

Children, Young People and Education Committee
Request for information on Pupil attendance & training for school governors
Response from: Powys County Council

Lynette Lovell
Cyfarwyddwr Addysg
Director of Education

Atebwch os gwelwch yn dda /Please reply to:

Gwasanaeth Ysgolion / Schools Service
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Dyddiad / Date: 10th January, 2022

Children, Young People and Education Committee.

Dear Jayne Bryant,

Many thanks for your letter. Please find answers to the two important issues you raised from Estyn's 2020 – 21 annual report.

1. Attendance: As a Local Authority we are working with schools and hard to reach families in one of three ways.

Firstly, our Educational Welfare Officers (EWO) has been working very closely with the schools and Youth Services to identify at risk and hard to reach families. Working within the Multi Agency Team framework they have undertaken calls, video calls and regular home visits. Where suitable, reintegration, phased returns, support, and attendance plans has been put in place which are monitored and reviewed carefully by the school and EWOs. The Education Welfare Service (EWS) has continued to adapt and further developed its Multi Agency Team framework as part of the Local Authority Emotional and Wellbeing Working group and the development of the Emotionally Based School Avoidance (ESBA) pathway alongside the Educational Psychology Service. The EWS has adapted and increased their referral threshold from 80% - 85% to support early intervention from January 2022 and re-instated fortnightly attendance panels to discuss bespoke and integrated practice alongside punitive measures to discharge our statutory obligations. Parental communications has also been adapted to facilitate a more holistic approach to building relationships and a EWS "Duty Cover" triage system introduced to support families, schools and other agencies to help support, guide and advise. The EWS team has also continued to work closely with Careers Wales and Youth Services to identify potential NEETS.

Secondly, due to the increase in demand and level of anxiety across the school, the Service has been successful in securing an additional Local Authority Covid recovery grant to fund additional EWO support for the 2022 Spring term. This additional support has been critical in ensuring equitable support county wide for our most vulnerable learners and allows the team to support more schools and their families to encourage



pupils safely back to school and to ensure that pupils are seen. New referrals procedures and monitoring outcomes has enabled and complemented enhanced provision via the TYFU system for anxious learners with increased resources.

Thirdly, as a result of the increase in number of families moving to Elective Home Education (EHE), the Service has employed two EHE support officers to make contact with the families, to ensure that the pupils are safe and where possible support the pupils back to mainstream education or at the least ensure that they are receiving an appropriate level of education. The EHE grant has been used for these roles as well as using the EHE element of the Local Authority Education grant to provide educational vouchers for families to access appropriate resources and to support the learning of the pupils.

Since the start of the pandemic the School Service reports attendance rates of Powys' schools to the Local Authority's Senior Leadership and Executive Management teams, including the Chief Executive on a weekly basis. This provides an oversight of the impact of the pandemic to all senior leaders within the authority. Information shared includes data regarding the % of in school face to face and remote learning for all Powys learners for the previous week and comparison and cumulative data for the term and academic year. This is then broken down to individual groups such as ALN, FSM, EAL, CLA and Gypsy Roma Traveller learners as well as the % of learners absent due to COVID. The overall attendance figure is also compared to the published National data. This data provides part of the evidence for key areas of work such as the EWS team, Youth Service and our Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy.

Based on the data available for the Autumn 2021 term, the Local Authority recorded an 86.83% attendance rate, with 70.76% present in school and 16.07% receiving remote learning. This is above the National average. Of the 13.17% not present, 0.4% Reception age to Year 14 pupils from across the Local Authority recorded zero attendance rates for the Autumn term and along with other low and vulnerable learners are being supported by the EWS team and Youth Services.

2. Governors:

Powys governors are supported through a comprehensive training programme along with half termly Chairs of Governors meetings and termly briefing sessions. These sessions are well attended by many governing bodies and allow the Local Authority the opportunity to update governors on the latest local, regional, and national developments. In addition, governors are able to access additional support and advice through the Hwb team and Facebook page. Sharing information regarding the lay inspector programme for governors is an intention for the spring and summer 2022 term governor briefing sessions as we update governors on the most recent Estyn guidance.

Yn gywir / Yours sincerely

Service Manager for Education Support Services.