

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Education, Skills and Culture Cabinet Board

25th January, 2018

Report of the Head of Transformation – Andrew Thomas

Matter for information

Wards Affected: All

PUPIL ATTENDANCE UPDATE

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide Members with information and data in relation to Neath Port Talbot pupil attendance covering the 2017/18 academic year to date.

Background

2. This report provides Members with details of the latest available data for the 2017/18 academic year to date.

Attendance Data

3. For the autumn term 2017/18 the primary sector attendance rate was 94.67%, which saw a -0.20% decrease compared to the autumn term period 2016/17. The secondary sector attendance rate for this same period was 93.37%, which saw a -0.18% decrease compared to the autumn term 2016/17 year. The start of term in September saw the lowest rate of pupil attendance across the County Borough for the past five years. Analysing the data shows that September also saw the highest number of unauthorised holidays amongst pupils for the past five years. This poor start to the new school year has meant that

throughout the autumn term schools have found it difficult to catch-up and produce positive attendance data.

4. During the autumn term 19 primary schools increased their attendance compared with the same period last year, with 40 schools reporting a decrease. In the secondary sector 4 schools increased their attendance with 7 reporting a decrease. [Note: for the purpose of statistical reporting, the data for Ysgol Bae Baglan and Ysgol Gymraeg Ystalyfera - Bro Dur as all-through schools has been disaggregated into both the primary and secondary sectors.] A list of the individual school data comparing the two academic years to date is provided in Appendix A to this report.
5. The Education Welfare Service continues to work closely with both schools and parents to identify the cause of individual pupil absence with the aim of early intervention when and where needed. Where these examples of strategies have been unsuccessful the Council has the available option of issuing parents with a fixed penalty notice or the commencement of prosecution via Court. For the current academic year to date the number of fixed penalty notices issued to parents is 46 with 122 being issued over the course of the whole of the last academic year 2016/17. The number of cases that have been subject to Court action this academic year to date is 24 compared to 40 for the whole of the last academic year.
6. Members will recall from previous reports that there is overwhelming evidence supporting the use of penalty notices where two-thirds of those issued with a penalty notice resulted in improved attendance rates amongst pupils with some pupils' attendance rising to 100% in the weeks/months following the issuing of the notice. Penalty notices also provide for a punitive step short of prosecution via the Court system where convicted parents' would receive a criminal record and a level of punishment up to and including a possible custodial sentence.
7. The education welfare service has close links with local Police who together regularly carry out truancy patrols to discourage absence from school. Over the course of the past twelve months three patrols have been carried out, the last of which was undertaken in Neath town centre in November to coincide with national safeguarding week. A number of pupils were identified as being absent from school without a valid reason and both pupils and parents appropriately warned.
8. Persistent absenteeism amongst secondary aged pupils within Neath Port Talbot has seen a good reduction over the past 5 years. In 2012/13 it stood at 5.8% of pupils classed as persistent absentees, whilst for the 2015/16 academic year it reduced to 3.8%. However,

mirroring the slight rise in pupil absence across the authority, persistent absenteeism rose to 4.7% during the 2016/17 academic year. The Welsh average for 2016/17 stands at 4.0%. In the primary sector persistent absenteeism over the past five years has always been either on or better than the Welsh average during each of the academic years.

9. Recognising that pupils who are persistent absentees need far greater intervention and support to attend school regularly, the directorate has made this a priority for the education welfare service and an additional member of staff has been seconded in to concentrate efforts in this area. This new role commenced at the start of term in September with the officer working closely with individual pupils, their families and schools to understand the barriers preventing regular attendance. Success to date has been good, with several pupils seeing significant progress in terms of attendance, or with the officer's intervention progress has been made in terms of referrals or support needed from various other professional agencies.
10. Members will continue to be provided with regular reports on pupil attendance and the work being undertaken to improve the operation of the Education Welfare Service.

Financial Impact

11. There is no financial impact associated with this proposal.

Equality Impact Assessment

12. Having considered the Council's screening assessment guidance produced to assist the Council in discharging its Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010 it has been determined that this report does not require an equalities impact assessment.

Workforce Impacts

13. There are no workforce or staffing issues directly associated with this report.

Legal Impacts

14. There is no legal impact associated with this report.

Risk Management

15. Members have previously determined that they wish to include the monitoring of pupil attendance as a regular activity within their on-going work programme. Such scrutiny maintains a high-level focus on attendance amongst schools within the County Borough whilst comparing internal pupil attendance with that of other authorities across Wales.

Consultation

16. There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item.

Recommendations

17. That Members note the contents of this report.

Appendices

18. Appendix A: List of schools with individual attendance rates.

List of Background Papers

19. None.

Officer Contact

20. John Burge, Manager of the School & Family Support Team

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APPENDIX A

School	To 31/12/17	Diff from 31/12/16
Abbey Primary	93.90%	0.76%
Alderman Davies CIW	95.98%	-0.09%
Alltwen Primary	95.50%	-0.06%
Awel y Môr	94.56%	-0.89%
Baglan Primary	94.88%	-0.18%
Blaenbaglan Primary	94.60%	-0.82%
Blaendulais Primary	94.60%	-0.97%
Blaengwrach Primary	95.39%	0.08%
Blaenhonddan Primary	95.36%	-0.05%
Brynoch CIW Primary	95.46%	0.98%
Brynhyfyd Primary	92.95%	0.98%
Catwg Primary	94.27%	-0.19%
Central Primary	94.66%	-0.30%
Cilffriw Primary	94.36%	-1.26%
Coed Hirwaun Primary	96.22%	-0.05%
Coedffranc Primary	94.47%	-0.40%
Creunant Primary	96.07%	0.04%
Croeserw Primary	93.89%	-0.90%
Crymlyn Primary	95.05%	-0.41%
Crynallt Primary	94.18%	-0.30%
Cwmafan Primary	94.04%	-0.02%
Cwmnedd Primary	93.52%	-1.26%
Cymer Afan Primary	96.06%	1.07%
Eastern Primary	93.60%	0.15%
Glyncorwg Primary	95.75%	-0.25%
Gnoll Primary	93.50%	-1.03%
Godrergraig Primary	94.12%	-0.39%
Groes Primary	93.65%	-1.17%
Llangiwg Primary	93.87%	-0.82%
Llansawel Primary*	89.86%	-3.56%
Maesmarchog Primary	95.77%	-1.28%
Melin Primary	94.23%	-0.06%
Penafan Primary	93.48%	-0.15%
Rhos Primary	94.06%	-1.53%
Rhydyfro Primary	95.67%	1.79%
Sandfields Primary	94.74%	0.73%
St Joseph's Infant	94.57%	0.17%
St Joseph's Junior	95.09%	-0.42%
St Joseph's Primary	94.64%	-0.24%
St Therese's Primary	95.13%	0.69%
Tairgwaith Primary	93.92%	-1.16%
Tonnau Primary	95.60%	1.57%
Tywyn Primary	95.47%	0.00%
Wauanceirch Primary	93.73%	-1.15%
YGG Blaendulais	95.01%	-0.99%
YGG Castell-nedd	95.62%	0.49%
YGG Cwmllynfell	95.68%	1.56%
YGG Cwmnedd	94.29%	-0.65%
YGG Gwaun-Cae-Gurwen	96.27%	1.23%
YGG Pontardawe	95.96%	0.84%
YGG Rhosafan	94.81%	-0.21%
YGG Trebannws	94.76%	-1.23%
YGG Tyle'r Ynn	95.18%	-0.04%

YG Ystalyfera - Bro Dur	95.15%	-0.25%
Ynysfach Primary	95.15%	0.42%
Ynysmaerdy Primary	93.85%	-1.12%
Ysgol Bae Baglan	94.07%	0.00%
Ysgol Maes Y Coed	89.67%	-3.29%
Ysgol Hendrefelin	89.64%	0.21%

*Includes Traveller Unit

School	To 31/12/17	Diff from 31/12/16
Cefn Saeson	94.01%	0.38%
Cwmtawe	94.17%	-0.01%
Cymer Afan	92.71%	-0.34%
Dwr y Felin	93.49%	-0.99%
Dyffryn School	93.27%	0.39%
Llangatwg	92.72%	-0.67%
St Joseph's RC	92.07%	-0.24%
Ysgol Bae Baglan	92.84%	0.76%
YG Ystalyfera - Bro Dur	93.95%	-1.10%
Ysgol Maes Y Coed	88.27%	2.09%
Ysgol Hendrefelin	83.69%	-1.05%