

Checklist for schools to ensure alignment to the expectations set out in the Department for Education *Working together to improve school attendance* guidance which became statutory on 19th August 2024

Schools may wish to tick in the circles when actions are complete or write notes in the section at the bottom of the form. This form will be located on Kelsi and best used electronically due to the range of links provided.

DfE guidance documents and associated legislation	
<p><i>We have a copy of the DfE attendance guidance which is easily accessible if needed:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working together to improve school attendance and Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance (statutory from 19th August 2024). This should be read alongside other related DfE guidance and legislation including The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contacts for the service responsible for meeting expectations in the local authority laid out in chapter 4 of the Working together to improve school attendance guidance.	
<p><i>We have contact details for the Kent PRU & Attendance Service (KPAS) officers in the local authority who are linked to our school/Trust:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KPAS Attendance Officer (previously known as <i>School Liaison Officer</i>) • KPAS Exclusion Intervention Adviser (previously known as <i>Inclusion & Attendance Adviser</i>) <p>These can be located on this webpage on the Kelsi website.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attendance policy (see the ‘Working together’ guidance, chapter 2, starting page 15)	
<p><i>We have revised our school/Trust policy to align to the statutory guidance and includes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details on the attendance and punctuality expectations for pupils and parents, including start and close of the day, register closing times and processes for requesting leaves of absence, informing school of reasons for unexpected absences etc. • The name and contact details of our Senior Attendance Champion. • Information and contact details for staff who pupils and parents should contact about day to day attendance and more detailed attendance support. • Our day to day processes for managing attendance, for example first day calling and processes to follow up on unexplained absence. • How our school promotes and incentivises good attendance, for example through assemblies, newsletters, social media etc. • Our strategy for using data to target attendance improvement efforts to the pupils or pupil cohorts who need it most. • Our strategy for reducing persistent and severe absence, including how access to wider support services will be provided to remove the barriers to attendance and when support will be formalised in conjunction with the local authority. • Details of the National Framework for Penalty Notices and when Notices to Improve, penalty notices or other legal interventions will be sought if support is not appropriate, unsuccessful, or not engaged with (see chapter 6 of the working together guidance). <p><i>Our school views improving attendance as a whole school approach to manage, and absence is a symptom of a wide range of issues which could be inside and outside of school. Attendance is everyone’s business. We view early intervention and a ‘support first’ approach as pivotal, with prosecution always a last resort.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Senior attendance champion (SAC)* (see ‘Working together’ guidance, chapter 2, page 14)	
<p><i>We have a designated attendance champion from our Senior Leadership Team (SLT) who:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance. • Establishes and maintain effective systems for tackling absence followed by all staff. • Has a strong grasp of absence data to focus our collective efforts, and regularly monitors and evaluates progress, including the efficacy of the school’s strategies and processes. This should include analysis of vulnerable groups/cohorts of pupils experiencing or at risk of experiencing lower attendance than their peers (see Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance 2024) such as 	<input type="checkbox"/>

Free School Meals / Pupil Premium, SEND (including pupils with an EHCP), pupils with medical conditions, pupils with a Social Worker (including Children in Care), Young carers and other groups identified by the school such as specific classes or year groups etc.

- Participates in **Targeting Support Meetings** with our named KPAS Officer.
- Represents the school and leads **formal attendance meetings** with parents.
- Represents the school at **Attendance Improvement Meetings (AIMs)** led by KPAS officers for statutory investigations which may lead to prosecution.
- Has **oversight** of the suitability and robust nature of any statutory attendance referrals made to KPAS for consideration of prosecution. (Ultimate oversight must be from the Headteacher if the SAC is not the Headteacher).

Represents our school at district/area **Attendance Network Meetings** facilitated by KPAS.

Day to day attendance monitoring procedures (see Working together guidance, chapter 2, starting page 16)

Our school has effective systems in place to manage absences:

- We have **letter templates** for contacting parents to raise concerns about their child's persistent absence (PA) or severe absence (SA) and cases where they are at risk of PA or SA.
- We make **home visits** to families and have a risk assessment to safeguard our staff.
- We hold **formal attendance meetings** led by the Senior Attendance Champion. The school's named KPAS officer can be invited via the [Digital Front Door](#) (will attend subject to availability and suitability).
- We ensure we don't request **medical evidence** from parents for every single absence, and only request it if we have a justified rationale for doing so. We do not request GP notes/letters.
- We use **attendance contracts** for individual pupils to help improve their attendance. *KPAS has created resources which can be found on this [webpage](#) on Kelsi.*
- We access the [Digital Front Door](#) to make referrals to KCC, notify of pupils who are excluded, missing education, on part time timetables or being deleted from our admissions register.
- We ensure our attendance policy is linked to our **safeguarding policy**.

Attendance and absent codes (see 'Working together' guidance, chapter 8 and regulation 10 of the School Attendance Regulations 2024).

*Our school is familiar with the revised national attendance codes, including new codes and any associated descriptions to ensure they are used **accurately**. In particular:*

- **Code N:** Should be converted to the most suitable and accurate code **within 5 school days**.
- **Code K:** Provision arranged by the LA (e.g. day 6 provision following a permanent exclusion).
- **Code B:** The activity is **supervised** by a person considered by our school to have the *appropriate skills, training, experience and knowledge* to ensure that the activity takes place safely and fulfils the educational purpose for which the pupil's attendance has been approved.
- **Code Q:** Unable to attend due to a lack of access arrangements (where LA has a duty to source transport for a pupil who has become eligible – this has a different meaning to code Y1).
- **Code C1:** Leave of absence where a pupil is participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
- **Code C2:** For sessions when a pupil of compulsory school age is on a part-time timetable but agreed between school and parent(s) they are not expected to attend.
- **Code J1:** Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution.
- **Code Y1 to Y7:** Code Y has now been split in to 7 scenarios to more accurately define reasons for absence.

*Our school is aware that for consistency, and to be able to identify any emerging attendance issues, the register codes are applicable to pupils of compulsory school age as well as non-compulsory school age (except **code X** which is used for absent sessions where a non-compulsory age pupil on a part-time timetable is not expected to attend).*

Good practice

- All our staff receive **regular training or general awareness raising** (for example during INSET days) around school attendance (this may extend to site managers, midday meals supervisors etc) and how what they do fits in to the school's ethos and culture taking in to account the DfE mantra that attendance is everyone's business.
- We will keep up to date with any DfE resources made available, including pre-recorded [webinars](#) on key themes around school attendance as well as any events led by KPAS (e.g. the Penalty Notice framework).
- We engage in **Targeting Support Meetings** and recognise the importance of school and the local authority working together as equal partners in the journey to improve attendance.
- We will actively seek opportunities to **collaborate** with a range of other schools in our geographical area or with similar characteristics to share effective practice, resources etc. This will include our school having a representative at KPAS led **Attendance Network / Best Practice** meetings in our area/district.
- We have a good understanding and make use of any services or resources outside of school to help address barriers to school attendance (e.g. the [Emotionally Based School Avoidance pathway](#) on Kelsi).
- To promote attendance where illness is a barrier, we will use the resources from the DfE's [Moments Matter, Attendance Counts](#) campaign.
- We keep a **chronology** of events for individual pupils which we will share if referrals are made to services such as KPAS for potential attendance prosecution to show evidence of our support first approach.
- We ensure that **part-time timetables** are used only in exceptional circumstances which have parental consent, regularly reviewed, short term and managed with a pastoral plan as well as risk assessed. We notify KCC of our pupils on part timetables via the [Digital Front Door](#).

Data returns (see 'Working together' guidance, chapter 2, page 21 and regulation 13 of the School Attendance Regulations 2024).

Our school knows we have a statutory duty to share specific information from our registers with Kent County Council at particular points in accordance with Regulation 13 of [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#), including:

- When any pupil's name is **added or deleted** from the admission register outside of standard transition times. (The latter is also known as a **deletion return**).
- Names and addresses of all pupils of compulsory school age who have **10 continuous school days of unauthorised absence** (codes N, O, G, U) recorded on their register (known as an **attendance return**).
- Names and addresses of all pupils of compulsory school age who have accumulated **15 school days of absence** (code I) either consecutively and/or intermittently, as well as any pupil the school has reasonable grounds to believe will miss **15 continuous school days** because of illness (known as a **sickness return**).

Deletion, attendance and sickness returns must be made via the [Digital Front Door](#) on the Kelsi website.

Share / view your daily school attendance data - DfE tool (see 'Working together' guidance, chapter 2, page 22).

We have registered for, and use the View Your Education Data (VYED tool to compare attendance outcomes of different cohorts of pupils at a local and national level to identify where intervention is most needed.

Guidance on *Sharing daily pupil attendance* can be found [here](#).

Governance (see 'Working together' guidance, chapter 3)

Our school's Governing body / Academy Trust board:

- Recognises the importance of school attendance and promote it across the **school's ethos and policies**.
- Ensures school leaders fulfil **expectations and statutory duties**.
- Regularly **reviews attendance data**, discuss, and challenge trends, and helps school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Ensures school staff receive adequate **training** on attendance.
- Has a dedicated **link governor for attendance** who interacts with process (where time allows) including joining meetings with parents and Targeting Support Meetings as well as events to

celebrate success.

- Keeps attendance firmly on the agenda at board meetings to ensure scrutiny of data and holding the school's senior leadership to account.

Legal intervention (see 'Working together' guidance, chapter 6)

- Our school has a good understanding of the range of **attendance legal interventions** and the DfE mantra that the most suitable one is the one which is deemed *most likely to change parental behaviour*.
- We have read and adhere to the KCC [Code of Conduct for Penalty Notices](#) on the Kelsi website.
- We follow our legal duty to consider any pupil who meets the national threshold for a **penalty notice**, even if we make the decision it is not a suitable intervention.
- We will not view leave of absence for the purpose of **leisure and recreation** as exceptional for the purpose of decisions around authorisation and penalty notices etc.
- We recognise that although it may be necessary, prosecution is **not guaranteed** to result in an improvement in a pupil's attendance and the case is not always guaranteed to result in prosecution. We recognise that our school must continue to follow all procedures in line with our **attendance policy** even if KPAS is taking forward any legal intervention such as a penalty notice or attendance prosecution.
- We will speak to our link KPAS officer before making a request for **statutory attendance intervention** to ensure criteria are met, and consider any other pathways where there is scope and suitability to do so.
- We understand that the local authority will most likely not take forward any form of enforcement for pupils who are on a **part-time timetable**.
- We know how to contact the KPAS **Courts Team** if we have a query about a penalty notice Attendance.enforcement@kent.gov.uk

Working with KCC teams and wider agencies (see 'Working together' guidance, chapter 2, page 22)

Our school notifies any family practitioners supporting our pupils (e.g. Social Workers, Early Help Workers, Virtual School Kent (VSK), Youth Justice Workers etc) about:

- **Absences**, particularly those which are unauthorised and where pupils are classified as 'severe absentees.'
- **Deletions** of pupil names from our admissions register.
- Circumstances where pupils will be moving to a **part-time timetable**.
- Where one of our pupils is **suspended**, regularly suspended, at risk of permanent exclusion, and in particular where a pupil is **permanently excluded** in line with the DfE [Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement](#) guidance, September 2023.
- **Register codes** we are using for pupils and any associated comments entered on to our management information system (MIS). We will share this information with professionals upon request to support progression with any cases for children where support or legal intervention is being considered.

School notes:

