

Y Pwyllgor Plant a Phobl Ifanc

Lleoliad:
Ystafell Bwyllgora 1 – Y Senedd

Dyddiad:
Dydd Iau, 31 Ionawr 2013

Amser:
09:00

Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales



I gael rhagor o wybodaeth, cysylltwch â:

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Agenda

Cyfarfod cyn y prif gyfarfod (09.00 – 09.15)

- 1. Cyflwyniad, ymddiheuriadau a dirprwyon**
- 2. Ymchwiliad i ymddygiad a phresenoldeb – Sesiwn dystiolaeth (09.15 – 10.15)** (Tudalennau 1 – 28)

Undebau'r Athrawon

David Evans, Ysgrifennydd Cymru, Undeb Cenedlaethol yr Athrawon Cymru
Rex Phillips, Cymdeithas Genedlaethol yr Ysgolfeistri ac Undeb yr Athrawesau
David Healey, Dirprwy Pennaeth Ysgol Friars, Bangor, ATL
Rolant Wynne, Swyddog Maes Gogledd Cymru, UCAC

Egwyl (10.15 – 10.30)

- 3. Ymchwiliad i ymddygiad a phresenoldeb – Sesiwn dystiolaeth (10.30 – 11.30)** (Tudalennau 29 – 36)

Undebau'r Athrawon

Anna Brychan, Cyfarwyddwr, Cymdeithas Genedlaethol y Prifathrawon Cymru

Mark Durbin, Llywydd a Phennaeth Ysgol yr Eglwys yng Nghymru Henllys, Tor-faen, Cymdeithas Genedlaethol y Prifathrawon Cymru

Hugh Davies, Llywydd a Phennaeth Ysgol Gyfun yr Olchfa, Abertawe, Cymdeithas Arweinwyr Ysgolion a Cholegau Cymru

Tim Pratt, Cyn-lywydd a Phennaeth Ysgol Gyfun Caerllion, Cymdeithas Arweinwyr Ysgolion a Cholegau Cymru



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CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE:

Inquiry into Attendance and Behaviour

About NUT Cymru:

NUT Cymru represents primary and secondary school members and is the largest teaching union in Wales and the UK. We welcome the opportunity to contribute evidence to the Children and Young People's Committee's Inquiry into Attendance and Behaviour.

For ease of reference the response is divided into the headings used in the Committee's invitation.

Strategies and Support in place to address Behaviour and Attendance:

We have no evidence that trainee teachers securing placements in schools are less well prepared in terms of managing pupil behaviour than they have been in the past. While some Headteachers report that the number of outstanding trainees has decreased, the overall standard remains good and possibly somewhat improved over the last decade.

Provision for pupils educated otherwise than in school vary significantly from Authority to Authority. In the worst cases, there is a very limited number of places available in one or two centres in a rural Authority which creates transport difficulties for the pupils and where placements are often opposed by parents. This is an area which requires further investment but given the

economies of scale of a number of local authorities, such investment is extremely unlikely.

The use of exclusion also varies significantly from school to school and Authority to Authority. We do not see the differences in policy are necessarily problematic, as it is for the Governing Body to establish the overall policy and ethos of the school, and the Senior Management Team led by the Headteacher in each individual school to implement the policy and operate it on a day to day basis. This will naturally give rise to different interpretations of situations and responses that are in keeping with the school's ethos and circumstances, the merit of the case and the needs of individual pupils rather than any attempt to adhere to local or nationally established criteria.

We do not believe that the achievement of complete consistency and approach is possible and seeking to impose a rigid framework at national or LEA level would not be supported. While exclusion statistics vary significantly from school to school, behavioural problems are sometimes masked by an excessive use of temporary or fixed term exclusions rather than seeking alternatives such as a managed move or ultimately the use of a permanent exclusion. We hear of instances where pupils receive up to 10 or 11 fixed term exclusions where it is quite clear after 3 or 4 that this is a strategy that is not likely to modify the pupils' behaviour. It is also quite possible for a school with a higher number of permanent exclusions to have a lower number of days lost to exclusion than others because schools either use repeated fixed term exclusions (see above) or extend for unnecessarily long periods.

We do not believe that there is extensive evidence of illegal exclusions or of parents being forced to withdraw their pupils from school as an unofficial alternative to a permanent exclusion. There are instances where parents either do not understand or will not co-operate with managed move policies and interpret this as an ultimatum to withdraw from school.

There is too much variation in the quality of Education Welfare Services. Where these are effective, they provide good support for youngsters and families but where they are ineffective, there is no evidence from school data of improvements to exclusion or attendance rates.

Schools increasingly report, even in the foundation phase, problems with youngsters who do not have the basic age-related social and interpersonal skills that would have been taken for granted a generation ago, with increasing number of youngsters joining infant/nursery schools who cannot use basic cutlery and feed themselves, have no experience of toys or picture books and do not appear to be able to play collaboratively. This problem is exacerbated by a small but growing minority of parents who do not share the values of the school and are unwilling to support them.

Teacher training and development needs to be part of initial teacher training and further training. The question is who will provide this training? If schools are more and more responsible for training teachers then they will train them in what is right for their school but not look at the wider issues. Once teachers are in post, who should be responsible for providing further training? Should it be a statutory right to continue to receive training? Should it be a wider issue with a whole school approach through LEA's etc?

Parental engagement is vital to ensuring pupils attend school while parental awareness of children's nutritional needs is vital if teachers are not to spend their time worrying about who has had breakfast and what pupils have for lunch. Issues raised about joint agency working need to be explored for all pupils not just those with additional needs.

Support for pupils with Additional Learning Needs in respect of Behaviour and Attendance:

This again varies too much from Local Authority to Local Authority. These services often suffer from diseconomies of scale arising from the preponderance of small Local Authorities, and the drive to increase delegation to schools, has led to a number of Authorities looking to delegate behaviour support funding to individual institutions. While in some respects, this is likely to be welcomed because it places control over funding directly in the hands of the school, it also comes with a number of difficulties including determining whether the funding is allocated on a per capita flat rate or a mixture of the two. An over emphasis on per capita funding can lead to small schools to have insufficient funding to make any significant additional staffing appointments, whereas reliance on flat rate or making flat rate a significant element of the delegated funding disadvantages larger institutions who therefore can appoint relatively few staff

or purchase additional resources compared with the scale of the problems they may face. We again believe that provision here is too varied and in many authorities, under resourced.

Collaborative Working Arrangements:

It is not entirely clear what is meant by this heading. Most schools have a good working relationship with their Authority but heavily dependent on the resources available from their Authority. Relationships between schools, particularly where collaborating on managed moves is concerned, remain too variable. We also have evidence of schools, in some cases supported by their Local Authority, refusing to admit pupils with behavioural difficulties even if they live in the Authority or within the catchment area and the school has not reached its standard number in that year group. It is unacceptable for young people to be placed in limbo by schools, actively or passively supported by their Authority, declining to carry out their statutory obligations.

Joint working with agencies is also variable. There is evidence of more youngsters with learning and behavioural difficulties and some research suggests a link to foetal alcohol syndrome. The hardest pressed services seem to be Education Psychology and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAHMS). In the case of CAHMS in particular, in some Local Authorities there is an excessive waiting list with unacceptable delays between referrals being made and pupils being seen. Support from Social Services is also an issue. Schools often complain that the feedback they get from Social Services after referrals are made is late, inadequate or non-existent. There is, however, evidence of good practice where schools hold regular multi agency meetings to share ideas and good practice in relation to the provision for individual pupils. However, the success of meetings depends entirely on the commitment of individual agencies and services to consistently send the same member or members of staff to meetings.

Relationships with the police are generally good. Police Liaison Officers are generally welcomed in schools and make a positive contribution. There is, however, evidence in some cases of a different approach being taken by the police and Youth Justice Services, with the latter sometimes seen as too reluctant to act in cases where youngsters are clearly not co-operating with plans put in place.

Concluding comments:

If we are to improve attendance at compulsory school age then the work needs to be done before pupils start school, through playgroups, crèches, Health Visitor clinics, local play workers and teachers employed by LA's to promote positive attitudes towards school and education. Home school links between schools and playgroups are essential and funding to release teachers from class needs to be identified. These home school links need to be driven by teachers and staff working with pupils in school to build relationships with parents and children.

Positive attitudes towards education from parents always results in better attendance of pupils. If parents show respect and value education then their children will too. It is very difficult for a child to develop a positive attitude to school if they are in a family where the adults do not value education. It is essential parents treat school and staff with respect and have time to learn alongside the child.

This is where the health visitor role (or similar) is vital in supporting those families and children who, whilst not "at risk" or have some form of ALN, need additional time and support.

Despite periodic stories in the press and media suggesting that pupil behaviour is poor and that teenagers are the principal cause of the "broken society", we do not believe that the majority of young people behave in a less acceptable manner than they did 10, 20, or 30 years ago. Young people in many cases show far greater concern and awareness for those in society around them both locally and globally and often become more actively involved in charity and community work than might have been the case in the latter stages of the last century. They are better able to form reasoned opinion and to express it coherently and confidently with adults and the creation of School Councils has in many respects had a beneficial effect on schools ethos and environment, as

well as making young people feel that their views are valued. However, the downside of the above is that some pupils are more read to assert what they believe to be their rights even though they do not understand them and are also prepared to assert rights that they do not have. This leads a minority, but a growing minority, to challenge teachers' authority on the basis of what they believe teachers can and cannot do.

Such problems are exacerbated by parents who increasingly support their children against the school, even when their children are clearly in the wrong and who are prepared to challenge the school's policies and authority, even though they were aware of them when they sought admission for their child to the school and in the worst cases, schools have to deal with parents who do not appear to have any significant value system at all. Disproportionate amounts of time are spent on parents who are prepared to complain when they believe that their children have been treated unfairly but who are less willing to support the school in dealing with behavioural issues when the school can demonstrate that it has acted in accordance with its own agreed procedures.

Support from Local Authorities is too variable and too susceptible to diseconomies of scale. While we would oppose vigorously any attempt to fetter schools' right to exclude pupils either temporarily or permanently, we regard it as inappropriate that schools seek to avoid their statutory obligations through the use of unofficial exclusion. However, unless there is evidence that this is a widespread practice, then it should be dealt with on a school by school basis rather than tarring all institutions with the same brush.

Schools are increasingly susceptible to broader social problems and for some children are the only oasis of order and stability in their lives. Drug and alcohol abuse, domestic violence and poor parenting can have a catastrophic impact on the life chances of children and significantly increase the problems schools face. Schools also report growing problems with social media where there are not only instances of dispute arising between pupils on Facebook etc. but also disputes arising between pupils and other family members or members of other families. These often spill over into school and are not easy for schools to deal with.

The review does not appear to be looking at the link between good teaching and a suitable curriculum on pupil behaviour. Both should be at the heart of effective school provision. We are concerned, however, particularly in the 14-16 cohort, that the reduction in grants to 14-19 partnerships is likely to lead to the demise of a number of collaborative courses in FE Colleges which will be too expensive for schools to sustain. Schools report that it has been possible to retain a number of pupils on roll who are in danger of exclusion because it has been possible to tailor a curriculum for them with some vocational provision at a local FE College. This will be under threat if funding is cut.

The growing emphasis on School Performance Data, including banding and the initial assessment by ESTYN prior to inspecting a school, can lead to a curriculum and a range of qualifications which are skewed to suit the institution rather than the needs of individual pupils. There is evidence of numbers of pupils in a number of schools being entered for vocational qualifications in Year 9 simply to boost the school's performance position and the emphasis on those schools' performance thresholds is likely to lead to schools targeting more of their resources at those pupils whose performance in external examinations and assessments can be pushed above such thresholds rather than those individuals who may need additional support.

Also, it may be worth mentioning the successful NUT Supporting Behaviour CPD and the popularity/ high take up of these courses, indicating an on-going need in the profession to seek support in this matter, and the importance of such courses being made widely available to teachers at all stages of their careers, not just those in ITT, Induction or Early Career Development.

**The Children and Young People Committee
Inquiry into Attendance and Behaviour
28 January 2013**

1. The NASUWT welcomes the opportunity to submit written evidence to the Children and Young People Committee Inquiry into Attendance and Behaviour.
2. The NASUWT is the largest teachers' union in Wales and the UK representing teachers and school leaders.

GENERAL COMMENTS

3. The NASUWT has considerable experience in dealing with behaviour and attendance issues in schools through casework and collective disputes and has produced high-quality guidance and resources on this subject.
4. This material can be accessed through the NASUWT's website at www.nasuwt.org.uk. Among the literature and studies that may be germane to this inquiry are: NASUWT Position Statement on Pupil Behaviour; Behaviour Advice; Risk Assessment of Violent and Abusive Behaviour; Gangs and Schools Report; The Big Question Survey 2012; Sink or Swim? Learning Lessons from Newly Qualified and Recently Qualified Teachers; Reflections, Renewal and Reality: Teachers' Experience of Special educational Needs and Inclusion; and NASUWT principles for the curriculum.
5. Through the work that has been undertaken in this field, the Union has identified several key factors that contribute to poor pupil behaviour and

poor attendance. These include a lack of parental support, low aspirations of pupils and families, lack of readiness to learn, lack of enforcement of school rules, and a lack of engagement with the curriculum.

6. The NASUWT notes that this inquiry focuses on the effectiveness of the Welsh Government's strategies for tackling many of these issues and will offer, where possible, views on the specific points of inquiry later in this response.
7. There are, however, some important factors that the Union maintains the Committee should be mindful of when considering attendance and behaviour. These include:
 - the effectiveness and clarity of school behaviour management policies;
 - the degree to which school behaviour management policies are applied fairly and consistently;
 - the effect that a failure to tackle the incidence of low-level disruption by a minority of pupils in a school can have on well-being and engagement with learning of the majority of pupils;
 - the effects that external influences, over which a school has very limited control, have on the behaviour of pupils within school and on their attendance at school;
 - the effects of the pressure placed on pupils through the high-stakes accountability culture that has been introduced into the education system due to the misuse of international benchmarking data, the School Effectiveness Framework, the Banding system and other target driven initiatives;

- the effect that the narrowing of the curriculum and the forensic scrutiny of pupils' work that could result through the introduction of the Literacy and Numeracy Framework may have on pupil engagement;
- the effect that the continuing underinvestment in education has on the ability of local authorities to provide the support services and alternative education provision needed to assist in addressing poor pupil behaviour and poor attendance;
- the effect that underinvestment in education has on the ability of local authorities and schools to provide teachers and other practitioners with access to the high-quality training and development needed to assist in addressing poor pupil behaviour and poor attendance.

SPECIFIC COMMENTS

8. The NASUWT offers the observations that follow in relation to the points of inquiry on which the Committee has sought assistance.
9. Strategies in place to address behaviour and attendance, for example:

Teacher training and development

The NASUWT has maintained for some considerable time that the training student teachers receive does not equip them adequately for dealing with the behavioural problems they may encounter.

Given the shortfalls in this area of initial teacher training, the Union decided to develop and offer a course in behaviour management, and ensured that a condensed version of the training was offered to Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) at the seminars that the Union runs each summer.

It may be of interest to the Committee to note that over the last two years it has become evident at these seminars that the training that student teachers are now receiving in the management of pupil behaviour has shown a marked improvement.

It is, however, clear from the attendees at the one day behaviour management courses, the NASUWT runs in Wales, that access to high-quality training and professional development is extremely limited.

Provision to pupils who are Educated Otherwise than in School (EOATS) including in pupil referral units

The NASUWT recognised the efforts made by the Welsh Government to reduce the number of children and young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) through the implementation of the Youth and Employment Action Plan 2011.

The NASUWT support the view that pupils are entitled to inclusion in the education service and to have their educational needs met. However, for a small minority of pupils, inclusion in the mainstream is inappropriate and access to specialist, alternative provision, of the highest quality, must be made available. Regrettably, access to such provision has declined in Wales.

The NASUWT maintains that placement in specialist provision, such as pupil referral units, should be viewed as providing a valuable passport to learning and a pathway to work for those pupils who, for whatever reason, have become disaffected with main stream education.

Use of exclusions (including permanent/fixed term/illegal exclusions)

There are times when, despite every effort made by a school, it is necessary to implement the exclusion procedure. Consequently, the

NASUWT maintains that headteachers must be empowered to exercise their professional judgement in the use of exclusion and, in the most severe cases, head teachers must be supported in excluding a pupil permanently.

Such decisions must balance the interests of the excluded pupil against the interests of all the other members of the school community.

The responsibility towards all permanently excluded pupils rests with local authorities to provide suitable full-time education and to reintegrate excluded pupils as quickly as possible into a suitable mainstream school.

The NASUWT is of the firm view that:

- the use of targets to limit or reduce the use of the exclusion sanction is unacceptable;
- Independent Appeals Panels should not direct the reinstatement of pupils where the disciplinary process has been carried correctly;
- the Welsh Government should ensure that a properly resourced national system of high-quality off-site placements is in place to assist schools to avoid permanent exclusion and to support pupils who are permanently excluded.

The NASUWT seeks clarification over the reference to 'illegal' exclusions.

Education Welfare

The NASUWT recognises the valuable contribution that Education Welfare Officers (EWOs) play in attempting to combat truancy but is concerned that the combination of economic restraint and the reorganisation of the education support services may have resulted in a reduction in the workforce that deals with education welfare.

Other general issues such as:

parental engagement - as stated previously, a lack of parental support was cited by just over half the teachers surveyed as the most significant factor for the cause of poor pupil behaviour^{1*};

behaviour support services – the NASUWT maintains that this is an area that has suffered, because of the requirement to increase delegation rates to schools and the restructuring of education support services, with specialist centrally employed staff who could be deployed to areas of need being made redundant;

the link between food consumption during the school day and behaviour – the NASUWT is aware that some foods can have affect the behaviour of some children but recognised the difficulties presented to school in attempting to control the dietary habits of pupils.

10. Support to pupils with Additional Learning Needs in respect of behaviour and attendance

As stated previously, the NASUWT support the view that pupils are entitled to inclusion in the education service and to have their educational needs met. However, for a small minority of pupils, inclusion in the mainstream is inappropriate and access to specialist, alternative provision, of the highest quality, must be made available.

The Union maintains that the decline in access to such provision can not only have a negative affect on the behaviour and attendance of those pupils who are deemed to be in need of such provision, but also on the mainstream pupils who and subjected to the indiscipline and disorder caused when such provision is unavailable.

¹ NASUWT Big Question Survey 2012

11. Collaborative working arrangements

Joint working between relevant agencies including, for example, education, social services, health, young offending teams, police, third sector organisations

The NASUWT recognises that collaboration between various agencies is essential to the development and provision of an appropriate system that identifies and meets the educational and social needs of children who become disruptive, disaffected or distanced from mainstream education.

Links to other relevant initiatives such as Families First, the School Effectiveness Framework, third sector initiatives

The NASUWT acknowledges fully the contribution that such initiatives can make in tackling poor attendance and poor behaviour and welcomes the integrated, early-intervention approach provided by the Families First programme, but warns against initiatives that are based on expectations and targets, rather than on need.

12. The NASUWT trusts that these views will assist the Committee in this Inquiry.



Rex Phillips

Wales Organiser

For further information on this written evidence contact Rex Phillips, Wales Organiser.

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Tudalen 15

ATL Cymru Submission to the Children and Young Peoples Committee Inquiry into Attendance and Behaviour

The Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL)

ATL represents over 160,000 teachers, lecturers, head teachers, principals, and support staff across the UK in maintained and independent schools, further education colleges and sixth forms. It represents over 6,500 education staff in Wales. Our policy is formed by members, *the* professionals in education practice and experience. ATL welcomes this short inquiry into the effectiveness of the Welsh Government's policy and guidance to promote positive behaviour and attendance within education provision for pupils of compulsory school age.

We want to record at the outset our support for the work undertaken by Professor Ken Reid reflected in his NBAR report of 2008. We share his frustration that some recommendations are still awaiting implementation, such as initial teacher training and the training of the wider school workforce.

For ease we will refer to the Committee's headings in its request for evidence.

- **Strategies and support in place to address behaviour and attendance for example:**

- Teacher training and development

There is a perception amongst more experienced members of the profession that greater emphasis should be placed on behaviour management in ITT courses. This perception is strengthened by the fact that the most popular courses run by ATL for students and Newly Qualified staff are those which relate to behaviour management. We hope that the recently announced review of Initial Teacher Training will look in depth at this issue.

- Provision to pupils who are Educated Otherwise than in School (EOTAS) including in pupil referral units

We are disappointed that the Minister has delayed taking forward the legislative proposals for registering and monitoring home-based education in the current Education (Wales) Bill¹. We believe that this is a missed opportunity to ensure that learners are able to access appropriate education, including that related to behaviour.

We have no reason to dispute Estyn's recent survey that found that '*Staff in these PRUs are well trained and confident in using these techniques to defuse potentially confrontational situations. All PRU staff undertake safeguarding training*'.² We would however like to see more robust recording methods to monitor training undertaken, and Governing Bodies/Management committees helped in their governance role of PRUs.

- Use of exclusion (including permanent / fixed term / illegal exclusions)

We wish to emphasise that no school ever takes the decision to exercise any form of exclusion lightly. We are pleased to note that the latest statistics show that the numbers being permanently excluded are falling (In 2010/11 there were 158 permanent exclusions, a decrease of 27 from 2009/10)³, but are concerned that the majority of these were for assault or violence towards pupils and staff. Survey after survey of our members suggests that violence is still too common a threat to many staff. While we would wish to see permanent exclusions reduced to zero this cannot be at the cost of tolerating violent and threatening behaviour.

- Education Welfare Services;

By and large members valued the work undertaken by EWOs but reported that there was a need for more such officers in the field. Home visits and the like can be very time consuming.

¹ Written Statement - Consultation – Elective Home Education. 21 December 2012.

² A survey of the arrangements for pupils' wellbeing and behaviour management in pupil referral units Estyn 23 January 2012.

³ Welsh Government. Exclusions from Schools 2010/2011 dated 28 February 2012.

- Other general issues such as parental engagement; behaviour support services; the link between food consumed during the school day and behaviour;

Members report varying levels of parental engagement and support in disciplinary issues. Some note that a few parents are reluctant or even hostile to support the school in its behaviour and discipline policies. Such attitudes are not confined by any means to schools in more deprived areas: some articulate and well educated parents can make no secret of their disdain for certain members of staff, or their personal assessment of matters of school dress or other codes.

Some members also reported better behaviour, especially in regard to punctuality, which they believed attributable to the uptake of the Welsh Government's breakfast initiative.

We would encourage the committee to give serious consideration to the link between poverty and poor educational outcomes. Estyn have identified several examples of excellent practice in some schools that are effectively tackling poverty and disadvantage and they do so by improving the attendance, punctuality and behaviour of disadvantaged learners⁴.

- **Support to pupils with Additional Learning Needs in respect of behaviour and attendance;**

Schools require the specialist resources for children with ALN's to stimulate and engage learners. Some members report that their schools are not in a position to be able to provide specialist resources required. Some concern has been expressed that the drive to greater delegation of funding to schools, which we broadly welcome, should be sensitive in regard to its impact on ALN pupils.

Some members noted that More Able and Talented (MAT) children also require additional support. They were afraid that this additional support, such as musical

⁴ Effective practice in tackling poverty and disadvantage in schools 13/11/2012

instrument teachers, specialist sport support, authors, etc was becoming prohibitively expensive and increasingly difficult for small schools to arrange.

- **Collaborative working arrangements:**

When responding to the Welsh Government on SEN in the summer of 2012 members were keen to stress that education should not necessarily be expected to lead on every matter, involving health & social services each time. ATL Cymru members, voice their concern that there are often difficulties in communicating with all the agencies that are (or should be) involved with the children in a schools care. We believe that Welsh Government policy should be a vehicle to benefit learners in gaining reassurance from external agencies that the duties imposed on those bodies will translate into support being made available for those children identified as requiring support.

Effective multi-agency working will be critical to success - all agencies will need to be involved & other service partners. This can be very time consuming and detrimental to learners. For teachers the balance between teaching and working with other agencies is as always challenging. We are happy to echo the words of the Minister who stated in March 2012 *'It is my view that teachers and Head Teachers simply cannot be as effective as you want to be, as I want you to be, without local authorities playing their part'*.⁵

Teachers and schools have high expectations and will have maximum success when it is forged as the culture of a school. That culture must also show respect for its pupils. For this reasons we believe that School Councils and pupil voice are also key parts of the agenda in

⁵ Keynote speech presented by Minister for Education and Skills, Leighton Andrews. 8 March 2012

tackling poor attendance and bad behaviour. Most pupils are eager to learn, don't want to be bullied, and resent the poor behaviour of others.

Finally we must register our concern over the recent proposals to fine parents for poor attendance. We believe that this will not produce the desired results and that the deterrent value of such an option has been greatly overstated. With attendance increasing overall we would argue that more forensic and particular attention needs to be paid to the hard core of parents who do not seemingly value education as highly as they ought. Challenging these attitudes more effectively will provide more sustainable success.

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Ymchwiliad Pwyllgor Plant a Phobl Ifanc Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru: Presenoldeb ac ymddygiad

Ionawr 2013

UCAC | yr undeb sy'n diogelu athrawon a darlithwyr Cymru

Pwyllgor Plant a Phobl Ifanc Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru Ymchwil i Bresenoldeb ac Ymddygiad

1.0 Cyflwyniad

- 1.1 Mae Undeb Cenedlaethol Athrawon Cymru (UCAC) yn croesawu'r cyfle hwn i gael cyflwyno tystiolaeth i'r Pwyllgor uchod ar ddau faes sy'n effeithio'n sylweddol ar ein haelodau.
- 1.2 Mae UCAC yn cynrychioli 5,000 o athrawon, penaethiaid a darlithwyr ym mhob sector addysg yng Nghymru. Mae'r sylwadau a ganlyn, felly, yn dystiolaeth gan athrawon llawr dosbarth a phenaethiaid ar faterion presenoldeb ac ymddygiad. Yn aml mae aelodau yn cysylltu â'r Undeb ynghylch y materion hyn pan fyddant dan bwysau aruthrol ac yn profi rhwystredigaeth wrth geisio ymdopi â sefyllfaoedd anodd neu ddisgwyliadau afresymol.
- 1.3 Croesawodd yr Undeb ymrwymiad Llywodraeth Cymru yn ôl yn 2006 i gynnal Adolygiad Cenedlaethol o Ymddygiad a Phresenoldeb gyda'r nod o *lywio'r modd y dylid ymdrin â'r materion heriol hyn yn y dyfodol*. Tra bo rhai datblygiadau o ran hyrwyddo ymddygiad cadarnhaol a gwella presenoldeb wedi digwydd, mae'r ffaith bod yr ymchwil pellach hwn yn cael ei gynnal, ynddo'i hun, yn amlygu mai annigonol a bylchog fu'r gwelliannau.
- 1.4 Byrdwn y ddogfen **Ymddygiad a Phresenoldeb: Cynllun Gweithredu yn Ymateb i'r Adolygiad Cenedlaethol o Ymddygiad a Phresenoldeb** (Dogfen 076/2009) yw'r cyswllt digamsyniol rhwng cyflawniad addysgol ac ymddygiad a phresenoldeb. Er bod synnwyr cyffredin yn dweud mai po uchaf yw'r gyfradd bresenoldeb, uchaf yw lefel y cyrhaeddiad yn debygol o fod, mae'r ystadegau yn cadarnhau bod y gyfatebiaeth yn drawiadol. Yn yr un modd mae cael disgybl anystywallt yn y dosbarth yn mynd i amharu o reidrydd ar addysg yr unigolyn a gweddill y dosbarth, yn ogystal ag effeithio ar fywyd a gwaith yr athro/athrawon dan sylw.
- 1.5 Cydnabyddir bod cyswllt amlwg rhwng rhai achosion o ymddygiad heriol ac oblygiadau hynny i bresenoldeb, ee mewn achos o eithrio neu ddiarddel. Fodd bynnag, mae cyplysu'r ddau wedi arwain at ganolbwyntio ar y garfan fechan hon o ddisgyblion yn unig gan anwybyddu'r ffactorau pwysig hynny sy'n effeithio ar bresenoldeb ac ymddygiad yn gwbl ar wahân i'w gilydd. Er mwyn eglurder, felly, rydym yn gwahanu'r ddau yma ar gyfer y cyflwyniad hwn.

2.0 Presenoldeb

- 2.1 Dros y blynyddoedd diwethaf mae sawl dogfen wedi ei chyhoeddi, sawl grŵp llywio wedi ei benodi, sawl peilot wedi ei sefydlu a'i weithredu yn sirol a chenedlaethol ar bresenoldeb. Mae llawer o'r dogfennau yn ailadroddus, yn llawn rhethreg ac heb lwyddo i adnabod nac i fynd i'r afael â sefyllfaoedd dydd i ddydd - a hynny mewn iaith bod dydd.
- 2.2 Bu sefydlu codau cofnodi absenoldeb cenedlaethol a chytunedig yn gam gwerthfawr o ran eglurder a chysondeb. Mae'r codau hyn wedi hwyluso casglu data ar bob lefel ac wedi arwain at well cysondeb ledled Cymru yn unol â'r bwriad. Ers mabwysyadau'r canllawiau newydd, fodd bynnag, mae yna ormod a amser ac egni swyddogion ar bob lefel wedi mynd ar adolygu ac addasu y codau hyn a hynny ar draul rhoddi sylw i'r rhesymau dros yr absenoldebau hynny.
- 2.3 ran cywain ystadegau, mae *'sefydlu dulliau a phrosesu newydd'* wedi mynd yn endid ynddo'i hun yn hytrach nag yn offeryn i wella presenoldeb. Bellach mae dadansoddi'r ystadegau wedi mynd yn eithafol ac afresymol. Mae cynnwys graddau presenoldeb fel rhan o'r cyfrifiad wrth fardio ysgolion yn rhagdybio bod gan yr ysgol reolaeth lwyf dros lefel presenoldeb y disgyblion.
- 2.4 Dengys y dystiolaeth nad oes unrhyw welliant arwyddocaol wedi bod ar lefel cenedlaethol yn lefel yr absenoldebau anawdurdodedig ers cyflwyno'r codau newydd. Mae hyn ar waethaf y ffaith bod ysgolion, dros yr un cyfnod, wedi buddsoddi amser ac egni sylweddol mewn sefydlu systemau

monitro a chofnodi presenoldeb; mae'r gweithdrefnau hyn wedi golygu cryn gost o ran sefydlu systemau cyfrifiadurol, adnabod staff i wneud galwadau dyddiol i gartrefi disgyblion absennol ac amser staff i fentora disgyblion ac i gywain a dansoddi'r data ar gyfer trafodaethau mewnol a bwydo cronfa ddata sirol a chenedlaethol. Mae'r cyfrifoldebau hyn yn yr ysgolion lleiaf wedi syrthio ar ysgwyddau'r Pennaeth ac wedi bwyta i mewn i'w amser addysgu a rheoli ac wedi trymhau'r llwyth gwaith.

2.1 Beth sydd angen ei wneud i leihau absenoldebau awdurdodedig ?

Awgrym 1

Gwella'r Gwasanaethau Cefnogi Meddygol a sicrhau eu bod ar gael ac yn gymharus ym mhob cwr o Gymru gan yn benodol:

- i. Sicrhau bod gan ysgolion wasanaeth Nyrs Ysgol a Meddyg Ysgol. Mae'r gwasanaeth yma wedi ei leihau yn gyson yn y blynyddoedd diwethaf ac yn dal o dan fygythiad ond mae yn anhepgor i gynghori ysgol a'r cartref ar sut i ddelio â chyflyrau parhaol neu dymor hir, megis asthma, clefyd siwgr, anhwylder croen, epilepsi, sy'n gallu bod yn rhwystr i ddisgyblion fynychu'r ysgol.
- ii. Darparu arweiniad clir a chenedlaethol ar salwch cyffredin plant sy'n effeithio ar eu gallu i fynychu ysgol. Ar hyn o bryd mae yna negeseuon cymysg iawn yn cael eu rhoi gan ysgolion a chan weithwyr yn y gwasanaeth iechyd ynghylch pryd y dylai plant fynychu a pheidio mynychu ysgol. Er enghraifft, dylid nodi'n glir pryd y dylai plant sydd wedi cael salwch penodol megis y frech goch, clwyf ieir, clwyf pennau ac ati ddychwelyd i'r ysgol. Ceir negeseuon cymysg hefyd o ran anhwylderau croen megis 'impetigo' sy'n chwalu'n sydyn drwy ddsbarth o fabanod. Byddai cyhoeddi llyfryn a'i anfon i bob cartref, ysgol, meddygfa Awdurdod Lleol a llyfrgell yn fanteisiol i bawb ac yn sicrhau cysondeb yn y negeseuon a roddir i rieni a gofalwyr.
- iii. Darparu, yn ychwanegol at hyn, gyngor a chyfarwyddyd clir a chyson i rieni ar pryd mae'n briodol i anfon eu plentyn i'r ysgol a phryd yn fwy priodol i'w gadw adref. Mae sefydlu ymateb cytbwys a phriodol i fân anhwylderau yn y blynyddoedd cynradd yn debygol o sicrhau ymddygiad priodol yn yr uwchradd ac ym myd gwaith. Ar un pegwn eithaf y mae yna blant sy'n cael eu cadw gartref ar y pesychiad cyntaf. Ar y pegwn arall ceir plant sydd wedi bod yn cyfogi neu efo dolur rhydd drwy'r nos yn cyrraedd yr ysgol yn llipa ben bore am nad oes neb i ofalu amdanynt; erbyn amser chwarae maent wedi bod yn sâl ac wedi heintio gweddill disgyblion a staff y dosbarth. Rhaid i rieni sylweddoli nad gwasanaeth gwarchod plant mo ysgolion.

Awgrym 2

Sicrhau bod cronfa ddigonol ar gael i dalu am gymorth i ddisgybl sydd angen cymorth ymarferol dros dro yn dilyn damwain ee torri coes neu fraich neu lawdriniaeth. Mae prosesau ceisio am gymorth o'r fath yn gysylltiedig â phrosesau Anghenion Addysgol Ychwanegol ac yn fiwrocraidd a hirwyntog. Profiad aelodau yw fod disgyblion o'r fath wedi gwella, ond wedi colli wythnosau o ysgol, ymhell cyn i'r cais am gymorth fynd gerbron y panel perthnasol.

Awgrym 3

Gwneud safiad pendant ynghylch tynnu disgyblion i fynd ar wyliau/teithiau yn ystod tymor ysgol. Mae dau reswm economaidd pam bod cynifer o rieni yn tynnu eu plant allan o'r ysgol i fynd ar wyliau teuluol yn ystod tymor. Y naill yw cost y gwyliau - a does ond eisiau edrych ar unrhyw gylchgrawn gwyliau i ganfod bod y gost yn dyblu a mwy yn ystod gwyliau arferol ysgol - a'r llall yw'r ffaith bod twristiaeth yn ddiwydiant pwysig yng Nghymru ac ni all y rhai sy'n ennill eu bywoliaeth yn y diwydiant hwn fforddio colli enillion drwy fynd ar wyliau ar adegau prysur.

Deil rhai rhieni dan yr argraff bod absenoldeb o'r fath yn 'hawl' ac nad oes angen gofyn am ganiatâd.

2.2 Beth sydd angen ei wneud i leihau absenoldebau anawdurdodedig ?

Awgrym 4

Gwella'r Gwasanaethau Cefnogi a sicrhau eu bod ar gael ac yn gymharus ym mhob cwr o Gymru a hynny drwy:

- i. Sicrhau bod gan bob ysgol gefnogaeth Swyddog Lles Addysg cyson a digonol. Dros y blynyddoedd diwethaf mae toriadau wedi bod yn y gwasanaeth hwn ac yn aml nid oes bellach fawr ddim cefnogaeth i ysgolion ac i ysgolion cynradd yn benodol. Mae ymchwil yn dangos bod ymyrraeth gynnar yn dwyn ffrwyth ar ei ganfed. Mae torri ar batrwm o absenoldebau rheolaidd yn gynnar yn addysg disgybl yn debygol o leihau sefydlu'r fath batrwm sy'n aml yn dwysau fel yr â'r disgybl yn hŷn. Tystia ein haelodau bod budd mawr yn y gwasanaeth hwn pan yw ar gael, ond mae mwy a mwy o sefyllfaoedd yn codi ble mae staff ysgol yn gorfod ysgwyddo'r fath gyfrifoldebau a hynny ar draul eu hamser addysgu a rheoli. Mae'r cyswllt mae Swyddogion Lles Addysg yn wneud efo'r rhieni yn aml yn allweddol at wireddu gwelliant yn y presenoldeb.
- ii. Rhannu unrhyw arfer dda sydd wedi profi'n llwyddiant mewn rhai ysgolion efo ysgolion eraill. Yn anffodus mae gwaith prosiect sydd wedi dwyn ffrwyth mewn un lleoliad yn methu oherwydd nad yw'r un mewnbwn, o ran arian ac arweiniad, yn cael ei gynnig mewn lleoliadau eraill. Rhaid i unrhyw ddatblygiad newydd fod yn gynaliadwy yn y tymor hir i fod o unrhyw werth gwirioneddol.
- iii. Meithrin y berthynas rhwng yr ysgol a rhieni sydd yn llai tebygol o deimlo'n rhan o gymuned yr ysgol. Mae rhaglen addysg y teulu (*Family Learning Programme*, sydd yn cael ei ariannu gan Lywodraeth Cymru) yn bwysig iawn yn hyn o beth ac mae'r dystiolaeth anecdotaidd yn dangos yn glir, lle mae rhieni wedi derbyn cefnogaeth i fynd i'r afael â phroblemau rhifedd a llythrennedd eu hunain ac wedi cael y cyfle i weithio gyda'u plant o dan gyfarwyddyd, maent yn llawer fwy tebygol o ymwneud â'r ysgol (e.e. ddod i gyfarfodydd Cymdeithas Rhieni Athrawon neu nosweithiau rhieni) ac mae lefelau presenoldeb a chyrhaeddiad plant yn codi. Mae cydnabyddiaeth cyffredinol bod y Rhaglen yn gweithio. Nid oes digon o dracio wedi bod yn y gorffennol o ran yr effaith ar rieni a phlant er mwyn cael tystiolaeth gadarn ond mae adroddiadau ee gan NIACE yn dangos pwysigrwydd gweithio gyda rhieni. Wrth ddatrys rhai o broblemau'r rhieni mae'n gallu cael effaith positif dros ben ar y plant a'u hagwedd tuag at yr ysgol ac addysg.

3.0 Ymddygiad

Yn anffodus, mae nifer yr achosion o aelodau yn wynebu sefyllfaoedd o ymddygiad heriol gan ddisgyblion ar gynnydd.]Ffactor pellach sy'n dwysau'r argyfwng yw'r ffaith bod nifer cynyddol o'r achosion sy'n dod i'n sylw yn ymwneud â'r sector cynradd ac â'r Blynyddoedd Cynnar yn benodol. Gellir categoreiddio'r achosion hyn i:

i. Iaith Amhriodol a Bygythiadau Geiriol

Mae achosion o iaith anwedus yn gyffredin iawn ond mae hyn yn gallu troi'n fygythiol efo disgyblion yn bygwth yn eiriol aelod o staff... *Dwi'n mynd ichdi* . Yn aml daw'r bygythiad yn sgil derbyn cerydd llafar neu pan nad yw'r disgybl yn cael ei ffordd ei hun.

ii. Bygythiadau Corfforol

Mae'n mynd yn fwyfwy cyffredin i ddisgyblion daro allan pan fydd aelod o staff yn gofyn neu eu cymell i wneud rhywbeth. Mewn rhai achosion mae disgyblion yn colli eu tymer i'r fath raddau fel eu

bod yn troi byrddau a chadeiriau drosodd, taflu pethau neu malu offer, arddangosfeydd neu waith ysgol – yn waith eu hunain a gwaith disgyblion eraill. Weithiau mae hyn yn fypwyol ac adweithiol a thro arall yn weithred wedi ei dargedu.

Er mai eithriadau yw ymddygiad eithafol o'r fath, pan yw'n digwydd mae'n amharu'n fawr ar forâl staff yn ogystal â'u diogelwch. Mae hefyd yn effeithio'n andwyol ar ddiogelwch ac addysg gweddill y dosbarth ac yn gallu arwain at gynnydd mewn absenoldebau. Mae hefyd yn gallu tanselilio athro yng ngolwg disgyblion eraill.

iii. Herio Emosiynol (Herio awdurdod / Gwrthod cydymffurfio)

Mewn rhai achosion bydd disgyblion yn gwrthod dilyn cyfarwyddyd yn agored neu yn gwneud yn groes i'r hyn a ddeisyfir yn fwriadol i gythruddo staff a chael sylw. Weithiau bydd disgybl yn herio aelod o staff efo sylwadau o'r math '*fedrwyd chi mo fy ngorfodi fi i.../ does gennyd chi ddim hawl i* ac ati.

iv. Defnydd o dechnoleg newydd

Mae rhai disgyblion yn defnyddio technoleg newydd, e.e. ffonau symudol yn fwriadol i danseilio awdurdod athro, e.e. ysgrifennu barn am athro / cyhuddo athro mewn fforwm cyhoeddus megis gwefannau fel ratemyteacher; mae eraill yn defnyddio ffonau symudol i ffilmio digwyddiad (e.e. herio athro) a llwytho'r ffilm i'r we. Mae'r ffilmio dirgel hwn, sy'n arwain at gyhoeddusrwydd anffafriol i'r athro, hefyd yn effeithio ar forâl, a statws yr athro a'i berthynas gyda'r disgybl / dosbarth.

Rydym wedi dod ar draws enghreifftiau o ddisgyblion yn gwneud defnydd amhriodol o Facebook i danseilio neu greu embaras i athro, e.e. creu cyfrif yn enw'r athro a llwytho pethau hollol amhriodol.

Mae'r defnydd o e-dechnoleg yn y modd yma wedi arwain at ymchwiliadau i ymddygiad, ac yn gallu peryglu nid yn unig statws yr athro yn y tymor byr ond hefyd ei yrfa yn y tymor hir. Mae'n ddull o seibr fwlio athrawon gan ddisgyblion ac yn hollol annerbyniol.

Mae athrawon yn gallu wynebu ymddygiad bygythiol o'r math yma gan rieni hefyd yn cynnwys defnydd o iaith anwedus neu fygythiol, bwlio, bygythiad corfforol a seibr fwlio.

3.1 Beth sydd angen ei wneud yn genedlaethol?

Awgrym 5

Mae angen cydnabod y broblem a'i maint. Ynghlwm wrth hynny mae angen polisïau clir ar lefel cenedlaethol – yn cynnwys datganiad clir nad yw ymddygiad heriol yn mynd i gael ei oddef mewn ysgolion gan ddisgyblion na'u rhieni.

Mae angen cyfleu'n glir a diamwys hefyd nad oes angen i staff ysgol ddiodef ymosodiadau geiriol na chorfforol. Mae ysgolion wedi bod yn llwyddiannus iawn wrth integreiddio disgyblion ag ystod eang o anghenion ac mae UCAC yn cefnogi bob ymgais i hyrwyddo a hybu cynhwysiad mewn addysgu a dysgu. Fodd bynnag, mae yna gamsyniad bod yn rhaid i athrawon ddygymod â phob sefyllfa oherwydd bod yn 'rhaid integreiddio' y disgybl. Mae'n rhaid derbyn bod pwynt yn dod weithiau ble mae'n ofynnol i staff wrthod addysgu disgybl oherwydd ei fod ef neu hi yn amharu'n ormodol ar ddiogelwch ei gyd-ddisgyblion a/neu staff neu ei fod yn amharu'n afresymol ar addysg plant eraill. Rhaid gwarchod hawl athrawon i weithredu mewn sefyllfa o'r fath er mor anfyndych y defnyddir yr hawl hwn.

Awgrym 6

Mae angen sicrhau arweiniad a hyfforddiant o ansawdd i staff ysgol yn athrawon a staff ategol. Mae dosbarthu'r Llawlyfrau ar Reoli Ymddygiad i ddarparu athrawon yn y Cynradd ac Uwchradd yn cynnig adnodd buddiol i athrawon ar ddechrau eu gyrfa ond mae angen hyfforddiant rhyngweithiol yn ogystal â chanllawiau printiedig.

Mae hi'n arwyddocaol bod ysgolion yn gorfod neilltuo cyfnodau sylweddol i gyflwyno sgiliau a hyfedredd cymdeithasol i blant ifanc a'u cynorthwyo i ymdopi â'u emosiynau. Mae'r rhaglenni megis Ysgol Dina, Rhaglen Blynyddoedd Rhyfeddol, Cynlluniau PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies) a SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) i gyd wedi profi'n llwyddiannus yn ôl ein haelodau, yn arbennig pan fo'r rhaglenni hyn yn cael eu cyflwyno fel rhaglen ysgol gyfan ac yn cynnwys holl staff yr ysgol. Mae'r cynlluniau hyn yn cynnig dull cyson a chydlynus o hyrwyddo ymddygiad da. Eto arian prosiect neu grantiau penodol sy'n eu cyllido yn aml ac efo toriadau mewn arian hyfforddiant, ee cyllid hyfforddiant drwy'r Cyngor Addysgu, nid oes adnoddau ar gael i eraill ddilyn yr un hyfforddiant, ee staff newydd.

Awgrym 7

Yn ogystal â'r hyfforddiant *generic* hwn sy'n galluogi athro i ddelio'n llwyddiannus â tharfu lefel isel dydd i ddydd, mae angen rhaglen o gynhaliaeth a hyfforddiant mwy dwys a phenodol i staff sy'n wynebu disgybl heriol. Yn aml, pan yw ysgol yn troi at asiantaethau allanol am gymorth, yn cynnwys troi am arweiniad gan eu hundeb, maent wedi ceisio rhoi lluo o strategaethau ar waith i ddelio â'r achos yn barod. Y cam cyntaf sydd ei angen yw cynhaliaeth ddwys di-oed i ddadansoddi pam nad yw'r strategaethau a ddefnyddiwyd wedi gweithio a chydgyllunio rhaglen ddwys o ymyrraeth. Profiad aelodau yw nad yw'r math hwn o gefnogaeth ar gael yn ddigon buan oherwydd prinder staff efo'r arbenigeddau perthnasol o fewn Awdurdodau; lle mae staff cymwys ar gael mae eu llwyth gwaith yn afresymol fel nad ydynt yn gallu rhoi amser digonol i ysgolion.

Pan gynigir hyfforddiant, mae tuedd iddo fod i un person yn hytrach nag i bawb sy'n delio â'r unigolyn. Er sicrhau cysondeb ac ymyrraeth llwyddiannus mae'n rhaid i bawb sy'n delio â'r unigolyn dderbyn yr un arweiniad, gan gynnwys y rhieni os yn bosibl.

Mae staff ysgol angen arweiniad cyffredinol a phenodol ar ymyrraeth gorfforol. Mae gwaith ymchwil pobl fel Heather Piper o Brifysgol Metropolitan Manceinion (The Case Against 'No Touch' Policies) yn amlygu bod Polisiâu Dim Cyffwrdd ysgolion wedi mynd yn eithafol. Mae i hyn oblygiadau pellgyrhaeddol pan fo staff yn ceisio delio â disgybl sy'n bygwth nhw a'u cyd-ddisgyblion yn gorfforol ac angen ataliaeth gorfforol. Er nad yw UCAC yn cymeradwyo gosod staff mewn sefyllfaoedd ble mae angen iddynt ddefnyddio grym rhesymol, pan fo ymddygiad disgybl yn gwneud y fath sefyllfa yn debygol ac yn angenrheidiol, y mae angen i'r staff hynny gael hyfforddiant llawn. Profiad ein haelodau yw fod swyddogion ar lefel sirol ac ar lefel cenedlaethol yn amharod i gydnabod yr angen hwn a'i oblygiadau cyfreithiol. Tra bod y swyddogion hyn yn 'ystyried' beth i'w wneud mae yna staff a disgyblion yn wynebu ymosodiadau dyddiol a hyn yn effeithio ar ansawdd yr addysg a gynigir a lles a morâl staff a disgyblion.

Awgrym 8

Mae angen neilltuo adnoddau i hybu cefnogaeth a chydweithio efo'r rhieni.

Mae ymateb a chefnogaeth rhieni'n greiddiol wrth ddelio ag ymddygiad heriol. Profiad ein haelodau yw fod ymateb rhieni'n amrywio o wadu a herio unrhyw awgrym o broblem i gydweithredu'n llwyr ac yn llawn cydymdeimlad. Yn fynych yn y categori olaf adroddir bod rhieni eu hunain yn 'crefu' am gymorth ac yn ei chael yn rhwystredig pan nad oes neb ar gael i'w helpu, maent yn aml yn troi at staff ysgol am yr arweiniad. Cawsom wybodaeth am sefyllfaoedd ble mae amharodrwydd i ddarparu cefnogaeth dros ffiniau sirol a byrddau iechyd, h.y. mae'r disgybl yn mynychu ysgol sydd y tu allan i'r sir ble mae'n byw neu o fewn tiriogaeth bwrdd iechyd gwahanol. Ni ellir cyfiawnhau biwrocratiaeth o'r fath.

Awgrym 9

Mae angen sicrhau bod adnoddau ar gael i hybu cydweithio ar draws yr asiantaethau. Profiad ein haelodau yw bod y rhan helaethaf o'r gwaith yn syrthio ar ysgolion a hynny yn bennaf oherwydd prinder adnoddau Adweithio i sefyllfaoedd sydd wedi cyrraedd pwnt o argyfwng yw'r patrwm arferol yn hytrach na darparu cefnogaeth buan a chydlynus a thrwy hynny rhoi strategaethau ar waith i osgoi i'r sefyllfa fynd yn argyfyngus.

Mae sefyllfaoedd o ‘symudiadau wedi’u rheoli’ wedi profi’n llwyddiant mewn rhai achosion, yn arbennig pan y gwelir hyn fel cyfle newydd i ddisgybl. Rhaid derbyn na fydd symudiad o’r fath yn addas ym mhob sefyllfa a sicrhau nad yw rhai ysgolion yn cael mwy na’u siâr o ddisgyblion sy’n symud dan y fath amgylchiadau. Unwaith eto mae ein haelodau yn adrodd bod llawer yn dibynnu ar lefel y gynhaliaeth sydd ar gael gan staff pob asiantaeth i’r disgybl a’r ysgol i ymdopi â’r symud.

Sylwadau Cloi

Ar ddiwedd y dydd nid oes dim gwelliant arwyddocaol yn mynd i ddigwydd heb fod yr adnoddau digonol yn cael eu cyfeirio i ateb y sefyllfa a hynny drwy fynd i’r afael â’r **Awgrymiadau** uchod. Mae angen rhoi’r gorau i chwarae efo ffigyrau dim ond er mwyn i bethau ‘ymddangos’ yn well ond yn hytrach mae angen dadansoddi’r data o ran adnabod y rhesymau wrth wraidd yr absenoldebau ac ymateb i hynny.

Fel â nodir uchod, yn barod mae yna brinder ledled Cymru o bobl sy’n gallu cynnig y gefnogaeth angenrheidiol i ysgolion i ymateb i’w anghenion o safbwynt delio ag ymddygiad heriol. Mae’n bryder real gan UCAC bod lefel ac ansawdd y gefnogaeth yn mynd i leihau ymhellach wrth i ni weld lleihad sylweddol yn nifer staff cefnogi o fewn Awdurdodau Lleol yn sgil ffurfio’r unedau rhanbarthol sydd i bob ymddangosiad yn gweithredu rôl monitro a herio yn unig.



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Submission prepared for:

**The Children and Young People's Committee Review of school attendance
and behaviour prepared by NAHT Cymru and ASCL Cymru.**

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Introduction

1. Thank you for inviting us to submit evidence to this Review
2. ASCL and NAHT represent the majority of school leaders in Wales.
3. The evidence the Committee has already heard from Professor Ken Reid largely reflects school leaders' views; we too regret the delay in implementing some of the recommendations of the 2008 NBAR report, such as those related to initial teacher training and training of the wider school workforce.
4. We acknowledge that the Welsh Government's 'Making a Difference on Behaviour and Attendance Action Plan 2011-2013' provides a coherent and evidence-based framework within which to operate.
5. School leaders have provided us with details of their own experience which we believe are indicative of schools' determination to tackle attendance and behaviour issues. We hope Committee members find them helpful. What we found could not be described as a consistent, national plan of action as envisaged by Professor Reid however. Many school interventions are effective and sharing these would be beneficial; other policy decisions and local factors are less helpful. We have attempted to give some examples below.

Attendance:

6. Training of NQTs and the wider school workforce on attendance issues is considered a neglected area by school leaders. Some have sought to address this by using school in service training days (INSET) to allow EWOs (Education Welfare Officers) to lead whole school training on the issue. This has been useful.
7. Practical issues have been resolved in this way too; for example, the importance of the register as a legal document and the requirement to use the codes accurately. Inaccurate recording may lead to inappropriate responses by the school or a failure to trigger necessary EWO/ESO involvement. The Welsh Government proposes to use parental fines in cases of persistent absenteeism. Though we are sceptical about Government proposals to introduce parental fines in such cases, we would point out that unless training issues are tackled seriously in relation to the keeping of the register, attempts to fine parents may be subject to successful challenge of records can be shown to be inaccurate.
8. If there is likely to be a permanent exclusion because of the severity of a particular incident, the local authority must be notified. Usually in such cases the local authority suggests home tuition or a move to another school (if school and parental agreement can be secured); this

- can be a lengthy process). Such solutions are not included in the authority's permanent exclusion figures but do adversely affect the attendance figures at the original school.
9. There is a concern that this may lead schools to avoid permanent exclusions even where circumstances warrant such action. This may not be entirely helpful because if a child's behaviour warrants exclusion but there is no record of it, it is very difficult to persuade the local authority, (without robust evidence of significant school intervention and provision which has been ineffective), to assist the school with more substantial and expert provision. The statementing process and access to behaviour specialist provision may be compromised.
 10. Members value highly the termly register audit completed by EWOs but the time it takes for the work to be completed for all schools impacts significantly and negatively on EWOs' ability to interact directly with vulnerable families. This speaks to another of Professor Ken Reid's concerns; that we have too few dedicated EWOs/ESOs in Wales. Even where schools maintain excellent practice, attendance may deteriorate without the necessary capacity to liaise directly with the school and conduct home visits.
 11. School leaders support a practice where families routinely meet with EWOs/AOs when pupils with a poor attendance record transfer to a new school. This helps to ensure sure that parents understand the attendance expectations of the new school. It is important that such good practice is not confined to individual schools but represents a consistent local authority policy, supported by excellent liaison with all parties.
 12. EWO services have undoubtedly increased their focus on tackling absenteeism by pupils. Swansea LA for example has operated a policy of publicly naming parents taken to court for failing in their duty to ensure attendance of their child at school.
 13. We recognise that the greater emphasis on pupil tracking and more forensic examination of data promoted by the School Standards Unit has been helpful with regard to attendance data despite continuing concerns about consistency outlined below. A good tracking mechanism is essential in dealing with attendance issues.
 14. Members report that the pupil deprivation grant (PDG) and the school effectiveness grant (SEG) have been a particularly important contributor to increased attendance rates. As Professor Ken Reid points out, absenteeism affects pupils from more disadvantaged backgrounds disproportionately; the pupil deprivation grant is of course specifically targeted at this group of pupils. One school whose percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is nearly 50% has reported a dramatic improvement (2011/2012: **88.1%**; 2012/2013: **93.2%**)

in attendance figures, a drop in exclusion rates and an overall improvement in behaviour.

The school used the PDG and SEG to employ additional support staff to implement intervention strategies for literacy, numeracy and emotional / nurture issues; some of the funding has been used to buy resources to run enriched curriculum and after school activities.

15. Another school reported that a £5000 grant from the local authority had helped the school employ a part-time attendance officer. Attendance jumped from 84% to 92% as a result in the period 2005/6 to 2009/10, a position maintained in subsequent years. In the same school, the introduction of a 'nurture room' in the school for an individual pupil saw that pupil's attendance improve from 32% to 90% over a two-year period.
16. There is real concern however about how schools will be able to maintain the impetus of these initiatives (which rely upon additional staffing) when the grant fund streams are withdrawn. It would be naïve to suppose that schools would be able to afford to continue to employ these staff without long-term additional funds, and this in turn will have a negative impact upon attendance.
17. Other schools, particularly in the primary sector report very positive effects from the introduction of awards for children who maintain a good attendance record (bronze award certificate for 100% attendance at Christmas; silver award certificate at Easter; gold award certificate and prize in the summer for example). Children engage very happily in this process; one school reported that it frequently exceeds its 95% attendance target by employing these strategies. Schools may involve EWOs/AOs (Attendance Officers) in 'attendance rewards assemblies'; they then become very well known to all the children and are seen in a more positive light.
18. These strategies are all supported by greater engagement with parents via letters, newsletters, meetings and very swift communication with parents in cases of unreported or unauthorised absences.
19. Government interventions such as the drafting of more robust guidance on the importance of avoiding school-time absences for holidays have also been useful, even though in some cases this has led to difficult conversations with parents.
20. We acknowledge too the impact of the inclusion of attendance data in banding judgements; we believe however that this too may lack national consistency because some doubt remains whether all schools and local authorities report absences to a common format. Until this is resolved, a reliable all-Wales picture will be difficult to achieve.

21. Some local authorities have also given better and more consistent support on attendance issues in particular. One school leader from Carmarthenshire detailed the change in culture there:
- Noticeable changes have included:
 - o Improved guidance from the local authority;
 - o Local authority visits to individual schools. This is much appreciated because individual school concerns can be tackled e.g. correct use of codes.
 - o The LEA has an Estyn target to improve attendance levels. This has been given high priority.
 - o Schools have a duty to respond to an 'attendance action plan'.
22. Less helpful in terms of determining the real nature of the attendance problem was a recent Government decision to reclassify study leave as 'authorised absence' rather than 'education elsewhere' and to advise that it should be limited to 15 days per annum. Study leave and five days illness would thus take a pupil into the category of pupils absent for 20.5 days or more. The justification for the decision, repeated in a recent communication to schools, is that some students are unable to make positive use of their time when their examinations have finished and would be better served by organised in-school activity. This is a classic case of affecting the majority because of issues affecting a minority. The experience of those schools that organised a programme of activities for the latter part of the summer term 2012 was that the majority of pupils voted with their feet and did not attend and thus decreased the school's attendance rates. In one case, a secondary school in south east Wales that attempted to follow the 'letter of the law' on study leave, found that other schools had exploited legitimate loopholes to maintain attendance rates; its own attendance figures were suddenly severely compromised, leading to a '4' classification in banding. This is a case of an unintended consequence that is at best unhelpful, and a worst grossly unfair.
23. Absentee figures can be affected by administrative decisions; when schools decide to close their register for example. Some schools do so earlier than others. Early closure of the register will identify persistent latecomers, triggering the involvement of an ESO/EWO and a formal record of an unauthorised absence; later closure may not do so though schools may make the decision for later closure for entirely legitimate practical reasons.

24. Anecdotal experience suggests that there has not been any noticeable change in the level of training in behaviour management for ITT trainees. Schools continue to address behaviour management 'on the job' via in-house professional studies programmes. This inevitably leads to variations across schools. That said, this is to be expected as each school would train its intake of ITT trainees in the systems that that school operates.
25. It is probably fair to state that the publication of the Handbook "Practical Approaches to Behaviour Management" has had minimal impact in schools. At 170 pages it is far too long to be a practical document for busy classroom teachers. Most schools will have made copies available to staff, but it is more than likely that the majority of copies are gathering dust on staffroom shelves. To make a real impact we would suggest that the Welsh Government consider a range of new approaches, as detailed below.
26. Many of the approaches suggested within the guidance are well thought through, and would have the complete support of school leaders. However, they need to be extracted from a lengthy and rather daunting formal document and distributed in digestible chunks to staff, possibly in the form of regular fliers which most schools could distribute as emails.
27. School leaders are often dismayed by the paucity of responses by newly qualified teachers at interview to questions about classroom. In response to questions about how to maintain order, the stock response is often 'to follow the school's discipline code', and further questioning frequently reveals a lack of real understanding. While school leaders will not expect NQTs to display great experience, we would suggest that this is an area to which teacher training institutions should devote greater resources.
28. If the Welsh Government views improving behaviour in schools as a priority, it needs to make financial resources available to schools to provide regular training for teachers and the wider school staff. In one school, the decision of the senior leadership team to devote a whole day to staff training on this issue involved hiring in an external speaker at a cost to the school in excess of £1,000. Whilst this is good use of resources, and works out at a cost of less than £80 per member of staff, it is easy to see that such an intervention may not continue to be possible in an environment where funds are under increasing pressure. A small financial incentive to the school to undertake regular training of this sort could have a major impact across the country.

29. One of the main concerns of classroom teachers with regard to behaviour is the increasing level of defiance shown by students, backed up by parents, when children are challenged about inappropriate comments or unacceptable disruption (often low-level) to lessons. Parents frequently refuse to support the school in the imposition of sanctions, and significant amounts of staff time are wasted having to attempt to negotiate with parents who are unwilling to accept that their child must recognise his/her responsibilities in this regard. Younger, less experienced members of staff find these situations particularly difficult; this can lead to significant stress. We do not have a 'magic bullet' to recommend, but feel it important to raise it as a major contributory factor that is of genuine concern in many schools.
30. There is still a lack of joined-up action between education professionals and others, particularly in relation to Looked-After children. Teachers frequently experience significant frustration about managing the behaviour of vulnerable children when professionals from social and mental health services are hard to contact and harder to persuade to take action. This is often due to a system where there is no one single point of contact tasked with dealing with all responses to specific schools. In a few cases in schools around Swansea, councils have set up systems that enable this, and it has proved to be very effective. However, in the majority of cases, teachers find that when they phone social services they speak to a different person each time, or get no further than a 'help-desk' which is frequently less than helpful. The person they eventually speak to probably has no knowledge of the case, and action is further delayed. There is a real case for requiring all social and mental health service providers to identify names officers to deal with, and build relationships with child protection officers at schools, so that personal, long-term relationships are established, and schools that have significant behavioural issues with very vulnerable children can have reliable contact with someone they know will understand the context of the individual child and their needs.
31. Arrangements for safeguarding are largely undertaken by Local Authorities on behalf of schools. This system allows schools to focus on their work of delivering education in the classroom, and is generally effective. Different LAs have different approaches to the matter of updating CRB checks, with most content that, once a member of staff has been cleared upon first being engaged for employment, this is sufficient. The current charges for CRB checking mean that both councils and individual schools are unwilling to spend the money to engage in three yearly checks in the current climate of limited financial resources.

32. With regard to students who are EOTAS (Educated Otherwise than at School), there are significant variations across LAs in rates of EOTAS pupils with Swansea having the highest rate at 4.3 per 1000. LAs, via the EWO service, have expressed concern at variations in the hours during which EOTAS pupils are expected to formally attend establishments, whilst officially remaining in full-time education. Ironically in the light of concerns about attendance, EOTAS students are recorded as having 100% attendance at their 'home school' as students who are being Educated Elsewhere'.

Support to pupils with ALN in respect of behaviour and attendance

33. The delegation of budgets to schools, as part of the move to 85% delegation, will have inevitably increased variation in how schools deploy resources, with many adopting the grouping of pupils with ALN (Additional Learning Needs), within mainstream settings, in order to maximise the efficacy of TA support. Budget delegation has not been universally supported by the parents of pupils with ALN.

Joint Working with Agencies

34. The major concern here would be on cuts to funding for proven programmes, with reduced capacity to benefit pupils. Certain programmes such as Exchange Counselling have been implemented in the last few years and appear to be contributing to wellbeing. However, other programmes such as Family Group Conferencing in Swansea have been highly effective in recent years, but face challenges in maintaining services in the face of funding cuts.

Conclusion

35. We hope that you find this information useful. We have attempted to describe the complexity of the issues; also schools' determination to tackle them effectively and sensitively. There is no consistent national approach to this. There are targets but concentrating solely on targets may not have the desired result; schools, local authorities and families need the support and intervention that reflect the needs of individual children. We need consistent reporting too and we are some way from achieving it; but problems affecting young people's lives will not be solved simply by recording their presence or absence at school.