well as from the parents.

    Confirmation has been sent from Headquarters to the school that permission has been granted for a pupil to be educated at home.

- Special arrangements have been agreed that a pupil will receive education elsewhere, other than at an educational establishment.

- A pupil has been absent for four consecutive weeks and, despite vigorous checks by the school and the Education Welfare Service, it has not been possible to trace the family. In such cases a referral should have been made to Children Missing from Education (CME) in order to continue the search for the missing pupil on a national level. Advice should be sought from the Senior Education Welfare Officer regarding removal from the school register in such cases.

The School to School Transfer System [S2S] will facilitate the transfer of children's data from school to school where the receiving school is known. However there are a number of pupils for whom the destination is unknown. When a destination school is unknown the pupil should be recorded as Code A on Seemis until another school notifies S2S that they have enrolled the pupil. The pupil should be kept on the school register until they are found or the school is authorised by the department to remove them.

If a pupil's whereabouts is unknown within a 4 week period, reference should be made to the Children Missing within Child Protection Procedures for guidance on appropriate action. In all cases appropriate arrangements should be made for the transfer of pupil records as described by the Authority's Child Protection Guidelines.

4.3 Maintaining the Register of Attendance

4.3.1 A pupil attendance register will be kept on SEEMIS.

4.3.2 For each morning and afternoon of any day that the school is open to pupils, the attendance register should be completed. The correct code entry should be made against the name of each pupil (see Appendix 3).

In SEEMIS each high school has the facility to record the attendance of individual pupils on a period by period basis. This facility will help identify pupils who are absent from classes throughout the school day. Any unexplained absences from individual class periods should be recorded using the code 'M' – Missing. If a pupil is recorded as missing from class for more than half of a morning or afternoon session then the code 'T' should be entered for the appropriate morning and/or afternoon session in the main recording system.

It is important to ensure that the correct code entry is made as these codes determine the number of recorded absences.

4.3.3 (a) A pupil is regarded as being present at school when s/he has the approval of the Education Authority to attend another establishment or to remain at home, e.g. for:

- An approved course of study;
- School camp / excursion or work experience;
- Study leave.

(b) A pupil should be regarded as being absent from school when s/he is not in attendance and is:

- Excluded;
- On holiday with parents; or
- Does not attend school for more than half of a morning or afternoon session.

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4.4   Absence from School

4.4.1   A pupil is absent if s/he fails to attend school for a period greater than half of the morning or afternoon session.

4.4.2   The Head Teacher should send an absence enquiry form to the parent when there is an unexplained absence. Parents should be encouraged to provide written notes of explanation. Registers should be updated as explanations are received, whether it is verbal communication or as a result of truancy call.

If no satisfactory explanation is received, or if the absence continues beyond a reasonable period, two weeks, then the Head Teacher should consider a formal referral to the Education Welfare Officer and whether to initiate an integrated assessment.

The Education Welfare Officer should be given a computer printout of the pupil's attendance, a white record card and any notes or medical certificates as well as an Education Welfare Service Initial Referral Form. A medical certificate cannot be requested from a general practitioner.

Any absences which are explained as 'medical' shall be recorded using either:

D (Self Certified) – If a note of explanation is received which is written and signed by the parent or guardian of the pupil.

F (Medically Certified) – If a note of explanation is received which is written and signed by a General Practitioner or Hospital Doctor or equivalent medical professional.

4.4.3   For pupils with reported medical absences where school refusal is suspected, every effort should be made to facilitate attendance. (Appendix B)

4.5   Exclusions

4.5.1   An exclusion imposed by the school and not the action of a pupil or parent, should, be recorded as Authorised Absence.   Where a pupil is undertaking off-site education as a part measure to address indiscipline, this should be categorised as Authorised Absence.

4.6   Unauthorised Absence

4.6.1   The category of Unauthorised Absence includes absence deriving from reasons such as:

- Unexplained Absence
- Truancy (unauthorised absence from school for any period as a result of premeditated or spontaneous action on the part of pupil, parent or both)
- Most family holidays during term time (see point 4.10)

4.7   Unsatisfactory Time-keeping

4.7.1   A pupil who arrives late for an opening will be recorded as an attendance under the following category:

Late Arrives during registration	attendance	category ¬
Late 1 Arrives before 50% of opening	attendance	category J
Late 2 Arrives after 50% of opening	authorised absence	category K

A record should be kept of when pupils arrive late, or leave early, and this situation should be managed through the normal school procedures.

4.7.2   In the case of persistent lateness each case should be looked at on its own merit to determine a pattern. Further action may be required i.e.

(a)   In the first instance, the Head Teacher should make every effort to obtain the parent's co-operation to ensure the pupil's punctuality. Head Teachers should, in writing, request the parent to come to the school to discuss the matter. The pupil should be included in this meeting (in accordance with the principles of the Lothian Children's Family Charter).

(b)   Once contact has been established with the parent, the Head Teacher should explain the procedure for dealing with persistent lateness. The Head Teacher should ask the parent to sign a written undertaking of her/his willingness to try to resolve the problem (see Appendix 4).

(c) Following (b) above, where either:

- Parents do not respond to the Head Teacher's request for a meeting;
or
- Do not give an undertaking of willingness to try to resolve the problem.

The Head Teacher should advise the parents in writing that the case will be referred to the Education Welfare Service. The Head Teacher must provide detailed records of the pupil's unsatisfactory time-keeping to the Education Welfare Service.

Where it has not been possible for the Head Teacher to contact parents, the Education Welfare Service should advise parents of the school and authority rules on punctuality.

(d) In exceptional circumstances, if following the involvement of the Education Welfare Service the matter has still not been resolved because contact has not been made the Head Teacher can ask for a letter to be sent to the parent, through the school Education Welfare Officer.

(e) Where the letter from the Director of Children and Families results in the initial contact with the parents, then step (b) above should be followed.

4.8   Unresolved Unsatisfactory Attendance

4.8.1   Each school is allocated to an Area Attendance Advisory Group which deals with cases of non-attendance which have not been resolved by the school. The Education Welfare Service prepares reports for and acts as Clerk to this Group. The Head Teacher provides the Group with updated information on the pupil's attendance.

4.8.2   Parent Councils (and others) may be represented in the membership of the Area Attendance Advisory Group in recognition that assistance in these matters is a function of Parent Council.

4.8.3   Cases are referred to the Area Attendance Advisory Group when all of the steps noted in 4.4 above have not resolved the non-attendance.

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4.9 Application for Absence due to Exceptional Domestic Circumstances (EDC)

4.9.1 Applications for absence due to EDC refer to a parent or guardian requesting exemption from school attendance for a child of **over** 14 years of age. Each case should be looked at own its own merit, no matter the age of the child and in consultation with the EWS

4.9.2 Absence related to EDC can be classified as either Authorised or Unauthorised.

Authorised absence (code Q) must be subject to approval by the EWO and covers situation such as:

- The period immediately after an accident or illness
- A period of serious or critical illness of a close relative
- A domestic crisis which causes serious disruption to the family home, causing temporary relocation.

Unauthorised absence (code R) must also be subject to approval by the EWO and would be used in cases where the amount of time for such absences is deemed inappropriate or unnecessary by the EWO.

As Education Authorities under section 40 of the SSSA 2000 Act must ensure young people within their catchment areas do not miss out on their entitlement to an education, a solution must be found for the long term educational needs of pupils with care responsibilities (Information on carers and young carers' entitlement to assessment can be found in the Health and Social Care Act 2001.) If a pupil is unable to attend school due to such responsibilities, and their absence from education will not be long term and therefore categorised as Authorised Absence, there is an expectation that additional support services will be accessed to support the pupil. However, where additional services have not been accessed and care responsibilities become long term, the absence should be categorised as Unauthorised Absence (code R – considered unreasonable by EWO).

4.9.4 The Council has delegated to the Director of Children and Families the power to grant leave of absence from school in relation to EDC.

4.9.6 All applications submitted by parents to the school for leave of absence for their child should be referred in the first instance to the School Education Welfare Officer and then to the Senior Education Welfare Officer.

4.10 Family Holidays during Term Time

4.10.1 The majority of family holidays taken during term time should be categorised as Unauthorised Absence (code G). However, it is acceptable under exceptional circumstances, and provided the parent has made a written request to the Head Teacher, for schools to authorise a family holiday of not more than two weeks duration, during term time. Such circumstances may include:

- A family holiday judged to be important to the wellbeing and cohesion of the family, following serious or terminal illness, bereavement or other traumatic events.

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4.10.2   A family holiday classified under the 'Authorised Absence (code E)" category should **not** include such reasons as:

- The availability of cheap holidays
- The availability of desired accommodation
- Poor weather experienced during school holidays
- Holidays which have overlap at the beginning or end of term
- Parental difficulty obtaining leave (with local judgement applied in cases where evidence is provided by the employer that leave cannot be accommodated during school holidays without serious consequences).

4.10.3   Family holidays with the above or similar characteristics should be classified as Unauthorised Absence.   The decision on recording absence as authorised and unauthorised, should be based simply on whether the school has given prior agreement to the absence or not, using the criteria outlined above.   Where a school's prior agreement has **not** been sought, the absence should automatically be classed as unauthorised.

4.11   Information for Parents

4.11.1   Information on attendances and absences to parents are to be provided in the School Handbook which will detail attendances.

4.11.2   Information on attendances and absences in schools is to be submitted to the Scottish Executive by 15 September each year.

4.11.3   Head Teachers are required to make a return of attendances for the previous session within one week of the start of the new session. The information is required by each stage and in the form as shown in (Appendix 5).

4.11.4 Parenting Orders

- Parenting orders should neither be used as a first option, nor be used without volunteering engagement with parenting services. A parenting order is a court order which may be used to require parents to take reasonable steps to prevent their child from committing a crime or antisocial behaviour and /or to improve the welfare of their child attending school

- Parenting orders will direct the parent as to how to behave in respect of their child. It will require the parent to undertake certain actions which should lead to improvements in reducing the offending or antisocial behaviour of their child or improve the welfare of the child

- Parenting Orders may require the parent to exercise control over their child's behaviour. These requirements should not conflict with those within any supervision requirement.

- Parenting orders will be used to engage with significant carers of children and where appropriate both parents including a parent absent from the home.

4.11.5 Referral to the Reporter to the Children's Panel

Non attendance at school without reasonable excuse is a ground for referral to the Reporter. A referral will only be made if it is considered that the child is in need of compulsory measure of supervision. This would mean that the child would attend a children's hearing and may be placed on supervision requirement, which could include a condition of attendance at a named

school. A referral will only be made after there has been full discussion with other agencies. Non – attendance at school is likely to be indicative of other difficulties in the child's life, which may also be grounds for referral to the Reporter. School can contact the Reporter for advice in this regard.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 The Authority will be responsible for:

5.1.1 Determining a policy and overall framework for the promotion of attendance at school;

5.1.2 Establishing an overall framework of Area Attendance Advisory Groups for the consideration of cases of persistent non-attendance at school which advise the Director of Children and Families of any action required to be taken.

5.2 Children and Families Department will be responsible for:

5.2.1 Monitoring levels of attendance at schools;

5.2.2 Publishing data on school attendance and school leaver destinations as required by the Scottish Executive Education Department (SEED);

5.2.3 Supplying the SEED with ScotXed data.

5.2.4 Managing a support service to schools which aims to prevent non-attendance patterns from developing and taking appropriate action in those cases where such behaviour has developed.

5.2.5 Taking legal action where necessary in cases of persistent non-attendance at school.

5.3 The Head Teacher will be responsible for:

5.3.1 Maintaining attendance records for all pupils enrolled at the school on behalf of the Director of Children and Families; these records to be of sufficient accuracy and detail to enable the publication of data required by the SEED, via ScotXed data transfer, and for legal action to be taken where necessary;

5.3.2 Monitoring attendance of individual pupils at the school;

5.3.3 Working with education welfare service and other agencies in improving attendance and preventing patterns of non-attendance from developing.

5.4 The Parent Council will be invited to participate in the Area Attendance Advisory Groups.

6. POLICY BASE

This procedure has been developed to promote attendance and manage absence.

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7. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

CEC Promoting Attendance and managing absence, Attendance Policy 2010.

8. RECORD KEEPING

When a procedure has been followed there are often outputs such as decisions made or events occurred that need to be recorded. These outputs are considered Council records. Please list all Records, including completed forms, generated by this procedure. For each record, list its title, location, responsible officer and minimum retention period.

Record Title	Location	Responsible Officer	Minimum Retention Period

Appendix A

Support Pathways to promote attendance and manage absence

Identifying and responding to concerns about attendance	
Pathways to Support	**Action to be taken/ Who and How**
Pathway 5 Complex/ Intensive/ Acute	**Direct Referral to Reporter/ Attendance Order (served on parent through AAAG only)**
Pathway 4	**Area Attendance Advisory Group (AAAG only in consultation with EWO after appropriate work being carried out)**
Pathway 3 Unexplained absence persists	**Multi-agency assessment, planning and review** • Information gathering - use of GIRFEC tools and profile of attendance difficulties • Solution-focused planning meeting involving pupil and parents • Identify and implement appropriate intervention • Review progress and update action plan
Pathway 2 Unexplained absence <85% attendance rate Persistent lates without parental support	**Referral to EWO/ On-going involvement of Pupil Support Staff** Individualised planning
Pathway 1 Lates and occasional unexplained absence	**Action taken by Head Teacher/Pupil Support Staff:** • Monitor attendance data regularly • Discuss concerns with pupil and parent at earliest opportunity • Unexplained absence should result in absence enquiry letter to parents with contact details of member of staff who can offer support.
Promoting School Attendance for all pupils to ensure they are included, engaged and involved Promoting positive parental involvement Pastoral support health and well-being Positive behaviour approaches – restorative practice, solution-orientated schools Reward systems Learner engagement curricular flexibility links with FE and voluntary organisations Playground supervision Buddying and mentoring systems	

Appendix B

Pupils with reported medical absences where school refusal is suspected

There are very few illnesses physical or mental, which require extensive absence from school. Indeed the routine of school attendance can give an area of normality in one's life even when dealing with a chronic illness. Every effort should be made to facilitate attendance even part time.

To enable a successful return to school it is important for a school to identify promptly patterns of absence and intervene early. Often absence is attributed or perceived as a mental health difficulty so may be regarded by educational professionals as beyond their competence. However parents, the school, its staff and other education professionals play a lead role in prompting health and wellbeing and supporting children with school refusal so should not stand back and wait until medical or CAMHS intervention.

It is important to remember that school refusal describes the behaviour not the cause. Causes are often multifactorial. It is unlikely to be a simple cause and affect i.e. school and child. There may be reporting of physical symptoms such as

- Aches and pains
- Headaches
- Sore tummy
- Diarrhoea
- Sleep dysfunction

It is important not to deny or disparage these symptoms as they will be very real to the child and family.

The Scottish Guidelines on Education of Children Medical Absent from school through ill health state that the trigger for action is 15 working days of continuous absence or 20 working days of intermittent absence.

Prolonged absence can cause secondary factors which reinforce the need to avoid school such as:

- Falling behind in schoolwork
- Loss of routine
- More pleasurable activities at home
- Loss of friends and peer relations
- Increased anxiety each time attempts made to return to school. Can transfer this to other situations such as travelling on bus

All of the above can lead to increased school avoidance.

It is vital that the school intervenes early to prevent what might appear to be relative minor, transient difficulties becoming chronic.

Appendix B cont'd

Strategies to ensure successful identification

- An examination of absences on a regular basis, especially those attributed to medical causes
- An inclusive ethos is promoted within the school
- A member of senior management with knowledge of SR
- Named member of staff who has lead responsibility for SR
- Effective anti-bullying policies
- Guidance teams who know their pupils thoroughly
- Identification of pupils at transition stage who are at risk

Once Identified:

- Important that school staff do not pass on that responsibility to other agencies. Responsibility should not be passed to EWS or any other agencies.
- Plan a programme of intervention with school as central to plan.
- School has to work with parents, avoiding judgement.
- Identify school key worker (may be the guidance teacher) who will keep regular contact with the family.
- Consider peer mentoring / buddy system to support the child before and during a return to school.
- Recognise pupil may require an increased level of adult support to survive in school.

Role of School Key worker

- To be central person who co-ordinates plan.
- To provide opportunities for regular contact with home, especially when child is not at school. If appropriate make home visits to the family home.
- With pupil, develop strategies to alleviate difficulties child may have with particular subjects, classrooms or teachers. Initially this may include reduced timetables.
- May be appropriate to discuss issues or difficulties pupil has with individual teachers / subjects.
- Decide options for lunch-time or break time.
- Ensure knowledge of relaxation strategies and encourage their use when anxiety threatens their stay in school.
- To contribute to multiagency planning and reviews.
- To troubleshoot potential hazards.
- To allay and prepare for any fears on the reception they might receive when returning to school.
- To communicate with staff in order to avoid – sarcasm – public demands for explanations – unreasonable academic expectations.
- In addition to communicate with teachers and key staff about the nature of SR and aims of intervention.
- To establish and provide a safe haven when pupil feels overwhelmed.

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Referral to the Hospital and Outreach Teaching Service

If a referral is made for a child whose medical diagnosis is unclear but there is a suspicion that there is a degree of school avoidance, the referrer (normally the school) needs to inform parents that the CCHS will gather information and if necessary invite them to a clinic to discuss the causes of absence and see if all possible health supports are in place. From this investigation and meeting the CCH paediatrician will make a recommendation as to whether Outreach Teaching is appropriate or not and if a return to school is recommended. This can clarify the position for the school and EWS.

Appendix 1

ATTENDANCE RULES

In addition to the statutory requirements defined in The Schools General (Scotland) Regulations 1975, as amended by the Education (Schools and Placing Information (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 1993, the Education Executive have approved Attendance Rules 1 -8 below.

The Education Executive has delegated to the Director of Children and Families responsibility to carry out their statutory duties regarding school attendance in respect of parents who default over Section 35 or 36 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980. Only the Education Executive may stipulate additional requirements or rules on attendance.

1.   In determining the mid-point of a morning or afternoon session, any morning or afternoon interval is included e.g. in a school with a 9.00 am start and a lunch interval starting at 12.30 pm, the mid-point of the morning session is defined as 10.45 am, regardless of the timing or duration of any morning interval.
        Where a school opens or closes at other than the usual time, and notice of time has been given in advance to parents and pupils, the actual time of opening or closure should be used in determining mid-points.

2.   Absence or non-attendance at a morning or afternoon session will be marked absent.

3.   A pupil who arrives after the mid-point of a morning or afternoon session will be marked absent.

4.   A pupil who has gone from school before the mid-point of a morning or afternoon session is complete should be marked absent for that session, unless they have the approval of the Head Teacher to go.

5.   The Authority - through the appropriate Officer may approve absence from school of a pupil who is not sick, or is the subject of an order granting non attendance at school attendance under Section 34 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980.

6.   A secondary Head Teacher may give "approved study leave" for pupils in classes S4, S5 and S6 who are preparing for certificate examinations. The number of days must not exceed twenty in any school year. Additional "approved study leave" may be given, subject to the approval of the Director of Children and Families. "Approved study leave" will be recorded as "present" on the pupil attendance register.

7.   A Head Teacher may accept the absence from school of any pupil for a period not exceeding two weeks in a 12 month period for the purpose of a family holiday. A parent should make the request in writing to the Head Teacher in advance of the holiday. If the Head Teacher accepts the request, this will be marked as Authorised Absence. However, if a written request is not made by the parent, this will be recorded as Unauthorised Absence.

Appendix 1 cont'd

For a request for more than two weeks absence, the parent must apply in writing to the Director of Children and Families. Pupils will be marked absent for such approved family holidays.

8. Due to unforeseen circumstances, it may be necessary for a Head Teacher to effect an early closure of the school. The Director of Children and Families may instruct the Head Teacher that all pupils are to be recorded as having been present for the whole of that day or for the afternoon/morning session.

    [The procedure to be followed in these circumstances is contained in Head Teacher Guidelines No.14.]

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Appendix 2

SCHOOL LEAVING DATES

1. Definition of School Leaving Age

1.1 The Education (Scotland) Act 1976 has revised the former school leaving arrangements. In future 31 May and the first day of the Christmas holiday period shall be the statutory summer and winter leaving dates in each year.

1.2 The arrangements will apply to pupils as follows:-

(a) Summer Leaving Date

(i) A pupil whose 16th birthday falls in or after 1 March and before 31 May is deemed not to have attained school leaving age until 31 May (i.e. the summer leaving date).

(ii) A pupil whose 16th birthday falls after 31 May but before 1 October is deemed to attain school leaving age on 31 May (i.e. the summer leaving date).

(b) Winter Leaving Date

(ii) A pupil whose 16th birthday falls on or after 1 October but before the first day of the Christmas holiday period is deemed not to have attained the school leaving age until the first day of the Christmas holidays (i.e. the winter leaving date).

(ii) A pupil whose 16th birthday falls after the winter leaving date but before 1 March is deemed to have attained 16 on the first day of the Christmas holidays (i.e. the winter leaving date).

Note: Children whose 16th birthday falls on a leaving date cease to be of school age on their birthday in terms of Section 32 of the 1962 Act.

2. Entry to Employment

2.1 Under the new legislation, pupils who have attained school leaving age are free to enter full-time employment even though they may not have reached their 16th birthday, except in certain industries where a minimum age for entry may apply.

2.2 Under no circumstances can a pupil of school age be allowed to leave school to enter full-time employment. Section 28 of the Children and Young Persons

2.3 (Scotland) Act 1937 contains statutory restrictions on part-time employment of children, as defined in appropriate local bye-laws. Apprenticeship is regarded as full-time employment.

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3. Entry to Further Education

3.1 The legislation permits the Authority discretion to allow exemption from school attendance to those still of school age to allow a pupil to begin a full time course of formal education. Such cases will be considered on their merit in relation to the educational needs of the pupil who will remain of school age until the statutory leaving date is reached. Pupils should normally have completed 4 years of secondary education before they are withdrawn from school and will not normally be admitted to courses at the expense of those who have already attained leaving age.

3.2 Head Teachers should seek the approval of Head of Schools and Community Services for those pupils still of school age wishing to begin a full-time course of vocational further education - after prior agreement with the pupil's parents and the Principal of the College of Further Education.

4. Non attendance at School

4.1 Discretion is also still allowed to authorities to grant non attendance at school to attendance to a child over 14 years of age for the specific purpose of allowing the child to give assistance at home if a situation of exceptional domestic circumstances is proved.

4.2 Applications for such non attendance should be dealt with as described in the Guidelines (Paragraph 4.9).

5. Social Security Implications

5.1 Any young person legally employed is covered by industrial injuries legislation whether or not he has attained the age of 16 years. Liability for National Insurance Contributions does not however, begin until he attains that age. Entitlement to unemployment, sickness and related benefits is assessed in relation to earnings and contributions from the age of 16 years. A young person is not entitled to supplementary benefit in his own right until he becomes 16 although, if his family is in receipt of benefit, he could qualify as a dependant until the age 16 years.

5.2 Child Benefit is payable at least until a child attains the age of 16 years, whether or not he has ceased to be of school age. Benefit continues subject to appropriate regulations after the age of 16 years if a person continues in full-time education.

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Appendix 3

Full List of SEEMIS Codes

SEEMIS Code	SEEMIS Short Code	Description	SEED	Att	Auth Abs	Unauth Abs
---	-	Present	10	*		
SCH	~	In school but not in class	10	*		
ABS	A	Other authorised Absence	24		*	
SEP	B	Sickness with educational provision	13	*		
CLO	C	Closed (e.g. election)				
SEL	D	Self Certified	20		*	
PHL	E	Authorised Parental Holiday	22		*	
MED	F	Medically Certified	20		*	
UPH	G	Unauthorised Parental Holiday	30			*
HOL	H	Holiday				
SNA	H	Should Not Attend				
INS	I	In-Service				
LAT	J	Late (arrives before mid-point)	11	*		
LT2	K	Late (arrives after mid-point)	21		*	
LRG	¬	Late During Registration	11	*		
MIS	M	Missing	10	*		
OUA	N	Other unauthorised absence	33			*
OAT	O	Other attendance out of school	10	*		
PER	P	Medical or Dental Appointment	10	*		
DCA	Q	Exceptional domestic circumstances (auth)	23		*	
DCU	R	Exceptional domestic circumstances (unauth)	32			*
STY	S	Study Leave	10	*		
TBC	T	To be Confirmed	31			*
UNA	U	Unexplained Absence	31			*
TRU	@	Truancy	31			*
FLD	V	Field Trip	10	*		
VIS	V	School Visit	10	*		
WRK	W	Work Placement	12	*		
EXC	X	Exclusion	40		*	
EXL	Z	Extended leave with parental consent *not included in SEED statistics	2			

Appendix 4

STATEMENT

I.................................being the parent/guardian of ....

a pupil in Class.................. Of................................., will do all that is reasonably

possible to make sure that.. obeys the rules, regulations

and disciplinary   requirements of ....School.

In particular, I accept that...

must arrive at school punctually and attend throughout the school day.

Signature..

Date...

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Appendix 5

Draft policy template for promoting attendance and managing absence

1. Aims and Targets

- Specific, realistic targets for improving attendance
- Resources available and how they will be used
- How communication between all partners in the process will be implemented

2. Rights, Roles and Responsibilities

- Details of school partnership with Education Welfare Service.
- The legal responsibility of the authority, Children and families Department, school, parents and pupils
- Partnership approach to promote attendance and manage absence

3. Procedures

- The stages, processes and staff involved
- Lateness procedures
- How and when attendance concerns are communicated to parents
- What processes are used to reintegrate pupils returning to school after an absence

4. Strategies for promoting attendance and manage absence

- Incentives/rewards
- Reintegration
- Building Relationships
- The school environment
- Curriculum

5. Monitoring and Evaluation

- How will the effectiveness of the strategies used be evaluated.
- When will monitoring and evaluation take place
- Who will be involved and how will they contribute