

KNOWSLEY ATTENDANCE

HANDBOOK 2021-2024

A GRADUATED, PARTNERSHIP APPROACH
TO IMPROVING ATTENDANCE

‘Every day counts’





‘Every day counts’

Introduction

Why is regular attendance at school important?

Evidence shows that securing excellent attendance at school is key for ensuring positive outcomes for children and young people. Missing lessons leaves students vulnerable to falling behind, creating gaps in their learning, and diminishing their self-confidence.

Good attendance habits must start from the earliest stages of education. We know that children who regularly miss school in Reception class will most likely go on to have poor attendance at secondary school. Research by Universities UK indicates that children with poor attendance are 5 times less likely to achieve 5 strong passes at GCSE, preventing them from going on to Higher education or into employment.

We also know that poor attendance at school can lead to poor emotional health and wellbeing. Children and young people who miss school on a regular basis can become socially isolated; they can lack confidence and have low self-esteem. Children can feel like they don't fit in with their peers and this can lead to loneliness. We also know that

young people who regularly miss school are at greater risk of anti-social behaviour and are more likely to become victims of crime.

These are not the life outcomes and experiences we want for our children. School is not just about academic success and attainment; it is about learning about the world, about relationships and about ourselves. It is about trying new things, making new friends and finding our place in the world. To miss school is to miss the many, many experiences that shape the choices we make, the opportunities we have and the quality of life that we lead.

There is a wide range of international evidence that tells us that children who attend school regularly go on to achieve better outcomes, to live healthier, wealthier and more enriched lives - and we want to make sure we are all doing everything that we can to make that happen for all of our children.

It is true that many children, families and schools in Knowsley have great attendance – we need to do more to celebrate that; we know that there are examples of great practice happening every day in our schools – we must do more to learn from that, and we know that we have some strong partnership arrangements in place for us that we can strengthen, to really make a difference together.

We believe that by improving attendance we will:

- Ensure more children and young people have a happy and enriched life experience;
- Enable children and young people to achieve more at school academically, emotionally and socially;
- Overcome some of the challenges we have all faced during and after the pandemic;
- Help children build positive, long lasting friendships and lead happy lives;
- Improve mental health and wellbeing of children and families;
- Reduce child exploitation and abuse, anti-social behaviour and knife crime on our streets;
- Help children and families prosper socially and economically;
- Increase chances of success in further or higher education or apprenticeships;
- Improve employability of young people;
- Reduce the demand for support services;
- Improve lifestyles and better prepare our young people for adulthood and the world of work.

What are our Key Issues?

Children, families, schools and council services have worked hard over recent years to improve attendance in Knowsley schools. Whilst there are many examples of children and young people attending on a daily basis and achieving well, too many students remain persistently absent from our schools. This means that they are missing lessons, enrichment activities and opportunities to build meaningful relationships with their peers and school staff.

Of particular concern is the high rate of persistent absenteeism; our most recent data shows that 11.3% of children in Knowsley primary schools were classed as persistent absentees (the national average was 8.2%); and in secondary schools the figures were 19.9% and 13.7% respectively.

We know that some of our most vulnerable children with social workers and children with special educational needs are more likely to be absent from school. We know that this is having a detrimental impact on their progress and attainment.

National and local research tells us that there is a strong correlation between poor attendance and under-attainment at school. Missing school for just a few days a month can seriously affect a student's chance of achieving well. In Knowsley too many young people leave secondary school

‘Every day
we prepare’



without the qualifications they need to go on to higher education or employment, for some of these students this is a result of a long legacy of poor attendance at school.

National research indicates that children and young people with little to no absence are 1.3 times more likely to achieve a Level 4 or above at GCSE and 3.1 more likely to achieve a level 5 at GCSE. Of pupils with absence rates over 50% only 3% manage to achieve 5 or more GCSE passes.

The most recent (pre-pandemic) data shows that Knowsley's attendance figures for all schools is 94.4% compared with the national average of 95.3%. Increasing the attendance of all students will undoubtedly lead to improved attainment, narrowing the gap between Knowsley and National performance data.

Impact of the COVID pandemic

The COVID pandemic created huge disruption for children, families, and educators. Attendance at school became more challenging for all. The disruption to learning created by the closure of schools and settings and the creation of remote learning packages is unprecedented. It is important that we work together to overcome the challenges created by the pandemic and make sure all of our children are supported to return to school and catch up on learning.

We know that for some children and young people the return to school following the pandemic and lockdown will be an anxious time and it is important that we all work together to understand that and make sure the right support is in place.

Our Attendance Strategy covers the next three years from 2021 to 2024 and will direct our work in improving school attendance over that time. One of our guiding principles in developing this strategy has been to build on our existing partnership working with schools, academies, partners and stakeholders to make sure our local approach is not only in line with current government guidance and legislation, but that it recognises the needs of our community, post pandemic, and seeks to empower and support them, inspiring confidence to attend school rather than exercising statutory powers to enforce it.

What do we know already?

There are many reasons why a child or young person may be missing school. It is important that professionals working with families take the time to understand those reasons and work in a solution focused way to overcome barriers to regular attendance.

It is also important that when considering poor attendance, a holistic approach is taken that considers the emotional, social, economic, and academic reasons why a child or young person may be missing school and how, through the support of the school and/or other agencies, barriers to regular attendance may be reduced or removed.

We know that many schools and agencies do this work very effectively; however, our analysis tells us that there is more that we can do to make sure that this approach is consistently applied across the borough.

We believe that when teams and services come together, in a person-centred way, we are likely to use our resources more effectively and instigate long lasting change in behaviours and life experiences.

We know that whilst there are lots of positive examples of good practice in schools, teams and organisations in relation to the management of attendance. However, this work is often not joined up enough to really make a difference for children and families.

We also know that we need to look strategically at the range of services available to schools to support attendance, to ensure that they are fit for the post pandemic world and to look for new and innovative ways to work with children and families differently.

What are we going to do?

Through surveys and conversations with our community we have identified some key priorities to shape our work. Our schools and young people tell us to improve attendance for all students we need to develop:

- A person-centred approach to the identification and management of poor attendance;
- A clear and well communicated graduated response built on early intervention: so that children and families get the help they need when they need it regardless of which setting they attend;
- A multi-agency approach: so that children and families get help from the right person or service at the right time and that attendance isn't just seen as an issue for schools.

How are we going to do this?

- Develop model policies and proformas for schools to adopt to bring a consistent approach to managing attendance at school;
- Work with children, families, schools and partners to find new ways to celebrate great attendance;

- Introduce a tool kit into our schools that provides practitioners with the resources they need to promote good attendance and intervene quickly when attendance is a cause for concern;
- Review our practice guidance in relation to early help and social care practices to make sure that a consistent approach is taken to the management of poor attendance;
- Develop a training offer for school-based staff, Head Teachers, Governors, Health and Care professionals and other key partners so that there is a common appreciation of what we mean by good attendance and how best to secure it;
- Develop a communications campaign that helps raise awareness of good attendance and why it is important;
- Review our existing service level agreements and refresh them so that they remain fit for purpose in a post pandemic world;
- Introduce a Social Worker in Schools programme to bring more capacity to school teams to manage attendance issues;
- Introduce a range of mental health workers to ensure that children and young people are supported well;
- Revise our safeguarding practices so we understand the risks associated with poor attendance and the escalation processes available when a child or young person is at risk;

- Seek to utilise the third sector and parental volunteers to re-establish networks to support good attendance, for example introducing a walking bus scheme;
- Ensure governance systems and processes are in place to manage key local issues such as the attendance of vulnerable students, and that where appropriate, alternative delivery models are secured to meet needs of children, families and schools. An example of this would be our Attendance of Vulnerable Children's Group.

The graduated approach to good school attendance

The graduated approach is a framework of staged interventions. Interventions begin with effective whole-school approaches to managing the attendance of all children. School policies should promote good attendance, make clear what everyone's roles and responsibilities are and clearly outline what action is taken at each stage so that early intervention can take place. An effective whole-school approach will include regular monitoring and reviewing of practice.

The toolkit outlines the 4 graduated levels of intervention and support:

Level 1 refers to the variety of school-based interventions to celebrate and promote attendance and secure good attendance levels for all

Level 2 deals with early intervention and a family response to early challenges with children's attendance

Level 3 uses targeted intervention and brokering multi-agency support

Level 4 moves on to statutory intervention through the local authority.

The toolkit provides guidance and resources to help schools move through the levels in a person-centred way. The local authority provides enhanced support for the non-statutory aspects of the graduated approach.

As part of the new offer, we will be working with several teams to create one point of contact to support schools to work directly with families and address their individual needs.

The role of the local authority

The key principle which underpins the Local Authority's procedures for managing attendance is the belief that regular and punctual attendance is the key to academic and social development. This will in turn safeguard vulnerable young people and will improve their life chances.

Attendance and Inclusion therefore are key priorities for our work with children, young people, families, partners and schools to embed the concept of early intervention and prevention and keep children and young people safe.

The Local Authority has a duty to ensure parents fulfil their legal responsibility in respect of their child's education. This is usually through ensuring attendance at school. The Attendance Strategy has an early help and prevention approach at its heart. The introduction of the early help approach ensures that issues and difficulties faced by children and families are identified early and dealt with holistically and in a timely manner by services from across the Local Authority.

The approach aims to build closer co-working relationships with families through early identification by schools and other services. Bespoke models of triage, screening and the delivery of a graduated response will better meet the needs of the children, families and schools in each area of Knowsley.

We will ensure that promoting good school attendance has a high profile within our community and local services and that council services across the community understand that attendance is everyone's business. This will be particularly the case in our wider contextualised safeguarding work and within Children's Services generally. Critical to this work will be partnerships with community wardens, community leaders and housing providers.

The plan will be underpinned by a comprehensive communications strategy which will make good attendance high profile. The Local Authority will seek to work closely with communities across Knowsley in championing the needs of young people and promoting the importance of attendance and the benefits of a good education.

When appropriate, if support options provided to parents, have not succeeded, the School Attendance Service will take the lead role on behalf of any school in using legal powers as a last resort when this is necessary to address poor attendance. This statutory intervention is available to all schools.

The local authority will:

- provide a traded offer for schools that provides support and guidance around attendance policy and practices;
- provide traded officers to become an initial point of contact for families;

- arrange multi-agency meetings and create action plans with relevant services and agencies eg. Health teams;
- provide Early Help and Family First support workers to work with families to improve attendance where required;
- ensure school attendance is a priority for families for children with social workers or support workers eg. YOS, Shield, MACE;
- SEND/Inclusion team will provide support and guidance to families with EHCP and SEND needs;
- for schools without a Service Level Agreement, the LA will provide support to ensure schools have enough evidence to move to statutory work where necessary;
- to identify children who are not receiving an education;
- ensure our statutory duties for school attendance are fulfilled;
- establish a communications campaign to raise the profile of school attendance;
- engage with third sector and businesses to support school attendance;
- continue to monitor and escalate the attendance of vulnerable children through the Attendance of Vulnerable Children Group meeting;
- provide events throughout the year to raise and celebrate the profile of good attendance;
- share good practice.

The role of parents/carers and pupils

Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring their child attends school regularly. Parents are expected to report their child's absence from school on the first day of absence and to confirm the reason in writing on their child's return to school. Where there are concerns about a pupil's attendance, parents/carers are expected to work with school staff and other services to address them. Parents/carers are expected to support school attendance by avoiding family holidays during term time. Parents/ carers are also responsible for following any related Public Health England (PHE) guidance and are required to inform school of any infectious illnesses including the requirement to inform school if their child needs to self-isolate or is displaying coronavirus symptoms. The DfE guidance suggests that only children who have received a shielding letter from their GP are entitled to not attend school. Headteachers can only authorise leave of absence from school in exceptional circumstances (a holiday is not considered an exceptional circumstance by the DfE). Headteachers can ask the Local Authority to issue a penalty notices for holidays taken during term time when the criteria are met.

With the return of all pupils to schools from Summer 2021, school is now once again compulsory and [under section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#) 4441 and 4441a parents/carers are responsible for making sure that their children of school

age receive efficient full time education that is suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs the child may have "either by regular attendance at school or otherwise".

The DfE's [addendum](#) to non-statutory guidance on attendance in relation to Covid-19 confirms that from the start of the autumn term 2020 pupil attendance is mandatory and the usual rules on attendance apply, including those relating to parents'/carers' duty to ensure attendance, schools' responsibilities for recording and following up absence and the provision to issue sanctions in line with local authorities' codes of conduct.

The guidance also states that absence code X can be used where a pupil does not attend school "in circumstances related to coronavirus". However, this should only be used where a pupil's attendance at or travel to school would be contrary to Public Health England guidance or a statutory restriction. An example would be where a pupil has tested positive and is required to self-isolate. More detailed information and further examples can be found in the latest government guidance.

Responsibilities and expectations

Parents and carers:

- encourage and ensure that their children attend school regularly and punctually unless there is a valid reason for absence which is accepted by the school's headteacher;
- intervene promptly and work closely with the school and local authority to resolve any issues when attendance problems occur;
- comply with their roles and responsibilities as outlined in the school attendance policy.;
- avoid term time holidays. A term time holiday may mean a pupil becomes a persistent absentee if they go on to have any further time away from school;
- discuss and resolve any issues surrounding their child's attendance with members of school staff. Parents should not keep children away from school whilst they are resolving any issues;
- ensure that their child continues to attend their current school until a place is available at another school if a transfer has been requested.

Children and young people:

- attend school regularly and punctually in accordance with the agreed timetable;
- stay in school for the school day unless lunchtime arrangements are agreed with the school and put in writing;
- ensure they arrive at school in correct uniform and equipped for the school day;
- adhere to school rules;
- comply with the requirements of them as laid out in the school attendance policy.

The role of schools and academies

Schools have a statutory duty under section 175 of the Education Act 2002 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. This can only be fulfilled through effective registration systems and active, whole school monitoring of pupil absence, in order to support and promote regular school attendance.

While regular school attendance is predominantly the responsibility of parents and carers, schools play a central role in ensuring that children and young people attend school regularly. This includes taking a positive and proactive role in

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the promotion of regular school attendance through strategies identified within their school attendance policy that will engage families and ensure that there is a coherent and consistent approach to attendance across the school.

All schools and academies should have a whole school attendance policy, including a graduated response which sets out how attendance is managed and what monitoring systems are in place. The Headteacher should take overall responsibility for and drive the attendance agenda, actively supported by every member of staff and endorsed and monitored by the governing body.

Parents/carers should be informed of the school's staged response systems. The governing body should nominate a governor to take a monitoring responsibility for attendance issues. Other governors may also play an active role where this is part of the school's attendance policy. All schools and academies should operate first day absence procedures to ensure that parents are aware when their child is not in school. Schools and academies are responsible for actively monitoring the attendance of their pupils receiving alternative provision and will need to be able to explain how they do this as part of an Ofsted inspection.

 Primary and secondary schools and academies are part of the Fair Access Protocol which is implemented through the primary and secondary Fair Access Panel. This process

should be considered when specific issues might be seen to prohibit a child or young person from attending school. Where the Panel deems this is the case, a child or young person may be moved to another school/academy through a managed move or as a hard to place pupil in an effort to improve their attendance.

Schools will:

- have a whole-school ethos which reinforces good attendance;
- set annual targets for attendance and monitor progress towards them;
- appoint a member of the Senior Leadership Team to take strategic responsibility for attendance matters and ensure all school staff are clear about their individual responsibilities and accountabilities in relation to school attendance;
- ensure that staff receive adequate training and development opportunities in relation to attendance (e.g. they ensure that admin staff are appropriately trained in using electronic attendance monitoring systems);
- comply with statutory registration and off-rolling procedures in line with Children Missing Education statutory guidance for removing a child from roll;
- submit attendance returns to the DfE and LA as required;

- regularly monitor the effectiveness of their registration system;
- take appropriate action and inform the LA when any pupil is absent for more than 10 days without contact or a reason being provided;
- adhere to the LA guidance on Children Missing Education where a pupil ceases to attend and they fail to enrol at a new school and/or their whereabouts are unknown;
- implement and regularly review their attendance policy;
- clearly communicate their attendance policy to all staff, pupils and parents;
- ensure parents/carers are supported in promoting the regular and punctual attendance of their children;
- actively involve pupils in the development of attendance initiatives (e.g. by using pupil surveys to assess the impact of interventions);
- provide easily accessible pastoral support to pupils who have become, or are at risk of becoming, disengaged from the education system and work with other partners and agencies to support pupils and families;
- involve medical personnel (e.g. the school nurse) in relation to long-term medical absences, either consistent or intermittent;
- discuss attendance as part of the agenda for SEND reviews;

- ensure that that senior leaders regularly analyse and report school attendance data to the governing body and use it to inform planning to further improve attendance;
- support mid-year transfers between schools via effective induction procedures for pupils and good inter-school communication;
- implement a clear escalation process for managing attendance, prior to local authority involvement, with clarity about respective roles and responsibilities at each stage;
- contact parents on the first day of absence.

The role of other agencies and stakeholders

Support to schools

We recognise that schools need the ability to draw in additional support from a single point of contact. To ensure there is clarity they need to know that the right person is supporting the child at the right time. Schools are sometimes unclear which service is best placed to provide support and this can lead to a number of similar services being requested for the same child or family.

As resources are scarce and demand is high, we need to maximise our capacity to ensure that we meet the needs of children within schools.

We know the importance and value of intervening early before problems become entrenched within families and therefore we need to have a clear distinction between a preventative Early Help support service within schools and a statutory response when Early Help has not achieved positive outcomes.

The services within scope which can bring additional resource and expertise to supporting schools in a preventative way are:

- traded school attendance officers;
- the inclusion and SEND support service;
- Early Help and Family First;
- children's centres and early years services;
- children's social care;
- school nurses and the wider health service.

Early Years

Whilst attendance in early years settings before the age of 5 is not statutory, early years is where lifelong habits are established. Securing good early years attendance therefore is an important foundation on which children will go on to thrive throughout their school life and beyond.

Our early years team will provide advice, guidance and support to families and settings to help secure good attendance. The same person-centred approach and keen desire for early intervention will feature in all of our practice and development work with settings. Support is available to all settings from the team.

Children's Centres

Engagement with young children and their families through a local Children's Centre is a key opportunity to work with parents to ensure that they understand the importance of their role in ensuring good attendance at school. Staff working in these settings are well placed to support parents and to emphasise the crucial role parents play in their child's learning and development. When children start school, children's centre staff can support the transition, working with the school staff to ensure a positive start, which includes good attendance.

Health Services

The school nursing service is available to all children in Knowsley schools. The school nurses support with health education in schools as well as providing support for both physical and mental health needs. Their role in attendance

can often be key and we engage with the services on a regular basis.

Vulnerable Pupils

Attendance Vulnerable Children Group Meeting:

The aim of this multi-agency group is to ensure that vulnerable children and young people are attending school and to support those who do not. This weekly meeting will focus on children in need; children with a child protection plan; children supported by Early Help and Family First; children at risk of criminal exploitation; persistent absentees and vulnerable children with an Education and Health Care Plan who are not accessing school.

Vulnerable children and young people can be referred to this group by the school attendance lead or other agencies informing the Education Improvement Team of their absent children.

The groups purpose is to identify pupils who need support to improve school attendance. It will:

- consider data reports showing the number of children and young people who are in these categories and the number who actually attend;

- ensure all services are using the Attendance Strategy/ Attendance Toolkit as agreed;
- share information across services to ensure a joined-up approach to working with these children;
- agree strategies for specific families/children or particular schools/teams;
- monitor the arrangements once they are established;;
- review arrangements as the situation changes, such as an increase in rates of infection or a change in a child's attendance.

The graduated approach to good school attendance

The graduated approach is a framework of interventions with pupils and families to underpin integrated working between schools and the local authority to improve attendance and aims to enable schools to address poor attendance at an early stage. Staged interventions begin with effective whole-school approaches to managing the attendance of all pupils. School policies should promote good attendance, make clear what everyone's roles and responsibilities are and clearly outline what action is taken at each stage so that early intervention can take place. An effective whole-school approach will include regular monitoring and review of practice and its effectiveness and enable schools to target appropriate interventions with pupils and families.

The toolkit also outlines how the graduated approach moves through Levels 1 to 4. Level 1 refers to the variety of school based interventions to improve attendance. Level 2 deals with early intervention and a family response to early challenges with pupil attendance; Level 3 uses targeted intervention and brokering multi-agency support; and Level 4 moves on to statutory intervention through the local authority. Again, the toolkit provides guidance and resources to help schools move through the levels. The local authority is now able to offer enhanced support for the non-statutory aspects of the graduated approach.

For schools who buy into this new, multi-disciplinary traded offer, a clear progressive pathway of support can be offered to schools to tackle the range of issues which impact on young people's attendance. This will be in line with the graduated approach to ensure that attendance is closely matched to the correct service to match the needs of schools, pupils and their parents. The Attendance Toolkit (appendix 1) describes the graduated approach.



As part of the new offer we will be working with several teams to create one point of contact to support schools to work directly with families and address their individual needs.

The multi-agency team consists of officers including but not restricted to:

- School attendance officers – traded and statutory;
- School family support workers;
- Behaviour and inclusion officers;
- SEND Officers;
- Careers Support and Post-16 providers;
- Children's Social care/Virtual School;
- YOS education officers;
- Early help and Family First support workers;
- Shield officers and support workers.



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LEVEL 1 UNIVERSAL:

School action and support (before requesting wider agency support)

Interventions are school-level actions to secure improvements at the earliest stages of non-attendance. The attendance policy should set out what school actions take place for pupils in each attendance band. For example, how pupils with good and improving attendance are rewarded and encouraged to maintain this. Pupils with patterns of irregular attendance should be identified and monitored as early as possible, for example when attendance drops below 95%. Schools should notify parents of their concerns. The message to both pupil and parents should be one of support and encouragement while making it clear that improvement is expected. The toolkit gives examples of effective actions that can be taken. The pre-requisite is to have the full support and drive of the headteacher.

The full range of Level 1 graduated response activity must have been undertaken by schools before a request can be made for multi-agency support from the local authority at Level 2 or above.

Such actions could include the following (although this is not an exhaustive list):

- Phone calls to parents;
- Correspondence to parents highlighting concerns;
- Meetings in school with parents (or virtually if necessary) to discuss issues;
- Home visits (social distancing guidelines to be followed or virtually);
- Staff involvement e.g. learning mentor, classroom support;
- Support plans and strategies agreed and reviews in place;
- Referral for Early Help (see Early Years above);
- Schools could send a education penalty notice warning letter (follow the Penalty Notice procedure) eg. For holiday absences;
- Other professional support e.g. health services support and advice.

The toolkit and library of resources will assist with this. The half termly attendance newsletter will also give some strategies to assist with school support.

THE ENHANCED OFFER FOR LEVEL 2 – SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT

LEVEL 2 / STEP 1:

SCHOOL-BASED CHECK – FOR SCHOOLS WITH A SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT (SLA)

This will be work for schools that have bought into the Knowsley SLA. If schools have bought their SLA from another provider this is the type of work we would recommend from their provider.

Schools need to have completed actions at the Universal stage and an Early Help assessment (Level 1) before instigating the next stage (Level 2). The following information would be useful to gather before engaging with other services:

- Up to date attendance data;
- Historical attendance (last 3 years);
- Siblings – dates of birth, school(s) attended;
- Parents/carers – names, addresses;
- Behaviour – exclusions;
- SEND information;
- GP details and medical information;

- Historic or current in-school pastoral support;
- Historic or current multi-agency support.

The school will then contact the traded officer for attendance who is assigned to them and discuss any concerns or issues. The traded officer will work with all the children in the family across all linked schools and will support the school with the following activities or could provide low-level intervention attendance support. This may include addressing generic issues within the school as a whole rather than individual cases and potentially small group work. Knowsley's SLA will reflect the support options available.

Any reference to meetings in the current climate during 2021/2022 assumes that schools will follow public health guidance and that meetings will be held virtually or with strict social distancing considerations in place.

Schools should consider the benefits of meeting virtually as this may mean more professionals and other stakeholders could attend.

LEVEL 2/ STEP 2:

Attendance Improvement Meeting (AIM)

The school completes a consultation with the Local Authority School Attendance Service. The Traded Officer will organise an Attendance Improvement Meeting. The Traded Officer assigned to the school will decide who from all services should be at the Attendance Improvement meeting. The Attendance Improvement meeting should not last longer than an hour as it should be solution focused. The Attendance Improvement meeting should include any professionals already supporting the family, the family themselves, the school attendance lead, the traded officer and any other services that may be appropriate. Any partner agency considered able to support would also be requested to attend. If the family does not attend the meeting, communication clearly explaining the actions of the meeting is shared with them by the Traded Officer. The group will suggest appropriate strategies to support the child and family in line with this strategy. Suggested strategies should then be selected and an action plan created. The action plan should be reviewed by the Traded Officer and school after 3 weeks. The decision to close and refer another case or to extend will be agreed at this point. Cases at Level 2 should not be extended beyond one half term. Refer to Appendix A for menu of actions. Parenting Contracts would be encouraged as agreements between

the school, parent, child, and other agencies. However, if these strategies have already been exhausted by all agencies, consideration would be given to escalating the case towards legal proceedings or a referral made to Step 3.

Note: At the point of parent contact, either by letter or verbally, the parent should be made aware that any further absences may not be authorised unless medical evidence is provided. Medical evidence can be in the form of an appointment card, prescription with the child's name and date on or prescription medicine. Parents should not be told to go to the GP to request evidence if they had none at the time. The Local Authority GP protocol can be used at a later stage if evidence is not available. It is important that the overall attendance record reflects a pattern of irregular attendance. There is no requirement for medical evidence for Covid-19 related absence but ensuring that the Test and Trace procedures have been adhered to is recommended.

LEVEL 3: FAMILY FIRST

For cases causing concern that are greater than Level 2, where the Attendance Improvement meeting actions haven't worked within the half term or if the needs and risks to the child have increased, then the traded officer will follow the step-up process to either Family First or to the Statutory Officer in the School Attendance Service.

If stepping up to Family First team, the Traded Officer should ask Family First to attend a TAF meeting to consider escalation. The Traded Officer must continue to meet but Family First will become the lead in future meetings.

If stepping up to Statutory Officer and the schools have bought into the SLA. There is no further action to take, the traded officer will move this forward. If a school has another provider for their SLA then the school will need to complete a Statutory Referral Form to explain all of the actions taken so far. This would then be picked up by the statutory officer for assessment to see if the case can be progressed. A penalty notice may be considered at this point.

LEVEL 4: SOCIAL CARE

If the work of the statutory officer does not result in the required attendance improvement within a half term, this may be escalated to prosecution or educational neglect. To escalate to Educational Neglect the case needs to be referred into the Attendance of Vulnerable Children Group for discussion.

If the work of the Family First Officer is unsuccessful or the family refuse to engage with the process then this can also be escalated to educational neglect or Level 4 Children's social care.

Actions at Level 4 can include the use of parental responsibility measures such as penalty notices. However, prosecution should always be a last resort; statistically it is the least likely to have a positive impact on attendance.

Appendix A – Knowsley’s Graduated response model

Level 1

- Badges
- Certificates
- Class competitions
- Clear school systems
- First day response
- Headteacher high profile
- Home visits
- Attendance toolkit
- Marketing/PR
- Community support – wardens, walking bus
- School Attendance meeting
- Meeting with parents

Level 2

- Attendance Team
- Early Help Team
- Attendance Improvement Meeting
- Health services – school nurse, health visitors
- Behaviour and Inclusion
- Shield/YOS/Virtual school support workers

Level 3

- Attendance Team
- Family First Team

Level 4

- Attendance Team
- Children’s Social Care



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Appendix B - Glossary

AIM - Attendance Improvement Meeting	Meeting led by the Traded Officer which brings together a range of people from appropriate services and the family to form an attendance action plan
Attendance lead	School based role to improve attendance
Attendance Vulnerable Children Group Meeting	Weekly multi agency meeting to discuss vulnerable children who are not attending and to escalate where necessary to appropriate support
Butterflies/Listening Ear	Counselling for bereavement services
CAMHS	Child and Adult Mental Health Services – work with young people when they have been referred by the school or their GP
CME – Child Missing in Education	Children missing from education are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at school.
Consultation Meeting	Meeting between School Attendance Service and Schools to decide on appropriate families to refer into the Traded Officers work or Statutory Officers work.
CPD	Continuing Professional Development – training to improve practice
Diamond/Listening Ear	Counselling for Domestic Abuse
EAL	English as an additional language

Early Help Assessment	The referral form required for Early Help to assess the family and decide whether they need further support
EPN	Education Penalty Notice – fine for non-attendance
Educational Neglect	Refer to the Educational Neglect Policy below
Education Supervision Order	An order granted in the Family Proceedings Court requiring the family to follow directions made in the Order and work alongside the Statutory Officer to improve the child's school attendance. This order can also compel families to complete an admissions form for a school.
EHCP	Children who have an Education, Health and Care Plan which is a legal document
Evidential Test	Whether there is enough and appropriate evidence for a prosecution
FAP – Fair Access Protocol	The Fair Access Panel meet to enact the Fair Access Protocol. The purpose of the Fair Access Protocol is to ensure that – outside the normal admission round – un placed children especially the most vulnerable are found and offered a school place quickly to minimise the amount of time a child is out of school. Knowsley Fair Access Panel is made up of primary and secondary senior leaders from across the borough.
LA Services	Attendance, SEND, Behaviour and Inclusion, EAL, Children with Disabilities, Governor support services, Admissions, Sensory Impairment Service, School Transport, Early Help, Family First, Hospital and Home Tuition, Virtual School, Shield, MACE, Education Psychology, Early Years, Crime and Community,

LM	Learning Mentor – pastoral member of staff in schools
MACE	Multi Agency Child Exploitation Panel, the means by which the local authority respond to children who are at risk or vulnerable to criminal exploitation which includes sexual exploitation, children who go missing, trafficking, criminal exploitation and modern slavery.
MARF referral	Multi Agency Referral Form to be completed if there are educational neglect or safeguarding concerns
MASH	The Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub screen the MARF referrals and escalate where necessary
NEET	Above school age child over 16 who is not in education, employment or training. These children are tracked by the LA's NEET Tracking service for 3 years after they leave education.
Other Partner Agencies	Health – school nursing service, CAMHS, Kooth, Careers Connect, Listening Ear, Mental Health Support Team, Police, Housing, Parent/Carer Voice, SENDIAS,
PA	Persistent Absentees – classed as this is a child misses 10% of school sessions
PACE Act	Police and Criminal Evidence Act – what evidence is required for prosecution
Parenting Contract	Formal written agreement to improve attendance. They are voluntary but are set within the context of possible legal action in the future. They commit both parents and the school to work together to bring about improvements. This is usually drawn up by an Officer in the School Attendance Service.

Pre- Proceedings Meeting	This is a meeting with the aim to see if any attendance problems can be fixed without the need to go to court. This is led by the Statutory Officer.
Pre-Court Panel	This is the meeting between officers and legal services to decide whether there is enough evidence for prosecution.
Public Interest Test	Whether it is within the public interest for a prosecution
Restorative Practice	Strategies that seek to repair relationships that have been damaged, it does this by bringing about reflection by the offender and forgiveness by the victim
SAS – School Attendance Service	LA service which has a Traded Offer through the SLA and delivers Statutory duties with schools
SENCO	Staff member responsible for SEND and EHCP in a school
Shield	The child exploitation or missing team. Shield workers work with families who are at risk of exploitation.
SLA	Service level agreement – a paid for traded service agreed with schools
SLT	Senior Leadership Team in a school (Headteacher, Deputy, Assistant Head etc)
Statutory Officer	A member of the Local Authority School Attendance Service whose work focuses on cases that may be pursued to legal proceedings. This includes further intervention work to assist with compiling the evidence for court proceedings.

TAF – Team Around the Family

Early help meeting organised by the school which includes the family and other agencies. This should promote effective partnership working. This is an opportunity for all practitioners along with parents, children and young people to discuss a given situation and how to progress.

Traded Officer

A member of the Local authority School Attendance Service who delivers the attendance service level agreement in schools who have bought into this traded offer. This officer delivers early intervention support and strategies. This is time specific.

Virtual School

Virtual School acts as a local authority champion to promote the progress and educational attainment of children and young people who are or who have been in care so that they achieve outcomes comparable to their peers.

YOS

Youth Offending Service is a statutory partnership to reduce reoffending by children and young people aged 10-18.

Appendix C

Level 1

Is Child Attending School less than 95% ?

YES

School completes Early Help assessment

YES

Has the school tried all techniques to engage with the family over a period of 6 weeks using the toolkit ?
Or has the family not engaged with process after 3 weeks ?
And/Or does the school feel family need support?

NO

Child is attending school regularly

Does school have Attendance SLA?

YES

NO

Level 2

The Traded Officer organises an AIM meeting and an action plan is created

After 3 weeks is the child attending school?

YES

NO

School can refer another child for work with Traded Officer. Work is completed with the family

After 6 weeks if no progress it is escalated by the Traded Officer to L3

School arrange meetings at Level 2 and engage services to assist with action planning. School must gather appropriate evidence of the casework completed to create an evidential base should it need to move to L3.

After 6 weeks is the child attending school?

NO

School must refer case to Statutory officer using Referral form or request Step up to Family First meeting as part of a TAF

Level 3

Family First and/or Statutory Officer work with family

After 6 weeks is the child attending school ?

NO

Level 4

Referral to Attendance Vulnerable Group for Educational Neglect or start proceedings for prosecution

Appendix D - Knowsley MBC Educational Neglect Policy

Rationale

In the previous policy, families could only be referred into Children's Social Care for educational neglect if they had a failed prosecution. Evidence suggests that prosecutions for attendance are often ineffective, lengthy and costly. This policy prevented the LA from intervening with families immediately to ensure their child/children attended school.

This new policy fits into the wider Attendance Strategy 2021 which supports a graduated response to attendance in schools. At Level 1, schools should provide as much support as possible, at Level 2 Early Help or Traded Attendance Officers can support further, at Level 3 Statutory Officers or Family First workers can intervene before we get to Level 4 which is prosecution or a referral to Children's Social Care for educational neglect.

It is intended that this policy is used at the Level 4 stage of the attendance strategy or at the highest level of the CYPD Thrive thresholds or if the family refuse to engage with Level 1, 2 and 3 intervention. Schools, School attendance, Family First, Early Help or Social care can refer a family for educational neglect but there will need to be substantial evidence of attempts to engage the family before this point.

The objectives for this policy are that families with persistently absent children receive essential support more quickly and without requiring their consent (as is the case for Early Help and Family First) or a prosecution.

This policy is for schools and services that work with schools such as Early Help, Family First, School Attendance and Children's Social Care to agree on a definition and process for educational neglect.

Definition

The Local Authority recognises that educational neglect exists and can be a factor within physical, emotional, sexual or criminal harm. It is a likely outcome of a range of contributing factors that could be attributable to parent(s)/carer(s), professionals or organisations. It could also be the continued persistent failure of a parent or young person, deemed old enough to determine their own actions, to manage their own travel to and from school and to attend school regularly.

In Knowsley some of the factors that contribute to educational neglect are:

- Failure to identify provision for their child or adequately maintain schooling/education provision;

- Failure to engage in most school/ Local Authority/ trust meetings - even where support is offered - that leads to a disengagement of a child in their schooling with a detrimental impact on their development;
- Failure to engage as required with agencies beyond school, for example health services that leads to a delay deterioration in their child's development, taking into account of a child's needs;
- Parental failure to provide substantiated reasons for absences from school ;
- Court interventions which fail to improve attendance;
- Ineffective take up of support that may have been likely through identified need to improve the educational development of their child;
- Pupil engagement and attendance levels are identified as seriously impeding their development – 75% or below;
- Where professionals or organisation(s) have failed to report concerns that require additional intervention to avoid serious impairment of a child's development;
- Where educational provision that is alternative to full-time education is not provided/is not in line with needs and is not monitored effectively or changed/adapted to reduce the serious impairment of a child's educational development, taking into account an individual child's needs and wishes;

- Where transfer of records or known information that supports a child's developmental needs, including their social, emotional, mental health and well-being and learning needs are not shared with other professionals or transferred to new settings in a timely manner;
- Where a child is 'off-rolled' from a school that does not follow correct process, or is off-rolled not in the best interests of the child but is in the interest of the school;
- Where an agency has not put into place in a timely manner, or sufficiently taken into account advice from health professionals, to establish an Education and Health Care Plan to support individual health needs.

Process

If a service believes children are suffering from educational neglect they should refer the children/organisation with as much information as possible to the Attendance Vulnerable Children Group. The GCP2 tool or the Neglect screening tool should be used to assist in the decision making process prior to referral. The Attendance Vulnerable Children Group is a multi agency panel consisting of early help, family first, shield, social care, SEND, school attendance and school improvement leads.

At the meeting it will be decided if the threshold has been met for an educational neglect referral and whether all agencies/ services have tried all other avenues before we reach this threshold.

The school will then be asked to refer the child/family via the MARF referral process into MASH explaining that this has been recommended by the Attendance Vulnerable Children Group.

MASH should then complete a robust assessment and decide how best to support the family in improving the attendance of their child/children if they agree with the decision of the Attendance Vulnerable Children Group.

If it is an organisation rather than a family that needs to be escalated, this will be completed through the appropriate escalation services using the Knowsley Escalation Process

9.2 Multi Agency Escalation Policy (proceduresonline.com)



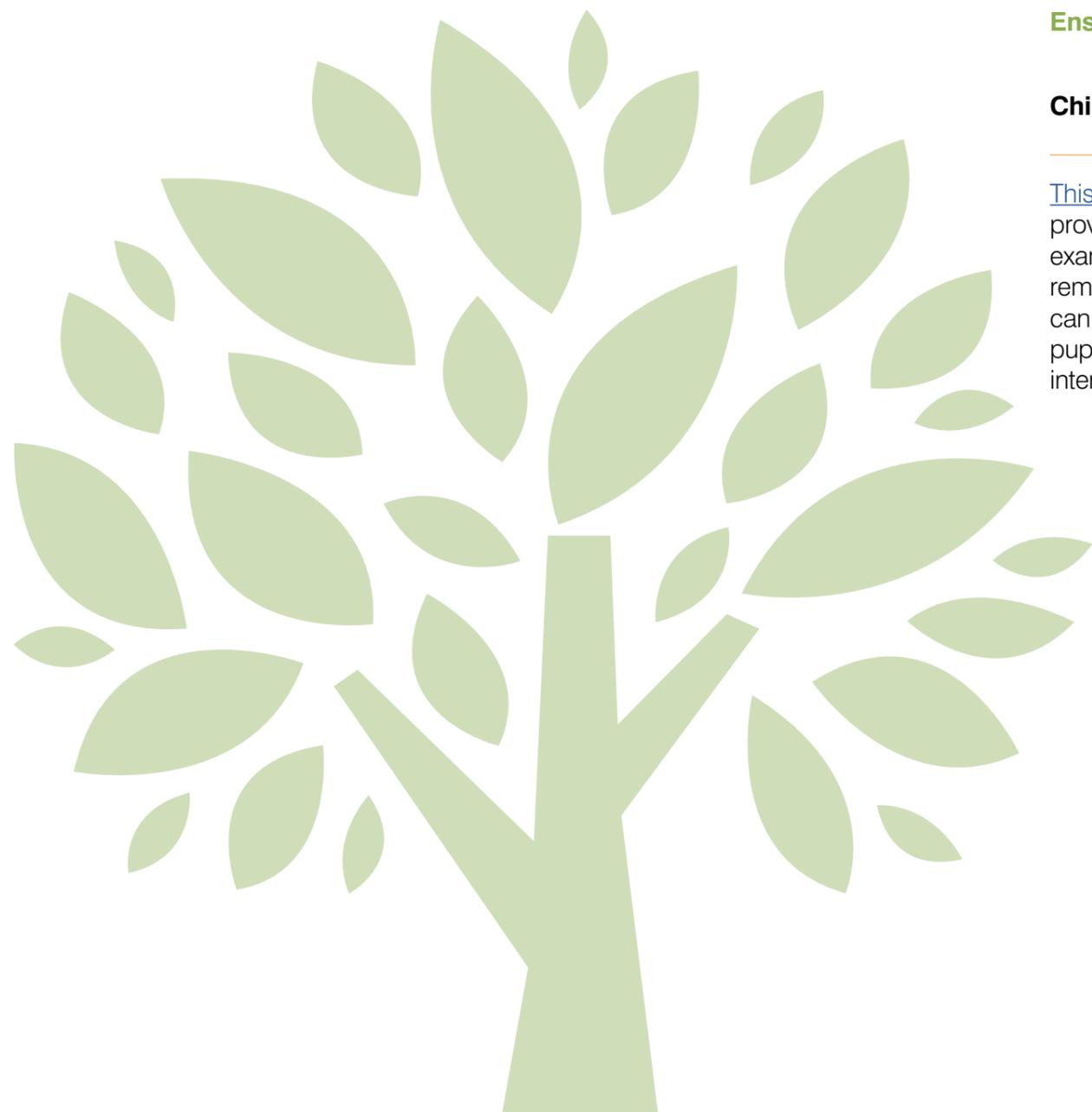
‘Every day
I understand a
little more’

Appendix E

Appendix 1 - Attendance Toolkit

Attendance issues, concerns and queries need to be raised and discussed with the link school attendance and education improvement officer. It is highly recommended that schools use their discretion and professional judgement when addressing attendance during the Covid-19 pandemic as there may be multiple reasons and circumstances which lead to non-attendance; these need to be taken into account and considered on a case-by-case basis rather than adhering too rigidly to a single approach, which can lead to inflexibility and a lack of inclusivity.

As always, the School Attendance Service can offer advice and support. However, the aim of this toolkit is to highlight to schools the many in-school interventions which can be implemented before cases are referred to the Service.



Ensuring good attendance – whose job is it?

Child	Parent/Carer	Class/form Teacher	Attendance Lead	Head Teacher	Governing Body	Local Authority
<p>This poster provides provides examples of key reminders that can be given to pupils at regular intervals.</p>	<p>This guide for parents reminds them of the importance of good attendance and their responsibility for ensuring it.</p>	<p>Monitor attendance each session. Welcome students back. Expect a reason for absence to be provided. Help them to catch up on missed work. Refer students to attendance lead where there are concerns or the school threshold has been reached.</p>	<p>Being a member of SLT (with some admin support) gives this job the seniority it needs. This sample job description outlines key responsibilities. Use the framework and suggestions below to explore actions and select the right level of support.</p>	<p>Support and champion the importance of excellent attendance across the school, holding everyone to account and praising success. Report at least termly to governors on levels of attendance and actions being taken.</p>	<p>Hold to account, challenge and support and praise success. Attendance should be a standing agenda item at relevant sub-committee meetings. Have a lead governor for attendance for link governor visits and as a member of school attendance panel.</p>	<p>Statutory duties include legal intervention, children missing education, elective home education and child employment and performance licensing.</p> <p>School Attendance Traded Officers offer the Service Level Agreement</p>

The school attendance lead needs to ensure the consistency of approach and adherence to the school's policy and practices by all members of the school community.

If a parent calls reporting COVID-19 symptoms, it is essential that the [Outbreak Management Guidance](#) from Public Health is followed and that parents are appropriately questioned, challenged and supported.

Who is here to help me?

Name	Team	Phone	Email
Phil McCalliog	Attendance Manager Children Missing Education	0151 443 5118	Phil.mccalliog@knowsley.gov.uk cme@knowsley.gov.uk
Penny France	Education Improvement	07973 949469	Penelope.france@knowsley.gov.uk
Aby Hardy	Education Improvement	07825 145068	Aby.Hardy@knowsley.gov.uk
Nadine Carroll	Education	0151 443 5978/ 07775221953	Nadine.Carroll@knowsley.gov.uk
Jo Knight	SEND Education Improvement	07973741736	Joanne.Knight@Knowsley.gov.uk
Jan Lee	SEND Education Improvement	07384 900836	Jan.Lee@knowsley.gov.uk
Jo Parry	Early Help	07824529592	Joanne.Parry@knowsley.gov.uk
Karen Foley	EAL Manager	07385375367	Karen.foley@knowsley.gov.uk
Paula Harding	Sensory Impairment Service Manager	07825 145125	Paula.Harding@knowsley.gov.uk
Andrew Nimmo	Home to school Transport Manager	07810 053 380	Andrew.nimmo@knowsley.gov.uk

Name	Team	Phone	Email
Vicki Clements	Safeguarding	073849 00808	Vicki.clements@knowsley.gov.uk
Angela Yoxall	Hospital Home Tuition	07825145135	Angela.Yoxall@knowsley.gov.uk
Jo Lowry	Attendance Deputy Manager	0151 443 5129	Joanne.lowry@knowsley.gov.uk
Trish Lunt	Education Psychology	07384900839	Trish.Lunt@knowsley.gov.uk
Phil Ball	Attendance / Child Entertainment and Employment	0782 599 6491	Phillip.Ball@knowsley.gov.uk
Sue Nevols	Attendance/ Home Education	07810054028	Sue.Nevols@knowsley.gov.uk
Alison Jones	Attendance / Home Education	0151 443 5133	Alison.Jones@Knowsley.gov.uk
Mark Strevens	Behaviour Support	07810053459	Mark.Strevens@knowsley.gov.uk
Jennie Dooley	Schools Admissions Team	07385084671	Jennie.Dooley@knowsley.gov.uk
Kelly Carey	SEND Team Manager	0151 443 2978	Kelly.Carey@knowsley.gov.uk
Mike Wharton	Inclusion	07919 111 237	Michael.Wharton@knowsley.gov.uk
Ian Willman	Crime and Communities	07827982659	Ian.Willman@knowsley.gov.uk
Gill Kirby	Virtual School	07799487547	Gill.Kirby@knowsley.gov.uk
Alistair Scott	Early Years	07810 053 531	Alistair.scott@knowsley.gov.uk
Suzanne Winrow	Early Years SENCO	0151 442 3971	Suzanne.winrow@knowsley.gov.uk
Karl Blaylock	Shield	07557849415	Karl.blaylock@knowsley.gov.uk

Leading and Managing Attendance: a community response

If pupil absence in school is to be addressed effectively, it is essential not only that all members of staff are clear about the role they have to play but also that there is a consistent, staged approach so that action is always taken at the right time and by the right person.

This graduated framework demonstrates a staged approach in action.

It starts with Level 1 which demonstrates how promoting good attendance is everyone's responsibility.

Level 1: UNIVERSAL – Making Attendance Everyone's Priority

Impact on learning & development	Response	Resources
What are we seeing?	What should we be doing?	
Strong leadership which places attendance as everyone's responsibility within the school family.	<p>Strategic analysis of attendance data.</p> <p>High profile headteacher leadership of attendance.</p> <p>Regular celebration of attendance in assemblies.</p> <p>Maintaining/improving attendance is a strategic priority in the school development plan.</p> <p>Budget allocation for attendance to support rewards and to overcome barriers to good attendance (eg travel or equipment costs).</p> <p>Analysis of data and looking at comparisons across collaborative and nationally</p>	<p>This model attendance policy can form the basis of your own practice.</p>

Impact on learning & development

What are we seeing?

A community that values attendance at school

Response

What should we be doing?

Pupils welcomed each day.

Monitoring and celebrating staff attendance.

CPD and regular updates on attendance for all staff.

Communication strategy – eg text message service.

Walking School Bus.

Attendance displays are high profile.

Policy on pupils with medical conditions and administering medicines and a strategy for encouraging medical appointments to be outside school hours.

Parents are expected to communicate during absence or for a meeting to take place.

Avoid half-day and mid-week closures for training sessions.

Strong relationship with school nurses and local medical centres, faith and volunteer sector, community police and community wardens

Resources

This model [policy on supporting pupils with medical conditions](#) can form the basis of your own so that pupils' needs can be best met and everyone understands their role.

Impact on learning & development	Response	Resources
What are we seeing?	What should we be doing?	
The majority of pupils are actively involved in school life with attendance at or above 95%	<p>Praise, encouragement and acknowledgement of good attendance.</p> <p>Pupils know that absence will be noticed and followed up.</p> <p>Support is provided to enable pupils who have missed work to catch up.</p> <p>Rich and accessible curriculum with support for blended learning and access to resources.</p> <p>Wide range of extra-curricular activities that are accessible by all.</p>	<p>Pupil questionnaires.</p> <p>Curriculum review – what is the daily experience of your pupils?</p> <p>The LA comms team can promote school attendance on a wider scale.</p>
High levels of parental engagement - clarity about school processes and systems	<p>Attendance policy on school website with catchy examples of the importance of good attendance – emphasise the positive.</p> <p>Attendance is a weekly feature in newsletter.</p> <p>Use good relationships with families to promote the vaccination programmes.</p> <p>Attendance meetings with pastoral staff and support workers.</p>	
Good behaviour and positive relationships	<p>An effective behaviour management policy that is applied consistently and understood by all staff and pupils is in place.</p> <p>Good behaviour is recognised and rewarded.</p> <p>All phone enquiries from parents, carers and others are responded to promptly.</p>	<p>You will want to make sure that your school's behaviour policy is based on your own ethos and approach but this example policy might be helpful.</p>

Impact on learning & development	Response	Resources
What are we seeing?	What should we be doing?	
	<p>Arrangements to support female pupils during their periods are in place and known by pupils.</p> <p>Pupils always have someone to talk to, whether it be a counsellor, mentor, form tutor or head of year.</p> <p>Creating a peer mentoring programme within school so children have a role model for attendance and aspiration.</p> <p>Discussing other barriers with families eg. Washing/uniform assistance</p>	<p>This link is to the DfE's guidance on period products for schools.</p>
Poor punctuality	<p>Registers close at the same time consistently across the school.</p> <p>Arrival after registers close is coded as U.</p> <p>Encourage punctuality of both pupils and staff to lessons.</p> <p>Lateness to lessons is recorded, monitored and early action taken.</p> <p>Senior leaders on "meet and greet" at school gates to encourage prompt movement to registration.</p> <p>Community engagement – brokering support of neighbours, wardens etc.</p> <p>Collaboration with schools of siblings to understand the problem and consider possible solutions.</p>	

Impact on learning & development	Response	Resources
What are we seeing?	What should we be doing?	
Culture of high expectations	<p>Messages about the importance of high attendance are continually reinforced.</p> <p>Robust first day response messaging and home visits.</p> <p>Clear term-time holiday guidance and consistent practice.</p> <p>Class/tutor group attendance data and targets are regular talking points.</p> <p>Consider using your faith and voluntary contacts to support your actions</p>	

Evidence of successful Level 1 practice

School letters on attendance
Home visit minutes
Parental meetings minutes
Headteacher's reports to governors and minutes of governor meetings
Behaviour policy
Attendance policy
Medicine Policy
Records of attendance-based CPD
Attendance Lead job description
Behaviour and attendance data
Analysis of reasons for absence
Data on engagement in extra-curricular activities
School website
School noticeboards
Responses to parent and pupil questionnaires
Penalty Warning Notice letter

Level 1 should help you to make sure that you have effective strategies in place to promote good attendance with the majority of your pupils.

If this is not working with an individual pupil or a group of pupils, the staged approach moves on to Level 2.

Level 2: Early Intervention: A family response to early challenges with pupil attendance

If you have an SLA then your Traded Officer may be able to support with these actions.

Impact on learning & development	Response	Resources
What are we seeing?	What should we be doing?	
<p>Attendance has not improved or has deteriorated over a 3-week period, despite early support interventions.</p>	<p>Review the Early Help Assessment via the TAF process every 4 weeks. If targets are not being met, escalate to Family First to lead the TAF.</p> <p>Review the Attendance Improvement Meeting actions every 3 weeks and if targets are not being met, continue for another 3 weeks and then escalate this.</p> <p>Consider the need for any additional referrals to support agencies to improve the wider issues which can support attendance.</p> <p>Consider involving alternative education providers to best suit the needs and aspirations of the child</p> <p>Consider escalate to school attendance service as a case</p>	<p>This guide to attendance casework covers school action, the fast track to attendance model, parenting contracts and prosecution for non-attendance.</p>

Impact on learning & development

What are we seeing?

Parents don't appear to have high aspirations for their child to have good attendance.

Response

What should we be doing?

School attendance meeting chaired by Chair of Governors or attendance link governor to agree improvement and set targets with pupil and parents/carers.

Resources

[School attendance improvement meeting guidance](#)

[School attendance improvement meeting template](#)

[School attendance improvement review meeting template](#)

Increase in occasional absence impacting on learning and/or friendships/relationships/self-regard

Data analysis: understanding the scale of the problem (patterns).
 First day response escalated to home visit.
 Teacher discussion with pupil.
 Pastoral staff meeting with parent/carer – seek to understand.
 Early help assessment initiated
 Pastoral staff work with pupil to understand barriers – eg is it a uniform/equipment problem?
 Hold a team around the family meeting at least fortnightly. This should be led by the headteacher or school attendance lead and include the parent(s), carer(s) and pupils.
 Your traded officer may lead an Attendance Improvement Meeting to include multi agency staff and this might lead to an agreed parenting contract.

[This](#) is a sample home-school agreement.

[Attendance letter 1](#)

[Attendance letter 2](#)

Good practice School [Team Around the Family](#) (TAF) meeting guidance

[Young Carer referral form](#)

[LA contextual safeguarding guidance](#)

Impact on learning & development	Response	Resources
What are we seeing?	<p>What should we be doing?</p> <p>Regularly track the pupil in pupil progress meetings – at least half termly.</p> <p>Set pupil/family attendance targets</p> <p>Discuss with school nurse; school attendance officer; young carers.</p> <p>Consider the pupil’s additional needs/SEND – ensure the Senco is involved at all stages.</p> <p>Involve the SEND/Inclusion team, contact any children with EHCP’s, SEND key worker for further advice and support.</p> <p>Seek advice from the Educational Psychologist</p> <p>Seek advice from the Behaviour and Inclusion service</p> <p>Consider Fair Access Panel Protocol and whether this process could assist</p>	<p>Trauma-related practice guidance</p> <p>FAP Protocol 2020-2021</p>
Parental/family dysfunction leads to change in norm, eg reduced engagement of child/parent, change in appearance, change in mood	<p>Signposting to parenting courses.</p> <p>Consider support from other agencies eg school nurse, YOS school support worker, MACE education support workers, virtual school support workers and service, housing trust,</p>	<p>“The only parenting advice you really need”</p> <p>Link to Knowsley family learning and planning.</p> <p>School attendance improvement meeting guidance</p>

Impact on learning & development	Response	Resources
What are we seeing?	<p>What should we be doing?</p> <p>Complete an Early Help Assessment – request support from your traded officer to arrange an Attendance Improvement Meeting led by the most appropriate attendees. If the school has an SLA this will be arranged by the School Traded Officer.</p> <p>Carry out a contextual safeguarding school assessment to identify any common themes.</p> <p>School attendance meeting chaired by the headteacher.</p> <p>Consider use of the volunteer hub to support</p>	<p>School attendance improvement meeting template</p> <p>School attendance improvement review meeting template.</p> <p>Knowsley Early Help Assessment form</p> <p>Model Child Protection Policy</p> <p>Good practice School Team Around the Family (TAF) meeting guidance</p>

Evidence of successful Level 2 practice

Summaries, plans, targets and reviews from school attendance meetings
 Letter recommending parenting courses
 Early help assessment form
 Contextual safeguarding assessment
 Minutes of TAF meeting with actions reviewed and implemented.
 Minutes of AIM meeting with actions reviewed and implemented.

Level 2 should help you to make sure that you have effective strategies in place to promote good attendance with pupils whose attendance causes concern.
If this is not working with an individual pupil or a group of pupils, the staged approach moves on to Level 3.

Level 3: Targeted Intervention: Brokering support from multi-agencies to meet the challenge of poor attendance

Impact on learning & development	Response	Resources
What are we seeing?	What should we be doing?	
AIM and/or TAF meeting actions have failed to improve attendance	<p>Family First officer is assigned to family to encourage attendance by developing a more robust action plan and assisting with family issues.</p> <p>The Traded Officer will refer the case to a Statutory Officer to consider for case work.</p> <p>The school will refer the case to a Statutory Officer if they don't have an SLA using the Statutory Referral Form.</p>	Statutory Referral Form
Parents are regularly providing reasons for their child's absence from school which are not legitimate.	<p>Inform the parent that if their child's attendance doesn't improve, the LA has to consider statutory action in line with the Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act 1996 and the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE)</p>	<p>This Knowsley penalty notice code of conduct outlines the process and includes an exemplar letter to parents and referral form. This is a parent's guide to penalty notices which could accompany a warning letter.</p>

Impact on learning & development	Response
What are we seeing?	What should we be doing?
Lateness has not improved or has deteriorated.	<p>A penalty notice may be issued "In cases where a child persistently arrives at school after the register has closed and has accumulated 14 unauthorised late marks within a period of no more than 10 weeks". (LA penalty notice code of conduct)</p>

Evidence of Graduated Response

Warning notice to parents.

Additional referrals to other services – CAMHS, Shield, Butterflies for Bereavement, Diamond for Domestic Abuse.

Family First case notes

Referral form from Traded officer/school to Statutory officer

Statutory Officer Support Plan

If Level 3 is unsuccessful, the staged approach moves on to Level 4:

Level 4: Statutory Intervention: Safeguarding & the Management of Poor Attendance

Impact on learning & development	Response	Resources
What are we seeing?	What should we be doing?	
<p>Attendance has not improved despite targeted support interventions.</p>	<p>The lead school attendance professional holds a formal inter-agency meeting. The outcomes will formulate a Parenting Contract and referral to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). This will involve statutory casework and inter-agency support in line with the Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act 1996 and The Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE).</p> <p>Escalate to the Attendance of Vulnerable Children Group for further support and advice.</p> <p>Consider referral to Children Missing in Education team via the School Attendance Service</p> <p>Escalate to police for a welfare call 111 if unable to contact parents</p>	<p>These are examples of letters sent to parents following a referral to MASH:</p> <p>Letter 1 Letter 2 Letter 3</p> <p>This is a sample LA parenting contract.</p> <p>CME Statutory Guidance Knowsley CME Policy The PACE Act 1984 does not apply solely to police officers but to anyone conducting prosecution casework.</p> <p>Here is a summary of the main areas covered by PACE. MARF Referral form</p>

Impact on learning & development	Response	Resources
What are we seeing?	What should we be doing?	
<p>Parents have not engaged with TAF and have no reason for the pupil's low attendance.</p>	<p>Parents are made aware that there are legal ramifications if they fail to cooperate. If the parenting contract does not improve the pupil's attendance, the parent will be invited to an Interview under caution in line with PACE and then the case will be reviewed by the pre-proceedings panel which involves the School Attendance Service Manager and two representatives from Legal Services.</p> <p>The school and agencies involved will be asked if there are any reasons why the case should not progress to the Family or Magistrates' Court. These will then be considered by the panel as part of the "Public Interest Test" and the "Evidential Tests". The outcomes from this panel can be to apply for an Education Supervision Order or decide either that further support is required or that it is not in the public Interest to proceed to criminal prosecution.</p> <p>Consider the risks to the pupil. Are the concerns such that they require the pupil to be referred to Children's Social Care for statutory involvement under Educational Neglect?</p>	<p>This document outlines the differences between a parenting order, education supervision order and a school attendance order. This is the agenda for a pre-proceedings panel meeting.</p> <p>Section 4 of this document explains the working of the "public interest" decision.</p> <p>This document contains relevant extracts about attendance from the Education Act 1996 Section 4441 (parent fails to secure attendance) 4441a (where parent failed to ensure they attend school)</p>
<p>Evidence of Educational Neglect. Prosecution has failed.</p>	<p>The school makes a referral to children's social care for Educational Neglect via the MARF process to MASH. If school are unsure if meets the threshold of MASH they should refer via the vulnerable children template into the Attendance of Vulnerable Children Group.</p>	<p>This is a draft of the LA's policy on educational neglect which has not yet been ratified.</p>

Evidence of Graduated Response

MASH referral form.

Parenting contract.

Warning letter and paperwork around penalty notices.

Minutes of MASH meeting.



'Every day I smile'

Some top tips for improving attendance

Developing a skilled and attendance-knowledgeable workforce

- Appreciate that a 'one model fits all' approach is not effective and that dealing with attendance on an individual needs basis is paramount.
- Lead from the top: aim for Headteacher involvement to promote the importance placed on attendance - <https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/toolkits/for-principals-leading-attendance/>, <https://www.attendanceworks.org/take-action/educators-professional-student-support-staff/>
- Organise CPD for all staff to understand the importance of attendance: what constitutes persistent absence (PA)?; share the attitudes of pupils who are absent or late to school; heighten awareness of physical and mental illness and strategies for coping with these in school - <https://www.attendanceworks.org/take-action/educators/teachers/>
- Have a wall chart of PA pupils for admin staff/SLT/LM/attendance officer to refer to so that if a parent rings in to inform of an absence, these key school staff know exactly how many days the pupil has already missed and can respond appropriately.

Review school practice

- Adopt an Adminstrating Medicine policy which is clearly implemented and shared with parents (see resource in Level 1 above).
- Engage your school nurse to encourage students to discuss their concerns. Conduct a medical health review - https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/AAP_policy_statement_chronic_absence_2019_.pdf
- Encourage staff and children to have the flu vaccination - https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/902790/Flu_vaccination_programme_briefing_for_school_team_and_headteachers.pdf
- Establish an asthma clinic in school (asthma can be a significant reason for absence) - https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Mapping-the-Early-Attendance-Gap-Exec-Summary-4-pager_4.pdf
- https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/SBHCs-Early-Dismissal-Seat-Time_Van-Cura_2010.pdf

- Pick pupils up in the school minibus in the morning - <https://eu.freep.com/story/news/education/2019/05/28/detroit-public-schools-absent-vans/1253365001/>
- Set up a school walking bus - <http://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/145562/8/1-s2.0-S0965856418315751-main.pdf>
- Develop "safe passage" routes to school: volunteers line the routes to school to make pupils feel safer - https://www.future-ed.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/REPORT_Attendance-Playbook-Covid-Edition.pdf
- Monitor remote learning attendance where this is operating - <https://www.attendanceworks.org/chronic-absence/addressing-chronic-absence/monitoring-attendance-in-distance-learning/>
- Ensure the school has developed and delivers an engaging curriculum, suitable for all learners - <https://www.attendanceworks.org/reducing-chronic-absence-requires-problem-solving-support-not-blame-punishment/>
- Greet each pupil at the school entrance at the start of school and at the classroom door for each lesson – <https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/toolkits/mentoring-elementary-success-mentors/what-does-an-elementary-success-mentor-do/meet-and-greet-each-morning/>
- Review what happens and what pupils do during break and lunchtimes – provide more structure - https://www.future-ed.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/REPORT_Attendance-Playbook-Covid-Edition.pdf

Effective communication systems

- Create short, considered letters and other communications, regularly reminding all parents about attendance - <https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Strategies-for-Connecting-with-Students-and-Families-rev-8-2-20.pdf>
- Send letters to parents of pupils who are absent, comparing their child's absence with those of the whole class - <https://leadinglearner.me/2017/07/02/absences-matter-and-you-can-help/>
- Ensure that warning letters aren't sent to parents of pupils with approved authorised absences or with known medical conditions that have prevented them from coming to school.

- Adopt a personalised response to attendance bearing in mind parents' and children's needs – be careful not to blanket everyone with a threshold of 96% or below.
- Use a text service to alert parents to absence or lateness, utilising this service as soon as the attendance issue is known - <https://www.attendanceworks.org/best-practices-for-texting-families/>
- Contact parents at different times of the day - <https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Strategies-for-Connecting-with-Students-and-Families-rev-8-2-20.pdf>
- Vary who makes first response calls to maintain impact – include SLT members including the headteacher when possible - <https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/toolkits/for-principals-leading-attendance/develop-staff-capacity-to-adopt-effective-attendance-practice/>
- Nudging parents proves more effective than threatening them. Try “Are you aware how many days your child has missed?”- type letters - https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Todd-postcard-Nudge-research-publis-REL_2017252.pdf
- Discussions with families should be centred initially on hopes/aspirations for their children rather than focused on poor attendance. The impact of tackling attendance in research worked best when families were contacted about something else first - <https://www.attendanceworks.org/reducing-chronic-absence-requires-problem-solving-support-not-blame-punishment/>
- Post COVID-19, regularly and in a variety of ways communicate how school looks now, how children are enjoying school, share pictures on social media, extend positive messaging. Ensure the school makes it very clear when pupils are too sick to go to school and when they should attend - <https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/messaging/how-sick-is-too-sick/>
- Ensure pupils ask for medical appointments outside of school or virtual appointments so they don't miss school. Can you enlist the help of local medical centres in only offering pupils appointments out of school hours?

Work with the pupil, not just the parents

- Use restorative practice methods and approaches - <https://www.iirp.edu/news/during-the-covid-19-crisis-restorative-practices-can-help>

- Provide mentoring in school for pupils with absence issues - <https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/toolkits/mentoring-elementary-success-mentors/>
- Provide character-building and self-confidence education - <https://turnaroundusa.org/resources-three-rs/> - <https://www.rulerapproach.org/>

Practical assistance

- Consider how to discreetly provide uniform/relax uniform requirements or have spare items available -
- <https://www.attendanceworks.org/a-dream-team-for-reducing-chronic-absence-the-cleveland-browns/> https://www.future-ed.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/REPORT_Attendance-Playbook-Covid-Edition.pdf
- Understand the positive impact of relaxing equipment/uniform/homework expectations if attendance issues are key. It's better for the pupil to attend than not to do so because of fear of repercussions from any of the above.
- Provide period products or use period product schemes to combat period poverty and ensure such products are easily accessible for pupils, avoiding unnecessary embarrassment caused if they have to request them - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/period-products-in-schools-and-colleges/period-product-scheme-for-schools-and-colleges-in-england>
- Provide pupils/parents with advice on washing uniform or personal hygiene if necessary - <https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/toolkits/integrating-attendance-into-kindergarten-transition/offer-supports-to-reduce-health-related-absences/>

Rewards and incentives

- Consider rewarding improved attendance, not just 100% - <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10824669.2018.1438898?scroll=top&needAccess=true&journalCode=hjsp20> https://www.future-ed.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/REPORT_Attendance-Playbook-Covid-Edition.pdf
- Think carefully about any attendance incentivising during COVID-19 as pupils will need to self-isolate if asked - https://www.future-ed.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/REPORT_Attendance-Playbook-Covid-Edition.pdf

