School Attendance: Information for Governors

- PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service
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
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 - e.g. School Nursing Service.
- Parents must be made aware that absence is not authorised - the decision to authorise absence rests solely with the Headteacher.
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
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 a child 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:
  o A child has moved out of the area but the Common Transfer File has not been requested by another school
  o 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?
Sources of Information

• KELSI –
  www.kelsi.org.uk/pru-inclusion-and-attendance-service-pias
• Attendance Officer Network Meetings
• Named School Liaison Officer
• Cathy Edwards – 03000 411958
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