

School Attendance: Information for Governors

- PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service

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School Attendance

- 2015/16 attendance in Kent improved from 4.9% to 4.7% but was below the national average which remained at the same rate (4.6%)
- The most common reason for absence was illness - 57.3%
- Absence due to family holiday increased from 7.5% to 8.2%

Early Help and Preventative Services

- PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service is part of Early Help and Preventative Services
 - In many cases the root causes of poor attendance are family and social issues
 - PIAS – support for schools, prosecutions and PNs
 - Every school has a named **School Liaison Officer**
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School Liaison Officers

- Advice, support and training on procedures, strategies and projects
- Attendance Officer Network Meetings
- Register Audits
- Casework and preparation of cases for prosecution

Legal Responsibility of Parents

- The Education Act 1996 states: ‘If any child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence.’
- The responsibility to ensure regular school attendance rests solely with the parent(s). Failure to ensure regular school attendance is a criminal offence.

Legal Responsibilities of Schools

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- Removal from roll
- Marking of registers – DfE guidance Nov 2016
- Section 434(6) Education Act 1996

Promoting good attendance

- Whole School Ethos
- School Attendance Policy
- Home/School Agreement
- Activities in school
- Individualised support

Persistent Absence

- The government now classes any pupil with attendance below 90% as a 'persistent absentee'
- Schools report their PA Rate to the DfE
- Schools should have systems in place to track PA pupils and prevent pupils becoming PA
- 90% - perception of parents

Tackling Poor Attendance

- Close monitoring – cohorts and individuals
- School Action
- Referral for Early Help support
- Referral to PIAS for prosecution - key referral criterion - below 90% attendance with a minimum of 10 days' unauthorised absence

Referral Criteria – School Action

- Contact with parents
 - Offer of appropriate support to both parents and pupil including Early Help Notification
 - Known medical issues investigated and advice sought - eg School Nursing Service.
 - Parents must be made aware that absence is not authorised - the decision to authorise absence rests solely with the Headteacher.
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Penalty Notices

- Schools can use PNs if this is included in the school's Attendance Policy and has been widely and regularly publicised
 - Revised Code of Conduct April 2017
 - A PN can be issued instead of prosecuting the parent in the Magistrates' Court.
 - A PN can be issued for poor attendance (including persistent late arrival), holidays in term-time and where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours
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Children Missing Education

- A child of compulsory school age who is not on roll of a school and is not receiving suitable education otherwise
- When the whereabouts of children are unknown and the school has made every effort to find them

Children Missing Education – a school's duty to report

- Children Missing Education via DFD eg:
 - A child has moved out of the area but the Common Transfer File has not been requested by another school
 - A child has emigrated
- Removal from roll via DFD

Questions to ask

- Is the School Attendance Policy up to date and in line with latest DfE guidance and KCC Code of Conduct?
 - Is there effective communication with parents?
 - How is good attendance promoted and poor attendance addressed?
 - Are sufficient time/resources given to attendance?
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Sources of Information

- KELSI –
www.kelsi.org.uk/pru-inclusion-and-attendance-service-pias
- Attendance Officer Network Meetings
- Named School Liaison Officer
- Heidi McGee 03000 418689
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