

School Attendance Guidance Checklist for Schools

This guide has been designed by the local authority to support schools in aligning their practice with the Department for Education's attendance guidance published in May 2002 and which became applicable in September 2022. Input into the development of this guide has been received from various services within KCC, therefore some of the checkpoints are related to local practices and resources which are not specifically detailed in the DfE guidance.

Links to the main guidance are below and will be abbreviated within the document:

- ✚ [Working together to improve school attendance \(WTTISA\) \(2022\)](#)
- ✚ [Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance \(STORSA\) \(2022\)](#)

The above guidance should be read alongside statutory guidance documents including:


- ✚ [School attendance parental responsibility measures \(2015\)](#)
- ✚ [Children Missing Education \(2016\)](#)
- ✚ [Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions \(2015\)](#)
- ✚ [Suspension and permanent exclusions from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units \(2022\)](#)

This guide is not intended to be an audit of schools by the local authority or a model attendance policy, therefore solely designed to trigger opportunities within schools to reflect on the current practices being used to address pupil attendance, including identifying gaps and challenges, as well as formulate actions required, which may include support from services external to the school. There is no requirement to share the contents with the local authority, however schools may wish to discuss some themes with their link Officer from the PRU, Inclusion & Attendance Service (PIAS) during termly targeting support meetings (TSMs).

Due to attendance improvement being a continuous process, it is advised that this guide is regularly reviewed by the senior leadership team in school as well as governing boards / academy trustees (for example, on a termly basis) to reflect on any objectives set and adjust accordingly where needed. Some schools may wish to integrate it as part of their wider school improvement plan or adapt it to take the form of a self-evaluation.

If you have any comments, questions or feedback please speak to your [link PIAS Officer](#).

No	Checkpoint(s)	Guidance Reference(s)	Supporting Evidence <i>Where are we now? What needs to happen next? How will we demonstrate impact of our decisions and actions?</i>
1	<p>Our school leadership team and governing board has read the DfE's <i>Working together to improve school attendance</i> guidance and <i>Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance</i> with a clear and confident understanding around the expectations for schools and the governance level.</p> <p>The school has had sight of the DfE's suspension and permanent exclusion guidance published in July 2022 and behaviour / exclusion policies have been reviewed to take changes into account.</p>	<p>See section above for guidance links.</p> <p>WTTISA: [1] and Sections 2 and 3.</p> <p>See DfE Webinars</p> <p>Suspension and permanent exclusions from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units</p> <p>Ofsted Webinar</p> <p>Contact link Inclusion & Attendance Adviser for queries.</p>	
2	<p>Our school has a strong ethos and culture where attendance is a priority and seen as everyone's business to improve. We understand it is a continuous process and recognise a 'support first' methodology should always be followed before considering punitive based approaches.</p> <p>Our school is trauma informed and has embedded trauma informed practices to support the inclusion and attendance of our pupils.</p>	<p>WTTISA; Section 2 & Section 3 and [7;8;13;14;15;16;17;31;35;36;51;54;65;85]</p> <p>STORSA (Pg 4)</p>	

3	<p>Our school understands the expectations for LAs in improving school attendance. This includes the purpose of Targeting Support Meetings (TSMs), also known as ‘termly conversations,’ and what an effective working relationship with PIAS (known as the ‘School Attendance Support Team’ in the guidance) looks like.</p>	<p>WTTISA: Section 4 and [15;40;46;47;48;57;67;72;73 – 75; 90]</p> <p>STORSA (Pg 5)</p> <p> DfE fact sheet - TSM.pdf</p>	
4	<p>Our school is aware of its points of contact in PIAS for attendance and inclusion / exclusion related queries (this includes School Liaison Officers, Education Engagement Officers, and Inclusion & Attendance Advisers).</p>	<p>WTISSA: [72;73;84]</p> <p>See PIAS Officer contacts here</p> <p>STORSA (Pg 4)</p>	
5	<p>Our school is confident in making a request for support for a family and recognises early help as an early intervention system including a range of resources and services rather than solely the main early help units.</p>	<p>WTISSA: [13;16;37;67;77;79;82;87]</p> <p>STORSA (Pg 6)</p> <p>Support Level Guidance</p>	
6	<p>Our school has a designated senior member of school staff who has overall responsibility for improving attendance. This includes clearly defined duties and the capacity to fulfil these. Their names is on our attendance policy.</p>	<p>WTTISA [16;17;37;56]</p> <p>STORSA (Pg 4)</p>	

7	<p>Our school is familiar with the new category of severe absence (pupils with attendance of 50% and below) and the expectation for schools, local authority services and partners external to KCC (where involved) to agree a joint approach to address this top priority group. We feel confident to query how multi-agency partners are addressing absences.</p>	<p>WTTISA: Section 5 and [17;31;37;38;76; 85 - 88]</p> <p>STORSA (Pg 7)</p>	
8	<p>Our school's attendance policy is fit for purpose, including being reviewed at designated intervals at governance level. The policy is on our website and understood by all staff, pupils and parents.</p> <p>We regularly keep up to date with any changes to national policy to ensure our guidance is aligned.</p>	<p>WTTISA [15; 17 – 21; 31;57]</p> <p>STORSA (Pg 4)</p> <p>See DfE Webinar.</p> <p>See Attendance Policy checklist on KELSI.</p>	
9	<p>Our school's management information system is fit for purpose, enabling us to record attendance marks accurately to run the reports we need to share with the senior leadership team and governance level.</p>	<p>WTTISA [26]</p>	

<p>10</p>	<p>Our school proactively uses data to identify pupils and cohorts at risk of low attendance and identify strategies to support them, fully recognising the need to maintain the same ambition as for any other pupil or cohort. These cohorts include pupils with medical conditions, SEND, and/or subject to a social care plan. Our school supports the expectation for schools by the DfE to share data with the LA on individual pupils to support collaborative working and where it is in the interests of safeguarding.</p>	<p>WTTISA: [13;15;16;17;26;31;32; 33;40;46;49;50;51;57 58;61;67;69;74;88]</p> <p>STORSA (Pg 4, 8 & 9)</p>	
<p>11</p>	<p>Our school has robust procedures to address and follow up day to day absence issues for specific pupils to ensure safeguarding is a priority. This includes first day calling, home visits and meetings with parents. Our school has robust recording systems, including the use of attendance action plans for individual pupils and chronologies to note key events and actions which may form evidence for future referrals.</p>	<p>WTTISA [16;31; 203 - 276]</p> <p>STORSA (Pg 4)</p>	
<p>12</p>	<p>Our school has a range of expertise and resources within our school / trust to try to unblock barriers to pupils' regular attendance. This includes effective ways to engage parents (e.g., avoiding terminology, referring to days lost rather than percentages and linking any impact of absence on learning and development for the pupil).</p> <p>Our school uses a strengths-based approach when having conversations with our pupils and their families.</p>	<p>WTTISA [8;13;16;31;34;35;36]</p> <p>STORSA (Pg 5 & 6)</p>	

13	<p>Our school has a governing board which takes a proactive role in attendance improvement, including working with school leaders to set whole school cultures and regularly reviewing attendance data. This may also include a governor / trustee on our board with responsibility for attendance and some participation in meetings with parents.</p>	<p>WTTISA: Section 3 and [54]</p> <p>STORSA (Pg 4, 6 & 9)</p>	
14	<p>Our school has engaging reward systems in place to promote good attendance across the school community which are used consistently and fairly (for example, rewards for progress for pupils where 100% attendance is not achievable, but recognition should be given).</p>	<p>WTTISA [16]</p>	
15	<p>Our school has firm knowledge of register codes to apply in different circumstances and accurately completes admission and attendance registers. This is particularly important in cases where enforcement pathways are being pursued and evidence of absence is shared in courts.</p>	<p>WTTISA: Section 7 and [15;31;22 – 27; 57;61]</p> <p>STORSA (Pg 4)</p>	
16	<p>Our school understands the criteria for deletion of pupils from the admissions register, the statutory requirement to notify KCC and the expectation to inform the pupil's key worker where relevant.</p> <p>Our school notifies KCC when a pupil is admitted in-year in accordance with statutory requirements.</p>	<p>WTTISA [24;84; 152 - 196]</p> <p>STORSA (Pg 10)</p> <p>Regulation 8</p>	

17	<p>Our school accesses the Digital Front Door (DFD) on KELSIS when required, understands the various pathways and expectations of activities that should be completed prior to making a referral.</p> <p>Our school recognises the difference between a persistent / severely absent pupil, and a Child Missing Education (CME) in order to complete the correct notification on the Digital Front Door on KELSIS.</p>	<p>WTTISA [84]</p> <p>See KELSIS</p> <p>See Children Missing Education</p>	
18	<p>Our school has good connections with other schools in the local area to share good practice. For individual cases school can build intelligence from a child's previous school and that of any siblings. Our school participates at attendance network meetings facilitated by PIAS throughout the academic year.</p>	<p>WTTISA [45;52;55; 62 – 64; 67;72]</p> <p>STORSA (Pg 4, 6, 8)</p>	
19	<p>Our school has an additional action / improvement plan to address and raise attendance (where applicable).</p>	<p>WTTISA [59]</p>	

<p>20</p>	<p>Where there is lack of engagement from parents with support offered to improve attendance, our school holds formal attendance meetings with parents led by a senior member of school staff, with barriers and possible solutions recorded. Our school knows how to invite a PIAS representative if we believe this is required.</p> <p>Our school facilitates parenting contracts, which are like Pastoral Support Plans (PSPs), with a focus on improving attendance by addressing barriers to attendance. Our school recognises a parenting contract is a formal intervention but is not legally binding and requires parental consent.</p>	<p>WTTISA [13;16;37;38;81;94 – 106; 107 - 115]</p> <p>STORSA (Pg 6)</p> <p>Guidance around parenting contracts coming soon and will be displayed on Kelsi.</p>	
<p>21</p>	<p>Our school understands the range of legal interventions which may be pursued by KCC in cases of persistent or severe absence including prosecution as a last resort when all other support has been unsuccessful or not engaged with to try to improve attendance. These include attendance prosecution, fixed penalty notices and education supervision orders (ESOs).</p> <p>Our school uses fixed penalty notices in cases of irregular attendance, for example unauthorised absences, unauthorised lateness and unauthorised leave of absence.</p> <p>Our school knows that fixed penalty notices must adhere to the Code of Conduct on Kelsi.</p>	<p>WTTISA: Section 6 and [8;13;37;38;81;85;90;117;130 - 139]</p> <p>STORSA (Pg 4 & 6)</p> <p>See Penalty Notice section on KELSI</p>	

22	<p>Our staff, parents and pupils are aware precisely what time registers open and close to promote punctuality and ensure registers are coded accurately and action taken where necessary.</p>	<p>WTTISA [16; 31; 205, 242 - 243]</p>	
23	<p>Our school is familiar with part time timetables and the various procedures which need to be followed to ensure a child is safeguarded.</p> <p>Our school notifies KCC via the Digital Front Door when a pupil moves on to a part time timetable.</p> <p>Our school recognises that part time timetables should not be used to manage behaviour as stated in DfE guidance.</p>	<p>WTTISA [43 – 44; 212 - 213]</p> <p>See KELSI</p>	
24	<p>Our school has a good knowledge of resources and services beyond the school gates to try to unblock barriers to pupils' regular attendance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Requesting Early Help District Conversations for signposting, and advice & guidance on early interventions and strategies to support students and their families. ✚ Recognising the need for parent advocates by promoting the support provided by Information Advice and Support Kent (IASK) for parents and carers of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). 	<p>WTTISA [66; 76 - 78; 89]</p> <p>STORSA (Pg 5, 9)</p> <p>Information, Advice & Support Kent</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Accessing District Contextual Safeguarding Meetings (DCSMs) facilitated by KCC and making appropriate referrals for individual pupils and location assessments to reduce adolescent risk. ✚ Seeking advice and working with Virtual School Kent (VSK), or other relevant virtual schools, for those with responsibility for Children in Care looked after by another authority, for those pupils who are in the care of KCC, are Previously Looked After children (PLAC) or who have, or previously been known, to a social worker within the past 6 years (with parental consent). ✚ Ensuring designated staff from our school have accessed the phase 1 Anxiety Based School Avoidance (ABSA) awareness training delivered by the Kent Education Psychology Service (KEPS) as well as case consultations (phase 2) for individual pupils where required. ✚ The school uses parent mail and social media platforms to raise parent / carer awareness of and access to universal and targeted support provided by local agencies. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Virtual School Kent</p> <p style="text-align: center;">ABSA</p>	
25	<p>Our school has signed up to the DfE's data sharing system which has been developed.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">WTTISA [49;50]</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Share your daily attendance data</p>	

Recommendations / Actions				
No	Action Point	Timescale / review date	Responsible person(s)	Comments
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
SCHOOL NAME				
PERSON COMPLETING THIS FORM				
ROLE				

DATE	
DATE OF NEXT REVIEW	
COMMENTS	