

Working Together to Improve School Attendance

School Attendance Handbook

A guide for schools, governing bodies, academy trustees and local authority practitioners in Kent

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Foreword

The importance of regular school attendance has never been greater following the Covid-19 lockdown which caused significant disruption to the education of children and young people across the country, and the impact for families continues to be felt far and wide today. This has triggered a high profile government response on the topic of school attendance ever since the pandemic, including an [MP enquiry](#) into persistent absence and support for disadvantaged pupils. There have been some challenges along the way, most notably the [Schools Bill](#) being discontinued, which has meant the Department for Education (DfE) is yet to determine when its [Working together to improve school attendance](#) guidance published in May 2022 will become statutory.

Kent County Council views the improvement of school attendance as a significant priority and continues to be fully committed to meeting all the expectations for local authorities in the DfE Working together to improve school attendance guidance irrespective of its non-statutory nature. Therefore, to ensure we are on course to align to the specific expectations set out by the DfE, also highlighted in a [bulletin](#) to schools in June 2023, KCC professionals from a range of services countywide formed an Attendance Working Group over the spring and summer of 2023. One of the many productive outcomes has been the development of a KCC school attendance handbook, primarily designed for schools, which breaks down into greater detail the 'Kent way' of implementing the guidance, and what we are all expected to do in line with existing national guidance and legislation. The handbook also includes reference to other related subjects such as exclusions where there has also been updated [guidance](#) published by the DfE. You will find an array of links to informative resources throughout this document.

The DfE attendance guidance itself could not have a more meaningful title as working together across our schools, local authority services and with wider partners to help overcome barriers to children's attendance is pivotal to achieving positive impact. We hope you find this handbook informative and look forward to hearing success stories from schools and partners in improving the attendance of children in our communities.



Simon Smith
PIAS Service Manager

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This handbook is located on the Kelsi website and will be reviewed in July 2024 to maintain its accuracy in accordance with local and national guidance processes and practice. However, it may be subject to change sooner to reflect any amendments made to Department for Education guidance or other legislation prior to the review date.

All links and references are up to date at the time of publication of this handbook, however, may be subject to change. Please report any errors identified to southkentpia@kent.gov.uk detailing the corresponding section or page number.

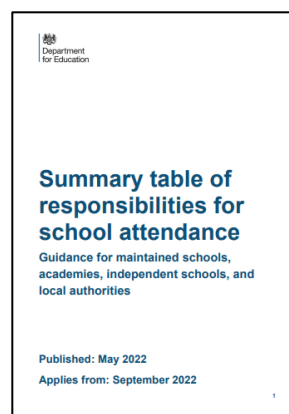
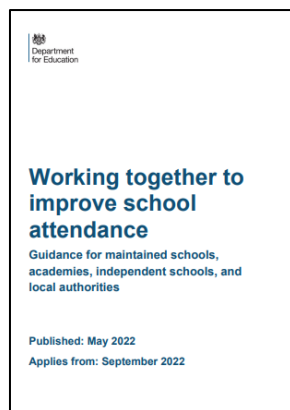
1. **Terminology:** This handbook corresponds to the Department for Education’s non-statutory guidance *Working together to improve school attendance* published in May 2022 and active from September 2022. The following DfE terminology and abbreviations will be substituted in some sections of this handbook:

Department for Education (DfE) terminology (from)	Operational guidance terminology (to)
Local authority (LA)	Kent County Council (KCC)
School attendance support team	PRU, Inclusion & Attendance Service (PIAS)
Virtual School Head (VSH)	Virtual School Kent (VSK)

Other key terminology with corresponding acronyms and abbreviations used throughout this handbook can be found below:

Terminology	Acronym	Terminology	Acronym
Persistent Absence / Persistent absentee	PA	Part-time timetable	PTT
Severe Absence / Severe absentee	SA	Targeting Support Meeting	TSM
Emotionally Based School Avoidance	EBSA	Attendance Network Meeting / Best Practice Meeting	ANM / BPM
Attendance Improvement Meeting	AIM	Child(ren) Missing Education	CME
Parenting Contract	PC	Digital Front Door	DFD
Parenting Order	PO	Registration Certificate	Reg Cert
Education Supervision Order	ESO	Elective Home Education	EHE
School Attendance Order	SAO	School Liaison Officer (PIAS team)	SLO
Fixed Penalty Notice	FPN	Education Engagement Officer (PIAS team)	EEO
Single Justice Procedure	SJP	Inclusion & Attendance Adviser (PIAS team)	IAA
Permanent Exclusion	PX/PEX	Kent Education Learning, Skills and Information (KCC website)	KELSI

- 2. Status of DfE school attendance guidance:** The DfE published *Working together to improve school attendance* guidance with the intention it would become statutory no earlier than September 2023. The DfE confirmed in June 2023 the guidance would not become statutory in September 2023 (see appendix 2), however advised that schools and KCC continue to follow the responsibilities set out in the document. The DfE aims to make the guidance statutory. KCC recognises improving school attendance is a high priority and will continue to adhere to the expectations set out in the guidance as if it was statutory already. KCC will await further direction from the DfE.
- 3. Links to DfE guidance:** The DfE published its main attendance guidance along with a summary table based upon the main guidance document. The link to the documents can be found [here](#), or can be opened directly by hovering over the images below and clicking the left mouse button whilst pressing the Ctrl key simultaneously:



The *Working together to improve school attendance* guidance states that it should be read alongside the following statutory guidance documents published by the DfE:

School attendance parental responsibility measures (January 2015)
Children Missing Education (September 2016)
Supporting pupils with medical conditions at schools (December 2015)
Suspensions and permanent exclusions (September 2023)
Alternative provision (January 2013)
Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2023)

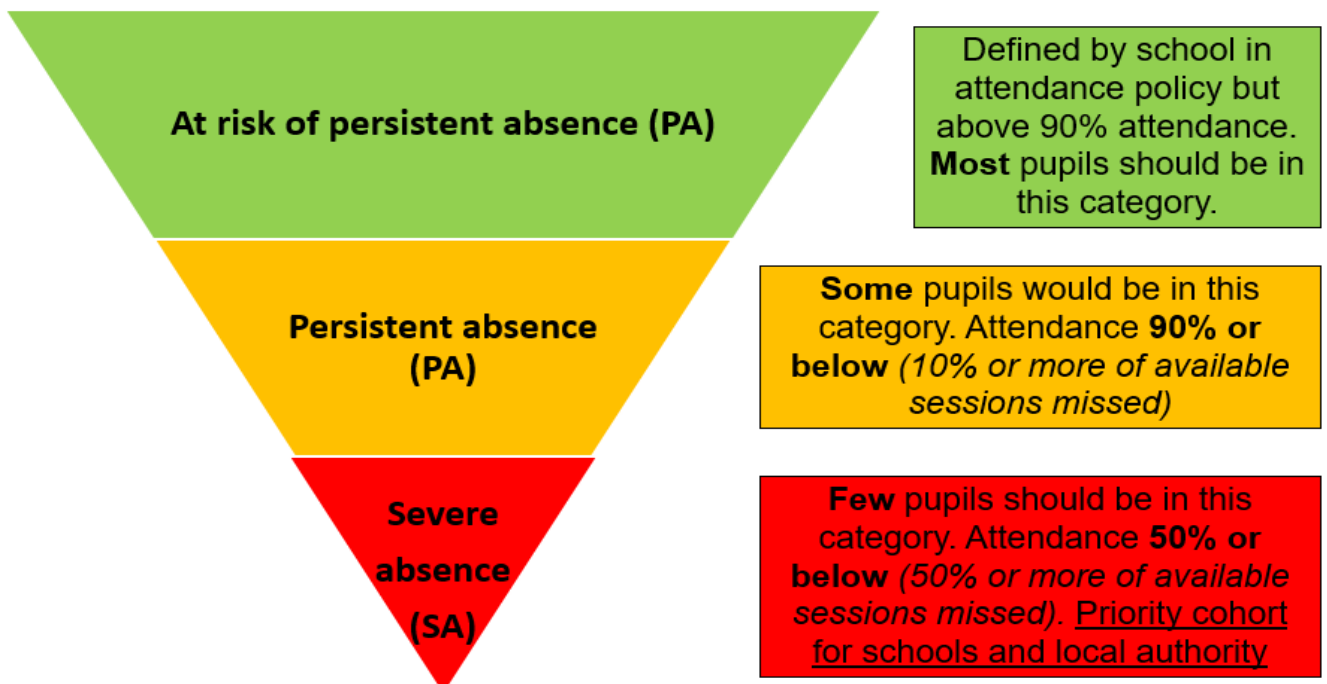
In February 2023 the DfE also published [Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance](#) guidance. A list of all related guidance is detailed in appendix 3 at the end of this document.

- 4. School attendance - key principles:** KCC believes there are some key principles which define how school attendance should be considered, and some of the below are from within the DfE *Working together to improve school attendance* guidance:
- ✓ Absence is always **symptomatic of wider issues** and may be the **first or only indicator** of barriers to attendance in school or beyond the school gates.
 - ✓ Attendance is **everyone's responsibility**, and a **multi-agency approach** will always be **the most effective**.
 - ✓ Championing the **young person's voice** is crucial to help identify and understand any push and pull factors affecting their attendance.

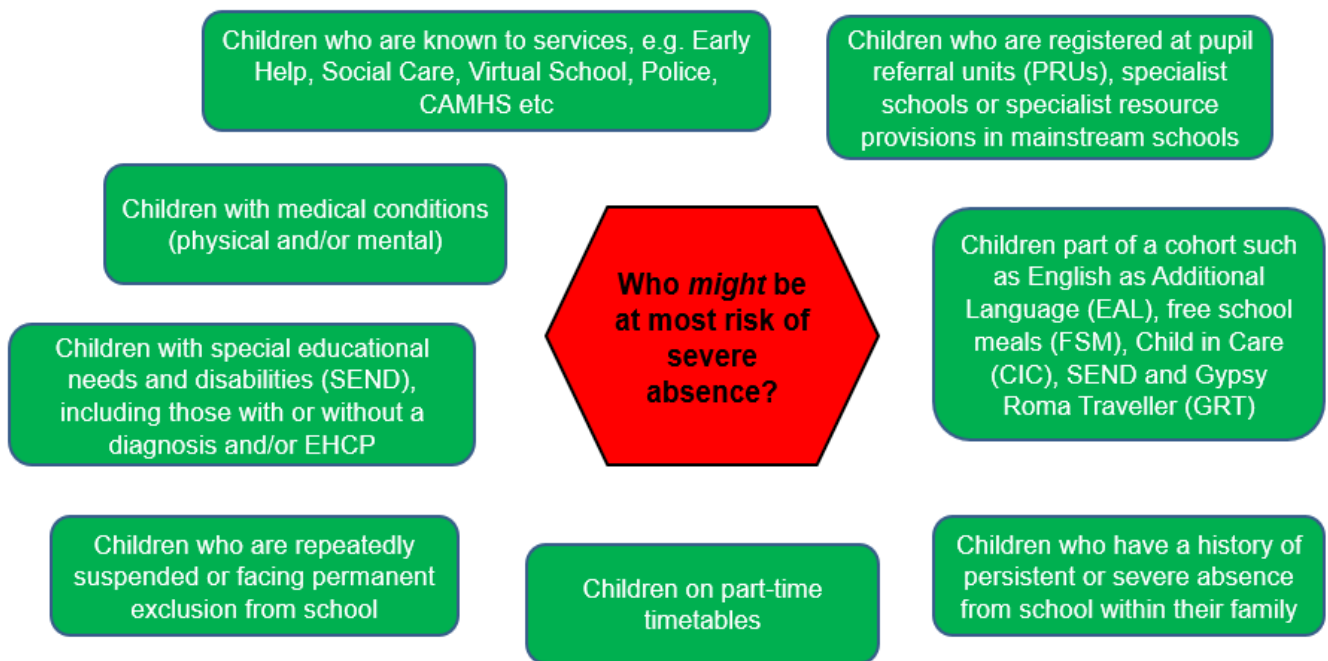
- ✓ **Early intervention** is essential to try to remedy the causes of a pupil's absence.
- ✓ Early help should be viewed as an **overarching system** rather than a single service, workforce, or individual person when aiming to improve pupil attendance.
- ✓ Regular attendance at school acts as a consistent **protective factor** for pupils to minimise or eradicate any potential physical and psychological harm.
- ✓ **Support** should come before more punitive measures are pursued.
- ✓ Prosecution is one **intervention** to try to improve a pupil's school attendance*

* Only the LA has the power to prosecute a parent in accordance with the [Education Act 1996](#) and may discharge its duties irrespective of any likelihood that the pupil's attendance will improve following the use of a range of statutory legal interventions.

5. School attendance - Priority pupils and cohorts: The DfE created a new category of absence which is referred to in [Section 5](#) of the *Working together to improve school attendance* guidance and known as **severe absence (SA)**. A pupil who has missed **50% or more** of school is now classed as being **severely absent**. The DfE states that SA pupils should be top priority for all partners. Pupils who miss **10% or more** of school continue to be classified as **persistent absentees (PA)**. Pupils who are PA or SA are expected to be a focus of regular data monitoring by schools and LAs.



Pupils with specific profiles, experiencing certain circumstances (e.g., trauma), educated part time or not accessing mainstream school may be more likely to sit or fall into the severe absence cohort. Persistent or severe absence can be made up of authorised as well as unauthorised absences. DfE guidance emphasises the importance of **prevention** and **early intervention** to address absence before it becomes habitual. Very poor attendance may be a child protection issue in its own right – when it becomes ‘educational neglect.’ However, this does not mean that all children with poor attendance are being neglected and it does not mean that children who are being neglected always have poor attendance. Ofsted published a webinar in Spring 2022 focused on [Securing good attendance and tackling persistent absence](#).



6. LA roles and responsibilities: In its *Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance* guidance the DfE sets out clear expectations for **parents, schools, academy trustees/governing bodies, and local authorities**. There are specific core functions for PIAS to provide to **all schools** (at no cost) outlined in the DfE *Working together to improve school attendance* (paragraph 67) including:

Communication and advice	Regularly bring schools together to communicate messages, provide advice and share best practice between schools and trusts within the area.
Targeting Support Meetings (TSMs)	Hold termly conversations with schools, using their attendance data to identify pupils and cohorts at risk of poor attendance, and agree targeted actions and access to services for those pupils.
Multi-disciplinary support for families	Provide access to Early Help support to work intensively with families to provide practical whole-family support where needed to tackle the causes of absenteeism and unblock barriers to attendance.
Legal intervention (LI)	Take forward attendance legal intervention (using the full range of parental responsibility measures) where voluntary support has not been successful or engaged with.

Greater detail about how KCC has and will continue to deliver the four functions outlined above can be found in this handbook.

In addition, KCC is expected to:

- ✓ **Rigorously track local attendance data** to devise a strategic approach to attendance, prioritising the pupils, pupil cohorts and schools on which to provide support and focus its efforts on to unblock area wide barriers to attendance.

- ✓ Monitor and improve the **attendance of children with a social worker** through Virtual School Kent (VSK).

7. KCC directorate structure: From 1st October 2023, the PRU, Inclusion & Attendance Service (PIAS) is positioned within the **Education & SEND** division of the **Children, Young People and Education** (CYPE) directorate:

Education & SEND	Integrated Childrens Services (ICS)	Childrens Countywide Services
PRU, Inclusion & Attendance Service (PIAS)	Early Help	Virtual School Kent
Fair Access (<i>including Admissions, Transport, Children Missing Education, Elective Home Education, Education Programme</i>)	Children’s Social Work teams	Safeguarding, Professional Standards & Quality Assurance
Special Educational Needs & Disabilities	Adolescent Services	Front Door
Area Education team	Open Access	Corporate Parenting
Kent Educational Psychology Service (KEPS)	Youth Justice	Disabled Children and Young People teams

Note: Not all KCC services are included in the above table.

Although PIAS has moved from the Integrated Children’s Services (ICS) division, the relationships with neighbouring teams and services with commitment to working in a multi-disciplinary way to improve attendance of Kent’s children remains unchanged.

8. PIAS objective: The core objective for PIAS is to ensure all children and young people are engaged, thrive, and achieve their potential through academic and vocational education by attending school regularly. Working closely with practitioners in the CYPE directorate as well as external partners, the service will aim to empower mainstream schools, specialist schools and alternative provisions to reduce levels of persistent absence, severe absence, and exclusion. Information about the service can be found on the Kelsi website [here](#).

9. PIAS structure and roles: There are four area teams which focus on the promotion of attendance and inclusion (see table below) with areas and districts aligned to other teams and services in the Education & Skills division. For services positioned within the Integrated Children’s Services division, Swale is classified as a North Kent district.

The Director for the Education & SEND division in Kent is **Christine McInnes**.

The Service Manager for PIAS is **Simon Smith**: Simon.smith2@kent.gov.uk

There are five PIAS Area Education Leads countywide:

Area	Districts	PIAS Area Education Lead(s)
North	Dartford, Gravesham, Sevenoaks	David Boyd
West	Maidstone, Tonbridge & Malling, Tunbridge Wells	Catherine Edwards (Mon to Wed) Maxine Gamage (Thu & Fri)
South	Ashford, Dover, Folkestone & Hythe	Lee Kennedy
East	Canterbury, Swale, Thanet	Melanie Higgins

In addition to the PIAS Area Education Leads, each area team is made up of three key roles with staff on full time, term time or part time, term time contracts:

- ✓ **School Liaison Officers (SLOs):** Providing advice and guidance to schools, parents and multi-agency partners relating to school attendance. Facilitating termly conversations with schools about individual pupils and whole school approaches to attendance improvement. Coordinating termly network meetings with groups of schools and investigation of potential children missing education (CME) referred by schools. Leading statutory attendance investigations which may subsequently result in prosecution of parents in accordance with the Education Act 1996.
- ✓ **Education Engagement Officers (EEOs):** As detailed above for School Liaison Officers and championing the attendance and inclusion of children and young people from the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT), English as an Additional (EAL) and other minority ethnic (ME) cohorts.
- ✓ **Inclusion & Attendance Advisers (IAAs):** Providing advice and guidance to schools, parents and multi-agency partners relating to suspensions, permanent exclusions, part-time timetables, and movement of pupils (including managed moves and off-site directions). Representing the LA at meetings which must be held in accordance with statutory exclusions guidance, such as governing board panels and independent review panels. Providing exclusion training for governing board and academy trustees as well as senior leaders in schools.

Contact details for all area PIAS Officers can be found [here](#) on the Kelsi website.

PIAS has two additional teams which are countywide:

- ✓ **Attendance Enforcement Team (AET):** The lead is **Alison Taylor**. The role of the Attendance Enforcement Team is detailed in the Legal Intervention section of this handbook relating to expectations of LAs.
- ✓ **Child Employment & Entertainment Team (CEET):** The lead is **David Boyd**. The LA has a statutory duty to promote the safeguarding of children and young people engaging in part-time work and participating in performances, e.g. theatre, television and modelling. The CEET is responsible for issuing work permits, chaperone licenses, child performance licenses and Body of Persons Approvals (BOPA's). CEE Officers regularly visit premises and inspect performances. Further information can be found [here](#) on the Kelsi website and the team can be emailed on childemploymentandentertainment@kent.gov.uk

A structure chart for PIAS can be found [here](#) on the Kelsi website.

10. PIAS duties and limitations: Due to the expectations placed upon LAs by the DfE's *Working together to improve school attendance* guidance (paragraph 67) and to balance commitment to the delivery of the core functions with current PIAS staffing capacity, KCC took the decision in September 2022 to place some PIAS activities out of scope. These include truancy sweeps, projects in schools, pupil assemblies, early/late gates, and induction events for parents of new reception aged pupils.

11. Access to PIAS: The entry point for the initiation of any formal work to be undertaken by PIAS Officers is via the [Digital Front Door](#) (DFD) located on the Kelsi website. The DFD has been refined to align with the expectations on LAs and terminology detailed in the DfE's *Working together to improve school attendance* guidance as well as other existing DfE statutory guidance and legislation.

The DFD allows schools to notify the LA of suspensions, permanent exclusions, children missing education, part-time timetables, and deletion of pupils from the admissions register as well as request PIAS representation at formal attendance meetings, the issuing of a fixed penalty notice by the LA, statutory attendance intervention (which may lead to prosecution by the LA), single registration of a pupil at a pupil referral unit, and inclusion advice for a pupil facing suspensions and permanent exclusion.

There is also a separate pathway for KCC professionals requesting advice or direct involvement from PIAS around attendance or inclusion/exclusion matters. Upon the submission of the forms, they are routed to the mailbox of the relevant team in KCC depending on the information inputted by the referrer. Referrers may choose to register for an account which will keep a record of all forms submitted. The DFD webpage contains a [School guide to the Digital Front Door](#) with details about the various forms.

PIAS has produced a diagram to show at what stages intervention from the service may be appropriate, and the type of intervention expected in cases of a pupil who is persistently or severely absent. This can be found in the appendices on page 35 in this handbook. This is aligned to the Digital Front Door pathway links.

Referrals are allocated to the link PIAS Officer for the **school where the pupil is registered** rather than the home address. There may be cases where a pupil attends school in one district, borough, or LA, but lives in another. PIAS is still responsible for holding the case if the school is based inside the Kent authority boundary.

12. Working with private companies: Some Kent schools employ the services of private companies to improve pupil attendance. PIAS and wider services will work in partnership with representatives from private companies and provide the same level of support to schools as set out in section 4 of the DfE [Working together to improve school attendance](#) guidance. PIAS has no plan to become a traded service for activities outside of the four core functions detailed in paragraph 67 of the guidance.

13. Expectations of parents: Parents have a legal responsibility under [section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#) to ensure their children of **compulsory school age** receive a suitable full-time education. This can be by regular attendance at school, alternative provision, or otherwise (e.g. the parent can choose to educate their child at home). A

parent means all natural parents, whether they are married or not; any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and any person who has care of a child or young person (i.e. lives with and looks after the child). For any pupil who is registered at a school and compulsory school age there is an expectation that parents:

- ✓ Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.
- ✓ Notify school as soon as possible when their child will be unexpectedly absent.
- ✓ Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances, and in advance.
- ✓ Book any medical appointments which are not urgent outside school hours.
- ✓ Work with the school and LA to help them understand any barriers to their child's attendance.
- ✓ Proactively engage with support offered to prevent need for more formal support and/or legal intervention.
- ✓ Adhere to requirements set out around school attendance and punctuality in any home-school agreement.
- ✓ Be proactive in providing any medical evidence if requested by school (and applicable to the circumstances).
- ✓ Promote good routines and positive attitude towards attending school to their child.

14. Expectations of schools: Schools play a significant role in proactively managing and improving attendance across their community. The DfE produced a [webinar](#) in May 2022 outlining what the attendance guidance means for all school types, including **LA maintained schools, academies, free schools, special schools, independent schools and independent special schools.**

Paragraph 15 of the guidance states: *The most effective schools **consistently** promote the **benefits** of good attendance at school, set **high expectations** for every pupil, communicate those expectations clearly and consistently to pupils and parents, systematically **analyse their data to identify patterns** to target their improvement efforts, and **work effectively with the LA** and other local partners to overcome barriers to attendance. They also recognise that **attendance cannot be seen in isolation** and that the foundation to good attendance is a calm, orderly, safe, and **supportive environment** in which all pupils want to attend and can learn and thrive.*

[Section 2](#) of the *Working together to improve school attendance guidance* details some key priorities including:

- ✓ **Developing and maintaining a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance.** This includes having a designated senior leader with overall responsibility to champion and improve attendance at the school. PIAS has produced a **job description** which includes typical duties an existing senior leader may have and can be found in appendix 15.
- ✓ **Having a clear attendance policy on the school's website which leaders, staff, pupils, and parents understand.** The DfE has no intention to publish a national model attendance policy for local authorities and schools, stating that schools will have different systems, structures, processes, and communities which makes a 'one size fits all' policy unfeasible. Consequently, KCC takes the same approach, but as an alternative PIAS has created an [attendance policy checklist](#) available on

the Kelsi website to aid schools. Additional guidance can be found in paragraphs 17 to 21 of the *DfE Working together to improve school attendance guidance*. The DfE webinar ([Setting an effective school attendance policy](#)) provides further advice about attendance policies.

- ✓ **Accurately completing admission and attendance registers.** Schools are expected to keep registers using the national attendance and absence codes prescribed in **Section 8** (paragraphs 204 to 276) of the *Working together to improve school attendance guidance* in accordance with [Regulation 6](#) of the Education Pupil Regulations 2006. **N codes** should be converted to the most accurate code within **5 school days** of it being recorded on the register. **B codes** should only be recorded where a pupil is attending an off-site educational activity *approved by school and supervised by someone authorised by school*. Therefore, using code B schools are certifying the education is **supervised** and measures have been taken to **safeguard** the pupil.
- ✓ **Having robust daily processes to follow up absence.** Schools should not be routinely asking for medical evidence to support illness (see paragraph 220 of the *Working together to improve school attendance guidance*).
- ✓ **Regularly analyse attendance and absence data (including at governing board meetings and termly conversations with PIAS) to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance and develop strategies to support them.** The *Working together to improve school attendance guidance* places weight on the use of data to inform decisions and actions. The DfE produced a [webinar](#) in November 2022 focused on analysing attendance and absence data.
- ✓ **Build strong relationships with families to understand barriers to attendance, aiming to address any which are within school.** The DfE promotes a ‘support first approach.’ The diagram in paragraph 13 of the *Working together to improve school attendance guidance* describes the importance of listening, understanding, facilitating, and formalising support which may include initiating a parenting contract. Meetings with parents should be ‘strengths-based’ and the ‘Breakthrough’ document in appendix 14 (page 33 of this handbook) provides further guidance.
- ✓ **Signpost and support access to any required services where barriers are outside of school.** This may include support from KCC services, health services, and partners in the voluntary and community sectors (VCS).
- ✓ **Agree a joint approach for all severely absent pupils with the LA.** This cohort should be the highest priority for schools and multi-agency services.
- ✓ **Act as lead practitioner in cases where other agencies are involved, and it is agreed school is best placed to do so.** If the family is open to Early Help or Social Care, then the relevant family practitioner may be best placed to lead the case.
- ✓ **Where there is lack of engagement from the family, hold more formal conversations with parents to be clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future.** (See paragraph 37 of *Working together to improve school attendance guidance*). Schools may wish to invite their link PIAS Officer to a [formal attendance meeting](#) via the [Digital Front Door](#) on Kelsi who will attend if capacity allows and the circumstances are appropriate.
- ✓ **Where there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through statutory children’s social care.** Pupils will not meet criteria for support level 3 or 4 due to school absence alone, therefore evidence of harm (which may result in increased absence) must be provided. See [Kent Support Level Guidance](#).

- ✓ **Work with other schools in the local area and the LA to share effective practice where there are common barriers to attendance.** Schools may wish to do this independently of the LA but there will also be opportunities through termly network meetings which each area PIAS team facilitates with schools in the area or district. See section **16** of this handbook for more details.

Other expectations for schools which help to promote best practice include:

- ✓ Sharing **KCC's key principles for school attendance** outlined in section **4** of this handbook, especially the support first model advocated by the DfE in its guidance.
- ✓ Engaging with **Targeting Support Meetings (TSMs) / termly conversations** and providing ongoing commitment from school's designated senior lead for attendance.
- ✓ Attending termly **network meetings** of schools facilitated by PIAS officers.
- ✓ Ensuring the school's designated senior lead for attendance represents the school at **formal attending meetings** with parents as well as **Attendance Improvement Meetings (AIMs)**, which are coordinated and led by a PIAS Officer as standard procedure for a statutory attendance referral which could lead to legal intervention.
- ✓ Submitting all **notifications** as per statutory requirements via the [Digital Front Door](#) (i.e. suspensions, permanent exclusions, potential children missing education and deletions from the admissions register).
- ✓ **Deleting pupils** from the school's admissions register only under one of the grounds set out in [regulation 8](#) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended (also referenced in paragraphs 152 to 196 of DfE *Working together to improve school attendance* guidance). A pupil must **not** be deleted due to general persistent or severe absence and doing so for this reason or other reasons outside of the specified grounds would constitute '**off rolling.**'
- ✓ Conducting **home visits** in cases where a parent is unresponsive, a pupil is absent for a prolonged period without justifiable cause, or where there may be potential barriers to regular attendance to explore which may not be visible in school (reference to home visits is made in paragraph 16 of the DfE *Working together to improve school attendance* guidance). PIAS Officers generally visit family homes for statutory child missing education and attendance intervention referrals only.
- ✓ Signing up to the DfE [attendance data collection](#) system (if school has not done so already) which will enable more timely data analysis.
- ✓ Accessing the Kent Educational Psychology Service (KEPS) phase 1 session on **Anxiety / Emotional Based School Avoidance (ABSA / EBSA)** which is required to be able to access the phase 2 case consultations.
- ✓ **Notifying** the pupil's family practitioner directly (e.g. early help worker or social worker) if there are any unexplained absences and if their name is to be deleted from the admissions register.
- ✓ **Ensuring** part-time timetables are used only as a short-term measure to deter from a pupil becoming a persistent or severe absentee. (They must not be used to manage a pupil's behaviour).
- ✓ **Accessing** Kent's resources such as the [Countywide Approach to Inclusive Education](#) (CATIE).

The *Working together to improve school attendance* guidance expects LAs to advise schools about what should have been offered before involving LA services. The table below contains some ideas on practice which should be explored before referring to

KCC services (unless there is an immediate risk to the pupil’s safety and wellbeing in which case safeguarding procedures must be followed). The content in the table is not exhaustive and is generalised as detailing what schools might put in place would be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Communication with family Build relationships	Facilitate support Identify and unblock internal barriers	Reach out Signpost to / access universal and additional support	Formalise approach Intensify support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold meetings in school and ensure the right staff with the right skills participate depending on circumstances. Make reasonable adjustments to promote family’s attendance at meetings. Use a strengths-based and solution focused approach in all meetings. Make home visits where parents are unresponsive, pupil’s absence sustained, or other potential concerns which may not be visible without outreach. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The voice of the child should always be prioritised. Consider all push and pull factors between home and school. Follow a plan-do-review cycle – sustaining attendance never ends. Deploy relevant school-based interventions available to remedy any barriers stemming from within school. Use any data available to assist in identifying any habitual patterns of absence. Keep chronology of key events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> KCC Early Help link worker KCC PIAS link officer District conversation (KCC Youth Hub/Children’s Centre) Virtual School Kent Advisory Team re Ever 6 Children with Social Worker (CWSW) and previously looked after children (PLAC) KCC area Education Safeguarding Advisers Information, Advice & Support Kent (IASK) District contextual safeguarding meetings (DCSM) Forums such as EBSA consultations Online resources (e.g., Resilience Hub and apps) Health services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore any changing or emerging barriers to attendance as circumstances evolve, and practical solutions. Consider a parenting / family contract. Invite link PIAS Officer to a formal attendance meeting via the Digital Front Door. Make a request for support where concerns meet criteria at level 3 or above of the Support Levels Guidance using the Kent Children’s Portal. <i>(Seek parental consent unless a serious or urgent Child Protection concern).</i>

To support schools to align their practices and processes to the expectations set out in the DfE [Working together to improve school attendance](#) guidance and the supporting [Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance](#) PIAS has designed a checklist which focuses on key themes within the DfE guidance. There is no mandatory requirement for schools to complete this checklist or share it with KCC, but it may be seen as helpful to receive input from PIAS Officers who refer to the guidance on a very regular basis. A PDF version of the attendance checklist can be found [here](#) on the Kelsi website. Please contact your link PIAS Officer for a Word version if required.

The DfE has a range of videos delivered by the DfE and schools related to the practice around school attendance which can be viewed [here](#).

15. Expectations of academy trustees and governing bodies: As improving attendance requires a whole school approach which is robustly reviewed, [Section 3](#) of the *Working together to improve school attendance* guidance highlights the importance of the role played by school trustees and governors. They are expected to:

- ✓ Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the school’s ethos and policies.
- ✓ Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- ✓ Regularly review attendance data, discuss, and challenge trends, and help school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- ✓ Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance.

Trustees and governors should have attendance on the agenda at board meetings and have regular discussions about it. Schools may have a governor with experience or interest in attendance matters who wishes to participate in meetings with parents, termly conversations with a PIAS Officer, or other forums (where their time and commitments allow) to ensure a good understanding of the needs and challenges facing the school community specifically in improving attendance.

16. Expectations of PRU, Inclusion & Attendance Service (PIAS): The DfE *working together to improve school attendance* guidance outlines the responsibilities for local authorities in [section 4](#). The DfE facilitated a [webinar](#) in May 2022 about what the guidance means for LAs. There are four core functions (summarised in section 6 of this handbook) which PIAS must provide to all schools in Kent:

i) Communication and advice: PIAS is committed to ensuring there is ongoing excellent communication with schools coupled with the provision of high-quality advice and support from its staff across all teams and roles. This includes:

- ✓ Outlining at what point the LA will become involved (which includes other KCC services in addition to PIAS). Section 14 in this document provides some guidance about what **actions schools should take first** in broad and generic terms.
- ✓ Providing each school with a **named point of contact** from PIAS to support with any queries and hold Targeting Support Meetings (see **section 16 ii** below). PIAS has always had a model of link PIAS Officers for every school to support with queries and coordinate attendance referrals as it views having consistent and robust relationships with schools as imperative. In Kent, all mainstream and special schools have two points of contact; a named School Liaison Officer or Education Engagement Officer for attendance matters *and* a named Inclusion & Attendance Adviser for inclusion/exclusion matters. Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) have a named Inclusion & Attendance Adviser as a single point of contact. Details for each PIAS Officer and schools they are linked with can be found on [here](#) on the Kelsi website. PIAS Officer links are subject to change based on the business need and other circumstances; however, the priority is to keep links consistent where possible. PIAS will also aim to have a single point of contact across a group of schools in the same geographical area and/or across a group of schools in the same multi-academy Trust where practicable.
- ✓ Sharing effective practice between schools is invaluable, and PIAS facilitated a series of meetings countywide throughout academic year 2022/23 with groups of schools in designated areas to discuss the DfE attendance guidance, local processes, and resources available for schools and families. Meetings have been held either in person or via Microsoft Teams and have various names by area such as **attendance network meetings or best practice meetings**. PIAS will continue to coordinate these events and promote opportunities for schools to share what has worked well for them to improve attendance. Guest speakers from partner agencies will also be invited and meetings will take place on a termly basis. Schools will be encouraged to recommend agenda items based on what themes they feel are most relevant at that time. In consideration of the commitment required by participants from schools and LA, there may be occasions where, in consultation with schools, a network meeting is substituted by a newsletter, pre-recorded webinar or other form of communication (once per year maximum).

ii) Targeting Support Meetings (TSMs): PIAS is required to hold a **termly** conversation with every school, **three times** per academic year, to discuss and signpost, or provide access to services for pupils who are persistently or severely absent or at risk of becoming so. The DfE has produced a **factsheet** about TSMs which can be found in appendix **16** of this handbook.

TSMs will be facilitated by the school's link PIAS Officer (contact details can be found [here](#) on the Kelsi website) and dates of the meetings will be mutually agreed between the school and PIAS; there is no need for schools to make a referral for a TSM and there is no facility to do so on the Digital Front Door.

Schools and their link PIAS Officer may choose to hold TSMs in person at the school or prefer for them to be virtually on Teams or another platform. PIAS has created a [Terms of reference](#) for TSMs which is located on the Kelsi website and provides greater detail about best practice for effective TSMs based on the experiences PIAS Officers have had facilitating them during academic year 2022/23.

PIAS has created a **form** to record themes raised at TSMs and actions identified to be taken by the school or LA services. The school's link PIAS Officer will share this form at TSMs which is designed to be owned by schools and not an assessment or audit of the school's performance. PIAS has also produced a TSM 'frequently asked questions' document for schools which is available [here](#) on the Kelsi website.

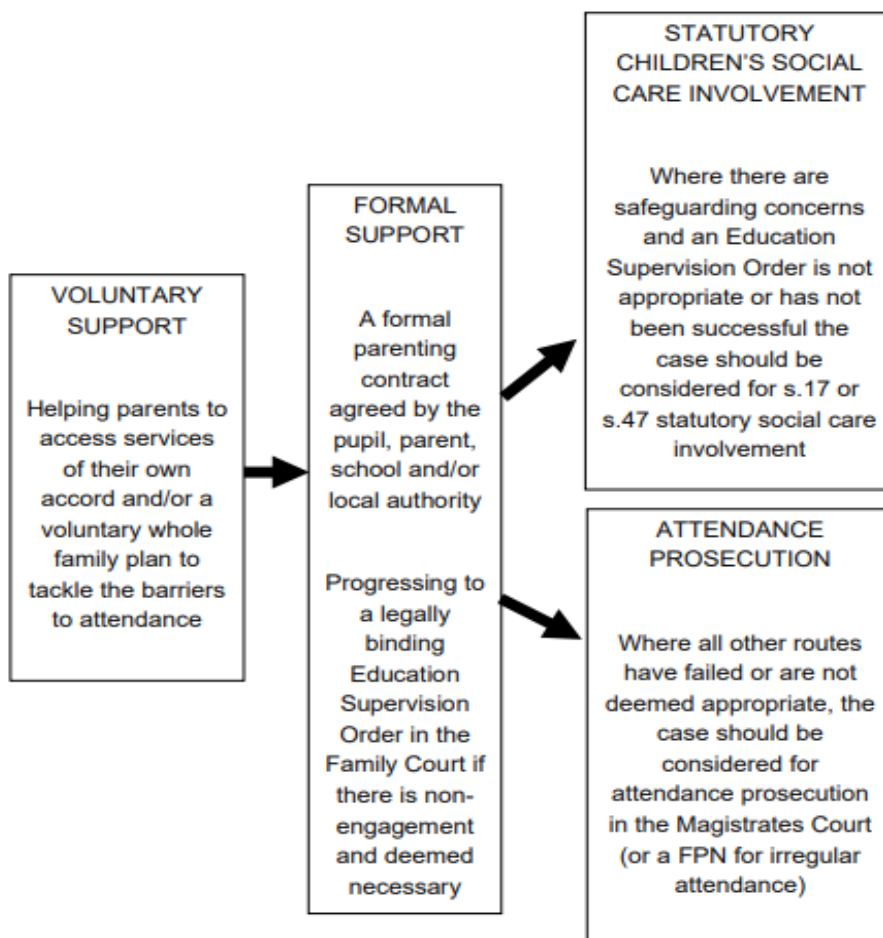
iii) Multi-agency support for families: Attendance is everyone's business and working together to improve school attendance is imperative, especially as absence is often a symptom of wider issues in a pupil's life. Although multi-agency support for families is a core function for PIAS to provide, working directly and intensively with children and their parents (like KCC services such as Early Help, Children's Social Care, or other services where practitioners have a caseload), is outside the scope of PIAS. Nevertheless, PIAS works closely with partner services both within and external to KCC to impart knowledge and expertise with the aim of improving school attendance for pupils known to family practitioners. A range of priorities as outlined in the DfE summary table of responsibilities for school attendance, are:

- ✓ Providing identified pupils with **access to services** they need where there are **out of school barriers**, including facilitating a **voluntary early help assessment** where absences persist and appropriate, and a KCC practitioner to act as **lead professional** where agreed they are best placed to do so. Schools and families can access a range of interventions and resources to help address barriers to attendance (some of which are detailed in the appendices). There are a vast range of reasons why a child does not attend school, therefore the correct support will depend on the individual circumstances, the needs of the child, what has been tried already, what is available in the area, and the level of engagement with support. Some ideas include:
 - A **district conversation** with the Youth Hub or Children's Centre to identify any activities which the family, the child or parents could benefit from.

- Seeking advice from the link **Early Help unit** or **Early Help link worker**, if the school has one assigned to discuss any universal services and additional support which may be pursued before referrals for intensive and specialist support from family services are made.
 - Seek advice from the **Virtual School Kent** for Kent children in care (CIC), previously looked after children (PLAC) or those children not in either of these two cohorts but who have or had a social worker in the last 6 years (Ever 6 Children with a Social Worker – CWSW).
 - Signposting parents to the [Information, Advice and Support Kent](#) (IASK) service if the child has SEND and they require independent advice.
 - Referring the pupil to a **District Contextual Safeguarding Meeting** (DCSM) if appropriate and there is risk of harm to the child or young person where a multi-agency response is required.
 - Accessing the **Phase 1 Anxiety/Emotionally Based School Avoidance (ABSA / EBSA) sessions** and **Phase 2 case consultations** facilitated by the Kent Educational Psychology Service (KEPS).
 - Completing a **request for intervention** at Support Level 3 or 4 from an intensive or specialist service. A conversation with the KCC area [Education Safeguarding Adviser](#) may be helpful first if the pupil is not at immediate risk of harm which otherwise requires an emergency referral.
 - Completing an invitation to a [formal attendance meeting](#) via the Digital Front Door on the Kelsi website for a PIAS Officer to attend and look at any further sources of support to try to identify and resolve barriers to attendance.
 - Signposting to online resources such as websites and apps focused on emotional wellbeing, e.g. [Kent Resilience Hub](#) or health services such as [Kent School Health](#).
 - Referring to other organisations such as [Young Lives Foundation](#) for mentoring or befriending support.
- ✓ **Where there are safeguarding concerns, ensure there is a robust collaborative approach between the school, children’s services, and other statutory safeguarding partners:** PIAS will ensure that training is provided to all KCC practitioners from Early Help and Children’s Social Care to ensure monitoring attendance and helping to unblock any barriers resulting in absence is a priority. This will also include ensuring attendance is built into child protection plans, child in needs plans, and any other documents such as moving forwards plans when a case closes. Training will also extend to child protection conference chairs countywide as well as external partner organisations such as School Health and the Police.
 - ✓ **Make severely absent (SA) pupils a top priority for support.** KCC acknowledges that children who are missing more school than they are attending often have vulnerabilities and school is an essential protective factor. PIAS will work with school to identify SA pupils, also using targeting support meetings as an opportunity to identify pupils where intensification of support could deter them from moving into the SA cohort.
 - ✓ **Ensuring improving attendance is a key focus for all frontline council staff:** The strategic approach from PIAS has been the creation of an Attendance Working Group headed up by the PIAS Service Manager and made up of a range of KCC staff from different teams and services across the county. The group has focused on key tasks such as improving the effectiveness of targeting support meetings,

developing ways to report and analyse attendance data, and create a training package for KCC integrated children’s services for academic year 2023/24 focused on improving attendance. KCC and Medway Council also hold joint local attendance alliance meetings to bring partners together to address attendance matters at a strategic level, which is an initiative created by the Secretary of State for Education.

iv) Legal intervention: Where voluntary support has been unsuccessful or not appropriate, PIAS is required to liaise with the school and any family practitioners involved to consider and agree taking forward attendance legal intervention by either formalising support and/or enforcing attendance. The diagram in paragraph 89 of the DfE *Working together to improve school attendance* guidance demonstrates this process and the various interventions such as parenting contracts, education supervision orders, statutory social care involvement and attendance prosecution:



[Section 6](#) of the DfE *Working together to improve school attendance* guidance outlines the full range of legal interventions in more detail. This section should be read in conjunction with [School attendance parental responsibility measures \(January 2015\)](#). In line with the requirements in the DfE guidance, KCC commits to ensuring that:

- ✓ Parents are given **clear information and notice** if any legal intervention is pursued by the LA.
- ✓ Integrated children’s services are expected to **build attendance expectations** into any family plans or assessments so that there is clear evidence the LA has exhausted all efforts to improve attendance before punitive action is pursued.
- ✓ Fixed penalty notices are always issued in line with the KCC [Code of Conduct](#).

- ✓ Attendance prosecution is taken forward as a **last resort** where all other routes (such as voluntary and formal measures) have been exhausted or inappropriate.

Schools, Trusts and KCC are expected to work together to determine which measure described above may be most effective in changing the parental behaviour resulting in an improvement in the pupil's attendance. All measures apply to pupils of **compulsory school age** and to **each parent of each child**. The main measures in more detail are:

- ✓ **Parenting contracts** (*paragraphs 94 to 106*): Although these sit within the attendance legal intervention section of the DfE guidance, they are **not** legally binding. However, parenting contracts (under the [Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003](#)) can be used as evidence towards other measures such as attendance legal intervention (attendance prosecution). In KCC, a decision has been taken that due to capacity pressures on the PIAS service, PIAS Officers will not be able to lead on parenting contracts or attend meetings where they are coordinated. Schools will however be able to seek advice from PIAS Officers about the process and PIAS has produced a **parenting contract template, checklist and frequently asked questions guide** for schools which is available [here](#) on the Kelsi website.
- ✓ **Education Supervision Orders** (*paragraphs 107 to 115*): An Education Supervision Order (ESO) is an alternative to prosecution, involving KCC (under [section 36 of the Childrens Act 1989](#)) applying to the family court for a district judge to issue an order to parent(s). KCC is expected to have explored the option of an ESO before considering attendance prosecution.

Schools will be unable to request an ESO directly, and a decision will ultimately be taken by PIAS if an ESO is appropriate. When a school makes a request for statutory attendance intervention via the [Digital Front Door](#), the allocated PIAS Officer will set up an Attendance Improvement Meeting (AIM) whereby all options will be considered and a decision made to either pursue the ESO or attendance prosecution route. If an ESO proves unsuccessful there will still be an option to subsequently follow the attendance prosecution to the Magistrates Court.

The responsible officer for an ESO and overseeing the process will be a PIAS Officer, with support from another KCC service to work directly with the family to try to improve the pupil's attendance through pre-arranged actions to achieve. Although considered on a case-by-case basis, KCC will generally recommend an ESO in cases where there is visible and consistent evidence of parental responsiveness and not in cases where there is clear parental disengagement from professionals.

- ✓ **Attendance prosecution** (*paragraphs 116 to 125*): KCC has the power to prosecute parents in the Magistrates Court under [Section 444 of the Education Act 1996](#). The two types of offences are section **444(1)** where a parent fails to secure the child's regular attendance; and section **444(1A)** where a parent *knowing* fails to ensure their child attends school regularly. The section 444(1) offence may result in a fine of up to level 3 (£1,000) and the section 444(1A) offence may result in a fine of up to level 4 (£2,500). Parents who fail to secure the regular attendance of their child at a place where the local authority or governing body has arranged alternative provision may be prosecuted under section **444ZA**. Sentences for a 444(1) offence

may also include parenting orders, conditional discharges, and absolute discharges. Sentences for a 444(1A) offence may also include a curfew, community order, rehabilitation activity requirement, or custodial sentence of up to 3 months.

All statutory attendance referrals will be managed by a PIAS Officer from the relevant area team. This may include home visits, phone calls, and letters to parents as well as referrals to other services where evidence arises (e.g., referral to children's social care). Due to the remit of the service, PIAS Officers will be unable to provide intensive support for families (which should have been offered and provided prior to the statutory referral). The referral can run alongside any other agencies involved but all parties should agree before prosecution is instigated.

Before being transferred to the KCC Attendance and Enforcement Team, the PIAS Officer holding the case will schedule and facilitate an **Attendance Improvement Meeting** (AIM) in school to devise an **attendance improvement agreement** with parent(s) and the pupil (where age and aptitude appropriate). Other agencies may be invited and a **representative from the school's leadership team** should be present to make any decisions about support from school if applicable. If unauthorised absences persist the PIAS Officer will send a formal warning and then final warning letter to parent(s). The AIM and both warning letters are included as evidence when the PIAS Officer writes their witness statement for court.

For any 444(1A) offence, PIAS will offer the parent a voluntary interview under caution in line with the [Police and Criminal Evidence Act](#) (PACE), 1984. This provides an opportunity for a parent to supply any evidence or mitigating factors and to show willingness to engage in efforts to improve their child's attendance. This evidence can be used in the Magistrates Court. Failure by the parent to respond to the opportunity of a PACE interview may be used as evidence of non-engagement in preparation for sentencing. If there are any other services involved PIAS will invite professionals to a **complex case meeting** and seek advice from the district's children's social care manager where there is a possibility of a custodial sentence which is the most serious prospect for a parent. Social care intervention may be deemed more appropriate as an alternative or in addition to prosecution if absence is severe and there is evidence of neglect.

The criteria for a statutory attendance intervention referral can be found in Appendix 6 on page 32 of this handbook. There is also guidance on the initial web pages of the [referral form](#) on the Digital Front Door located on the Kelsi website. *PIAS will close a statutory attendance referral if there are **no unauthorised absences** on the pupil's registration certificate in the most recent **20 school days**, in line with its local process.*

There is no guarantee that a referral for statutory attendance intervention will automatically result in prosecution as it will depend on a range of potential circumstances whereby it may not be in the public interest to proceed. These may include if the family move out of the area, county or country, the pupil becomes electively home educated (EHE), there is a significant change of family circumstances (e.g. the pupil is taken into care), the parent is able to supply evidence in line with the [statutory defences](#) outlined in the Education Act 1996, the

pupil's attendance improves significantly for a sustained period of time or there is evidence of a procedural impropriety by the school or KCC. All cases must adhere to the [Code for Crown prosecutors](#) and pass the **public interest and evidential tests**.

- ✓ **Parenting orders** (*paragraphs 126 to 129*): Parenting orders are an ancillary order which the Magistrates may choose to impose if a case has been presented by the LA for attendance prosecution. In a similar way to an ESO, the responsible officer for a parenting order will be a PIAS Officer, but another KCC service will become involved to work with the family directly to try to improve the pupil's attendance due to PIAS not having a remit to work intensively with families. Should a parent breach a parenting order they may be returned to court which could result in a fine of up to £1,000. A parenting order could last up to a year.
- ✓ **Fixed penalty notices** (*paragraphs 130 to 139*): KCC will issue all fixed penalty notices (FPNs) in accordance with its Code of Conduct which can be found under the [Fixed Penalty Notice](#) section of the Kelsi website and also in line with the [Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) Regulations 2007](#). If a FPN is not paid within the specified timeframe it will be withdrawn and addressed by way of the Single Justice Procedure (SJP), meaning it is dealt with separately to KCC and usually results in a larger fine for parents. In Kent, a FPN for unauthorised absence (excluding unauthorised leave in term time) is viewed as most likely to have an effect in improving a pupil's attendance in cases where absence is not severe, not historically severe, and circumstances are not complex due to the fines being much lower than other forms of legal intervention. A school can request for the LA to issue an FPN [here](#) via the Digital Front Door on the Kelsi website. From September 2023, fixed penalty notices can be paid via this [link](#) on kent.gov.uk.

For pupils of compulsory school age and not registered at a school, KCC has the power under [section 443 of the Education Act 1996](#) to prosecute a parent through a **School Attendance Order (SAO)** for failing to register their child at a school. An SAO may be issued to the parent of a child in a number of scenarios, for example where KCC deems an elective home education (EHE) arrangement to be unsuitable, in which case the pupil is reclassified as a child missing education (CME) and transferred to the AET. The CME team will contact a school requesting a place is held for the pupil on its admissions register as the order requires a school to be named. The parent may approach a different school if they are able to secure a place. If the pupil becomes registered at a school before the SAO is issued to the parent, then it will discontinue. If the parent does not ensure their child is on a school roll within the specified timeframe the SAO will be issued by the Attendance Enforcement Team, and the parent will be prosecuted in the Magistrates Court and could receive a fine up to £1,000.

17. Expectations of Virtual School Kent (VSK): The DfE *Working together to improve school attendance* highlights how good attendance at school also provides an additional safeguard for vulnerable pupils. Absence for pupils with a social worker, however, has been historically higher, with a quarter of children who have ever needed a social worker persistently absent compared to less than 10% of those who had never been in need. The Virtual School Kent (VSK) plays a key role by:

- ✓ Regularly **monitoring the attendance** of those children looked after by Kent LA.

- ✓ Strategically **championing the educational attendance** of Children with a Social Worker (CWSW), those who have had a social worker in the last 6 years (known as the Ever 6 CWSW cohort) as well as Previously Looked After Children (PLAC).
- ✓ Ensuring Social Workers and Schools set **aspirational targets** for attendance of pupils with a social worker in the area and put in place **personal education plans** for pupils looked-after.
- ✓ Providing **training for designated teachers** about their role in promoting the attendance of children who have ever needed a social worker.
- ✓ Securing regular attendance of looked-after children as their corporate parent and provide **advice and guidance** about the importance of attendance to those services supporting pupils previously looked after, as well as those who have or have had a social worker.
- ✓ Working across the children's social care service to ensure all social workers recognise the **importance of good school attendance**, and that **attendance is built into every child in need plan or child protection plan** where it is a concern.

Information about the Virtual School Kent can be found on its website [here](#). In addition, [Promoting the education of children with a social worker](#) guidance was published by the DfE in June 2022 detailing the role of Virtual Schools nationally.

18. Part-time timetables: Sometimes known as *reduced timetables*, these may be used in cases of pupils re-integrating into school after a period of absence due to physical health and/or psychological health reasons, or when transitioning into a new school.

The DfE states in paragraph 30 of its [Working together to improve school attendance](#) guidance that part-time timetables should **not** be used to manage behaviour.

Key considerations and requirements for schools when considering moving a pupil on to a part-time timetable (some of which are included in the above guidance) include:

- ✓ Parental consent **must** be obtained as all pupils are entitled to a full-time education. If parents agree and wish their child to return to full time sooner than planned or with immediate effect this must be honoured even if the school believes it is not in the child's best interests. Equally, school may refuse a parent's request for their child to be placed on to a part-time timetable. School may choose to move the pupil back to full-time at short notice if it is not proving an effective intervention.
- ✓ The timetable should be a **temporary** measure and for the **shortest time** possible.
- ✓ There should be a **regular review** with input from parents (and pupil where appropriate) using a **pastoral support plan** or similar framework to record details such as actions agreed etc to support the pupil returning to a full-time programme.
- ✓ As school is a protective factor for pupils, a **risk assessment** should be conducted to mitigate against potential safeguarding risks when they are absent. This may also include arrangements which become apparent, e.g. adult supervision, travel arrangements at alternative times of day and free school meals (where applicable). The DfE's [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(September 2023\)](#) guidance is a key document which to refer to promote the wellbeing of pupils missing school.
- ✓ If the pupil has an **EHCP, subject to a statutory children's social care plan and/or in the care of the LA** then the relevant KCC department(s) should be contacted for their input to ensure the child is safeguarded and there is compliance

with any related statutory legislation. Schools may also wish to seek advice and guidance from professionals in the district's Specialist Teaching and Learning Service (STLS) and SEND Inclusion Advisers. The school can contact the PIAS Inclusion & Attendance Adviser directly or complete the [Request inclusion advice for a pupil](#) form on the Digital Front Door on the Kelsi website.

- ✓ Any sessions where the pupil is not required to be in school must be recorded on the register as **authorised absence** (code C). For non-statutory school aged pupils who are part of a whole year transition (e.g., new reception pupils in September) code X (not included in the count) may be applied.
- ✓ **Notify KCC** of the part-time timetable details by completing the [Notify of a part-time timetable](#) form on the Kelsi website.*

*There is currently *no statutory duty* on schools to notify the LA of any pupil who moves on to a part-time timetable, however KCC recommends it is good practice to do so to be able to identify the numbers of pupils countywide. Schools are required to report how many pupils are on a part-time timetable for the census three times per year.

Although **flexi-schooling** has similar features to a part-time timetable in that both school and parents must agree it, there are some differences:

Type	Hours	Usually initiated by	Provider of work when pupil absent	Timeframe	Register coding
Part-time timetable	Part-time	School	School	Short-term	Authorised absence
Flexi-schooling	Full-time	Parent	Parent	Short-term or longer-term	Authorised absence

Flexi-schooling is **not** the same as elective home education (EHE) and the pupil must therefore be on the school roll for all 10 school sessions each week. The pupil should be marked with the appropriate code on the register for sessions they are expected to attend school and authorised absent (code C) when not expected to be in school. If a school intends to agree to flexi-schooling for some of its pupils it should have a formal flexi-schooling policy. KCC does not intend to publish a countywide flexi-schooling policy. Although not strictly a part-time timetable, schools can notify KCC of a flexi-schooling arrangement by completing the [Notify of a part-time timetable](#) form on the Kelsi website.

19. Suspensions and permanent exclusions: The most recent DfE guidance related to suspensions, permanent exclusions and pupil movement (September 2023) can be found [here](#). Reference to pupil movement (managed moves and off-site directions) is made in section **20** of this document. Schools, governing bodies / academy trustees and LAs **must** comply with specific requirements set out in the guidance including:

- ✓ School **notifying parents and KCC** of any suspension (known in the past as fixed period / term exclusion) and permanent exclusion issued **without delay**. Schools

must complete the [Notify of a suspension or permanent exclusion](#) form via the Digital Front Door on the Kelsi website which goes to PIAS.*

- ✓ School notifying specific teams/professionals where applicable (e.g. **Social Worker or the Virtual School**) of any suspension or permanent exclusion. *If a permanent exclusion is cancelled (previously known as withdrawn or rescinded), any days served by the pupil before the cancellation **must** be formally recorded and count towards the maximum 45 days of suspension permitted in an academic year.*
- ✓ School arranging **provision from day 6** onwards of any suspension which last longer than 5 days (this includes any consecutive suspensions) which may be less than 5 days each but bring the total days above 5).
- ✓ School and governors complying with key legislation and guidance including the [Equality Act 2010](#), the [SEND Code of Practice](#) where relevant, and [Keeping children safe in education](#) when suspending or permanently excluding a pupil.
- ✓ Governing board convening to consider reinstatement of:
 - Any pupil **permanently excluded**. The meeting must be within *15 school days* of the headteacher's notification.
 - Any pupil **suspended for more than 15 school days**. The meeting must be within *15 school days* of the headteacher's notification.
 - Any pupil **suspended for more than five school days** (or more than ten lunchtimes) in a term where parents have made representation. The meeting must be within *50 school days* of the notification of suspension.
 - Any pupil suspended or permanently excluded which would result in the pupil missing a **public examination** or national curriculum test. Governors (may be less than three) must make reasonable steps to meet before the exam.
- ✓ School informing PIAS, Virtual School and Social Services (where pupil is known to Social Care or in the care of the LA or another LA) of any planned governing board meeting or independent review and any decisions made. In the best interests of the pupil, KCC recommends that any LA representative is invited to contribute and not solely attend as an observer (see paragraph 104 of the DfE exclusions [guidance](#)).
- ✓ School ensuring there is a clear **behaviour policy** accessible to school, parents, and pupils (there may be a separate specific exclusion policy).
- ✓ School not using **part-time timetables** to manage a pupil's behaviour, or to avoid suspensions or permanent exclusions.

**All suspension and permanent exclusion notifications are entered on to a KCC database and the KCC management information team subsequently run a monthly report detailing all suspensions and permanent exclusions issued countywide.*

Schools can [request a fixed penalty notice](#) be issued to any parent of a pupil of compulsory school age who is found in a public place during the first five days of a suspension or permanent exclusion. School must make it clear in writing to parent(s) the relevant dates when the suspension or permanent exclusion is issued.

In the case of a permanent exclusion of a **primary aged pupil**, KCC has a statutory duty to arrange day 6 provision (most commonly via the KCC Education programme or other appropriate service), and PIAS will coordinate an In-Year Fair Access (IYFA) panel of local schools in line with the [Fair access protocol](#) to identify an onward school for the pupil, except for pupils with an EHCP or in the care of KCC or other LA whereby

other services will coordinate this. If a school is not identified at panel, KCC may seek a direction via the [Office of the Schools Adjudicator](#).

In the case of a permanent exclusion of a **secondary aged pupil**, each district receives funding from KCC which is through either a delegated or devolved model depending on the way the district is set up (e.g., if there is a PRU). Therefore, secondary schools are commissioned to provide day 6 provision, and longer-term education is arranged through the district In-Year Fair Access (IYFA) panels. Pupils with an EHCP or in the care of KCC or other LA are not placed via IYFA, and arrangements are made through the relevant departments.

If a pupil is permanently excluded and governors decline to reinstate the pupil at the governing board panel meeting, then parent(s) may request an **independent review** within 15 school days of the notification of the decision to decline to reinstate the pupil. KCC Democratic Services will be responsible for organising an independent review panel (IRP) within **15 school days** of the parental request in the case of a permanent exclusion from an LA maintained school. Academies are responsible for making their own arrangements but may wish to request KCC Democratic Services to coordinate it (via appeals@kent.gov.uk). Panel members will still be independent of KCC to ensure the process is impartial. There will be a charge to academies who request for KCC to organise a review.

Once all statutory processes have concluded for a permanent exclusion and the pupil is not reinstated, the school may complete the [Notify of a deletion from admissions register](#) from on the Digital Front Door on the Kelsi website.

PIAS allocates a link Inclusion & Attendance Adviser (IAA) to every Kent school to provide advice. Schools can complete the [Request inclusion advice for a pupil](#) form via the Digital Front Door on the Kelsi website. Due to IAAs being impartial it is outside their remit and power to recommend, make a judgement on, or overrule a decision by a headteacher to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil. Inclusion advice and support from IAAs will be on a case-by-case basis and work commitments but may include:

- ✓ **Providing advice** on the DfE exclusion guidance and processes as well as behaviour policies.
- ✓ **Sharing ideas** as well as signposting to resources and services who may be able to support schools and pupils in promoting inclusion where behaviour is a concern.
- ✓ **Attending meetings** in schools with parents (and partner agencies where involved) about individual pupils experiencing suspensions at risk of permanent exclusion.
- ✓ **Representing KCC** at statutory meetings in relation to suspensions and exclusions.
- ✓ **Delivering training** to governors and senior leaders on responsibilities in relation to exclusions set out in the DfE guidance (usually organised for a whole area and not bespoke for a single school or Trust).

In the case of pupils with SEN, Inclusion & Attendance Advisers are not responsible for assessing the quality of provision, or finding provision for pupils whose needs may be best met in specialist provision. They are also unable to expedite the statutory assessment process or make or overrule decisions by the KCC SEN department.

Inclusion & Attendance Advisers represent PIAS at a range of forums such as the Local Inclusion Forum Team (LIFT), In Year Fair Access (IYFA) panels and District Contextual Safeguarding Meetings (DCSM).

KCC does not have a model exclusion policy for schools and will continue to advocate reference to and compliance from schools and KCC with the most recent DfE exclusions guidance (see section 3). KCC has template letters for notifying parents of a suspension or permanent exclusion which schools may request from their link Inclusion & Attendance Adviser (IAA). Schools are advised to ensure their link IAA's name is on template letters and any associated contact details are accurate.

20. Managed moves and off-site directions: The DfE [Suspensions and permanent exclusions including pupil movement guidance](#) (September 2023) recommends headteachers consider a **managed move or off-site direction** for a pupil as a **preventative** measure to exclusion. Paragraph 33 states off-site direction may only be used to improve future behaviour and **not as a sanction or punishment** for past misconduct. It should be a **temporary** intervention which may result in a return to the school or managed move to another mainstream school. Pupils subject to a managed move should not take priority over any pupil who has priority status for admission to the school as detailed in the [School Admissions Code 2021](#).

Governing bodies of maintained schools have the power to direct a pupil off-site for education to improve behaviour under [Section 29A](#) of the Education Act 2002. Academies can arrange off-site provision for similar purposes under their general powers, set out in its *Articles of Association*. The managed move process was changed by the DfE in September 2022 having previously been a dual registration agreement and temporary.

The differences between managed moves and off-site directions are summarised in the table below:

Move Type	Parental consent	Timeframe	Registration	Provision type
Managed move	Yes	Permanent	Single	School
Off-site direction	No	Temporary	Dual	School or Alternative Provision

The relevant KCC department should be informed before any managed move or direction off-site is initiated if the pupil has an **EHCP, subject to a statutory children's social care services plan and/or in the care of the LA** so any protective and risks factors are identified and addressed. This will also ensure compliance with any statutory legislation which may influence the suitability of the arrangement.

Schools should ensure that parents and pupils fully understand how a managed move or off-site direction works from the outset and how any direction will be monitored and reviewed. Schools may wish to seek advice and guidance from their link PIAS Inclusion & Attendance Adviser, and can do this via the [Request inclusion advice for a pupil](#) form on the Digital Front Door. All pupils referred to a PRU **must** be dual registered with a mainstream school. Schools can ask KCC for consent for a pupil to

be single registered with a PRU by completing the [Request single registration at a PRU](#) form on the Digital Front Door on the Kelsi website if the pupil meets one or more criteria detailed on the first page of the form. If a school removes a pupil from roll to be single registered with a PRU without KCC consent, or for any other ground outside of [Regulation 8 of The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) this would constitute 'off rolling' and deemed unlawful.

There is no statutory duty on schools to notify the LA of a decision to initiate a managed move or off-site direction for a pupil, therefore there is no form on the Digital Front Door on Kelsi to do this. However, to be able to determine how many pupils are moving to other schools or in to PRUs, KCC's Management Information team continues to coordinate a **Countywide Key Stage 3&4 Inclusion Dashboard** on a termly basis to track the number of managed moves, successful directions (pupil has returned to school) and unsuccessful directions (pupil has not returned to school and moved on to another provision) in each district. PIAS Inclusion & Attendance Advisers will ask schools for this information in advance of the publication of each dashboard at relevant checkpoints across the academic year.

KCC does not intend to create a countywide managed move and/or off-site direction policy, but will continue to have regard to, and expect schools to have regard to, the [Alternative Provision statutory guidance for LAs, headteachers and governing bodies](#) published by the DfE in 2016.

21. Children Missing Education: Children Missing Education (CME) are children of **compulsory school age** who are **not registered pupils** at a school and are **not receiving suitable education otherwise** than at a school (e.g., elective home education). LAs have a duty under [section 436A of the Education Act 1996](#) to make arrangements to establish the identities of children in the circumstances outlined above. A pupil would **not** be classified as CME if they were a persistent or severe absentee in general unless there is continuous absence and indication or confirmation they have not returned or will not return to the area.

For safeguarding purposes, schools are advised to notify KCC of any non-compulsory school aged child who may be CME so that there is a record and action to be followed up when they do reach compulsory school age. CME guidance from the DfE can be found [here](#). Schools should inform KCC via the [Notify of a Potential child missing education](#) form located on the Digital Front Door on the Kelsi website as soon as they become aware of one of the two scenarios below and have completed their own *reasonable enquiries*:

Ground E within [Regulation 8 of The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#). *The pupil has ceased to attend the school and **no longer normally lives a reasonable distance from school**, and the pupil is not a boarder at the school. Also, in cases where parents are relocating and **unable to confirm a new school in advance**. Parents may have given notice the pupil is leaving the area or may leave without warning. Absences should be recorded as unauthorised. Schools should ask parents for a forwarding address and date the pupil is leaving the area if advanced notice is provided, plus the name of a new school if available. All details should be recorded on the CME notification form.*

Ground F within [Regulation 8 of The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#). *The pupil has **failed to attend the school following a period of leave** granted by school where there is reason to believe the absence is **not** due to sickness or other unavoidable cause. Absences should be recorded as unauthorised.*

Reasonable enquiries include contact with parents, reaching out to any emergency contacts, liaising with other schools where there are siblings (where applicable) and contacting any agencies to whom the family may be known. For safeguarding reasons, schools should conduct a **home visit** where there is no forwarding address and if there is uncertainty about the family relocating. Each case should be judged on its own merits and professional curiosity should always be applied.

For a **Ground E** scenario detailed above, PIAS will follow up any lines of enquiry to identify the whereabouts of the pupil and confirm to school via email when KCC investigations are complete. The pupil can then be deleted* under [Regulation 8 of The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) **once they have completed their final day at school and moved out of the area.**

For a **Ground F** scenario detailed above, PIAS will follow up any lines of enquiry to identify the whereabouts of the pupil and confirm to school via email when KCC investigations are complete. The pupil can then be deleted* under [Regulation 8 of The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (Ground F) **once the pupil has been continually absent for 10 school days from the point of expiry of the period of leave granted by the Headteacher.**

*If a pupil is known to **Social Care and/or has an EHCP and/or in the care of the LA**, then agreement from the relevant KCC department is required for safeguarding purposes **before deleting** the pupil from the admissions register using the form [Notify of a deletion from admissions register](#) via the Digital Front Door on the Kelsi website.

KCC's central CME team will continue with a range of lines of enquiry to identify the location of a pupil and arrangements for their education if these remain unknown.

A notification of a potential CME does **not** replace safeguarding procedures which a school would follow if a child went missing and there are concerns there is a risk of immediate harm, in which case standard procedures with the relevant authorities such as Social Care and Police must be pursued by school without delay.

When a pupil is deleted from roll and the **next school is unknown**, the original school should create a common transfer file (CTF) using XXX for the destination LA and XXXX for the destination school. More details can be found on page 15 of [School to school \(S2S\) guide for schools \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#) guidance.

Schools are **not** required to notify KCC of pupils who leave school at standard transition points such as Year 2, 6 or 11.

If the school later receives details of a forwarding address for the pupil or a school the pupil is now registered, details should be sent to cme@kent.gov.uk

If a practitioner not based in a school (e.g. Early Help worker) becomes aware of a child who has moved in to Kent without a school place the [Notify of a Potential child missing education](#) form should be completed or email cme@kent.gov.uk

The DfE produced a [webinar](#) for schools in June 2023 about the CME process and examples of good practice including joint work between schools and their LA.

22. Children with medical needs: LAs have a statutory duty under [Section 19 of the Education Act 1996](#) to ensure suitable education, such as alternative provision, is arranged for children of compulsory school age who, because of health reasons, would not otherwise receive a suitable education. In Kent, [the Rosewood School](#) provides education for pupils who cannot attend school due to health reasons and who are known to senior medical professionals such as paediatricians and consultants.

23. Elective Home Education: Elective home education (EHE) describes a choice by parents to provide education for their children at home, or in some other way which they choose, instead of sending them to school full-time. DfE guidance about EHE can be found [here](#). Guidance for parents about EHE can be found [here](#).

Schools have a statutory duty to notify the LA when a parent provides notification of their intention to electively home educate their child and can do this by completing the [Notify of a deletion from admissions register](#) form on the Digital Front Door on the Kelsi website. Schools should choose **ground D** from the list of grounds for deletion which are detailed in [Regulation 8 of The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#).

A pupil who is registered at a special school **cannot** be deleted from roll without agreement from the LA in accordance with statutory [guidance](#) – paragraph 8.6. For any pupil who has an EHCP the school is advised to call an early annual review and invite parents and any relevant KCC practitioners to ensure the arrangements for the pupil's continued education are suitable.

PIAS does not have any direct involvement with pupils who are electively home educated as there is a designated EHE team, which includes EHE Officers who visit families to check the arrangements and signpost to resources and further information. If KCC deems an EHE arrangement is unsuitable it may decide to reclassify the child as a CME (child missing education) which may lead to KCC initiating a School Attendance Order for the child to return to mainstream education and parents may be prosecuted under [section 443 of the Education Act 1996](#) if they fail to make suitable arrangements.

24. Deletion from the admissions register: Schools have a statutory duty under [Regulation 12\(b\) of The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) to notify the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admissions register. Pupils must only be deleted from the admissions register under one of the grounds prescribed in [Regulation 8 of The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#). Additional detail can be found in the [DfE Working together to improve school attendance](#) guidance, paragraphs 152 to 196.

Schools can inform KCC of their intention to remove a pupil from its roll using the [Notify of a deletion from admissions register](#) form on the Digital Front Door on the Kelsi website. The details entered by the referrer will determine which team in KCC will receive the notification.

If a pupil is removed from a school roll for a reason not set out in Regulation 8 then this would be classified as 'off rolling' which is unlawful. If KCC becomes aware of a pupil being deleted from roll for a reason not set out in legislation, or no notification has been received by KCC, then this will be raised formally by the relevant team in KCC depending on the pupil's status (e.g., has an EHCP, child in care etc). PIAS Officers may request a list of pupils deleted from roll when facilitating termly conversations / targeting support meetings.

25. Data collection, analysis and sharing: The DfE *Working together to improve school attendance* guidance expects schools, governors/trustees, LAs and other partners to: **Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.** All schools should:

- ✓ Proactively and systematically analyse their data on a weekly, half-termly, termly, and yearly basis to **identify patterns of absence** for individual pupils at risk of persistent absence, and who are persistently absent or severely absent.
- ✓ Regularly identify **cohorts of pupils** more likely to be persistently or severely absent, such as those eligible for free school meals (FSM), have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) including medical conditions, have English as an additional language (EAL), Children in Care (CiC), Gypsy Roma & Traveller (GRT) and those pupils known to services such as children's social care. This could also include individual classes, year groups and other factors where patterns are emerging.
- ✓ Put **effective strategies** and targeted support in place for pupils and groups of pupils to help unblock barriers to their attendance following the analysis of the data.
- ✓ Ensuring staff have the relevant **training** on the running of key reports available on the electronic management information system the school uses.
- ✓ Ensure data is **communicated between all levels** at the school from operational level to senior leadership, including sharing at governing board meetings.
- ✓ Keep register codes **up to date and accurate** so reports enable effective analysis of data and subsequent interventions implemented are also targeted correctly.
- ✓ Include the school's strategy for using data to target attendance improvement efforts to the pupils or pupil cohorts who need it most in its **attendance policy**.
- ✓ Benchmark attendance data (at whole school, year group and cohort level) against **local, regional, and national levels** to identify areas of focus for improvement.
- ✓ Work jointly and share data on individual cases where it is of benefit to the pupil (e.g. health services where there are medical conditions or the Police where there is extra-familial harm).
- ✓ Share attendance data for individual pupils from the registers with PIAS Officers at **Targeting support meetings** (TSMs). Schools may not be in a position or see it as appropriate to disclose the circumstances causing absence for some pupils which is highly sensitive and confidential where there is no role for PIAS.

- ✓ Sign up the DfE data collection system [Share your daily attendance data](#).

Academy trustees / governing bodies play a crucial role at strategic level to:

- ✓ Regularly **review attendance data, discuss and challenge trends**, helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- ✓ Thoroughly examine **recent and historic trends** at a school level as well as **benchmarking** to comparator schools within the trust, local authority area, region and nationwide.
- ✓ Pay particular attention to attendance of pupil cohorts within their school(s) that have historically had poor attendance or face entrenched barriers to attendance.
- ✓ Work with school leaders to **set goals** or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those focus areas.
- ✓ Ensure **attendance training** is provided to staff with a specified attendance function in their role (e.g. administrative, pastoral / family support staff and senior leaders) which includes the necessary skills to interpret and analyse attendance data.

KCC is expected to:

- ✓ Rigorously track local attendance data to devise a **strategic approach** to attendance that **prioritises** the pupils, pupil cohorts and schools on which to provide support and focus its efforts on to unblock area wide barriers to attendance.
- ✓ Use attendance data from all schools in the area to **identify the pupil cohorts, schools, and neighbourhoods/ towns** on which to focus efforts. This should include benchmarking against **neighbouring local authorities** (both geographic and statistical) and **regional and national averages** to identify patterns and trends of concern.
- ✓ Build effective **data sharing opportunities** with different partners as part of the overall data sharing/ governance arrangements in the local partnership to ensure a joined-up approach.

In KCC our staff will:

- ✓ Receive regular **training** on information governance and GDPR.
- ✓ Ensure at Targeting support meetings (TSMs) that PIAS Officers **do not request or remove lists of names** of pupils, as KCC does not have the facility to store details on its systems, which are designed to hold data for individual pupils on each record. However, PIAS Officers may request cohort level data which does not identify individual pupil names.
- ✓ Expect schools to provide a **registration certificate** (attendance record with codes) from its system (for example SIMS, Bromcom, or Arbor) when requested for any pupil open as a statutory attendance referral or subject to a fixed penalty notice to determine next steps required by the relevant PIAS Officer or team.
- ✓ **Anonymise school names** when presenting data from KCC reports related to attendance and exclusions in forums such as LIFT Executive, unless all school leaders who own that data provide consent to share, and with which recipients.
- ✓ Ensure permission from the document owner of any KCC reports is obtained before sharing information following any requests from schools.






- ✓ Encourage schools to have **sharing agreements** with each other where they wish to compare any data trends or patterns (for example with schools in the same geographical areas or having similar characteristics) rather than making requests to KCC. This may include cases where a school wishes to check the attendance of a sibling at another school.
- ✓ Seek advice from their line manager in cases schools **do not wish to share** pupil data at targeting support meetings where there is robust evidence of a role for PIAS to play in supporting the school in promoting a pupil's attendance.
- ✓ Share intelligence between KCC departments where appropriate to ensure a collaborative approach in promoting the attendance of pupils.
- ✓ Develop systems and tools using local and DfE data to identify schools to target support and resources from KCC services as a priority.







26. Improving attendance - next steps: KCC is fully committed to finding new and innovative ways to continuously enhance its practice, build ever stronger relationships with schools and other partners, and adapt to any future government guidance to meet its expectations to promote the attendance of all of Kent's children and young people. The following actions are being taken by KCC over the coming academic year:






- ✓ KCC representation in a **local attendance action alliance** in partnership with Medway Council, which was formed following the creation of a national [attendance action alliance](#) led by the secretary of state for education.
- ✓ Continuation of the KCC **attendance working group** with a view to extend membership to schools, parents, and external partners.
- ✓ Seeking opportunities to **extend local programmes** countywide which are currently being delivered by KCC services focusing on engaging young people to improve their school attendance.
- ✓ Rolling out of emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA) **awareness sessions** for all KCC family practitioners as well as an extension of the awareness sessions for schools and facilitation of **case consultations** for individual pupils in 2023/24.
- ✓ Discussing attendance in key meetings where there is school representation such as **DSL forums, LIFT Executive, Headteacher briefings, FLO network meetings and Local Children's Partnership Groups (LCPGs) and PIAS led termly attendance network meetings.**
- ✓ Supporting **professional development for KCC family practitioners** to improve practice, including regular opportunities to discuss complex cases as well as developing bitesize guides on attendance, exclusions, part-time timetables, and Children Missing Education.
- ✓ Developing **guidance for parents** around subjects such as Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) to signpost them to support for their children.

27. Appendices: The table below provides a summary of information from internal and external sources related to school attendance and relevant themes detailed throughout the handbook.

Some of the resources are attached or embedded in this document, and there are also links to web pages and videos. KCC is not responsible for the content of external websites and documents and links may be subject to change by the source:

No	Title / description	Format
1	Department for Education (DFE) guidance: <i>Working together to improve school attendance</i> and <i>Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance</i>	Web page
2	Letter from DfE about attendance guidance and update around plans to become statutory.	 230622 Letter from Simon Blake to Direc
3	Summary of key guidance and legislation related to attendance and other relevant subjects	 LEGISLATION & GUIDANCE.docx
4	PRU, Inclusion & Attendance (PIAS) intervention levels	See page 36
5	Criteria for PIAS statutory attendance intervention	 Criteria for statutory attendanc
6	Information about PIAS, including PIAS Officer contacts, Digital Front Door and Fixed Penalty Notice Code of Conduct	Web page
7	National data on a range of parental responsibility measures (including penalty notices, attendance case management, parenting orders, parenting contracts and education supervision orders).	Web page
8	Attendance guidance checklist for schools (created by PIAS).	Web page
9	Attendance policy checklist for schools (created by PIAS).	Web page
10	Securing good attendance and tackling persistent absence	Ofsted Webinar
11	Analysing absence and attendance data	DfE Webinar
12	What the new attendance guidance means for schools	DfE Webinar
13	Improving attendance: Good practice for schools and multi-academy trusts	DfE Webinars
14	Breakthrough meetings (a guide to strengths-based conversations in school with families).	 Breakthrough Meetings.docx
15	Example Job Description for Designated Lead for School Attendance	 JD Designated Attendance Lead.do

16	Targeting support meetings: DfE fact sheet, PIAS terms of reference for termly conversations and frequently asked questions for schools	 DfE fact sheet - TSM.pdf  TSM TERMS OF REFERENCE SEP 23.c  PIAS FAQ TARGETING SUPPOR
17	Improving attendance – Principles for success (written by The Education People)	Web page
18	Parent guide to school attendance (published by DfE)	 Guide-for-parents-on-school-attendan
19	Emotionally based school avoidance – how can schools respond?	Webinar
20	Article about school attendance and emotionally based school avoidance.	 Supp-March2023-V Ls-SecEd.pdf
21	Child Law Advice: Includes useful information in the education section about a range of topics including attendance, exclusions, admissions, and home education.	Web page
22	School attendance of children with SEN (research completed and published by the KCC Kent Analytics team)	 School Attendance Presentation - May 2
23	Children Missing Education: Webinar for schools (June 2023)	DfE Webinar
24	Virtual School Kent (VSK): Website including information about the VSK Advisory Team (VSKAT). Promoting the education of children with a social worker (DfE guidance).	Web page Web page
25	Education Safeguarding Team – contacts and website	Web page

26	Parenting contracts: Template, checklist and frequently asked questions guide for schools.	 PARENTING CONTRACTS CHECKLIST  PARENTING CONTRACT TEMPLATE  PARENTING CONTRACTS FAQs F...
27	Kent Support Levels guidance	Web page
28	Information Advice & Support Kent Kent Resilience Hub Guidance on the exclusion of autistic pupils.  	IASK Web page Kent Resilience Hub Web page Autism Education Trust Web page
29	Kent Facts and Figures related to different sectors of education (published annually by the KCC Management Information team).	Web page
30	KCC term dates 2023/24	Web page

PRU INCLUSION & ATTENDANCE SUPPORT (PIAS): INTERVENTION LEVELS

1. ANALYSE, IDENTIFY (ALL PUPILS)	2. FACILITATE SUPPORT (IDENTIFIED PUPILS)	3. FORMALISE SUPPORT (IDENTIFIED PUPILS)	4. LEGAL INTERVENTION (IDENTIFIED PUPILS)
<p><i>Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of absence at cohort and individual level.</i></p> <p><u>SCHOOL ROLE</u></p> <p>Address individual cases of persistent absence rapidly using day to day processes including phone calls and letters. Request evidence for absences where appropriate.</p> <p>Use a <i>support first</i> approach focused on intensifying support rather than acceleration to punitive approaches as set out in the DfE Working together to improve school attendance guidance.</p> <p><u>LA ROLE</u></p> <p>No direct involvement from the PIAS Officer with the family required at this time. School will most likely be the lead for individual cases.</p>	<p><i>View absence as a key indicator to identify challenges in or outside school. Apply a contextual approach to school attendance.</i></p> <p><u>SCHOOL ROLE</u></p> <p>Meet with family in school to listen and understand barriers to pupil's regular attendance. Consider home visit if family unable or will not access school site or other forms of communication prove unsuccessful.</p> <p>Consider district conversation with KCC's Open Access team to identify resources available to address barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Consider informal conversation with link PIAS Officer for advice on KCC or DfE guidance.</p> <p>Consider referral to Front Door where there is evidence and likelihood intensive support levels 3 or 4 may be met for Early Help or Social Care family assessments.</p> <p><u>LA ROLE</u></p> <p>Facilitate Targeting Support Meetings (TSM's) held on a termly basis. Senior member of school staff to participate.</p> <p>No direct involvement from the PIAS Officer with the family required at this time.</p>	<p><i>Where unauthorised absence persists, and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with by parent(s).</i></p> <p><u>SCHOOL ROLE</u></p> <p>Consider offering parenting contract which is regularly reviewed with clear actions and support from any partner agencies.</p> <p>Consider inviting link PIAS Officer to a formal attendance meeting in school with parent(s) and pupil (if age appropriate). Meeting chaired by senior member of school staff, with school being lead professional unless another agency has this role.</p> <p>Consider raising a fixed penalty notice (FPN) in line with KCC's Penalty Notice Code of Conduct if case not complex, absence not severe, and if an FPN has not been issued in same academic year.</p> <p><u>LA ROLE</u></p> <p>School's link PIAS Officer to join formal attendance meeting to provide advice and outline potential legal interventions measures which may be initiated.</p> <p>KCC Attendance Enforcement Team to issue fixed penalty notice to parent(s) if raised by school and criteria met in Code of Conduct.</p>	<p><i>Where all resources exhausted, and support not engaged with. Last resort process to try to improve attendance.</i></p> <p><u>SCHOOL ROLE</u></p> <p>Consider making a request for statutory attendance intervention for persistent or severe absence which may lead to attendance prosecution in the Magistrates Court or an education supervision order (ESO) in the Family Court.</p> <p><u>LA ROLE</u></p> <p>Link PIAS Officer to coordinate statutory attendance referral and arrange an Attendance Improvement Meeting (AIM) to assess most suitable pathway to try to improve the pupil's attendance.</p> <p>KCC Attendance Enforcement Team to apply to Family Court for the issuing of an education supervision order (ESO) or present case in Magistrates Court for prosecution under section 444(1), (1A) or (ZA) of the Education Act 1996.</p>