

Sheffield City Council School Attendance Policy

“Sheffield will be an inclusive city where we work together to ensure that all children and young people get the right support at the right time so that they can live a happy and fulfilled life”.

Sheffield Inclusion Strategy 2020-2025

Purpose

The purpose of the School Attendance Policy is to:

- Articulate our expectation for the children of Sheffield’s school attendance
- State the Local Authority’s priorities for supporting school attendance
- Describe everyone’s roles and responsibilities to safeguard a child’s attendance for them to receive an appropriate full-time education suitable to their age, ability, and aptitude.

Vision for School Attendance

School attendance is everyone’s business. In Sheffield our expectation is that every child will be supported to access a formal and full-time education where they attend on time, every day.

Research by ISOS in 2021 suggests that we need a wide definition of children missing out on education. They have detailed this as – ‘any child of statutory school age who is missing out on a formal, full-time education. By ‘formal’, we mean an education that is well-structured, contains significant taught input, pursues learning goals that are appropriate to a child or young person’s age and ability and which supports them to access their next stage in education, learning or employment.’

[Children missing education \(squarespace.com\)](https://www.squarespace.com)

When considering attendance and access to education we will utilise this definition.

Priorities

To work towards this vision, we will focus on the following priority areas:

- **Early Years Attendance**
Support families to develop good attendance and punctuality from an early age so that children develop good attendance habits when they are at school.
- **Targeted increase in percentage attendance**
A child who attends 90% or less of the time is classed as persistently absent. On average this child will miss half a day per week for a full year. We will focus on specific increases in percentage of attendance including:
 - **Raising 100** – increase the number of 100% attenders and encourage 95%-99% attenders to take steps towards 100% attendance.
 - **Reduce Persistent Absence** – reduce the number of pupils with attendance at 80-95%
 - **The Lowest Attenders in the City** – focus on pupils with less than 50% attendance to understand the causes of poor attendance and identify appropriate multi-agency support to make sure they can re-engage in education full time

- **Reduce 'Exclusion in all its forms'**

Support access to a formal, full time education by addressing the following areas:

- **Reduced timetables** – ensuring these are appropriate, interventions based and do not continue beyond 8 weeks
- **Fair access and managed moves** – ensuring timely management and monitoring
- **Meet physical and mental health needs in schools** – working with partners to meet health needs within school so that children do not need to be out of school unnecessarily
- **School sufficiency** – make sure that sufficient school places exist within a reasonable and accessible distance from a child's home
- **Reduce fixed term exclusions** – support schools to manage behaviours that minimise exclusion
- **Alternative provision** – Ensure off site and reduced opportunities for formal education are used as an intervention to support re-engagement, are reviewed regularly and are time limited
- **Term time holidays** – challenge parents who take their children out of school for holidays or other activities

- **Identify and Address Underlying Needs**

Supporting schools to identify and address barriers to attendance due to the following areas of need so that appropriate support and adjustments are in place:

- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- Victims of Bullying
- Unmet health needs
- Family circumstances
- Children at risk in their community

- **Targeted Cohorts at risk of reduced attendance**

Focus on specific support for attendance of specific groups of children who are more at risk of not accessing a formal and full-time education including:

- Children with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHC Plans)
- Children at SEN Support
- Children with social workers including children looked after
- Specific ethnic groups
- Children who are also young carers

- **Effective Use of Attendance Legal Process**

Utilising the attendance legal opportunities available to bring about change in patterns of attendance

- **Covid Recovery Measures**

Ensure children attend school when they can and engage with remote learning if they are required to isolate or quarantine. Ensure good routines are revisited so that children attend regularly and on time.

Roles and responsibilities

Everyone has a role to play in making sure that children can and do attend school full time. The following information details these roles and responsibilities.

The Local Authority

Statutory Duty

Sheffield City Council has a statutory duty for school attendance, to:

- Track cases where pupils are regularly missing out on their education including:
 - o Children not on a school roll
 - o Children Missing Education (CME)
 - o Persistent absentees
 - o Pupils attending alternative provision
 - o Pupils on reduced timetables
 - o Pupils receiving fixed term exclusions
 - o Pupils transferring school (including fair access and managed move)
- Manage and track pupils whose parents have chosen to electively home educate
- Manage fixed penalty notice arrangements
- Manage fixed penalty notices for term time leave where a parent has knowingly allowed their child to be absent for the purposes of a holiday or to visit friends/relatives
- Pursue cases through the legal framework and ensure this brings about change
- Issuing child employment and performance licences
- Identify young carers and ensure they receive support at the earliest opportunity

Offer to schools

Sheffield City Council will support schools in improving pupil attendance. Access and Inclusion Specialist Officers will work in the best interests of the child to ensure the child is able to return to full time education as soon as possible. Staff across the Local Authority will:

- Work with school-based attendance officers to understand attendance issues at whole school and individual level
- Advise around attendance policy and practice in school
- Support schools to identify and review children who are attendance concerns to create a plan for improved attendance
- Support schools in managing targeted cases through planning meetings and casework
- Progress legal routes including:
 - o Provide dates for the penalty notice warning letters once agreed
 - o Provide a period of complaint for evidence if a penalty notice fine is to be issued
 - o Issue the penalty notice fine
 - o Monitor when the penalty notice fine has been paid
 - o Progress cases to court where the fine is unpaid, or a fast-track basic offence is appropriate
 - o Progress aggravated cases to court as appropriate
 - o Progress School Attendance Orders
 - o Progress Education Supervision Orders
 - o Issue term time leave fines requested by the school
- Support schools to address individual needs that lead to a child not being offered a formal and full-time education

What children, families and partners can expect from the Local Authority

- Monitoring of pupils who are not attending regularly
- Attendance intervention from the earliest opportunity
- Regular networking and training opportunities
- Consultation for keyworkers and caseworkers
- Monitoring of attendance for key priority groups
- A city-wide attendance campaign that highlights the importance of attendance
- Challenge to schools when a pupil is not receiving the full-time education that they are entitled to
- Early Help Support
- A zero-tolerance approach to holidays in term time
- Support at key transition phases to ensure continuation of education
- Regular liaison with colleagues across education, health and care to ensure a multi-agency response
- Developing the school and health workforce through training and networking regarding attendance practice

Health Services and Other Partners

We would ask health professionals and other partners to:

- Develop practice that focuses on supporting good attendance at school
- Work with parents to identify appointments for non-urgent medical appointment outside of school hours
- Identify reasonable adjustments to learning based on the child's health needs and clearly communicate these to schools
- Work with schools to implement educational support alongside treatment plans to ensure children can continue to engage in education
- Have good communication with schools to provide clarity on treatment and appointments and how they can minimise impact on attendance
- Question and challenge non-attendance
- Notify the Local Authority and the school when they are concerned about attendance
- Further develop health systems that ensure children are supported to attend e.g. Healthy Minds
- Identify risk for children not attending school who may be engaged in other activities within the community to which they require support and guidance

Schools

School Leaders and Governors have a statutory responsibility for school attendance to:

- Maintain an Admissions register
- Maintain an Attendance Register with marks recorded for each pupil at least twice a day (morning and afternoon minimum)
- Notify the Local Authority of any pupil who is:
 - o Missing from Education (CME)
 - o Receiving support via a reduced timetable
 - o At risk of permanent exclusion
 - o Requiring 6th day provision - following a permanent exclusion
 - o On an unauthorised term time leave that will last 5 day or more
 - o Persistently absent from school
 - o Persistently late for school

What children, families and partners should expect from the school

- A named Governor for school attendance
- A senior leader with responsibility for attendance
- A clear attendance policy that is reviewed regularly and available on the school website
- Offer of a broad and balanced curriculum to engage pupils in education
- A register that is maintained and taken twice a day (minimum)
- Closure of the register after registration, with persistent lateness challenged and addressed
- 'First day calls' to parents where a child is absent, and no contact has been made by parents
- Monitoring and challenge when attendance levels are not in line with expectations
- Meetings with school staff to assess why the child is not attending and plan for supporting the re-engagement with education
- Requesting support for families at the earliest opportunity
- Escalation to the Local Authority when attendance is not improving
- For term time leave requests to only be authorised in exceptional circumstances
- Liaise with other schools where children from the same family attend
- Request proof of medical appointments and work with parents to minimise lessons missed

Parent/Carer

Parents and carers have a responsibility to ensure:

- Their child attends school, on time and ready to learn
- They contact school at the earliest opportunity if their child is too unwell to attend
- They are open and honest with school staff, providing the reason for the absence
- They work with the school to seek appropriate support

We expect parents and carers to:

- Take responsibility for ensuring their child attends school, on time and ready to learn
- Speak to school if their child is feeling slightly unwell, and be assured school will contact you if the child is feeling worse
- Ensure if one child is unwell, their siblings continue to attend school
- Book non-urgent medical appointments outside of school hours
- Not book holidays in Term Time
- Not request term time leave unless for an exceptional circumstance (for example a funeral or music examination)
- Have good morning routines to ensure their child arrives at school on time
- Have good evening routines and promote good sleep hygiene for their children
- Ask for support at the earliest opportunity
- To talk to school about concerns they have about their child's needs and work with the school to address them
- Build resilience to allow their child to attend with headache, period pains etc
- Bring the child's medicine into school to ensure the child can continue to attend
- Where a school move has been agreed, ensure their child continues to attend their current school until they start their new school.
- To work in partnership with the school to promote good attendance if their child is struggling to attend or wants a 'day off' rather than agree absence

Children and Young People

We expect children and young people to:

- Go to bed on time to ensure a good night's sleep
- Have a good morning routine that allows you to leave the house on time
- Have all your equipment and books for the day, including your planner
- Arrive to school on time
- Build your resilience, you can attend with a headache, period pains, stomach-ache
- Engage in your lessons
- Be polite and courteous to staff and other pupils
- Speak to school staff if something prevents you from attending regularly
- Ask for support at the earliest opportunity
- Let your parent/carer or school staff know if you are being bullied
- Let your parent/carer or school staff know if you are feeling anxious about something
- Not ask your parent/carer for a day off
- If you are moving schools, continue to attend your current school until you start at your new school

Sources of Further Information

Further information, including legal guidance, guidance on the marking of attendance registers and strategies for improved school attendance can be found in the following documentation.

DFE School Attendance: guidance for schools

[School attendance: guidance for schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/school-attendance-guidance-for-schools)

DFE Attendance Coding for schools

[School attendance guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/guidance/school-attendance-guidance) from page 10 onwards

DFE Improving School Attendance: Support for Schools and Local Authorities

[Improving school attendance: support for schools and local authorities - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/improving-school-attendance-support-for-schools-and-local-authorities)

DFE Children Missing Education Statutory Guidance

[Children missing education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/children-missing-education)

DFE Keeping Children Safe in Education

[Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/keeping-children-safe-in-education)

DFE Ensuring a Good Education for Children who cannot attend school because of Health Needs

[Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/education-for-children-with-health-needs-who-cannot-attend-school)

Elective Home Education

[Elective home education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/elective-home-education)

Sheffield City Council Child Performance and Licensing

[Children in entertainment licences \(sheffield.gov.uk\)](https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/children-in-entertainment-licences)

Sheffield City Council Attendance Action Plan 2021



Attendance Action
Plan.docx

Schools Own Management of Attendance



Schools Own
Management of Atten

Attendance Response – Assess, Plan, Do, Review



Attendance
Response.docx

Local Authority Support for Attendance Codes



Attendance
Codes.docx

Reduced Timetable Guidance



Reduced Time-Tables
Guidance for Sheffield

Sheffield City Council Exceptional Leave in Term Time Policy



Exception Leave in
Term Time Policy - rev

School Attendance Orders



Guidance for School
Attendance Orders CM



Guidance for School
attendance Orders EH

Education Supervision Orders



Education
Supervision Orders.doc

Full and Effective Use of Legal Powers



Full and Effective Use
of Legal Powers.docx

Fixed Penalty Notice Code of Conduct

Currently in review

Key Contact

For Attendance related enquires please email Sheffieldinclusion&attendance@sheffield.gov.uk