

# **Newport High Cluster Attendance Policy**

## **Polisi Presenoldeb**

Newport High Cluster of Schools  
Clwstwr Ysgolion Ysgol Uwchradd Casnewydd



**November 2023**

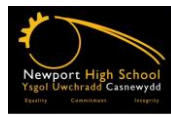
**Rebecca Paginton**



## Terms and definitions

- **Attendance**-Traditionally, good attendance depends on circumstances, but is usually taken to be around 95%.
- **Compulsory school age.** Under section 8 of the Education Act 1996 and associated legislation, children become of compulsory school age on the 31 December, 31 March and 31 August (whichever comes first) following their 5th birthday. A young person ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they have their 16th birthday.
- **Education Welfare Service (EWS)** provides support for schools, learners and parents to ensure regular attendance and address problems relating to absence. The service liaises with other agencies and provides an important link between home and school, helping parents and teachers to work in partnership.
- **Family Engagement Officer** refers to a dedicated member of staff working with parents and could have the title of parent liaison officer, pastoral support officer community pastoral worker, family support worker, or wellbeing officer.
- **'Learner'** unless qualified, refers to a child, young person, learner or student of compulsory school age.
- **'School'** unless otherwise qualified refers to maintained, primary, secondary and special schools.
- **The Education welfare officer (EWO)** has a dual role to play as a provider of a service to the school and as mediator between home and school.
- The definition of **'parent'** is set out in section 576 of the Education Act 1996 and includes:
  - any person who, although not a parent, has parental responsibility (as defined in the Children Act 1989) for a child or young person, and
  - any person who has care of a child or young person.

Having care of a child or young person means that a person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child, is considered to be a parent.



## Introduction

*“Under section 8 of the Education Act 1996, children and young people should attend school from the start of the first term commencing after their fifth birthday. The end-of-term dates are 31<sup>st</sup> March, 31<sup>st</sup> August and 31<sup>st</sup> December. A young person ceases to be compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they have their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday.”*

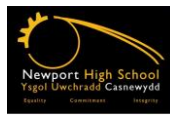
The Newport High Cluster of Schools purpose is to ensure that the provision outlined in our attendance policy promotes and considers the individual needs and expectations of all stakeholders. We aim to ensure that everyone has equal access to this provision regardless of *race, ethnic origin, language, gender, disability, age, sexuality, nationality, religious or non-religious belief, family background, or any other individual characteristics*. We aim to ensure that all stakeholders also share these values.

The Newport High Cluster deliver the Curriculum for Wales which is based on four purposes. This demonstrates a breadth of the academic, well-being, and social benefits that learners gain by having excellent attendance at school which also supports learners' wider development as full and rounded members of society. Excellent and regular attendance at school is essential if learners are to succeed and fulfil their potential. To ensure learners' success, the Newport High Cluster employs a whole school approach with class teachers, form tutors, pastoral team, designated leadership, and the Educational Welfare Officer all being fully involved in monitoring students' attendance.

Excellent attendance is given a high profile throughout all schools and we all aim to ensure that the learners in our school attend regularly and on time, where this is not the case, staff follow a staged procedure designed to encourage and support consistent attendance.

Finally, attending school is also crucial from a safeguarding perspective, ensuring that children are seen, safe, and heard, where concerns are raised the school has a duty to report.

***The practice of attendance is always at the discretion of the Headteacher.***



### **The Newport High Clusters shared principles:**

- Every child has a fundamental right to be educated, to flourish personally and to achieve their very best academic results, these are secure with high levels of attendance.
- By law all children of compulsory age must receive a proper full-time education.
- All stakeholders and teachers have a duty to ensure maximum attendance at school.
- Our cluster expects every student and Parent/Carer to aim for 100% attendance and excellent levels of punctuality in each academic term and year.
- There is a clear link between academic achievement and excellent attendance and punctuality.

### **The Newport High Clusters shared aims:**

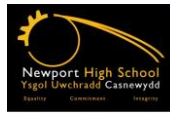
- To support and aim for 100% student attendance and excellent levels of punctuality in every class and every year group in every term.
- To encourage all students to take maximise their educational opportunities through high levels of attendance to school.
- To work in partnership with parents/carers and the Education Welfare Officer to address the factors that can negatively impact on student attendance.

### **The Newport High Clusters shared objectives:**

- To identify and challenge patterns of persistent non-attendance and provide relevant support to make necessary improvement.
- To reduce the percentage of unauthorised absences.
- To provide an effective and sustainable system for the monitoring of attendance.
- To recognise and reward high levels of attendance and punctuality and improvement in attendance every term.

### **The Wider aims of our attendance policy are to:**

- Inform parents/carers of the importance of excellent attendance and punctuality.
- Support families with individual needs to improve attendance and their access to education.



- Work effectively with our partners to maximise levels of attendance.
- Raise levels of attainment and achievement at school through high expectations of excellent attendance and punctuality.



## **Legal Framework**

The law outlining attendance is:

### **The Education Act 1996 which places a legal obligation on:**

- the local authority to provide and enforce attendance;
- school to register attendance and notify the local authority of a child's absence.

### **Section 7 of the above act states that:**

'The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient, full-time education suitable to his/her age, aptitude, and ability and to any special educational needs he/she may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'.

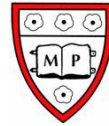
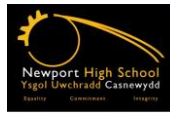
### **Section 444 further states that:**

'The parent of a child of compulsory school age registered at school and failing to attend regularly is guilty of an offence punishable in law'.

### **The Education (Penalty Notice) Wales Regulations 2013:**

This legislation came into force in September 2014 and has given Local Authorities powers to issue fixed penalty notices (FPN). A code of conduct has been agreed by Newport City Council on the issuing of the FPN which includes the following criteria:

- Minimum of 10 unauthorised absences in a twelve-week rolling term which do not have to be consecutive.
- Attendance below 92%
- Minimum of 10 sessions of lateness after the close of registration. Registration closes half an hour after the start of the school day.
- Parents/carers who choose to take their children out of school to go on holiday during term time without authorisation from the Head teacher, rolling from one school year to the next.
- Truancy, where the child has come to the attention of the police or public or public during school hours for being absent from school, without acceptable reason.

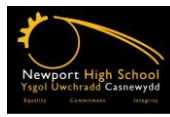


The Head teacher will inform the parent by letter that the school may request a fixed penalty notice for unauthorised absence. If an FPN is requested, the Education Welfare Service Manager (EWS) for the Local Authority will review the case with the school, considering levels of absence, level of parental engagement, any equality implications, history of attendance and also any statement of special educational needs.

A fixed penalty notice warning may be issued and a period of 15 days will be monitored for an immediate improvement. A warning may not be issued in respect of an unauthorised holiday in term time.

A penalty notice is £60 if paid within 28 days in receipt of the notice, increasing to £120 if not paid within 28 days. If not received by 42 days then the local authority can prosecute parents for the child's absence.

**Attendance is everybody's concern, and the school expects all stakeholders to play a part in improving attendance.**

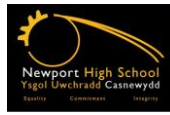


## **What Parents/Carers can expect from each school**

- All cluster school attendance policy which has been approved, is reviewed regularly by the Governing Bodies and is available to parents/carers on the school website (and/or the school.)
- A positive and welcoming atmosphere in which students and parents feel safe, secure and valued.
- A high priority of attendance and punctuality monitoring.
- Regular and efficient recording of attendance; twice daily.
- Early contact with parents/carers when a student fails to attend school without good reason.
- Early contact on any notified problems if a child is absent from school.
- Efficient and effective communication between home and school.
- Clear advice and guidance relating to the policy and procedures including the use of Fixed Penalty Notices.

## **What students can expect from school**

- A safe learning environment in which students feel valued and secure.
- Consistently applied rewards and recognition for excellent and improving attendance.
- Support when experiencing any difficulties in attending school.
- Contact with home when feeling unwell.
- Home visits from the schools' Education Welfare Officer (EWO) or Pastoral support team, School meetings, letters, and telephone calls with Parent/carers regarding attendance issues.
- Each designated leader in each school will have whole school responsibility for the management of attendance. Support will be provided by the School Support/Attendance officer who will act as coordinator of the SIMS system.
- All schools will use the correct authorised and unauthorised codes, set out by the Welsh Government 2010. Authorisation of absence is only at the discretion of the Headteacher.
- The school will contact the parent on the first day of absence if a reason for absence is not provided.



## **What the cluster can expect from Newport City Council**

### **Education Welfare Service**

- Provide support to schools, students and parents/carers to ensure regular attendance and address problems relating to absenteeism.
- Support a multi-agency approach to provide important links between home and school. Work in partnership so that students will benefit from the educational opportunities available to them.
- Provide statutory support in the form of Fixed Penalty Notices, Cases for Magistrates Court proceedings for Education Supervision Orders.
- Swift follow up on CME (Children Missing Education) referrals.

### **Specific responsibilities include:**

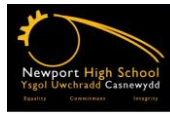
Encouraging excellent attendance and punctuality is the shared responsibility of our schools, parents, carers, students, cluster staff and our cluster partners.

### **Our Cluster can expect all schools to:**

- Use the Cluster Schools Attendance Policy- to guide attendance tracking and monitoring and investigate any problems that may lead to non-attendance including challenging parents about regular or intermittent illness absence.
- Keep parent/carers informed of any attendance related issues.
- Register students accurately and keep up to date records.
- Complete accurate and timely CME (Child Missing Education) referrals.
- Use a wide range of attendance support strategies and have a robust system of keeping accurate records of all contacts and actions taken.

### **Parent/Carer Responsibilities:**

- To perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age attend regularly.
- Absences should only be for genuine illness or in exceptional circumstances.
- To ensure their children attend school punctually.



- To provide the school with their current and at least two emergency telephone number(s), an email address for school records and keep the school updated on any changes.
- To inform schools on the first day of their child's absence and any further absences.
- To take holidays during the school holiday periods; any leave of absence during term time must be applied for in advance.
- A child must be signed out of school or given permission to leave site by a parent/carer in accordance with the individual school's policy.
- To provide medical evidence for extended absence.

#### **In the case of absence, our Parents/Carers will:**

- Contact school via telephone **(01633 820106)** or email **[reportingbsences@newporthigh.co.uk](mailto:reportingbsences@newporthigh.co.uk)** to notify of absence.
- Arrange medical appointments outside of school time whenever possible.
- Arrange family holidays during the school holidays.
- Contact the School Pastoral Support/Attendance Officer to report any attendance concerns or queries.

#### **Student Responsibilities:**

- To aim each year for 100% attendance and to attend school regularly.
- To arrive at school on time and follow school procedures for registration.
- To arrive at school in the correct uniform and equipped for learning.
- To seek support in school regarding any barriers to attendance, attainment and achievement.

#### **Our primary class teachers and secondary form tutors will:**

- Raise the profile and importance of excellent attendance.
- Collect information from students regarding any absence.
- Meet with Parents/Carers as appropriate.
- Support students in achieving attendance targets.
- Follow up attendance and punctuality concerns, robustly.



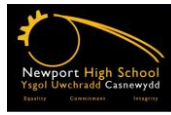
- Refer attendance and punctuality concerns to the attendance officer (and/or Pastoral lead/SLT).

### **Secondary school subject teachers will:**

- Liaise with Head of Year about students whose learning is being negatively affected by repeated lateness or absence.
- Raise the profile and importance of excellent attendance.
- Mark class registers accurately within the first ten minutes of the lesson.
- Follow internal truancy procedures.

### **Secondary school Head of Year with the support of the Pastoral Support Officer will:**

- Monitor attendance daily/weekly and ensure that SIMS/Classcharts attendance records are updated.
- Monitor the lateness of students who are late on a daily and weekly basis
- Follow up on all students who have been absent for 3 days or more through home contacts
- Follow up with Parents/Carers of students who are repeatedly late
- Communicate with the Educational Welfare Officer on a regular basis. (As designated by NCC)
- Discuss attendance issues with Form Tutors at weekly briefing sessions and team meetings.
- Distribute rewards for attendance and ensure attendance receives a high profile in assemblies and through displays.
- Co-ordinate work for long-term absentees (when appropriate medical evidence has been provided.)
- Target a 'spotlight group' of students whose attendance can be improved and work with these students.
- Use attendance rewards to improve attendance.
- Arrange for the production and distribution of attendance certificates termly.
- Meet with parents as appropriate.
- Provide a regular report on attendance in year groups for the designated senior lead.

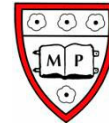
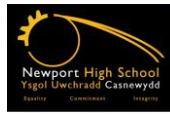


## **Our School Pastoral Support /Attendance Officers will:**

- Monitor the SIMS system, and report concerns to the relevant class teachers and school leaders.
- Contact all students on the first day of absence by telephone/text message or letter.
- Refer students who have been absent for 5 days with no response to the designated school lead.
- Update attendance data as necessary with parental returns/holiday forms/manual registers.
- Produce registers and statistics when required for the school lead and Pastoral team.
- Address punctuality of persistent lateness concerns where needed.

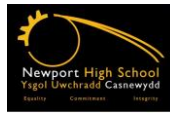
## **The Designated Senior Lead will:**

- Ensure that all key staff are aware of whole school and year group attendance targets and progress on achieving these.
- Produce summary documents for Governors and the Headteacher.
- Ensure parents, staff and students are made aware of changes to attendance recording or reporting.
- Monitor attendance weekly.
- Negotiate annual/ termly attendance targets based on previous attendance figures.
- Liaise with Progress Co-ordinators and the Educational Welfare Officer to ensure resources are used effectively and students monitored appropriately
- Meet with parents as appropriate.
- Ensure attendance is discussed in fortnightly meetings between all Progress Co-ordinators and line managers.
- Raise the profile of, and reward, good attendance on a regular basis.
- Review persistent unauthorised absences, issue warning letters and liaise with the Local Authority over the issue of Fixed Penalty Notices.
- Identify the barriers to attendance and support parents/students to overcome absenteeism.



## **Our Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) will:**

- Respond to urgent welfare concerns and carry out a home visit when required
- Meet with school attendance lead regularly to discuss attendance issues.
- To follow the legal process for parents where all other avenues have failed.
- The EWO will recommend school actions which may result in visiting parents of students who have unsatisfactory attendance and devising suitable home-school agreements for their reintegration to school.
- Visit parents as requested by the designated school leader.



## **Authorised and unauthorised absence**

Where a pupil is of compulsory school age, the register must show whether any absence was authorised by the school or unauthorised.

### **Authorised absence**

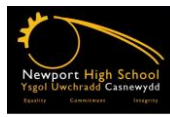
Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for the pupil to be absent from school, or where an explanation offered afterwards has been accepted by the school as satisfactory justification for absence. Only schools, and not parents or carers, can authorise an absence, and schools must consider whether the reason for absence is reasonable.

### **Unauthorised absence**

An absence is deemed authorised when the school accepts that there is good reason for the absence and communication from the parent or carer has been received. In line with absence codes below.

### **Absent Codes**

B - Educated off-site	Approved Educational Activity
C - Other authorised circumstance	Authorised Absence
D - Dual-registered	Approved Educational Activity
E - Excluded	Authorised Absence
F - Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised Absence
G - Family holiday (not agreed)	Unauthorised Absence
H - Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised Absence
I - Illness	Authorised Absence
J - Interview	Approved Educational Activity
L - Late (before registers close)	Present
M - Medical appointment	Authorised absence
N - No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised Absence
O - Unauthorised absence	Unauthorised Absence
P - Approved sporting activity	Approved Educational Activity
R - Religious observance	Authorised Absence
S - Study Leave	Authorised Absence
T - Traveller absence	Authorised Absence
U - Late after registers close	Unauthorised Absence
V - Educational Visit or Trip	Approved Educational Activity
W - Work Experience	Approved Educational Activity
Y - Partial or enforced closure	Attendance not required
X - Non-compulsory school age abs	Attendance not required
# - School closed to all students	Attendance
Z - Students not on role	Attendance not required



## **Procedure for Absence Concerns:**

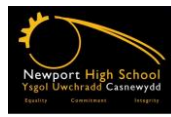
- Mark register with the appropriate code.
- School to initiate first day response to Parent/carer via text, email or phone.
- If the absence remains a concern, school will make further contact with home via phone and email.
- If required, the school will send written correspondence letter 1, in addition, they may invite the parent or carer for a school meeting.
- If needed, school to action further correspondence with letter 2, should there be insufficient improvement with the attendance. In addition, the school may invite the parent or carer for a school meeting.
- All on-going absence concerns, must be reported to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO).
- As attendance improves, school will continue to monitor.
- Action a referral to EWS for the following reasons:
  - On-going concerns.
  - No response or poor response from the parent.
  - Parent fails to fully engage.
- School must continue to keep the EWO regularly update with all absence concerns.

## **Medical Appointments:**

All schools will code absences 'M' as medical if sufficient evidence has been provided by the parent/carer. Our cluster reserves the right to trust what our parent/carers tell us, but for extended medical absence or if there is any doubt about absence then an appointment card or letter will be requested.

## **Entertainment Licenses:**

Schools will only consider granting leave of absence for students who are in possession of an up to date Entertainment / Performance License.



## **Leave of absence in term time**

The Education (Student Registration) (Wales) Regulations, make clear that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. If the leave is granted, Head Teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school.

Leave of absence will be considered by the Headteacher/attendance lead and the Governing Body. For the leave of absence to be authorised, all of the following criteria must be met:

- The child is of statutory school age (5 years and above)
- The child's average level of attendance across the rolling 12 months prior to the date of requested leave is **96%** or above
- The child is always punctual to school
- The child's attendance record for the current academic year shows no unexplained or unauthorised absences
- The requested leave does not fall within the assessment/examination period for the year group

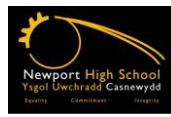
## **Holiday requests**

The Newport High Cluster takes a consistent and standard response and does not authorise any holiday in term-time; indeed, FPNs may be/are issued if a highly significant number of days are taken for holiday.

In accordance with Newport local authority guidance, absence due to family holidays will be considered by each school in the cluster.

## **Fixed Penalty Notices**

When the local authority Education Welfare Service, working with the school, has fully explored the reasons for regular non-attendance and exhausted all reasonable intervention and support mechanisms with little success, the use of other statutory interventions and sanctions will be considered such as Fixed penalty notices.



## For information

**Fixed Penalty notices are currently set at £60 and must be paid within 28 days. Non-payment within this timeframe results in a total Penalty of £120. Non-payment of fines may result in prosecution.**

### **FPN, these may be considered appropriate when:**

- At least 10 sessions (5 school days) are lost due to unauthorised absence in the last 12 academic weeks. These do not need to be consecutive.
- Unauthorised absences of at least 10 sessions (5 school days) due to holidays in term time or delayed return from extended holidays.
- Persistent late arrive at school, i.e., after the register has closed, in the current term. "Persistent" means at least 10 sessions of late arrival.
- Truancy, where the child has come to the attention of the Police or public during school hours for being absent from school, without an acceptable reason.

### **Child Missing Education (CME)**

- If the child fails to return to school on the agreed date, the school must act and consider following the Child Missing in Education process.
- When a child's absence is unexplained, schools will contact the parents on the first day of absence and endeavour to continue to make contact throughout the day until they can speak with the parent/carer.
- If the absence remains unexplained, the school must take steps to establish the child's safety and whereabouts.
- All reasonable enquires with emergency contacts, friends in school and neighbours should be made before a CME referral to the Local Authority is completed.
- The CME referral should be made to the Local Authority after enquiries have proved unsuccessful.
- If a child moves out of the Newport City Council Authority, not attending school and school are unable to locate the child / family, a CME referral to the Local Authority must be actioned.



## **Admissions and deletions from school roll:**

- Schools are required to inform the Local Authority in every circumstance when they are about to delete a student's name from the admissions register.
- This would include informing the Local Authority of the student's name, address, parents' name(s), parents' email address and contact telephone numbers, expected new destination and proposed new school name / Local Authority, within 5 days of the student leaving their school.
- Elective Home education (more information can be located via this NCC Website link. [Elective home education | Newport City Council](#))

## **Re-integration**

The school has arrangements to reintegrate students who have been absent for extended periods. In such cases, each student will be treated individually, and arrangements will be made that are most appropriate to the individual's circumstances. All reintegration plans are formalised by the designated school leader for attendance and welfare in conjunction with supporting staff.



Ref: Medical letter Secondary/ Primary

**Insert name**

**Address 1**

**Address 2**

**Post code**

**Date**

**Dear Insert Name**

**Re: Insert Name**

A recent register check shows that **insert name** attendance is currently **XX%**. Although it is understood that some of these absences are supported with a note or a telephone call, we would also request further evidence e.g. a letter from the family GP or a copy of a prescription. On receiving this evidence, we will be in a position to discuss which strategies can be put in place to support **insert name** education.

The Education Welfare Officer has also been made aware.

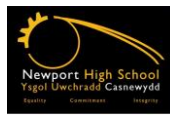
I must therefore inform you that without the relevant letter and/or supporting information, we are unable to authorise the absences. As a result of this, absences from **insert date** will be marked as 'unauthorised' and this will continue unless the appropriate letter/evidence is received.

\*\* School do not require confidential medical information to be shared, only a letter from the GP or any other supporting evidence for the absence, and stating that **insert name** has been or is too ill to attend school.

If you wish to discuss the matter further, please contact me.

Yours sincerely

Attendance Lead/ Head of Year



Ref: Attendance Letter 1/Secondary

Insert name

Address 1

Address 2

Post code

Date

Dear Insert Name

Re: Insert Name

At present, **insert name** attendance is **XX%**.

There is concern that the amount of time **insert name** is absent from school will affect her ability to gain maximum benefit from her studies and achieve her full potential.

If **insert name** attendance is above 95% **she/he** will have a much greater chance of gaining 5 GCSE grades A\*-C including English and Maths which will provide her with better opportunities in the future. An attendance of 90% or below is equal to 95 missed lessons, 85% means 143 lessons missed, 80% is equal to 190 lessons missed, having a significant impact on **insert name** learning potential.

I would appreciate it if you could ensure **insert name** attends school on a regular basis in order to improve this level of attendance. Parental support is essential if we are to help **insert name** achieve her full potential.

If you wish to discuss **insert name** attendance at school, please contact me on the above number.

Yours sincerely

Attendance Lead/ Head of Year



Ref: Attendance letter 2

Insert name

Address 1

Address 2

Post code

Date

Dear Insert Name

Re: Insert Name

On <date> I wrote to you advising that **insert name** attendance was XX%. Unfortunately, there has been no significant improvement in her attendance, which is now XX% and this is continuing to cause concern. If **insert name** maintains her/his current level of attendance it would equate to around <number> missed lessons over the course of this academic year.

A copy of the registration certificate is enclosed.

I must remind you that regular attendance is a legal requirement and it is important that any issues that may be the cause of this poor attendance are addressed as soon as possible. You are invited to attend a meeting at school with Name on <date> at <time> to discuss insert name attendance and offer our support in improving this.

If you are unable to attend on this date please contact the school to arrange a mutually convenient time.

If there is no improvement in insert name attendance a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service.

Yours sincerely

**ATTENDANCE LEAD/ HEAD OF YEAR**



**Newport High Cluster -Leave of absence request form.**

Please list all school age children in your family

Student's Name ..... Form..... School.....

Student's Name ..... Form..... School.....

Student's Name ..... Form..... School.....

Student's Name ..... Form..... School.....

Home Address .....

I wish to apply for my child/children to be absent from school during the following dates:

Date of last day at school ..... Date of return to school .....

Total number of school days missed .....

Please explain the circumstances that make it necessary to have a holiday in term time.

.....  
 .....  
 .....

I wish to make an application for my child/children named above to have an authorised absence from school for the reasons stated. I understand that if this is not agreed then any absence will be treated as unauthorised and may lead to the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice or referral to the education welfare service.

Name of Parent/Carer making application .....

Signed ..... Date .....

*Leave of absence applications will be considered by the Headteacher/Attendance lead and the Governing Body.*

**PLEASE RETURN THE COMPLETED APPLICATION FORM GIVING AT LEAST 4 WEEKS NOTICE OF INTENDED ABSENCE.**