

The role of the School Attendance Champion (SAC)

The Department for Education’s [*Working together to improve school attendance*](#) guidance became statutory on 19th August 2024. Every school is expected to have a member of its senior leadership team as a designated Senior Attendance Champion – see page 5 of the [*Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance*](#) guidance and paragraph 25 of the main Working together guidance document. Please note:

- ✓ The Senior Attendance Champion (SAC) must be a member of the Senior Leadership Team due to the strategic responsibilities, although attendance is everyone’s responsibility across the school (paragraph 15 of the Working together guidance).
- ✓ Responsibility for school attendance ultimately rests with the Headteacher (if the SAC is not the Headteacher), for example decisions around the authorisation of leave of absence and signing court documents if the local authority intends to prosecute a parent.
- ✓ The SAC role is not expected to be a newly appointed post for schools to recruit to; it is viewed as an additional responsibility for an existing member of SLT.

The below provides a guide to example core duties for a SAC. Reference to the DfE *Working together to improve school attendance* guidance is in square brackets. Some additional tasks have been added which the Kent PRU & Attendance Service (KPAS) view as discretionary as part of local collaboration, therefore there is no DfE guidance reference.

Key responsibilities	DfE Guidance References
Set a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance, including regularly monitoring and evaluating progress, including the efficacy of the school’s strategies and processes.	[25]
Oversee staff who have day to day responsibility for attendance monitoring to ensure effective processes are in place, such as accurate recording of admission and attendance registers.	[25]
Make sure all teaching and non-teaching staff know the importance of good attendance, are consistent in their communication with pupils and parents, and receive the training and professional development they need. This should include for all staff:	[25]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The importance of good attendance and that absence is almost always a symptom of wider circumstances ✓ The law and requirements of schools including on the keeping of registers, the school/trusts’ strategies and procedures for tracking, following up and improving attendance, ✓ The processes for working with other partners to provide more intensive support to pupils who need it. 	[71] [81]
<p>For staff with a specified attendance function in their role:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The necessary skills to interpret and analyse attendance data. • Any additional training that would be beneficial to support pupils and pupil cohorts overcome commonly seen barriers to attendance. <p>(Although the governing body / academy trust board is expected to ensure staff have adequate training).</p>	

Liaise with pupils, parents and external agencies where needed.	[25]
Be named in the school's attendance policy , including contact details. Further duties may include working with the governing board to ensure the attendance policy is updated, accurate, reviewed and fully accessible to parents, pupils and staff.	[26]
Have a strong grasp of absence data to focus the collective efforts of the school.	[25]
Lead meetings with parents (and pupils where old enough to understand) where more formal conversations are required to explain the consequences of persistent and severe absence and the potential need for legal intervention in future. These meetings should also be an opportunity to continue to listen to and understand the barriers to attendance and explain the help that is available to avoid those consequences. In some cases the school's link KPAS Officer may be present if invited and available to join (if circumstances appropriate).	[20]
Be the school's point of contact for the named point of contact in the Kent PRU & Attendance Service (KPAS). This may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representing the school at Targeting Support Meetings (TSMs) with KPAS Officers. • Representing the school at termly Attendance Network Meetings with groups of schools facilitated by KPAS Officers. • Representing the school at Attendance Improvement Meetings (AIMs) which are led by KPAS Officers and held as part of statutory attendance referrals which may lead to prosecution. • Representing the school at any training provided by KPAS or other KCC services on themes related to school attendance. 	NA
Have oversight for quality assurance of requests for support, request for penalty notices and requests for statutory attendance intervention made by the school to KCC via the Digital Front Door (although penalty notice and statutory attendance intervention requests must be authorised by the Headteacher (if the SAC is not the Headteacher).	NA
Oversee the use of part-time timetables to support pupils to attend school in specific circumstances as well as ensuring these are balanced with safeguarding duties and policies.	NA
Any other duties as deemed appropriate by the Headteacher (if the lead is not the Headteacher).	NA