



ATTENDANCE POLICY

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The policy has been written in line with the following:
Working together to improve attendance – July 2026
Table of responsibilities for school attendance – August 2024
Elective Home Education Guidance for parents – April 2019
Keeping Children Safe in Education – September 2026

INTRODUCTION:

1. At Bramhall High School we believe that all pupils have a right to an education as enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and in UK Law. The opportunities provided by education are fundamental to enabling all children to reach their potential and lead happy and rewarding lives.
2. Evidence shows clear links between good attendance and high achievement in school. Pupils who attend school regularly are more likely to feel settled in school, maintain friendships, make progress and gain the greatest benefit from their education as well as develop a strong sense of belonging. For the most vulnerable pupils, regular attendance is also an important protective factor and being in school gives the pupil the best opportunity for needs to be identified and support provided. We will work with families to ensure pupils engage in education and maximise their full potential.
3. This policy outlines our approach to attendance and summarises the legal duties and expectations of the whole school community. It reflects the key principles of the Department for

Education's attendance guidance: [Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK](#) and locally agreed processes.

4. Throughout this document, 'parents' should be taken to include all those with parental responsibility, as defined in law and may include guardians and legal carers.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND THE LAW

Parents

5. The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational needs they may have.
6. Parents have a legal responsibility to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.
7. For children receiving full time education at a school, parents have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. Regular attendance means their child must attend every day that they are expected to attend, except in a small number of allowable circumstances.
8. If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at the school at which they have been registered the parents may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the local authority.

Schools

9. Schools are required by law to:
 - Carry out all their functions with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all pupils at the school.
 - Maintain and preserve accurate attendance registers as required under regulations in School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and make them available for inspection by the local authority.
 - Comply with legal requirements regarding adding or removing pupils' names to or from the admissions register, ensuring that:
 - Pupils' names are added to the school roll on the expected date of attendance.
 - Pupils' names are removed from roll only when one of the legal grounds in the Education (Pupil Registration) England Regulations 2006 is satisfied.
 - All removals from roll are reported to the local authority.
 - Information is shared and enquiries made jointly with the local authority to locate missing pupils.
 - Complete Attendance and Sickness returns to the local authority.

Legal Sanctions

10. Regular school attendance is a legal duty on parents and carers. If a parent fails to ensure their child attends school regularly, they are guilty of an offence under section 444(1) or (1A) of the Education Act 1996.
11. A parent who commits this offence may be liable to prosecution in the Magistrates' Court and, depending on which offence they are convicted of, may be liable to a fine of up to £2500 or a term of imprisonment of up to three months.

12. Although school will offer support in addressing attendance issues, it will also refer pupils whose attendance fails to improve due to non-engagement of the parent, or who take leave of absence from school without agreement, to the Education Welfare Service within Stockport Council. This can take several routes:

13. Education Penalty Notice:

Education Penalty Notices are fixed penalty notices issued by Stockport Council. The amount of the fine depends on whether any previous Education Penalty Notices have been issued to the parent for the same child for unauthorised absences which took place after 19/08/2024 but within a period of three years from the current fine. For the first such Education Penalty Notice, the fine is £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. For the second such Education Penalty Notice, the fine is at a single rate of £160 payable within 28 days. If third or subsequent offences occur within a rolling three year period which would otherwise result in a fine, the Local Authority is not allowed to issue a further fine, and instead the parent is likely to be prosecuted in the Magistrates' Court.

14. Education Penalty Notices for Irregular Attendance

Before being issued with an Education Penalty Notice, parents will receive a written warning from Stockport Council. This gives them an opportunity to avoid a fine by ensuring that no unauthorised absences – including late after the register closes – are recorded against their child during the next 15 school days. The minimum criteria for sending such a warning is - 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10 week period.

15. Education Penalty Notices for unauthorised leave of absence

Education Penalty Notices may also be issued where a pupil is taken out of school for five days or more without the school's consent – such as for a term time holiday. In these cases, the fine is sent by the Council without an initial warning being issued/

16. Attendance Contracts

A Parent Contract is an agreement which usually involves the school, parents, members of Stockport Council's Education Welfare Service and, in some cases, the pupil. The agreement sets out the actions required by all parties to overcome the barriers to improved attendance. Compliance with the contract and the progress of improving attendance are reviewed regularly at Parent Contract Review Meetings. If a parent fails to participate and/or fails to ensure that attendance improves, they may be prosecuted in the Magistrates' Court.

17. Education Supervision Order

An Education Supervision Order (ESO) is an order granted in the Family Proceedings Court requiring a parent and child to follow directions made in the Order and work alongside a Supervising Officer to improve the child's school attendance. The Supervising Officer will be put in place by Stockport Council and may be a Social Worker, Education Welfare Officer or other Family Help professional. Where parents persistently fail to comply with the directions given under an ESO, they may be prosecuted in the Magistrates' Court. ESOs usually last for a year, but can be extended to up to three years.

OUR VISION FOR ATTENDANCE:

18. At Bramhall High School we know that **attendance is everyone's business**. We recognise that the foundation of securing good attendance is to develop good patterns of attendance and ensure that it is an integral part of the school's ethos and culture. We will work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers by building strong and trusting relationships and work together to put the right support in place.

School

19. As a school, we will:

- Have a named senior leader with the responsibility for Attendance.
- Make sure attendance support and improvement is appropriately resourced including the effective use of Pupil Premium funding.
- Make improving attendance integral to our wider school improvement efforts, recognising how it connects with the quality of the school's curriculum, behaviour, safeguarding, and our approach to inclusion, well-being and support for disadvantaged pupils.
- Have a school strategy for reducing persistent and severe absence, including access to wider support services and when support will be formalised work in conjunction with the local authority.
- Promote the importance of good attendance and set high expectations for every pupil's attendance and punctuality at school.
- Communicate these expectations clearly, strongly and consistently to parents and to pupils.
- Record attendance accurately and follow up absences with parents in a timely manner.
- Make sure staff have a good understanding of attendance-related matters and attendance support is appropriately resourced.
- Listen carefully to parents about the reasons why children are not attending regularly.
- Support parents to understand what is expected of them and work together to identify and understand the barriers to attendance.
- Offer support and make reasonable adjustments where needed to overcome barriers to attendance under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Where appropriate, work with a range of services and alternative provisions when additional support is needed.
- Work closely with support services and agencies where pupils and families need additional support.
- Analyse attendance information to identify patterns and trends and use this analysis to target our actions for individual pupils, groups of pupils and at a whole-school level.
- Regularly review our attendance-related messaging, processes and strategies with a view to continued whole-school improvement.

- Proactively manage lateness and first day calling to ensure each reason for not being in school or on time is challenged and supported appropriately.
- Make contact with children who are struggling to attend regularly to ensure that children maintain their sense of belonging to school – this could involve a home visit, a Teams meeting or phone call from someone in the pastoral team, senior leadership team, the SEND department or someone the child is familiar with. These check-ins are also important to ensure the child's safeguarding. Communication between school and home will aim to be curious about reasons for absence and look at ways to improve attendance and support the child in attending.
- Work with Stockport Council on legal intervention if support is not successful or not engaged with.

The designated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance at Bramhall High School is **Janet Kennedy**.

20. To support our vision for attendance, the governing body will:

- Provide ongoing support and guidance to children and parents, while appropriately challenging attendance concerns and promoting good attendance throughout the school's ethos and policies.
- Ensure there is a named senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in school.
- Ensure the school's leadership team fulfil their expectations and the relevant statutory duties as set out in attendance related legislation and guidance.
- Regularly review attendance data, discuss and challenge trends with vulnerable groups or year groups, and help the school leadership team focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or groups of pupils who need it most.
- Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance.

Parents

21. The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.
22. Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.
23. Parents are expected to support the school to improve and maintain high standards of attendance by:
- Ensuring their child attends regularly as required by law.
 - Ensuring the school has up to date contact information including home address, telephone numbers, email addresses and emergency contacts. Where reasonably possible there should be more than one emergency contact number (KCSiE 2026 pt 101).

- Ensuring that, in the event of a house move, the school has been informed about the new address and possible school details at the earliest opportunities and no later than the last day they attend.
- Supporting the school's absence procedures:
 - ✓ Communicating, via Class Charts, with school every day that their child is unable to attend school due to illness (except where a doctor's report has already been provided indicating an expected return date).
 - ✓ Providing medical or other evidence in relation to absence if required by the school.
 - ✓ Arranging medical or dental appointments to take place outside school hours wherever possible.
 - ✓ Not taking family holidays in term time or any leave of absence for any reason without prior agreement.
 - ✓ Requesting leave of absence only in exceptional circumstances and in advance.
- Raising any issues or concerns affecting attendance with school staff at the earliest opportunity.
- Attend meetings with school staff to discuss attendance concerns and plan support, if requested by the school.
- Working in partnership with school and other agencies to address any attendance problems.
- Encouraging good routines at home to ensure children are prepared for school each day.

ABSENCE PROCEDURES

This policy reflects the statutory 2026 DfE guidance: morning and afternoon registration must take place simultaneously, staggered registration is prohibited, and pupils arriving after the register closes must be recorded using code “U”.

Parents:

24. If a pupil is absent from school, **parents are expected to:**

- Contact school before 08:30, via the Class Charts app, on the first day their child is absent, giving the reason for absence, and on every further day of absence (except where a doctor’s report has already been provided indicating an expected return date).
- Ensure their child returns to school as soon as possible.
- Provide any medical evidence, if requested, to support the absence.
- Proactively contact the school for support where they are concerned about their child’s attendance by speaking to their Head of Year or Form Tutor in the first instance.
- Attend meetings to plan action and outcomes when attendance is a concern.

School:

25. The school will:

- Contact parents by text, telephone or email on the first day of absence and further days of absence (if we haven’t already been notified of the absence). If we are unable to make contact this way, we will attempt to reach parents by using all emergency contacts, letter and home visits where necessary.
- Where there are additional concerns, or where a child’s welfare may be at risk, a home visit will be undertaken in cases of absence without contact from parents and a referral to Stockport Council’s MASSH (Multi Agency Safeguarding and Support Hub) may be made.
- Complete an Attendance Return for any child with unauthorized absence over a period of 10 continuous school days.
- Complete a Sickness Return to Stockport Council for a child who has been recorded as ill and who we have reasonable grounds to believe will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness. This is to help the school and Stockport Council to agree any provision needed to ensure continuity of education, in line with education for pupils who cannot attend because of health needs, in line with statutory guidance.

26. Children are expected to be in school by no later than 08:25 and registers are taken, in Form, at 08:30. Pupils will receive a late mark in the register if they are not in school by that time. Latecomers are issued with a same-day break-time detention. Where pupils fail to attend a detention, sanctions will be increased in line with the school’s Behaviour Policy.

27. Children arriving after 09:00 are required to sign in via main reception. As above, latecomers will be issued with a detention.

28. In accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration)(England) Regulations 2026, any pupils arriving after morning registers have closed will be marked as 'U' in the register for the morning session. This is classed as an unauthorised absence.
29. Parents will be contacted in cases where pupils are regularly late to discuss the reasons for lateness and offer support where appropriate.
30. Parents should note that if their child is regularly late, after the registers close, it will significantly impact on their child's overall percentage attendance. School will monitor this and offer support to improve attendance. However, where this is not successful or parents don't engage with the offer of support, it will lead to school making a referral to the local authority for legal proceedings.
32. The school will not enforce blanket requirements for medical evidence (such as doctor's notes) for minor illnesses. Formal medical evidence will only be requested in a strict minority of cases where a documented, genuine reason exists to doubt the validity of the absence.
33. The school is legally prohibited from operating blanket absence approval policies. Every request for a leave of absence will be reviewed on its own unique, exceptional merits.

Authorised absence from school

31. Authorised absence is an absence agreed by the school. Examples of authorised absence:

32. Illness

- Parents are asked to contact school before 08:30 – **via the Class Charts app** - each day their child is unable to attend school due to illness, except where information from a health professional has been provided indicating an expected return date (see section 3 – absence procedures).
- Where a child has frequent absence due to illness, parents may be asked to attend a meeting in school to agree a medical action plan this may include support from the school nurse.
- Parents may also be asked for medical evidence, particularly where absences due to illness are frequent or result in the pupil having long periods of time off school.
- Where pupils are likely to miss more than 15 days of school due to illness, they may be entitled to educational provision from their home local authority. In most cases, the school would make a referral where appropriate. We will work in partnership with parents and health professionals to identify and refer pupils entitled to this provision in line with the relevant local authority's policy for children who cannot attend school due to health reasons.

33. Medical/Dental appointments

- Parents are requested wherever possible to make routine medical or dental appointments outside of the school day. However, we understand that hospital appointments and specialist clinic appointments often occur during the school day. Pupils should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time
- necessary for the appointment. In such cases, please inform the attendance office in advance: attendance@bramhallhigh.stockport.sch.uk

34. Other leave of absence may only be granted in exceptional circumstances

- Parents must put their request in writing (using a Leave of Absence form) in advance. Term time holidays will not be agreed.
- If the absence is not authorised, and the child does not attend school, we will request that Stockport Council issues an Education Penalty Notice (see Section 8 - legal sanctions).
- Leave of Absence request forms are available from the attendance office.

35. Other examples of authorised circumstances include:

- Part-time timetables may be agreed only in exceptional cases, for example where medical issues prevent a pupil from attending fully for an agreed period of time or as part of a re-integration plan. Any part-time timetable agreed should only be used as a temporary arrangement, with full consent of parents, and be regularly reviewed with a view to increasing attendance to full-time as quickly as possible. Remote education will never be offered as a routine alternative to attendance. It is strictly used as an absolute last resort, temporary measure embedded directly within a formal, time-bound physical reintegration plan back into school.
- Where a pupil is absent from school because of a suspension or permanent exclusion.
- Absence to take part in any day set aside exclusively for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong.
- Study leave granted by the school for Year 11 pupils during the GCSE examination period.
- When traveller families are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending another school. (In order to fulfil legal requirements, in such cases, pupils must attend school for at least 200 sessions in every 12 months).

Unauthorised Absence from School

36. Unauthorised absences are absences from school for which the school has not given permission, including arriving late at school after the registers have closed. Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation that has been accepted by the school.

UNDERSTANDING BARRIERS TO ATTENDANCE

The school operates under an individualised national attendance improvement target set to reflect our local context and student needs. Progress against this target is directly monitored by the DfE. At Bramhall High School, we recognise that poor attendance is often a sign of wider difficulties in a child's life whether at home or at school. Parents should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance or behaviour at school. This may include bereavement, divorce/separation, or other family difficulties; friendship issues; concerns relating to special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), medical needs or mental ill health. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

37. Additionally, we recognise that some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers and are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), those with physical or mental health needs, young carers and children with Social Workers. We still maintain high expectations of attendance, but we will be mindful of the way in which additional barriers may affect attendance. Reasonable adjustments will be made and additional support from other services sought where appropriate.
38. Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) – the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator (SENDSCO) will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made where appropriate to support good attendance and that attendance issues are addressed in all assessment and review processes.
39. Pupils with a Social Worker – we will notify the Social Worker of any unauthorised absences and concerns about attendance/punctuality and will support them in addressing attendance issues as part of the child or family plan.
40. Children in Care – the designated teacher for children in the care of the Local Authority will ensure that attendance issues are addressed in Personal Education Plans (PEPs) and in regular Looked After review meetings. The Social Worker will be notified of any unauthorised absences and we will contact the relevant Virtual School Headteacher for more support where necessary.
41. Young Carers - To prevent academic disadvantage, young carers are explicitly designated as a vulnerable pupil cohort. These children are distinctly flagged, tracked, and provided with bespoke pastoral support.

ATTENDANCE INTERVENTION STAGED PROCESS

42. Bramhall High School uses a range of methods to identify pupils whose attendance is causing concern including:
- Regular analysis of whole school and group attendance data including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND (this data is anonymised) by attendance staff, the leadership team and governing body.
 - Regular attendance monitoring meetings between relevant school staff and, with parental consent, half-termly discussion of attendance concerns for individual pupils at the School's TAS (multi-agency Team Around the School) meetings.
 - Termly meetings with the local authority's Education Welfare Service to discuss cases where persistent absence is a concern.
43. We use Stockport Council's **Attendance Intervention Staged Process** as a framework for our work with individual pupils with low attendance. We recognise that, in most cases, improvement in attendance can be brought about by good communication and strong partnership working between parents, pupils and the school, identifying and addressing the barriers to attendance.
44. Offering early help and involving early help services is also an integral part of the staged process in cases where more support is needed to help improve attendance.

Appendix A

ATTENDANCE INTERVENTION STAGED PROCESS

1. The staged process was introduced in September 2021 and has been reviewed in light of Department for Education attendance guidance 2026 [Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK](#) and [Summary Table of Responsibilities for School Attendance – August 2024](#). From September 2024, this guidance replaced all previous guidance on school attendance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities (with the exception of the existing statutory guidance on parental responsibility measures) and is statutory alongside changes in legislation – [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#) and [The Education \(Penalty Notices\)\(England\)\(Amendment\) Regulations 2024](#).
2. The DfE attendance guidance supports the Attendance Intervention Staged Process. This formalises the role of the school in supporting and addressing attendance issues, with support from other professionals including a voluntary early help plan where needed, so that families get the right support at the right time. Throughout the process emphasis is placed on trying to understand barriers to attendance and put appropriate support in place. At **Stage 3** this becomes a more formal process (Attendance Contract), where the support offered at Stage 1 and 2 haven't been successful for example where voluntary support has not been effective and/or has not been engaged with.

3. An **Attendance Contract** is a formal written agreement between a parent and either the school or local authority to address irregular attendance at the child's provision. It is not legally binding but allows a more formal route to secure engagement with support. It is not a punitive tool but intended to provide support and offer an alternative to prosecution. Parents cannot be compelled to enter an attendance contract and it cannot be agreed in a parent's absence. There's no obligation for the school or local authority to offer an attendance contract as it may not be appropriate in every instance and the reasons why an attendance contract is not used will be recorded.
4. Where a voluntary early help plan, or formal attendance contract has not been successful, and all offers of support have been exhausted an **Education Supervision Order (ESO)** can be a useful alternative to provide formal intervention without a criminal prosecution. In deciding whether to progress to an ESO, the school and local authority should be clear that making the order would be beneficial for the pupil and parent. Where safeguarding concerns exist, the lead practitioner should also discuss with the school's designated safeguarding lead and children's social care services and agree an ESO would be a more suitable option than a s.17 (Children in Need) or s.47 (Child Protection) plan. In all cases, local authorities must fully consider using an ESO before moving forward to prosecution.
5. Where parents persistently fail to comply with the directions given under the ESO, they may be guilty of an offence. Local authorities can prosecute in the Magistrates Court for persistent non-compliance with the Order and parents (upon conviction) will be liable to a fine of up to £1,000.
6. **Prosecution** in the Magistrates Court is the last resort where all other voluntary and formal support or legal intervention has failed or where support has been deemed inappropriate in the circumstances of the individual case. Where it is decided to pursue prosecution, only local authorities can prosecute parents and they must fund all associated costs, including in the preparation of court documentation.

SUPPORT FIRST APPROACH - School: Getting Advice and Getting Help

7. An effective whole school culture of high attendance is underpinned by clear expectations, procedures, and responsibilities.
8. As poor attendance is habitual, prevention and early intervention is crucial. The key to this is regular data analysis to identify and provide immediate additional support to pupils or pupil cohorts that need it, and to look at historic and emerging patterns across the school and develop strategies to address them.
9. Bramhall High School utilises 'broken weeks' report as a useful tool in identifying pupils who are missing odd days of school, which can often be the start of a more significant attendance issue. When considering broken weeks, account is taken of the number of weeks the school has been in session, which will set the broken week comparator figure (number of broken weeks compared to number of weeks school has been in session e.g. 2 broken weeks out of 4 = possible concern, 2 broken weeks out of 20 = less of a concern). When identifying pupils with broken weeks causing concern, school considers the following:
 - Is there is a pattern to the absences?
 - Is there a short-term issue leading to the absences?
 - Is there a pattern to the absences, e.g. particular days of the week or time of the year? What might be causing this?
 - Are absences due to illness a concern? Does the pupil have multiple broken weeks for minor ailments? Schools should consider whether a medical absence Plan would be appropriate.
10. Many children will experience normal but difficult emotions that make them nervous about attending school, such as worries about friendships, schoolwork, examinations or variable moods. It is important to note that these pupils are still expected to attend school regularly - in many instances, attendance at school may serve to help with the underlying issue as being away from school might exacerbate it, and a prolonged period of absence may heighten anxious feelings about attending in future.
11. Relevant school staff play a critical role in communicating this expectation to parents. They will work alongside families to ensure that such circumstances do not act as a barrier to regular attendance by mitigating anxious feelings in school as much as possible.
12. Some children face more complex barriers to attendance. This can include children who have long term physical or mental health conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Their right to an education is the same as any other child and therefore the attendance ambition for these children should be the same as it is for any other child, but additional support may need to be provided. Any attendance issues for a child with SEND will involve the SENDCo and any multi-agency colleagues involved with the child/family. Attendance concerns will also be discussed during all EHCP (education, health and care plans) and SEND Support reviews.

13. In cases of both long term physical or mental ill health, school staff are expected to work together with families and other agencies with the aim of ensuring regular attendance for every pupil. This may involve referral to the Education of Sick Children team at Stockport Council.
14. Where a pupil's health need means they need reasonable adjustments or support because it is complex or long term, school will seek medical evidence to better understand the needs of the pupil and identify the most suitable provision in line with the statutory guidance in 'Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions' or 'Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs'.
15. Medical Action Plans will be used as early as possible (Stage 1). They are used in cases where a pupil has multiple broken weeks for minor ailments and it is believed they could be attending more; a pupil has a serious medical need, but it is felt they could be attending school more or accessing more education provision. School will only move to Stage 2 of the process, once a medical action plan is put in place and there is an agreement between the school and medical staff that the pupil's medical needs do not justify the level of absence.
16. At an early stage, school will signpost pupils to appropriate apps and online sources of support, skilled colleagues in schools, the school counselling service or GP if appropriate. Local help available in Stockport includes:
- [Kooth](#) - a free, safe and anonymous online support and counselling service for young people age 11-18, to support mental wellbeing.
 - [ChatHealth](#) - a confidential text messaging service that enables children and young people aged 11-19 to contact the Stockport school nursing team about any health queries or concerns they may have. Available Monday to Friday (excluding Bank Holidays) from 8.30am-4.30pm.
 - [Stockport Emotional Wellbeing Hub](#): Information, advice, and guidance for anyone up to the age of 25. Parents, carers and professionals can call 0161 217 6028 (during work hours).
 - [SHINE](#) – an Emotional Help and Wellbeing Service for Stockport Young People aged 11-17 years provided by Beacon Counselling. SHINE deliver group sessions with a focus on emotional help, wellbeing and creativity and providing specific signposting relevant to the needs of the individual young person. Telephone: 0161 440 0055.
 - [The Proud Trust Proud Connections](#) is for both LGBT+ and those who are questioning their gender and sexuality, and the adults that support them. Proud Connections offers resources and information, as well as the opportunity to speak directly with a Proud Trust youth worker via a one-to-one webchat.
 - More information on sources of advice and support for young people can be found on the [Local offer - Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing](#)
 - **The School Nursing Service** can also support schools by offering screening and support for young people who are struggling with poor emotional health. School nurses run clinics in secondary schools and provide support as required in primary schools.

- Where mental health continues to be a concern, schools should consider a referral to the **Primary or Secondary Jigsaw services** if appropriate or a **referral to CAMHS**.
- In some cases, secondary schools may consider a referral to **The Pendlebury Centre** for a period of off-site education and support alongside attendance at school. Also accessible are Stockport Family Hubs and/or Stockport Live Well - <https://www.stockport.gov.uk/directories/children-and-families>

FORMAL SUPPORT: Getting More Help

1. In the majority of cases, pupils will be supported in school, but where there are multiple issues requiring other service involvement, school will work with other agencies to explore more intensive whole family support. Multi-disciplinary support should build on the existing offers in the LA and the family should receive a single assessment, plan and, where necessary, a single lead practitioner. Rather than holding a significant number of cases, the school attendance team will support the family's lead practitioner on any attendance related elements of the plan and be part of the team around the family.

STAGE 1 – Getting Help

NOTICING PERIOD, school will:

- Make contact with the parent/s to arrange a meeting to discuss attendance.
- Where attendance is becoming a concern, ensure the link between school and home is strengthened by utilising our Attendance Outreach colleague to further explore if there is an unmet need or if there is anything school can help with. Any improvement in attendance will be acknowledged.
- Where a pattern of absence is at risk of becoming, or becomes, problematic schools will draw on these relationships and listen to and understand the barriers the pupil or family is experiencing. School will attempt to resolve any issues that arise from these conversations and offer support and advice
- Where the pupil has a Social Worker, school will inform them of any unexplained absences and ensure attendance is an action on the child's plan.
- For pupils displaying anxiety around attending school, school will:
 - offer a key adult who can meet the pupil at the start of the school day and provide support at other times.
 - Signpost to appropriate apps and online sources of support, skilled colleagues in school, the school counselling service or GP if appropriate. The School Nursing Service can also support schools by offering screening and support for young people who are struggling with their emotional health,
 - Undertake the Anxiety Based School Avoidance support work.
- Where there are early indications that things are not going well for the family and support needs may go beyond what the school can offer, school will offer early help to families through an Early Help Assessment (EHA). Where parents agree, a referral to the Team Around the School (TAS) may also be made.
- If the family already has an EHA and are part of the TAC/TAF process, school will collaborate with the lead professional to share concerns about attendance and ensure that it is considered as part of the relevant assessment and that actions are included in the child/family's plan.
- School will send a Stage 1 letter to all adults with parental responsibility or day-to-day care (this may include parents, step-parents and any other adults who are residing with and caring for the pupil) summarising the attendance issues and the support that has been offered and put in place.

STAGE 2 – Getting Help

ACTION: school will

- Stage 2 letter will be sent to parents and other adults with 'day to day care' of the pupil. This will include an invite to attend a meeting with the Attendance Outreach Officer and relevant Head of Year.
- Discussions at the meeting will summarise absences, explore reasons for absence and strategies to improve attendance.
- If parents have previously refused the offer of early help and an EHA, this will be offered again.
- If parents cite medical issues as reasons for absence at this stage, a medical action plan will be explored.
- The meeting outcome will be an agreed clear, personalised plan with actions and targets. It will be reviewed every 4-6 weeks and have clear achievable targets for all involved.
- The school will consider additional support for a child, including access to alternative provision (if appropriate), and/or support from other educational LA agencies.
- If the child is already in the TAC/TAF or Child Protection process, a separate attendance meeting is not necessary as actions to address attendance will be included in the child/family's plan. School will liaise with the lead professional to ensure that is the case.
- School will continue to monitor attendance robustly, ensuring first day calling for any further absences and follow-up conversations with parents and child (where appropriate). We believe it is important for the child to maintain their sense of belonging, therefore we will maintain regular contact with the family, including meetings and home visits as necessary.
- Where the child has a Social Worker, school will inform them of any unexplained absences.
- If there is significant improvement, school will continue to monitor for an agreed period and decide to remain on Stage 2 for an agreed period of time or end the Attendance Contract if the review period is successfully completed.
- If attendance is not improving and there are continued sporadic absences the support offer will be reviewed and next steps will be discussed with families.
- At end of each of the review periods, school will conduct a review of the case to decide whether to start the formal process which may lead to enforcement. This review will include consideration of attendance records (authorised & unauthorised absences), parental contact and child view where appropriate. Advice may be sought from Education Welfare Officer (EWO) as to the next steps.
- School will maintain accurate register marks in the event that prosecution is considered.
- Make a sickness return to the LA if a child is recorded in the attendance register as absent using code I (unable to attend because of sickness) and there are reasonable grounds to believe the pupil will have to miss 15 days consecutive or cumulative within the year (only once a year).
- Make a missing from school referral to the LA if a child has 10 unauthorised consecutive school days.

STAGE 3 (Referral to LA for consideration of formal support / prosecution)

The Education Welfare Service recognise that there will be cases where parents will not engage or attend a meeting to discuss attendance, despite the best efforts of schools. Therefore, school can request a school attendance enforcement referral at Stage 3 by completing an on-line referral form. Enforcement action is only likely to be appropriate in cases where it is considered that the parent could be doing more to improve attendance, therefore, there needs be evidence that:

- The school has clear actions taken at Stage 1 and Stage 2 to show a substantial support package has been offered; this will be needed in order to proceed to a Stage 3 enforcement referral.
- Parents not engaging with the School Attendance Contract or accessing any voluntary support offer eg EHA **AND** more than 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks.

Referrals identify why school believes parents could do more. Referrals for enforcement for children that are part of a TAC/TAF or Child Protection process will not be made without consultation with the lead professional or Social Worker.

STAGE 3A (Notice to Improve)

- A Notice to Improve (NTI) is a formal notice from the Local Authority that a child's attendance is not acceptable. It provides parents with a final opportunity to improve attendance so as to avoid an EPN fine. It also points parents to sources of support in improving attendance.
- The idea is to focus the family's attention on the need to improve attendance over a short period of time. NTI's are most likely to be appropriate in cases where there do not appear to be any significant barriers to improved attendance such as medical issues, mental health issues, bullying issues or complex family issues.
- The NTI advises the parent(s) that if there are any unauthorised absences in the next 15 school days, they will receive an EPN.
- EPNs issued following service of NTIs, alongside those issued in respect of unauthorised Leave of Absence, will be subject to the new rules on Education Penalty Notice escalation. This means that the first fine issued to a parent in relation to a particular child for offences of either type will be £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. Fines for second offences of either type will be for £160 payable within 28 days. No further Education Penalty Notices can be issued if two have already been issued within a rolling three year period, so alternative strategies, including prosecution, will need to be considered.
- At the end of the 15-day period, the Education Welfare Service will check attendance and determine whether or not to issue an EPN
- In all cases, attendance will be monitored by the Education Welfare Service for a period of 3 months following the initial 15 day period.
- At the end of the 3 month period, if attendance still meets the threshold for enforcement, i.e. at least 10 unauthorised absences in 10 school weeks, the case will be assessed for suitability for further enforcement, and moved to Stage 3(b) Parent Contract Meeting if appropriate, led by the Education Welfare Officer.

STAGE 3B (Local Authority Attendance Contract)

- There is no obligation on the school or local authority to offer an attendance contract, and it may not be appropriate in every instance, but an attendance contract should always be explored before moving forward to an education supervision order or prosecution.
- An attendance contract is a formal written agreement between a parent and the school or local authority to address irregular attendance at school or alternative provision. It is not legally binding but allows a more formal route to secure engagement with support where a voluntary early help plan has not worked or is not deemed appropriate. An attendance contract is not a punitive tool, it is intended to provide support and offer an alternative to prosecution. Parents cannot be compelled to enter an attendance contract, and they cannot be agreed in a parent's absence.
- The aim is that all involved work in partnership to gain views on any underlying issues and how it's believed they should be addressed. If parents don't attend the meeting then all reasonable attempts to engage the parents should be made and these should be recorded.
- For cases in TAC/TAF or subject to a Child Protection Plan, a School Attendance Meeting and plan are not necessary as attendance should be addressed as part of the TAC/TAF or CP process. Evidence would need to include actions taken in relation to attendance with outcomes, and confirmation that the decision to make an enforcement referral was discussed and agreed through this process.
- All Attendance Contracts should include:
 - Details of the requirements for parents to comply
 - A statement from school / LA agreeing to provide support to help parents meeting the requirements
 - A statement by the parents that they agree to comply with the requirements for the time period specified.
 - A plan of action – including the support offered, who will be the main support and the timeframe in which it will happen.
- Additional support provided to help the parent satisfy those requirements

LEGAL INTERVENTION: Urgent Response

2. Where all voluntary support options are unsuccessful or are not appropriate (e.g. an unauthorised holiday in term time), the local authority's school Attendance Support Team will liaise with school and the early help lead practitioner or social worker (where applicable) to take forward attendance legal intervention to formalise support and/or enforce attendance.

STAGE 4: (Formal Legal Intervention / Prosecution)	
Parents not engaging with the Attendance Contract will be discussed at a legal planning meeting and a joint decision will be made to offer a formal legal intervention or go down the prosecution route.	
EDUCATION SUPERVISION ORDER	PROSECUTION
• ESOs are made through the Family or High Court, rather than Magistrates Court. They give the local authority a formal role in advising, helping and directing the child and parent(s) to ensure the child receives an efficient, full-time, suitable education. For the duration of the ESO, the parent's duties to secure the child's education and regular attendance are superseded by a duty to comply with any directions given by the local authority under the ESO. The order initially lasts for one year, but extensions can be secured within the last 3 months for a period of up to 3 years at a time. • If the LA progress with an ESO, parents will be notified in writing and a meeting arranged to discuss the process. • The LA retains the responsibility of the ESO, however, schools should work in partnership and provide support and supervision where appropriate. Where a parent persistently fails • to comply with the directions given under the ESO, they may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted in the Magistrate Court for persistent non-compliance with the order and will be liable to a fine of up to £1,000.	• Prosecution in the Magistrates Court is the last resort where all other voluntary and formal support or legal intervention has failed or where support has been deemed inappropriate in the circumstances of the individual case. Where it is decided to pursue prosecution, only local authorities can prosecute parents and they must fund all associated costs, including in the preparation of court documentation. • The decision to prosecute rests solely with the LA as an independent prosecuting authority, but in deciding whether to prosecute the local authority may wish to consider: - The level of engagement from the parent and whether prosecution is the only avenue left to demonstrate the severity of the issue to the parent and/or cause parental engagement with the support they require. - Whether all other legal interventions have been considered and are not appropriate or have been tried and have not worked. - Whether statutory children's social care intervention would be more appropriate in the case (including a Child in Need or Child Protection Plan), especially where absence is severe. - The response of the parent(s) to the Notice to Improve and/or warning(s) and/or evidence given in the interview under caution – including any statutory exemptions to prosecution that might apply (see below). - The Attorney General's guidelines for public prosecutors, including public interest tests and equalities considerations.