

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we approach the end of another successful school year, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the support you have given your child, their school, and the wider Monmouthshire education community.

School attendance remains one of the most important factors in helping children and young people achieve their full potential. Regular attendance supports academic progress, enables children to build strong friendships, develop positive relationships with trusted adults, participate in the full life of their school, and promotes their overall wellbeing and sense of belonging. These principles are reflected throughout Monmouthshire's Attendance and Engagement Policy, which emphasises the importance of partnership between families, schools and the local authority in ensuring that every learner can engage fully in education.

I am pleased to say that, for many learners in Monmouthshire, attendance this year has been good. Across our schools, pupils, families and staff have worked hard to rebuild and strengthen attendance following the challenges experienced in recent years. However, whilst we should celebrate this progress, we know there is still more we can do. Every day in school matters, and even small improvements in attendance can have a significant impact on a child's learning, confidence and future opportunities. The Welsh Government has made improving school attendance a national priority, recognising that attendance is closely linked to educational success, wellbeing, inclusion and life chances. Schools, local authorities and families all have an important role to play in helping children attend regularly and benefit fully from their education. Consistent with this ambition, Monmouthshire remains committed to supporting families and addressing barriers to attendance wherever possible.

We also want to remind parents and carers that holidays should be taken during school holiday periods wherever possible. Every absence from school results in missed learning, and it can be difficult for children to fully catch up on lessons, experiences and social opportunities that have been missed.

From the start of the 2026–27 academic year, Monmouthshire County Council will be preparing for the introduction of the use of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) for unauthorised holidays taken during term time where the circumstances do not meet the exceptional criteria set out in our Attendance and Engagement Policy. This approach is designed to promote fairness and consistency across all schools and to reinforce the importance of regular attendance. Schools and the local authority will continue to work constructively with families, and requests will always be considered in line with the established criteria and guidance.

Our intention is to ensure that every child has the best possible opportunity to learn, achieve and thrive. We recognise that the vast majority of parents and carers already place great importance on attendance, and we are grateful for your continued support. As we look ahead, we remain committed to working with schools, learners and families to further improve attendance and engagement across Monmouthshire. Together, we can ensure that every child benefits from the opportunities that education provides. In September 2026, I will write to you again to provide further information about attendance expectations, the support available to families, and our collective progress in continuing to improve attendance across the county.

For now, I would like to thank you once again for your support throughout the year and wish you and your family a happy, safe and enjoyable summer break.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'W. McLean', followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Will McLean

Strategic Director, Children, Learning, Skills and Economy
Cyfarwyddwr Strategol, Dysgu, Sgiliau a'r Econo