

Meeting of:	CABINET
Date of Meeting:	16 DECEMBER 2025
Report Title:	SCHOOL ATTENDANCE ENFORCEMENT POLICY
Report Owner / Responsible Chief Officer / Cabinet Member	CORPORATE DIRECTOR EDUCATION, EARLY YEARS AND YOUNG PEOPLE CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND YOUTH SERVICES
Responsible Officer:	MARK LEWIS GROUP MANAGER, EARLY YEARS AND YOUNG PEOPLE
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	The updated policy will replace the existing policy and form part of the local authority's statutory framework for attendance enforcement.
Executive Summary:	The report provides an update to the fixed penalty notice code of conduct and the School Attendance Enforcement Policy.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek Cabinet approval for the revisions to the Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) School Attendance Enforcement Policy 2025-2028 and the fixed penalty notice (FPN) code of conduct.
- 1.2 These updates reflect changes in national guidance, Welsh Government expectations and local priorities for improving school attendance.

2. Background

- 2.1 BCBC has statutory responsibilities under the Education Act 1996, the Education (Penalty Notices) (Wales) Regulations 2013, and related Welsh Government guidance to ensure regular school attendance.
- 2.2 Bridgend County Borough Council's Attendance Enforcement Policy and FPN code of conduct were last reviewed in 2023. Since that time:
 - Welsh Government has published updated attendance guidance;

- local data shows increased persistent absenteeism and unauthorised term-time holidays; and
- feedback from schools, governors and partners has identified the need for clearer procedures and more consistent enforcement.

2.3 The current fixed penalty notice code of conduct and the School Attendance Enforcement Policy are out of date and include inaccuracies. The proposed changes to the documents are outlined in **Appendix 1 and Appendix 2.**

3. Current situation/ proposal

3.1 The revised Attendance Enforcement Policy strengthens the local authority's graduated approach to improving pupil attendance. It emphasises early intervention, parental engagement and collaborative working prior to the enforcement of legal processes.

3.2 The updated Fixed Penalty Notice Code of Conduct provides greater clarity on:

- thresholds for issuing FPNs (for example, a minimum 10 unauthorised sessions within a school term);
- procedures for unauthorised holidays in term time;
- roles and responsibilities of headteachers, the Education Engagement Team, Education Welfare Officers and the local authority; and
- appeals, withdrawal and monitoring arrangements.

3.3 Both documents have been updated to reflect:

- alignment with Welsh Government's Framework for Improving School Attendance 2022;
- all-Wales safeguarding procedures; and
- the need for consistency across schools within the Bridgend.

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

4.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh Language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. This is an information report, therefore it is not necessary to carry out an Equality Impact assessment in the production of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

- 5.1 The proposed updated policy and code of conduct contribute to the Council's duties under the Act by supporting long term educational outcomes, preventing exclusions and fostering collaboration with families and partner agencies.

6. Climate Change and Nature Implications

- 6.1 There are no climate change or nature implications as a result of this report.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

- 7.1 Ensuring children attend school regularly is a key safeguarding measure. Poor attendance can increase the risk of neglect, exploitation or disengagement from support services.
- 7.2 The updated policy and code of conduct reinforce BCBC's safeguarding duties by enabling earlier intervention, improved monitoring and consistent escalation where attendance raises welfare concerns.
- 7.3 The Education Engagement Team will continue to liaise with partners including Children and Family Services, schools and other agencies to ensure attendance enforcement aligns with safeguarding protocols.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 There are no financial implications. Income generated from FPNs will continue to be retained by the local authority and reinvested into attendance support services, in line with regulations.

9. Recommendations

- 9.1 Cabinet is recommended to:
- approve the revised School Attendance Enforcement Policy; and
 - approve the updated Fixed Penalty Notice Code of Conduct.

Background documents

Education Act 1996

Education (Penalty Notices) (Wales) Regulations 2013

Welsh Government: Framework for Improving School Attendance (2022)