

Gwybodaeth Ychwanegol gan NASUWT ar bresenoldeb ac ymddygiad
Additional Information from NASUWT on attendance and behaviour

- NUT Cymru say that some schools refuse to admit pupils with behavioural difficulties even if they reside within the catchment area. How common an occurrence is this?

The NASUWT does not have an evidence base to draw on in support of this view, but I have no doubt that the data driven, high-stakes accountability regime that is being visited on schools across Wales will lead to an increased reluctance by schools to accept pupils who could adversely affect their standing when it comes banding, the outcome of an Estyn inspections or local authority reviews.

- Have schools placed an increased emphasis on attendance since its inclusion within the school banding data?

Possibly, but this would not provide argument to support the banding system.

- The Welsh Government is currently consulting on proposals for the introduction of fixed penalty notices to address the issue of persistent unauthorised absence from school. What are your views on this approach?

The NASUWT acknowledges that penalty notices could provide a means of improving levels of unauthorised absences but maintains that the current proposals are fundamentally flawed as they do not provide for a consistent approach across Wales. The NASUWT believes that the proposals must be impact-assessed against equalities legislation to minimise the risk of litigation.

- Members of the NAHT Cymru/ASCL report that the pupil deprivation grant and the school effectiveness grant have been a particularly important contributor to increased attendance rates. Should there be more direction on spending such grants on ways which can improve attendance and behaviour?

The NASUWT is unaware of the evidence base that the NAHT and ASCL are relying on to make this statement. However, the NASUWT does not oppose the earmarking of grants for specific purposes as long there is no expectation that initiatives continue, if the grant is subsequently withdrawn.

- Has the delay in implementing the recommendations of the 2008 National Behaviour and Attendance Review had an impact on the work of your members?

The NASUWT is not aware of any evidence to support this view either way.

- What is the priority issue that the Welsh Government needs to take forward to improve the attendance and behaviour of pupils?

The NASUWT believes that the Welsh Government need to move away from the high stakes accountability regime that, indirectly and inadvertently, brands pupils as failures, if they fail to achieve an A* to C grade at GCSE.

Success at all levels should be celebrated, and achievement should be relative to the aspirations and ability of the pupil, rather than government diktat.

- In your view, is there a link between food consumed/not consumed and behaviour, and what can schools do about it?

Apart from the obvious (if a child is hungry then they may well be badly behaved, withdrawn and not engaged in learning and the established links between certain foods and hyper-activity), the NASUWT would not presume to comment further on any such links. The NASUWT maintains that this is more a parenting issue rather than a matter that can be resolved at school level. **Schools can try to encourage 'healthy eating' and look carefully at the food provided and available in schools**, but the NASUWT believes any restrictions on food consumption would have to be measured against the risk of litigation and the principles of fairness and equality.