

Attendance Policy

ISP Whitstable



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Contents no.	Page
1.1 Vision.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
1.2 Principles	Error! Bookmark not defined.
1.3 Aims	Error! Bookmark not defined.
1.4 Roles and Responsibilities.....	3
1.5 Dealing with Trends.....	6
1.6 Dealing with Lateness.....	6
1.7 Absence	6
1.8 Raising Awareness of this Policy/EBSA	7
1.9 Information about individual school targets	8
2.0 Attendance - Teams Around the School and Setting.....	8
2.1 Monitoring Arrangements.....	8
2.2 Links with other Policies.....	9
Appendix 1: Attendance Codes	9
Appendix 2: DfE summary of responsibilities fro school attendance	12-26

1.1 Vision:

This policy reflects the vision and aims of ISP School, Whitstable by:

- ↑ Encouraging school adults, parents and children to maximise the learning experience in order that all children can reach their full potential.
- ↑ Providing clear procedures for involving parents relating to school attendance.

1.2 Principles:

We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our children. We believe high attainment and future success depends on good attendance allowing each child to experience the full school offer.

We expect all school adults to support and promote excellent school attendance by acting as role models and to work hard to provide a learning environment in which all children are eager to learn, feel safe and valued and enjoy coming to school.

Sometimes a child's absence or lateness may not be their fault and in these circumstances it is our policy to be supportive of the child and not to make them feel guilty or inadequate. Also, at times we have to give allowances for religious beliefs and individual family circumstances.

We believe it is essential to regularly remind parents of the importance of good attendance and its links to child attainment. The Education Act 1996 clearly states that the prime responsibility of parents/carers is to ensure that their children attend school regularly.

1.3 Aims

- ↑ To create a culture in which good attendance is accepted as the norm.
- ↑ To demonstrate that good attendance and punctuality is valued by the school.
- ↑ To maintain and develop effective communication regarding attendance between home and school.
- ↑ To work with our other schools to share good practice in order to improve practice and policy.
- ↑ Act early to address patterns of absence.

1.4 Roles and Responsibilities

Role of the Proprietor and Governing Body

The Proprietor and Governing Body will:

- ↑ delegate powers and responsibilities to the Head Teacher to ensure

all

- ✚ school adults are aware of and comply with this policy.
- ✚ nominate a link governor to visit the school regularly, to liaise with the coordinator and to report back to the Governing Body.
- ✚ ensure that the attendance policy is carried out.
- ✚ ask questions about trends and what is being done to prevent persistent poor attenders.
- ✚ monitor termly progress.
- ✚ take responsibility for ensuring this policy and all policies are maintained and updated regularly.
- ✚ take responsibility for ensuring all policies are made available to parents.

Role of the Deputy Head

The Deputy Head will:

- ✚ Ensure all school adults, children and parents are aware of and comply with this policy.
- ✚ Oversee the daily monitoring of school attendance.
- ✚ monitor attendance according to gender, age, ethnicity, first language, eligibility for Free School Meals and special educational needs.
- ✚ target intervention and support to those children that have been highlighted as poor attenders or have been highlighted through monitoring and data analysis around attendance.
- ✚ have in place a system for parents to report a child's absence.
- ✚ report the attendance figures and progress to the Governing Body.
- ✚ remind parents of their commitment to this policy.
- ✚ publicise good attendance during assemblies, newsletters and the termly report to the Governing Body.
- ✚ introduce rewards and incentives to encourage punctuality to lessons and positive attendance.
- ✚ organise training for school adults on the use and understanding of attendance codes and authorised and unauthorised attendance.
- ✚ work closely with the link governor and First Day Contact person - School administrator.
- ✚ Work closely with the leadership team and class teams who will have the role of family liaison for those children who struggle to maintain high attendance
- ✚ monitor the effectiveness of this policy.
- ✚ annually report to the Governing Body on the success and development of this policy

Role of the School administrator:

The Responsibilities for attendance are shared between the Senior Leadership Team and the school administrator. They will be jointly responsible for:

- ✚ implementing the policy with the Head Teacher.
 - ✚ monitoring individual and class attendance on a daily basis.
 - ✚ keeping the Head Teacher informed of attendance figures and trends.
 - ✚ contacting parents regarding concerns about their child's attendance
 - First day response call
 - ✚ Liaise with the leadership team and class teams who will then contact /arrange home visits for any child where there is cause for concern
 - ✚ compiling attendance data for the Head Teacher, the Governing Body and any meetings with the Local Authority (LA).
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- ✚ ensuring registers are completed in a timely way and are kept up to date
 - ✚ contacting parents if they have not reported their child's absence by 9-30 a.m.
 - ✚ Note if any of those who have not arrived in school are on the 'concerns list'- liaise with DSL's
 - ✚ sending an email/ text/ letter if no contact is made.
 - ✚ continuing to contact the parents throughout the day until contact is made.
 - ✚ contacting the key worker if a child is on the school's pupil concerns list and no reason has been given for the child's absence.
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- ✚ informing the Head Teacher of trends in absence

Role of School Adults

School Adults will:

- ✚ comply with and implement this policy
 - ✚ set an example of punctuality and good attendance.
 - ✚ monitor class and individual attendance patterns.
 - ✚ inform the School Administrator of any concerns about attendance.
 - ✚ emphasise the importance of punctuality and good attendance.
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- ✚ discuss individual child attendance at parent-teacher meetings

Role of the Nominated Governor

The Nominated Governor will be Toni reedman - Director of Education. They will:

- ✚ work closely with the Head Teacher and the coordinator.
- ✚ ensure this policy and other linked policies are up to date.
- ✚ ensure that everyone connected with the school is aware of this policy.

- ✚ report to the Governing Body every term.
 - ✚ annually report to the Governing Body on the success and development of this policy
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Role of Parents

Parents are responsible for:

- ✚ ensuring that their children are punctual and know the importance of good attendance.
 - ✚ informing the school on the first day of absence.
 - ✚ informing the school of any changes to their contact details.
 - ✚ collecting their children on time
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- ✚ supporting the school Code of Conduct and guidance necessary to ensure smooth running of the school

Role of Children

Children are responsible for:

- ✚ arriving at school on time.
 - ✚ knowing the value of good attendance.
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- ✚ taking part in questionnaires and surveys

1.5 Dealing with Trends in Attendance

When there is a pattern of poor attendance then the following procedure will take place:

- ✚ Parents are invited to attend an informal meeting with the Head Teacher/Deputy Head to explain their child's repeated absence.
 - ✚ Support will be offered if there are underlying reasons for the absence.
 - ✚ If not, then the situation will be monitored for improvement.
 - ✚ If there is no improvement, then appropriate action will be taken.
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1.6 Dealing with Lateness

The School Administrator and school adults monitor lateness and inform:

- ✚ The Deputy Head of patterns of lateness.
 - ✚ Parents of the school's concerns.
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1.7 Absence

Holidays during term time - With effect from August 2024 the Department of Education has updated Attendance Regulations and under The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, the school is not permitted to

approve any term time holidays. In the past, Penalty Notices have not been issued but under the new framework the school may be compelled to issue Penalty Notices or refer to the Local Authority who may decide to prosecute.

Religious Observance - a maximum of three days absence is allowed for religious observance.

Medical, Dental or Hospital Appointments - we encourage these appointments to take place out of school time in order not to disrupt the child's education.

1.8 Raising Awareness of this Policy

We will raise awareness of this policy via:

- ✚ the school website
 - ✚ meetings with parents such as introductory, transition, parent-teacher consultations and periodic curriculum workshops
 - ✚ school events
 - ✚ meetings with school personnel
 - ✚ communications with home such as weekly newsletters and of end of half term newsletters
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- ✚ Head Teacher reports to the Governing Body

Children who struggle to attend school

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse. If there are any concerns, it is always best to work with school adults to try to resolve the issues to then support the pupil to attend school well

EBSA - Emotionally based School Avoidance

Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) is a term used to describe children and young people (CYP) who experience challenges in attending school due to negative feelings (such as anxiety). EBSA is commonly associated with emotional and physical distress, and a reluctance to attend school, which can lead to reduced attendance and further anxiety regarding school.

Some of our pupils suffer from EBSA and we have trained all of our staff to recognise this. Communication is kept open with all parents and carers and regular visit are carried out to see the pupils. Staff understand the attendance challenges and will support the anxieties that our children have, whilst promoting family wellbeing.

Authorised and Unauthorised absence

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school, (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a reason such as genuine illness, medical and dental appointments, religious observance and traveller children travelling for occupational purposes.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given.

This includes:

- ✚ parents keeping pupils off school unnecessarily
- ✚ truancy before or during the school day
- ✚ absences which have never been properly explained

Parents/ foster parents are expected to contact the school office on 01227 771172 at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, then school will request Local Authority support, (if appropriate the Social Worker).

It is not usually appropriate for the school to authorise absences for shopping, looking after other children, day trips etc. Leave may, however, be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments which must be in school time.

All other absences and holiday requests

DfE regulations regarding absence no longer permit holidays to be taken during term time. Head Teachers are not to authorise any leave or absence from school unless the circumstances are 'exceptional' relating to a 'one off' isolated situation. Any such request must be submitted in good time in writing

1.9 Information about individual school targets

The school has adopted the following attendance targets:

Any attendance which falls below 95% is enough to set off initial concerns records. Attendance of less than 90% should become a cause for concern.

2.0 Attendance

Each Local authority (Kent and Medway) will have a single point of contact (SPOC) for schools to discuss all attendance issues. They will meet with our attendance leaders, if needed, who are all part of the Senior Leadership Team, to discuss whole school data and hold targeted conversations across the year. The focus of conversations will be to support schools in building attendance capacity, strategies, and to provide specific cohort interventions around attendance. The Attendance Support Team can offer advice and guidance.

2.1 Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE if updated, and as a minimum annually by Carole Cox, Head Teacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Chair of Governors and policy updates discussed at Governing Body meetings.

2.2 Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection, Safeguarding policy and behaviour policy.

Appendix 1: Attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Important Changes to Attendance Codes

Code	SIMS Description	DfE Description / Explanation
/	Present (AM)	Present for school morning session
\	Present (PM)	Present for school afternoon session
B	Attending any other Approved Education Activity	Attending any other approved educational activity. Not to be used for Virtual learning
C	Other authorised circumstances	Leave absence for exceptional circumstance
C1	Leave of absence – regulated performance	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
C2	Leave of absence – Temporary part-time timetable	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
D	Dual registered	Dual registered to another school
E	Suspended or excluded without alternative provision	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision

G	Family holiday (not agreed)	Unauthorised absence as pupil on a family holiday, not agreed, or is taking days more than an agreed family holiday
I	Illness	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
J1	Leave of absence – Interview for employment or transfer to another educational institution	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
K	Alternative provision provided by LA	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
L	Late (before registers closed)	Late arrival before the register closed
M	Medical or dental appointment	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment

N	No reason yet provided for absence	Reason absence not yet established
O	Absence in other or unknown circumstance	Absence in other or unknown circumstance
P	Participating in sports activity	Participating in sports activity
Q	Unable to attend – lack of access arrangements	Unable to attend the school because of lack of access arrangements
R	Religious observance	Religious observance
S	Study leave for public examination	Study leave for public examination
T	Traveling with parent for occupational purposes	Traveling with parent for occupational purposes
U	Late (after registers closed)	Late (after registers closed)
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Attending an educational visit or trip
W	Attending work experience	Attending work experience

X	Not required to attend non-compulsory school age pupil	Not required to attend-non-compulsory school age pupil
Y1	Unable to attend – Transport not available	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being provided
Y2	Unable to attend – widespread travel emergency	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend – unavoidable partial closure	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed.
Y4	Unable to attend – unavoidable full closure	Unable to attend due to the whole schools' site being unexpectedly closed
Y5	Unable to attend – criminal justice detention	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend – Public Health Guidance / Law	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	Unable to attend – Unavoidable other than Y1-Y6	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause.
Z	Pupil not on roll	Prospective pupil not on admission requester
#	Planned whole school closure	Planned whole school closure

This is a list of codes where a reason will be required with the attendance code:

Code	SIMS Description	DfE Description / Explanation
B	Educated off-site (not Dual-Reg)	Attending any other approved educational facility.
K	Alternative provision provided by the LA	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
Y7	Unable to attend – Unavoidable other than Y1-Y6	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause.

Code	SIMS Description	DfE Description / Explanation
H	Family Holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence due to agreed family holiday.
J	Interview	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances – not counted in possible attendance
Y	Unable to attend due to an exceptional circumstance	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances – not counted in possible attendance

Appendix 2. Pupils, parents and school expectations of absent children.

1. All pupils

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.</p> <p>Notify the school as soon as is possible when their child is unexpectedly absent (e.g sickness)</p> <p>Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.</p> <p>Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible</p>	<p>Have a clear school attendance policy on the school website which all staff, pupils and parents understand.</p> <p>Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefit of good attendance.</p> <p>Accurately complete admission and attendance registers.</p> <p>Have a robust daily process to follow up absences.</p> <p>Regularly monitor data to identify patterns and trends and understand which pupils and pupil cohorts to focus on.</p> <p>Have a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance.</p>	<p>Take an active role in attendance, support their school(s) to prioritise attendance, and work together with leader to set out whole school cultures.</p> <p>Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.</p> <p>Use data to understand patterns of attendance, compare with local schools, identify areas of progress and where greater progress is needed.</p> <p>Ensure staff receive training on attendance.</p>	<p>Have a strategic approach to improving attendance for the whole area and make it a key focus of all frontline council service.</p> <p>Have a school attendance support team that works with all schools in their area to remove area wide barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Provide each school with a named point of contact in the school attendance team who can support with queries and advice.</p> <p>Offer opportunities for all schools to share effective practice</p>

2. Pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the local school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more support.</p>	<p>Proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of persistent absence.</p> <p>Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in school barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Where out of school barriers are identified, signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance and act as a lead practitioner if attendance is the only issue and/or the local threshold for formal Early Help is not met.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Hold a regular conversation with every school to identify, discuss and signpost or provide access to services for pupils who are persistently absent or at risk of becoming so.</p> <p>Where there are out of school barriers, provide each identified pupil and their family with access to services they need in the first instance.</p> <p>If the issue persists, and there are multiple needs, consider whether the threshold for Early Help is met and facilitate access where it is. Regardless, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the school and other partners. Provide the lead practitioner in cases where the threshold is met and all partners agree that a local authority service is best placed to lead. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the local authority, continue to work with the school and partners.</p>

3. Persistently absent pupils

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary Early Help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention</p>	<p>Continue support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and:</p> <p>Where absence becomes persistent, put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers. Where necessary this includes working with partners.</p> <p>Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, work with the local authority on legal intervention.</p> <p>Where there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through a referral to statutory children's social care.</p> <p>Work with other schools in the local area, such as schools previously attended</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Continue support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and:</p> <p>Work jointly with the school to support options including attendance contracts and education supervision orders.</p> <p>Where there are safeguarding concerns, ensure joint working between the school, children's services and other statutory safeguarding partners.</p> <p>Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, enforce attendance through legal intervention (including prosecution as a last resort).</p>

	and the schools of any siblings.		
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4. Severely absent pupils

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.</p>	<p>Continue support as for persistently absent pupils and:</p> <p>Agree a joint approach for all severely absent pupils with the local authority.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Continue support as for persistently absent pupils and:</p> <p>All services should make this group the top priority for support. This may include a whole family plan, consideration for an education, health and care plan, or an alternative form of educational provision.</p>

5. Support for cohorts of pupils with attendance lower than their peers

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
N/A	<p>Proactively use data to identify cohorts with, or at risk of, low attendance and develop strategies to support them.</p> <p>Work with other schools in the local area and the local authority to share effective practice where</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Track local attendance data to prioritise support and unblock area wide attendance barriers where they impact numerous schools.</p>

	there are common barriers to attendance.		
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6. Support for pupils with medical conditions or SEND with poor attendance

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their children's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered.</p>	<p>Maintain the same ambition for attendance and work with pupils and parents to maximise attendance.</p> <p>Ensure join up with pastoral support and where required, put in place additional support and adjustments, such as an individual healthcare plan and if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupils EHCP is accessed.</p> <p>Consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals.</p> <p>Regularly monitor data for such groups, including at board and governing body meetings and with local authorities.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Work closely with relevant services and partners, for example special educational needs, educational psychologists, and mental health services, to ensure joined up support for families</p>

7. Support for pupils with a Social Worker

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered.</p>	<p>Know who the pupils who have, or have had, a social worker are.</p> <p>Understand how the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that they are experiencing, or have experienced, can have an impact on attendance – whilst maintaining a culture of high aspiration for the cohort.</p> <p>Provide additional academic support and make reasonable adjustments to help them, recognising that even when statutory social care intervention has ended, there can be a lasting impact on children's educational outcomes.</p> <p>Work in partnership with the local authority at a strategic and individual level, sharing data on attendance including, at an individual level, informing the pupils social worker if there are any unexplained absences and if their name is to be deleted from the register.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Ensure that all children's social care practitioners understand the importance of good attendance for pupils educational progress, for their welfare and their wider development – and understand their role in improving it.</p> <p>Through the work of the virtual schools Heads, they should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake systemic monitoring and data sharing of the attendance of children with a social worker in their area: developing and implementing targeted cohort level interventions to improve attendance. • Provide advice, challenge and training to schools on how to promote and secure good attendance for children with a social worker. • Develop whole system approaches, with social care, to support the attendance of children in need.

8. Looked after and previously looked after children

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them, understand the barriers to attendance – including the development of personal education plans.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered.</p>	<p>Have high expectations for the cohort – with expert support and leadership provided by the designated teacher for looked after and previously looked after pupils.</p> <p>Work in partnership with the local authority virtual school head to develop and deliver high quality personal education plans for looked after children that support good attendance.</p> <p>Work directly with parents to develop a good home school links that support attendance. For previously looked after pupils this could include a discussion on use pf premium plus funding managed by the school.</p>	<p>Designate a member of staff to have responsibility for the promotion of educational achievement of looked after and previously looked after children.</p> <p>Monitor and review attendance of the cohort and consider how school policies, including behaviour policies, are sensitive to their needs and support good attendance.</p>	<p>Promote the educational achievement of looked after and previously looked after children – doing everything possible to minimise disruption to education when a pupil enters care.</p> <p>(LA that looks after the child:) Appoint an expert Virtual School Head (VSH) – will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor, report on , and evaluate the education outcomes of looked after children, including their attendance, as if attended a single school – wherever they live or are educated. • Ensure schools know when they have a pupil looked after by the authority on their role and that information is shared with the school on issues that may impact on their attendance. • Ensure that all looked after pupils have high quality, up to date, effective Personal

			<p>Education Plans developed in partnership with schools, social workers and carers – including, where necessary, clear interventions and use of pupil premium plus funding to support good attendance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide expert advice and information on the education of previously looked after pupils to schools and parents – including their attendance.
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9. Monitoring

Parents:	Schools:	Academy trustees and governing bodies:	Local authorities:
<p>Schools regularly update parents on their child's attendance.</p> <p>(If parents feel the school and/or local authority have not delivered what they are expected to they should discuss the case with the school and/or local</p>	<p>The school's senior attendance champion will ensure all school based staff complete their attendance responsibilities in line with the school policy.</p> <p>The governing body or academy trust will hold the Head Teacher or Executive Leadership to account for their delegated responsibilities and for compliance with regulatory and statutory requirements. They will review progress and provide challenge when required. The board</p>	<p>Ofsted considers governing bodies' efforts as part of inspections.</p>	<p>Ofsted may consider the local area partnership's approach to improving attendance of children with SEND as part of the SEND area inspection, and the local authority's approach to improving attendance for children with a social worker through inspecting local authority children's services.</p> <p>Ultimately in cases where a local authority has not met expectations or statutory duties the Local Government and social care</p>

authority's attendance support team)	<p>will help school leaders focus on improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most and ensure that school staff receive adequate training in attendance.</p> <p>Ofsted will expect school to do all they reasonably can to achieve the highest possible attendance as part of behaviour and attitudes judgement. This includes, where attendance is not consistently above what could reasonably be expected, that schools have a strong understanding of the cause of absence (particularly for severe or persistent absence) and a clear strategy in place that takes the account of those causes to improve attendance for all pupils.</p> <p>Ultimately, in cases where a school has not met expectations or statutory duties the secretary of state can consider a complaint.</p>		ombudsman or the secretary of state can consider a complaint.
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❖ Taken from the DfE summary table of responsibilities for school attendance.