

Attendance Roadmap

The Department for Education (DfE) Working Together to Improve School Attendance statutory guidance (effective from 19th August 2024) expects schools to offer a supportive, stepped attendance approach. A welcoming ethos with high expectations for all builds a culture where all pupils can and want to be in school and ready to learn. Schools can prioritise attendance across the school by assessing data to identify absence trends and using preventative discussions/meetings with families to listen, understand, and support to remove barriers. Where required, support can be formalised to nurture improvement using Attendance Contracts and, as a last resort, considering the use of legal intervention.



Did you know, arriving after the register has closed (30 mins from school starting) = an absence?



Step 2 - Listen and Understand

Where a pattern exists, encourage pupils and parents to listen and understand barriers to attendance, and agree on how all partners can work together to resolve them. Discussions and meetings should be offered to identify if early support or any reasonable adjustments are needed. This can be done using discussions and/or meetings to create a supportive action plan.

Did you know, 90% attendance = 4 weeks of absence over a year?



Step 3 - Facilitate Support

If barriers exist, help pupils and parents access the support they need to overcome barriers in and outside of school. This might include an early help or a whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

Did you know, 90% attendance = approx. 95 missed lessons/hours of learning?



Step 4 - Formalise Support

(1,2,3,4,5,6,7(a),7(b),8)

Where absence persists and voluntary support has not been engaged with, partners should work together to clearly explain the possible actions and ensure support is in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances, this may include formalising support through an attendance contract. This is a 3-6-month nurturing plan of improvement to prevent further escalation. Achievable and individualised targets should be set and reviewed regularly. Medical and/or other information should be actively sought at this point if required to work collaboratively with families, professionals, and other agencies.

Did you know, good attendance increases academic success?



Step 5 - Consider Legal Intervention⁽⁹⁾

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support has not been engaged with, consider legal intervention to protect the pupil's right to an education. Statutory guidance states that a referral to Children's Social Care for children with 'severe absence' (less than 50%) should be considered to obtain 'intense support'.

PENALTY NOTICES & LEGAL INTERVENTION

1st Offence (effective from 19th August 2024) of Term Time Leave and/or Irregular Attendance (10 sessions of Unauthorised Absence or more) = Fine of £160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days. If paid within 21 days, the fine is reduced to £80 per parent, per child.

2nd Offence within 3 years (from 19th August 2024) = Fine of £160 per parent, per child payable within 28 days, no reduction available.

3rd Offence within 3 years (from 19th August 2024) = NO PENALTY NOTICE considered. The case will be presented to Magistrates' Court under s444(1) or (1a) of the Education Act. If found guilty, a fine of up to £2500 per parent, per child can be issued. Convictions for s444(1a) offences will show on DBS record.

*(number) denotes step on "Attendance Process" document