



# Attendance

Next review: Autumn 2023

## Introduction

Nottinghamshire Local Authority (LA) is committed to working with, and supporting schools, parents /carers and children to ensure that every child achieves the highest level of attendance at school. The LA is also committed to working in partnership with other agencies who can contribute to an holistic approach to improving school attendance.

The Education Welfare Service (EWS) will lead on school attendance for the LA and will ensure that all other relevant agencies are engaged in the support of particularly vulnerable children and groups, including children in public care and Traveller children.

## Legal Requirements

Parents have a duty to ensure that their children receive full time education. The Education Act 2002 places the responsibility for enforcing school attendance on the LA. This responsibility is delegated to the EWS.

Legal action will be instigated against parents/carers in relevant circumstances using the wide range of available options including:

- penalty notices
- school attendance orders
- Section 444(1) and (1)(a) of the Education Act 2002

All of the above can be incorporated within a 'fast track to court' process.

## Working with Schools

The EWS will work with and support all schools to improve the level of attendance. This will be done by providing:

- written guidance and advice on '*Wired*' the County Council's intranet site
- examples of regularly updated good practice on *Wired* and via the DfE website
- information on *Wired* about the range of strategies that can be used
- checking of attendance registers and computerised attendance databases
- monitoring of attendance data
- annual review of statutory absence targets
- collaboration with other LA and voluntary organisations to promote improved engagement and attendance of pupils
- providing a range of courses and events aimed at improving schools' response to attendance

An Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will be allocated to each LA maintained secondary school. The amount of EWO time given to each school will be based on greatest need through a formula using school-based data.

Support for LA maintained primary schools will be delivered by EWOs and Education Welfare Assistants (EWAs). EWAs will work with targeted primary schools to raise awareness of the importance of regular attendance across the whole school.

The way in which EWS staff and school staff work collaboratively will be specified in a service level agreement that is reviewed annually. An end of year, annual report will be provided to each school and governing body.

Schools will be encouraged to develop a whole school attendance policy that details the action they will take to deal with unacceptable levels of attendance.

Each year the annual absence target for reducing absence for each school will be reviewed, and where necessary revised, to ensure that schools continue to improve the level of attendance.

### **Working with Parents/Carers**

The role of parents/carers is crucial in ensuring that children achieve a high level of attendance. The EWS will support parents/carers to fulfil their role and will encourage close liaison with schools. Specialist EWOs will work with carers in supporting the regular attendance of children who are in the care of the local authority. A specialist EWO will also work with the Traveller community.

### **Working with other Agencies**

Poor school attendance can be both a symptom of other difficulties faced by a pupil and their family, and a cause of other problems including exclusion and involvement in criminal activity. A coordinated approach on a multi-agency basis is required to support these children and families.

Senior EWO (Managers) will attend termly meetings with representatives from other LA support services to share information and concerns and to ensure a coordinated approach to service delivery and support. Close links with the LA's School Improvement Service will enable inspectors to support school managers in dealing with issues related to school attendance.

### **Monitoring Arrangements**

Although the law distinguishes between authorised and unauthorised absence, it is the overall attendance of pupils that is crucial. Targets for reducing absence have been set with all schools and will be reviewed on an annual basis. The LA also has a target to reduce absence that will be monitored annually.

In order to monitor the level of pupils' attendance, each school will be asked to provide the LA with termly data. This data will inform the LA on the progress being made in achieving the targets to improve the overall attendance in LA schools. From 2006 (secondary) and 2007 (primary) individual pupil attendance data will be collected as part

of the national school census survey which is collected via the Research and Development team and submitted to the DfE.

An annual report will be provided to the Education and Lifelong Learning Select Committee about the work of the EWS and about the level of attendance in the LA schools.

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **ATTENDANCE STRATEGIES**

A range of different activities make up the LA strategy for promoting and improving the level of attendance in our schools.

The EWS lead and coordinate the LA strategy on attendance issues and are involved in the following activities:

- monitoring school attendance levels on a termly and annual basis and review the trajectory targets towards meeting the targets set for all schools for 2008
- Supporting the schools with a high proportion of unauthorised absence prioritised by the DfES to reduce the numbers of persistent truants
- offering advice to schools on the use of electronic registration systems
- negotiating action plans with LA targeted schools to improve attendance
- enforcing school attendance through the use of penalty notices, school attendance orders, Section 444(1) and Section 444(1)(a) of the Education Act 2002 and a 'fast track' process
- consulting schools on an annual basis through the use of a seminar programme
- consulting service users on an annual basis through the use of questionnaire
- establishing a service level agreement with all schools that is reviewed annually
- monitoring the effectiveness of legal action
- supporting the introduction and use of attendance panels
- engaging in joint truancy patrols with the Police and monitoring their effectiveness
- allocating an EWO to each school to work with school staff
- supporting targeted primary schools through the use of EWAs
- supporting schools and young people in the transition from Year 6 to Year 7 through the work of the EWAs in targeted schools
- actively engaging in LA cross-service groups to ensure co-ordinated support is provided to relevant schools
- providing written advice and guidance, and examples of good practice for schools on *Wired* on:
  - attendance policy
  - holiday request form
  - registration regulations
  - children who abscond from school
  - improving attendance at school
  - penalty notice code of conduct
- checking registers and electronic registration databases and assisting schools in the preparation of data for the annual attendance return
- setting and annually reviewing statutory absence targets
- providing specialist EWO support for children in public care and Traveller children

## St.Wilfrid's CE Primary School

- supporting parents/carers in fulfilling their role
- working with other relevant agencies so that all the needs of a child are addressed
- providing an annual report to schools and governing bodies
- providing an annual report to elected members.