



Redcar and Cleveland Attendance Handbook

*A guide for schools, governing bodies,
academy trustees, local authority
practitioners and wider partners*

Document Control

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Review Date	August 2026

Version Control

Version	Date	Author	Changes
V1	September 2025	Amanda Olvanhill	

Distribution

Version	Date	Circulation
V1	24.09.2025	

Foreword

'Attendance needs to be everyone's business – it's not just an abstract metric and we must do everything we can – at national, local and school level – to make sure children are in school every day and ready to learn. Not just for their future, but for their wellbeing and safety too.'
Children's Commissioner Rachel De Souza

It is important for children and young people to get the most out of their education and learning and enjoy their experience of school/college/training, with the wider benefits to their health, wellbeing, safety, social interactions (building friendships) and to improve their prospects and life chances. Children and young people are safer in school and college and for our most vulnerable young people, education is a protective factor where their needs can be identified and supported.

Every child of compulsory school age is entitled to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational need they may have. However, barriers to good attendance are extremely complex and wide ranging and occur not only in school/college but also in the family home and in communities. Securing good attendance cannot therefore be addressed in isolation and effective practices and focussed efforts to improve attendance must involve close and meaningful interactions with children, young people, their family, education and a range of partners, therefore it is our aim in Redcar and Cleveland to **'Make Attendance Everyone's Business'**.

Local and national attendance data shows there have been green shoots emerging, following the Covid19 Pandemic and although a long way to go, the commitment to improving attendance has been impactful and reflected not only in the data but in the many positive examples of **good practice** going on across schools, wider education partners and the network of support services in Redcar and Cleveland

The Department for Education (DfE) published the non-statutory **Working together to improve school attendance guidance in May 2022**, which outlined expectations of schools, governing bodies, academy trustees and local authorities to tackle persistent and severe absence. On 19th August 2024, the DfE re-published its [Working together to improve school attendance](#) guidance which is now **statutory**. A number of changes to the Working together guidance have seen the introduction of a new national framework for penalty notices, updates to attendance and absence codes and amendments to legislation set out in [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#).

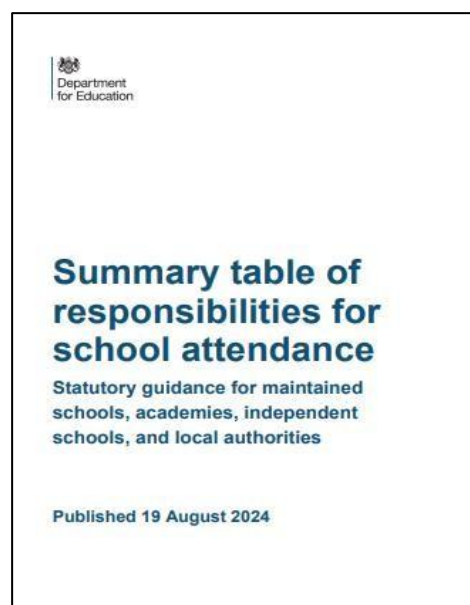
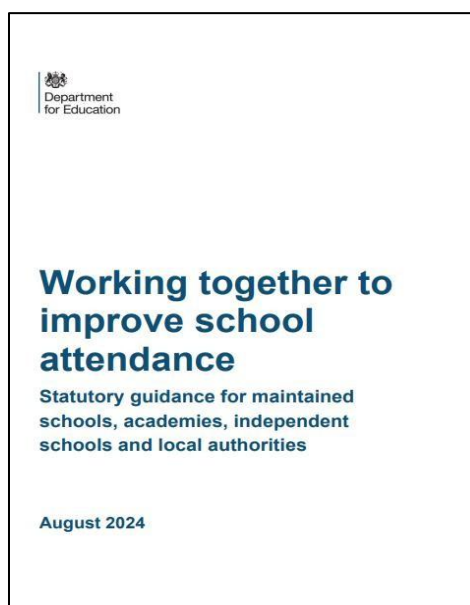
This handbook brings together useful information and advice from a range of guidance and legislation and sets out how Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council (RCBC) and our partners can meet the expectations laid out in the Working together guidance. It also includes reference to other related subjects such as pupil exclusions and children missing education where guidance was re-published in August 2024.

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1.0 Links to DfE guidance

In addition to the Working together guidance, the DfE published a summary table highlighting the key expectations for parents, schools, governing board, academy trustees and local authorities. The link to the documents can be found [here](#)



The guidance states that it should be read alongside the following statutory guidance documents published by the DfE:

Children Missing Education (August 2024)
Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions (December 2015)
Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs (December 2023)
Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance (February 2023)
Suspensions and permanent exclusions (August 2024)
Arranging Alternative Provision - guide for LAs and schools (February 2025)
Keeping children safe in education 2025

2.0 Defining absence

Children and young people can be absent from school/college for many reasons and some of these often overlap. These include children not on school roll (Children Missing Education – CME), those who are excluded or suspended, children with health needs, meaning they are unable to attend school, children registered at school but not attending regularly and parents/carers, who through their legal right, have chosen to electively home educate (EHE) their child or children. It also includes children who are absent for family holidays or events.

Every school is legally required to take a daily register, and this must be marked using attendance codes defined by the DfE. In addition, schools will also record details for the reasons of absence provided. Absence is the total amount of time a child or young person is not in school/college when they should be and classed as being **authorised** or **unauthorised**. Authorised absence is approved by the school using clearly defined guidance and codes as set out by the DfE's Working together guidance in Chapter 7 and [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)

[When can children miss school? | Redcar and Cleveland](#)

Children are classed as persistently absent (PA) or severely absent (SA) when they are registered at a primary, secondary, special school or pupil referral unit and are missing **more than 10% of their education – PA** or **more than 50% of their education – SA**. This could be either through authorised or unauthorised absence (or a combination). Absence (and particularly unauthorised absence) is often a symptom of something else and therefore it is important to get to the root cause.

3.0 School attendance – key principles

In Redcar and Cleveland, we have a strong partnership approach to improving the education outcomes and life chances for children, young people and families and believe that improving attendance is everyone's business and that there are some key principles which define how we will **Make Attendance Everyone's Business (MAEB)** in the Borough, achieving this by:

- ✓ Strengthening the system and partnerships
- ✓ Aligning, and utilising resources more effectively
- ✓ Creating a sense of belonging and inclusivity through co-production
- ✓ Embedding prevention and early intervention
- ✓ Providing responsive targeted support

Our wider MAEB system improvement programme of work (from the past 2 years and ongoing) is set out in the strategic '**Framework for Positive Action**' that has involved 350+ system partners. The Framework describes the journey taken in Redcar and Cleveland from the baseline situation for attendance in 2023 to its desired future state by 2030. It outlines how we intend to overcome challenges, leverage strengths of different partners across the system and navigate the changing landscape in the next 5 years towards achieving our longer-term goal by 2040.

'A system, and Borough, where it is exceptional for any child or young person to miss more than 10% of their education. Redcar and Cleveland is a place renowned for providing modern, flexible approaches that motivates, equips and supports children and their families to want to be at school college or other inspiring learning setting.'

Our wider work can be found here [Home page](#)

4.0 Our Pledge to Children, Young People and Families

In Redcar and Cleveland, we ask that all our partners adopt our Attendance Pledge:

We are committed to working together to improve attendance for children and young people across Redcar and Cleveland, to keep them safe in education, ensure they thrive and fulfil their potential and make attendance everyone's business.

We agree to:

- Collaborate with each other to remove barriers to attendance.
- Embed attendance as part of everyone's job role – senior leadership, management and front-line teams.
- Share best practice and learning about what works to prevent and reduce absence across our whole system.
- Adopt preventative, and early intervention approaches and provide responsive targeted support where needed.
- Make best use of available attendance data and lived experience so that we can use our resources in targeted ways that will make the most difference.
- Use relational 'trauma informed' practice and create a sense of belonging for everyone.
- Place children, young people and families at the centre of everything we do and make sure they feel listened to and understood.
- Use professional curiosity if we notice that children and young people are not in school, college or training when they should be and query the reasons behind their absence.
- Provide a supportive environment where children, young people and families can go to for help and advice.

We will all play an important and distinct role in supporting the child, young person or family, no one partner can do it on their own.

5.0 Attendance and Welfare Officer Team

To provide consistent support, RCBC's Attendance and Welfare Officer (AWO) Team provides a single point of contact for education and wider partners in relation to attendance. Each school **has a dedicated AWO** and this will be confirmed at the start of every academic year. We aim to offer continuity to schools but sometimes we may need to move staff around due to absence/unforeseen circumstances.

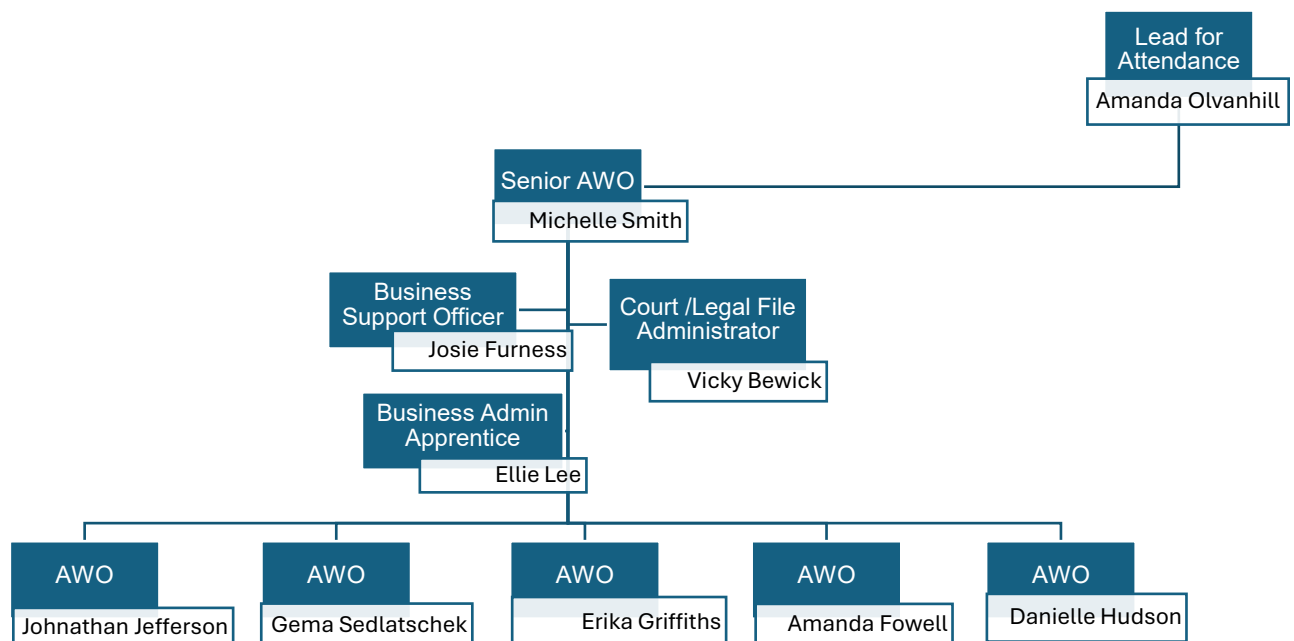
There is a dedicated email and helpline and our highly skilled team can provide initial advice and guidance or help with more complex cases.

Telephone: 01642 837738

Email: AWS@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

In addition, our AWO Team will provide training sessions and regular updates for partners; with a termly Newsletter and Attendance Alliance Meeting to allow partners to receive and share best practice.

AWO Team Structure



The AWO Team sits within the Children and Families Directorate, which allows for an integrated working relationship with Children's Social Care, Early Help, Health Services, Youth Justice Service, specialist SHiFT and Safe Teams, Inclusion, SEND, Specialist Teachers, Educational Psychology Service, School Admissions, Governor Support Services, Early Years and Post-16 Progression and Careers Team.

In addition to supporting schools and partners to fully embed the Working together guidance, RCBC will:

- Ensure that everyone understands their roles and responsibilities.
- Continue to strengthen the **Attendance Alliance** to provide opportunities for schools, colleges and partners to share best practice, seize opportunities and overcome challenges.
- Rigorously track and share local attendance data to devise a strategic approach to attendance that identifies and prioritises the children, young people and families that need the most support and working alongside MAT's, schools/colleges and wider partners to unblock area wide barriers to attendance.
- Provide universal support to schools through:
 - Information, advice and signposting
 - Holding Termly Support Meetings: regular conversations with schools, using their attendance data to identify pupils and cohorts at risk of poor attendance and agree targeted actions and access to services for those pupils.
 - Providing multi-disciplinary advice/support for families through access to early help support to work with families to provide practical whole-family support where needed to tackle the causes of absence and unblock the barriers to attendance.
 - Access to best practice and resources through the AWO Support Newsletter.
 - Where everything else has failed and voluntary action has not been successful (as a last resort) taking forward attendance legal intervention.

RCBC provides universal support to all schools as above, however some MAT's/schools purchase additional traded services. These are clearly set out and **differentiated in a service level agreement**. Page 39 of the Working together guidance documents some of the areas of work that a school may wish to purchase from a local authority or other private sector company.

The AWO Team are also responsible for processing **child employment permits** and **entertainment** and **chaperone licences**. Further guidance on the employment of school age children and applying for performance and chaperone licences can be found here [Child employment, entertainment licencing and chaperone guidance | Redcar and Cleveland](#)

6.0 Expectations of RCBC's Virtual School

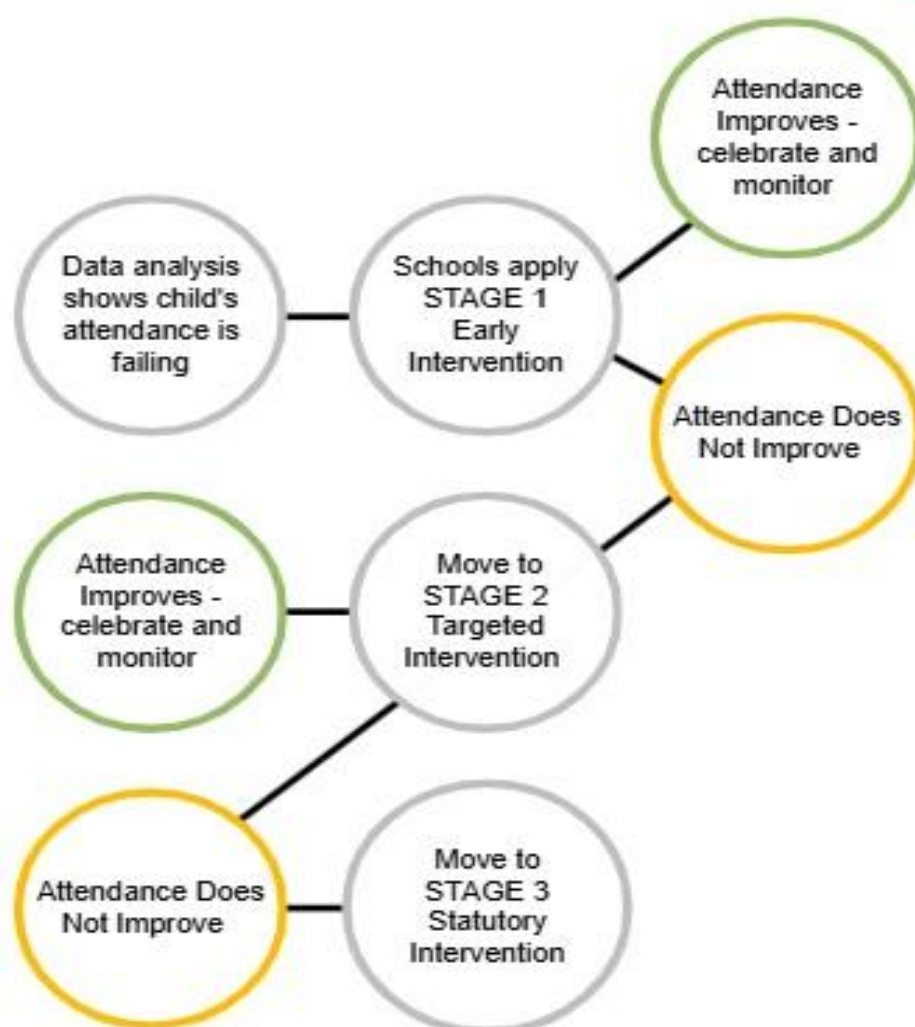
RCBC's Virtual School (VS) is responsible for the educational progress and achievement of children who are looked after (Children in our Care - CioC) and those previously looked after (PCioC). They do this by:

- Regularly monitoring and strategically championing the educational attendance of CioC/PCioC's attendance and those who have had a social worker in the last 6 years.
- Ensuring social workers and schools set aspirational targets for attendance of pupils with a social worker in the area and put in place personal education plans (PEPs) for looked-after pupils.
- Providing training for designated teachers about their role in promoting the attendance of children who have **ever** needed a social worker.
- Securing regular attendance of looked-after children as their **Corporate Parent** and providing advice and guidance about the importance of attendance to those services supporting pupils previously looked after, as well as those who have or have had a social worker.
- Working across the Children's Social Care Service to ensure all social workers recognise the importance of good school attendance, and that attendance is built into every child in need plan or child protection plan where it is a concern.

[Virtual School | Redcar and Cleveland](#)

7.0 Graduated Response

How does Redcar & Cleveland Graduated Response work



In Redcar and Cleveland we believe attendance is everyone's business and a summary of responsibilities can be found [here](#) [Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#)

It is the **legal responsibility of every parent** to make sure their child attends 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.

Our graduated response in Redcar and Cleveland provides a '**support first**' approach to encouraging good attendance that partners should familiarise themselves with and should embed within their systems. The stages of this are:

PREVENTION – through whole school embedded relational practice and good attendance management practice.

Stage 1 – EARLY INTERVENTION

Stage 2 – TARGETED INTERVENTION

Stage 3 – STATUTORY/LEGAL INTERVENTION

Schools should consistently **promote the benefits** of good attendance at school and make school a **welcoming** place that pupils want to attend. They should set high expectations for every pupil and communicate those expectations clearly and consistently to pupils and parents. Schools should have a dedicated **Senior Leader** with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance and a visible **Attendance Policy** on the school website which is accessible and that all staff, pupils and parents/carers understand. The Attendance Policy should be reviewed **annually** and updated in line with any policy changes. Help and support with policies can be provided through the AWO Team.

A **whole school approach** should be adopted that clearly sets out everyone's roles and responsibilities, with governors having active oversight of attendance and improvement measures where required, making sure approaches are relational and trauma informed. Improving attendance requires constant focus and effective whole school approaches require regular ongoing support, guidance and challenge. Therefore, all **trusts and governing bodies** are expected to:

- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the school's ethos and policies.
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Regularly review attendance data, discuss and challenge trends and help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance.

We encourage schools to share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area and with RCBC and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming PA/SA. Contacting RCBC's AWO Team early for advice and guidance can prevent issues from escalating.

The full breakdown of expectations on **schools** can be found in **Chapter 2** of the Working together guidance and on **Academy Trust Boards** and **governing bodies**, in **Chapter 3**.

7.1 USING DATA EFFECTIVELY

Data should be used to identify patterns and trends and understand which pupils and pupil cohorts to focus on and to act promptly at the earliest possible stage, providing tailored support.

The DfE have developed a number of tools where schools can monitor their own attendance [Monitor your school attendance: user guide - GOV.UK](#). Feedback from schools using the data tools has been very positive, allowing them to use **data bandings** effectively to identify those pupils whose attendance is just starting to

decline, to compare year to date data and make comparison with other schools and regional and national trends, also saving time in building reports as they are already available.

Although attendance percentages are a valuable indicator, they often mean very little to parents and carers and by themselves provide limited information about when and why a child is missing from school.

When we dig a little deeper and take a close look at the patterns of absence, reasons for absence being provided or if parents or carers are not providing reasons for absence; then this provides a wealth of information that can inform discussions with children, young people and families to help establish what the barriers to attendance are.

The Children's Commissioner's report made some interesting observations; firstly, that children who missed the second, third or fourth day of the new term were predicted an overall absence of around 43% or 30 days across the term, significantly more than their peers. Secondly, whilst Fridays are the most popular day for children to be absent, it is those children who miss mid-week (Tuesday to Thursday), who are more likely to be habitually absent from school.

<https://assets.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wpuploads/2022/07/cc-new-insights-into-school-absence.pdf>

When analysing absence, we need to consider:

- Is this a new or changing pattern? What does historic attendance look like? What has been the impact of this?
- Are siblings off at the same time? Why is this? What does this tell us?
- Are parents/carers contacting school to report their child's absences? If not, why not?
- Is absence from school linked to concerns at home (e.g. substance misuse, domestic abuse, parental illness, poor parental mental health, Educational, Medical, Physical or Emotional Neglect)?
- Is absence from school due to concerns outside of the home and school (e.g. Child Sexual Exploitation, Child Criminal Exploitation, Anti-Social behaviour, friendship groups)?
- Is absence from school linked to concerns at school (e.g. a subject issue, bullying or friendship issues, unidentified needs, difficulties accessing learning, behaviour, an ongoing or recent incident)?
- Is there a concerning pattern of illness? If yes, has the School Nurse been involved? Has a Health Assessment been considered? Are medical appointments being attended?
- What is this young person doing when they are not in school?
- What is the impact on them?
- What could the impact be on their future if this level of absence continues?

Measuring good attendance in a school year – EVERY DAY COUNTS!

100%	0 days missed	Excellent
99%	2 days missed 10 lessons missed	Very good
97%	1 week missed 25 lessons missed	Good Any absence has an impact, but it is understood that children may be ill or have other valid reasons for absence.
95%	2 weeks missed 50 lessons missed	Beginning to make it harder to make progress. Early intervention, based on rigorous attendance and absence data, is the most effective way of preventing a pattern of absence or arriving at school late from developing. Unauthorised holidays can result in a Fixed Penalty Notice. Are there concerns about the reasons/patterns of absence? Historic attendance can be a key indicator of future attendance. What was the pattern last year?
94%-91%	11 – 17 days missed 55 – 85 lessons missed	Cause for concern – Becoming harder to make progress
90%	4 weeks missed 100 lessons missed	Persistently Absent – Progress will suffer Schools and local authorities are expected to work together to put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. <i>Working Together Guidance p.32</i>
80%	7 and half weeks missed 190 lessons missed	If a child misses this much school each year for five years (e.g. Year 7 to Year 11), then they will miss a whole year of school during this time.
50%	19 weeks or half of the school year has been missed 485 lessons missed	Severely absent The Government regards any student at 50% or under as being severely absent (SA), and support should intensify to support an improvement in attendance.

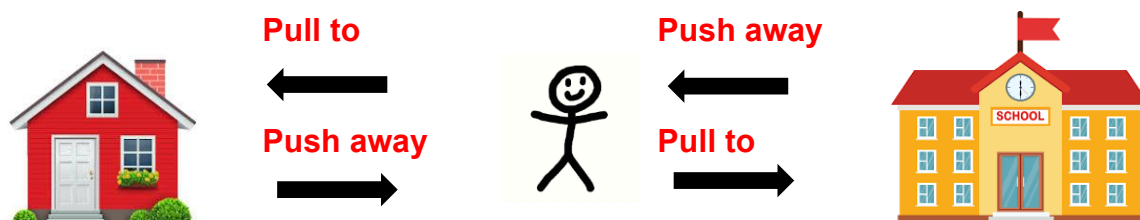
7.2 IDENTIFYING BARRIERS

We encourage everyone to work together to be **professionally curious** about what the barriers to attendance might be for children, young people and families and to work together to remove these. Considering what information school and wider professionals and partners already have about attendance and what the push and pull factors might be. What do we know about the reasons a child is missing school and what do we need to find out?

Examples of push & pull factors

- Parental illness
- Separation anxiety
- X-Box/social groups

- Bullying
- Friendship issues
- Difficulty accessing learning



- Parent/carer wants their child to attend school

- Good relationship with staff/trusted adult
- Loves Art/Music

Who helps this young person inside school?

How is this young person managing their behaviour in school? What was their behaviour in school like before/after an absence?

Who helps this young person outside of school?

What do we know about what this young person is doing when they are not in school?

How does this young person get to school?

Does this young person have a special or additional need or disability (SEN) or and Education Health Care Plan (EHCP)?

What are the patterns of non-attendance?

Does this young person have healthy friendships in or out of school?

What support has been tried before? What impact did this have?

When did the attendance concerns begin?

What else do we need to find out?

Identifying what else we need to find out is an important next step but think carefully about **what** questions need to be asked, **who** is best to ask them, **where** and **when** these discussions need to take place. It is important that young people and their families do not feel overwhelmed by too many questions and feel safe and supported to work together.

Open, honest, working relationships between families and professionals take time to build but moments to break down. **Every Conversation Counts** – the mention of school attendance or legal action can result in confrontation and defensiveness and

does not always give professionals and families the space they need to work together to identify the barriers to attendance and the solutions to removing these barriers.

Ask open ended questions

Who... e.g. 'Who else could we invite to a meeting so that we can start to think about supporting you better?'

What... e.g. 'What is a school morning like in your house? What is the hardest thing about this?'

Where... e.g. 'Where does (child's name) go if they have not gone to school?'

Why... e.g. 'Why do you think that (child's name) shouts and screams/acts this way, when you ask him/her to go to school?'

How... e.g. 'How do you think we could start to make a small change to make it easier for (child's name) to go to school tomorrow?'

Relationship questions:

If (child's name) was here with us now, what might he/she say is the hardest thing about leaving you at home?

If (child's name) was here with us now, what might he/she say that they miss about school when they are not there?

Exception questions:

Can you tell me about a time when (child's name) got up and got ready for school without getting angry?

Future Hopes:

What are your best hopes for your children when you think about their future? What do you think needs to happen now to make this more likely?

7.3 EARLY INTERVENTION

Good attendance starts with **close and productive relationships** with parents and pupils. Schools should treat all pupils and parents with dignity and staff should model respectful relationships to build a positive relationship between home and school that can be the foundation of good attendance. Where a pupil or family needs support with attendance, it is important that the **best placed person** in the school works alongside and supports the family and wherever possible the person should be kept consistent.

Early intervention is used to prevent attendance issues from escalating further. It is important for schools to have **robust first day absence procedures** in place and clear and engaging communication channels with parents/carers. [Toolkit for schools:](#)

[communicating with families to support attendance - GOV.UK](#) and [Annex A - example letters and messages to parents and carers.odt](#)

It is good practice for schools to have immediate follow-up/home visits for unauthorised absence, so that support can be offered promptly.

Schools are expected to:

- Support pupils and parents by working together to address any in-school barriers to attendance.
- Where barriers are outside of the school's control, all partners should work together to support pupils and parents to access any support they may need **voluntarily**. As a minimum, this should include meeting with pupils at risk of PA/SA and their parents to understand the barriers (as above) to being in school and agreeing actions or interventions to address them, this may include referrals to services and organisations that can provide support. These actions should be regularly discussed and reviewed together with pupils and families.

Having a **trusted adult** for pupils provides a safe environment for children to discuss concerns before they escalate and schools should have a whole school approach to **welcoming** children back to school when they have been absent. [Attendance toolkit for schools.pdf](#)

Any early concerns can be discussed with the school's dedicated RCBC AWO who can provide advice and guidance.

7.4 PROVIDING SUPPORT

Support should be specific and targeted to the barriers identified and it is important that this does not just focus on what professionals can do but also on what families can do.

Parents and carers will have their own views and experience about school and sadly for some families, school may have been a difficult time or place, so building relationships can be challenging and take time, empathy and persistence.

It is important that families and children do not feel like that they are being interrogated. The aim is that by using a selection of the right child-centred questions (examples as above) professionals can support children, young people and families to consider what the barriers are and what **everyone** can do to remove them.

The DfE's 'Toolkit for schools: communicating with families to support attendance' [Toolkit for schools: communicating with families to support attendance – GOV.UK](#) highlights a wealth of advice about evidence-based ways of communicating with parents and carers about absence. Some of the tips suggested are:

- Framing absences in lessons missed
- Adopting positive, future focused messaging
- Being careful about generalising when describing children and young people's feelings and experiences
- Balancing a firm, factual tone with empathy

- Avoiding unevidenced or unrealistic claims

Example messages

“Your child has missed X number of lessons this year. Lessons build on what children already know and missing one may make tomorrow’s lesson more difficult.”

“One day could be as many as seven missed lessons, as well as time spent with friends and doing extracurricular activities.”

“You can support your child’s physical, social and mental wellbeing by ensuring they are in school every day.”

“We know that parent’s and carers worry about their child’s mental health, rather than keeping your child off school let us know about your concerns we can then work together on supporting your child.”

Exploring out of school support:

Has absence from school been included in the Family Plans?

Who are the community members, friends and family members who might be able to offer wider support?

Who are the other service providers or Voluntary and Community Sector organisations that can offer support to the family?

Who could the parent contact if they were having a bad day and need some help to get their child/children to school? What could they do to help?

Who could school contact if they could not contact the parent? How could that person help support more effective communication when a parent is struggling?

When exploring in school support options:

Who would the parent find it easiest to speak to in school? Is there anything else that the parent or school could do to make staying in contact any easier?

Which members of staff could this child/young person go to in school, how and when?

Who does this child/young person say helps the most in school?

Which lessons/parts of the school day do they enjoy? Why?

Which lessons/parts of the school day are more difficult? Why?

Who does this child/young person say are their friends in school? How do they support them? Does this young person need any additional support around friendships?

Are the approaches being used in school trauma informed?

Is there a consistent approach across school staff in how they effectively support, communicate and engage with this child/young person? Has information been shared effectively to support this?

Support from the local authority

The Working together guidance (**Chapter 4**) expects RCBC to advise schools about what should be provided and particularly before considering **attendance legal intervention**. The table below contains some ideas on practice which should be explored before referring to RCBC (unless there is an immediate risk to the pupil's safety and wellbeing in which case safeguarding procedures must be followed). The content in the table is not exhaustive and is generalised as detailing what schools might put in place and would need to be determined on a case-by-case basis:

- **Communication with the family** (i.e. building relationships).
- **Facilitating support** (i.e. to identify and unblock barriers which may be within school but also beyond the school gates).
- **Reaching out** (signposting and access to universal and additional support).
- **Formalising approach** (i.e. intensifying support, which would start to bring involvement from RCBC but not a focus on punitive measures at this stage).

Communication with the family – <i>Build relationships</i>	Facilitate support – <i>Identify and unblock internal barriers</i>	Reach out - <i>Signpost to/access universal and additional support</i>	Formalise approach – <i>intensify support</i>
• Hold meetings in school and ensure the right staff with the right skills participate, depending on circumstances • Make reasonable adjustments to promote the family's attendance at meetings • Use strengths-based, enquiry and solution focussed approaches in all meetings • Make home visits where parents are unresponsive, the pupil's absence is sustained or there are other potential concerns which may not be visible without outreach	• The voice of the child should always be prioritised • Consider push and pull factors (as above) between home and school • Follow a plan, do and review cycle - sustaining attendance is ongoing • Deploy relevant school-based interventions available to remedy any barriers stemming from within school • Use any data available to assist in identifying any habitual patterns of absence • Keep a chronology of key events	See section below for wider support but additional partner support could include: • Early Help/Family Hubs • The Virtual School • RCBC SEND Service/Educational Psychology Team • Youth Justice Service • Safe/SHiFT Teams • Head Start/Health Partners • Community and Voluntary Sector organisations	• Explore any changing or emerging barriers to attendance as circumstances evolve • Consider a Family Plan • Invite RCBC AWO to a formal attendance meeting • Make a formal request for support – see below through RCBC AWO Team (<i>seek parental consent, unless a serious or urgent Child Protection concern</i>).

Examples of support for early intervention available in Redcar and Cleveland

The list below is not exhaustive, and we encourage partners to share resources and best practice through our well-established **Attendance Alliance** that meets each term, with membership from schools/colleges and wider service providers.

Early Help – RCBC's Early Help provides a range of services to support children, young people and families including Family Hubs, Youth Service and the Children and Families Intervention Team. [Early help | Redcar and Cleveland](#)

If a school/partner feels the pupil/family needs some additional help and support and there are no immediate safeguarding concerns, a good approach is to use an Early Help Assessment (EHA) together. In Redcar and Cleveland this is known as '**Our Family Plan.**'

The Family Plan aims to help with meaningful conversations with a family about their strengths and worries, working out what they need and pulling in the right people to provide support as a '**Team Around the Family**' where required.

The school would normally act as the lead practitioner and implement support if attendance was the sole issue, including signposting/working with other service partners where required. If issues persist, a multi-agency approach is likely to be required, with careful consideration as to who the lead practitioner should then be. [The Early Help Assessment or Our Family Plan | Redcar and Cleveland](#)

RCBC's Virtual School, can support schools to embed trauma informed principles and practice. [Virtual School | Redcar and Cleveland](#)

Embedding the '**Transition Practice Standards**' that have been co-created with partners to support successful transitions across education and to ensure that every child and young person in Redcar and Cleveland is fully supported as they move through each stage of their learning journey.

Working with **HeadStart** to help children to build resilience and achieve good emotional health. [About Us : HeadStart South Tees](#)

Developing relationship with RCBC's **Healthy Communities Team** who can provide connections to specialist commissioned services, grassroot and community and voluntary sector organisations in your area.

HealthyCommunities.Coastal@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

HealthyCommunities.GreaterEston@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

HealthyCommunities.EastCleveland@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

The SEND Local Offer provides a free information directory that shows what support or provision is available in our area for SEND children and young people. [Redcar and Cleveland Information Directory | Redcar & Cleveland: Information Directory](#)

Health Start (see below) a directory of the health service offer to Redcar and Cleveland schools, including our Health Visitor and School Nursing team who

provide a Healthy Child Programme for schools. Health visitors and school nurses are specialist public health nurses with health visitors leading the 0 to 5 elements of the Healthy Child Programme and school nurses leading the 5 to 19 elements.

[Health Visiting and School Nursing Services | Redcar and Cleveland](#)



Health Start.pdf

Making Every Contact Count is about making the most of our daily conversations with others to signpost people to help and support that will benefit their health and wellbeing. The more openly we talk about these themes, the more likely families can access the help and support they need at the earliest possible opportunity. [Making Every Contact Count | Redcar and Cleveland](#) and [MECC Gateway](#)

The Supporting Families Toolkit is an interactive document with hyperlinks, providing practitioners with a central point where they can access practice guidance, service contacts and tools to support them in delivering positive and sustainable outcomes for children and families. It includes links to a wide range of local services that can help. [Supporting families toolkit | Redcar and Cleveland](#)

The Junction Foundation is a well-respected charity for children, young people and families. They provide a children/young person's and adult carers support service, mental health and emotional wellbeing services and youth employment, education and skills programmes. [The Junction](#)

Kooth is an online counselling and emotional well-being platform for children and young people that is accessible by laptop, phone, tablet and computer. The platform is free, safe, confidential and anonymous and offers various forms of support to children/young people such as live chat platform with Kooth counsellors, articles written by young people and daily journal entry. [Home – Kooth](#)

The Link provides therapeutic interventions in collaboration with children, young people and families to achieve sustainable, positive mental health and emotional resilience. Support includes individual and group support, family interventions and services to schools. [Home Page – The Link – The Link](#)

Rubies is an inspirational local charity that supports young women to build confidence and self-esteem. Specialist courses can be delivered to primary and secondary schools. [OUR STORY | Rubies Charity – Redcar & Cleveland](#)

Middlesbrough Football Club Foundation can provide programmes that engage, inspire and upskill children and young people, using sport and physical activity as a medium to engage participants, whilst improving health and wellbeing. [About – MFC Foundation](#)

Thrive at Five RCBC has teamed up with Thrive at Five to work with the whole community in Dormanstown, Eston, Grangetown, Kirkleatham and South Bank to create a local approach that enables all local children to reach a good level of development by the end of their first year of primary school. [Thrive at Five supporting children in Redcar and Cleveland - Thrive At Five](#)

7.5 TARGETED INTERVENTION

Where absence becomes persistent, schools should put in place additional targeted support to remove any barriers, with the pupil and parents/carers at the centre of this. When implementing appropriate support, schools should consider the specific needs of the child, including SEND, social, emotional and mental health. [Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance](#) medical needs and any adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) [PHW-WHO-ACEs-Handbook-Eng-18_09_23.pdf](#) Where necessary, targeted support should include working with wider service partners and specialists, including Early Help as above.

Where there is a lack of engagement, the school should consider holding a formal Attendance Case Conference (ACC) with parents and any other support agencies to agree clear targets for improvement set out in an Attendance Improvement Action Plan.

The plan should be clear (using plain English), be personalised to the needs of the child/family and be formally recorded. The meeting should be chaired by an appropriate member of the school staff and include, for example, someone from the Pastoral Team or a staff member who has a **trusted relationship** with the child/parent, e.g. the SENDCo.

A review date should be set with the parent/carer for 4-6 weeks following the ACC. During the review, improvements should be celebrated or alternatively any further concerns discussed. The school may wish to offer a further period of monitoring where positive progress has been recognised.

It is important for schools to work closely with other lead professionals, for example, where there is involvement with children's Social Care/Early Help. If a child is already a Child in Need (CiN) or Child Protection (CP), a separate attendance meeting may not be needed as actions to address attendance should be included in the child/family plan; this should be verified by the school. Where the child already has a social worker, the school should work closely with the social worker and inform them of any unexplained absences. Attendance should be discussed and recorded at any multi-agency/team around meeting.

Note: RCBC will only process legal requests where there is evidence that **2 members** of staff/professionals have been present at the meeting, this allows for meaningful discussion and due diligence. If this is going to be difficult for a school, they should discuss with their allocated RCBC AWO who will be able to help with this.

Notice to Improve

During this meeting, it may be decided to issue a Notice to Improve or Court Warning endorsed by RCBC.

A Notice to Improve is a final opportunity for a parent to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is issued (see below). If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate but offers of support have **not been** engaged with by the parent or have not worked, a Notice to Improve should usually be sent to give parents a final chance to engage in support. A Notice to Improve does not

need to be issued in cases where support is not appropriate and an authorised officer can choose not to use one in any case, including cases where support is appropriate but they do not expect a Notice to Improve would have any behavioural impact (e.g. because the parent has already received one for a similar offence).

The Notice to Improve is expected to include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and details of the specific issues.
- The benefits of regular attendance and parents' duty under section 7 of the Education Act 1996.
- Details of the support provided so far.
- Opportunities for further support and the option to access previously provided support that was not engaged with.
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued or prosecution considered if attendance improvement is not secured within the improvement period.
- A clear timeframe for the improvement period of between 3 and 6 weeks.
- Details of what sufficient improvement within that timeframe will look like.
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period.

More details of a Notice to Improve can be found in Chapter 6 of the Working together guidance, or can be provided by The AWO Team.

[Examples of targeted support available in Redcar and Cleveland](#)

RCBC's Early Help (EH) Service can provide information, advice and support if you have concerns about a child, young person and/or family, including guidance on EH assessments/Family Plans. [Early help | Redcar and Cleveland](#)

Redcar and Cleveland's Resource and Support Panel provides schools access to High Needs Funding, Educational Psychology (parent centred/multi-agency approach), The Specialist Teaching Service, Hospital and Community Teaching service and LA advice and support. [Resource and Support Panel | Redcar & Cleveland: Information Directory](#)

[Resource and Support Panel tri-fold DL leaflet updated 25-26.docx \(DOCX, 3.53MB\)](#)

South Tees Youth Justice Service (STYJS) works with 10–18-year-olds who have been sentenced by a court or who have come to the attention of the police because of their offending behaviour. Prevention is an important part of the work delivered by the service. The prevention offer delivered by STYJS is the 'Turnaround Programme', which is early intervention for children on the cusp of entering the youth justice system. [South Tees Youth Justice Service | Middlesbrough Council](#)

Inclusion Service

The Inclusion Service work with schools to help prevent and reduce suspensions and permanent exclusions. Each Inclusion Officer has allocated schools and work directly with pastoral and senior staff. They can offer advice, guidance, support and signposting.

Inclusion Officers can attend 15+ day suspension and permanent exclusion **Pupil Discipline Committees**, if invited to do so by the parents. This meeting is attended in an advisory capacity only to ensure that all procedures are followed correctly and to offer advice and guidance to both the schools and the families.

Schools can request the support of the Inclusion Service prior to these thresholds being met.

See below for contact information:

Grant Smith – Lead for Inclusion: Grant.smith@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

Angela Henderson – Education Development Advisor Inclusion:
Angela.henderson@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

Tracy Woods – Inclusion Officer: Tracy.woods@redcar@cleveland.gov.uk

Matthew Dobson – Inclusion Officer: Matthew.dobson@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

Emily Bowey – Exclusions/EHE Officer: Emily.bowey@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

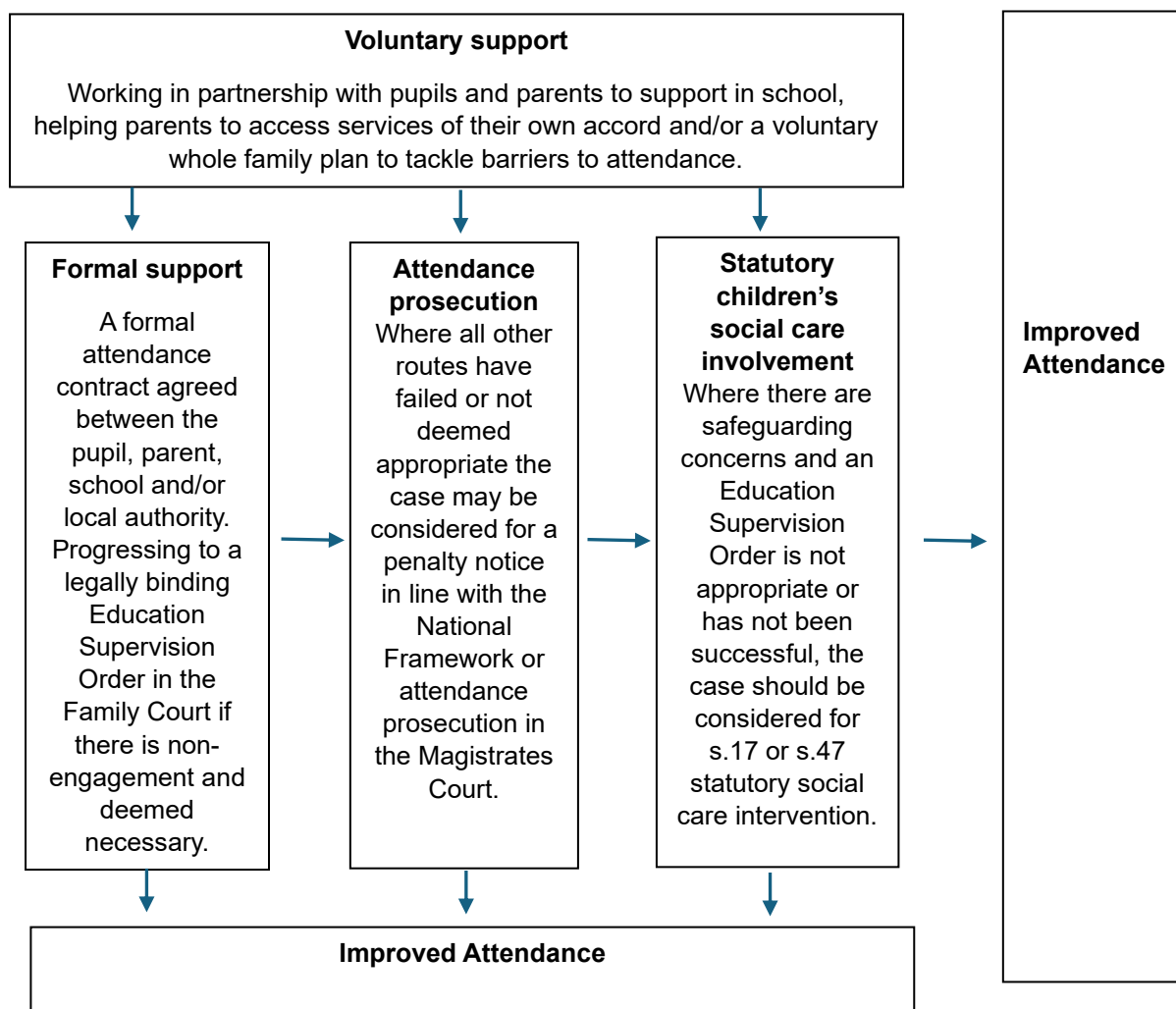
Victoria Ogden – Exclusions/CME/EHE Officer: Victoria.ogden@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

Paula Harland – CME/EHE/Exclusion Support Officer: Paula.harland@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

SAFE are a specialist exploitation team who work with children, young people and their families and carers to respond to, reduce and disrupt risks of exploitation in Redcar and Cleveland. Working with partners to provide help and support so that children and young people can be safe and help to families and carers when they need it. Supporting children and young people from 0 to 18 years old. [SAFE | Redcar and Cleveland](#)

7.6 STATUTORY/LEGAL INTERVENTION

Providing support before legal intervention



If stages 1 and 2 have not resulted in any improvements to attendance a decision might be made to move to statutory level/legal intervention. There should be clear evidence provided by the school of the **tailored support** that has been offered to the family and all attempts at communication and engagement with the parent/carer. Although the lead RCBC AWO might have provided guidance and support throughout stages 1 and 2, a formal referral should be made to RCBC (through a single agency referral form – SARF).



SARF1.doc

The AWO will need to review:

Documents confirming the action the school has taken to support the child and family to improve attendance, including any home visits, discussions with the parent/carer and meetings and other relevant evidential material (including ACC minutes, attendance data, reasonable adjustments).

Schools, trusts and local authorities are expected to work together and make use of the full range of legal interventions rather than relying solely on penalty notices or prosecution. It is for individual schools and local authorities to decide whether to use them in an individual case after considering the individual circumstances of a family. These are:

- Attendance Contract
- Education Supervision Order
- Attendance Prosecution
- Parenting Order
- Penalty Notice

Attendance Contract

An attendance contract is a formal written agreement between a parent and either the school (except for independent schools and non-maintained special schools) or local authority to address irregular attendance at school or alternative provision. An attendance contract is **not legally binding** but allows a more formal route to secure engagement with support where a voluntary Early Help/Family plan has not worked or is not deemed appropriate.

An attendance contract is not a punitive tool; it is intended to provide support and offers an alternative to prosecution. Parents cannot be compelled to enter an attendance contract and they cannot be agreed in a parent's absence. Attendance contracts do not have a minimum or maximum duration, each individual attendance contract should set out the duration it will be in place and most are for between 3 and 12 months but can be longer if needed. **More details of Attendance Contracts can be found in Chapter 6 of the Working together guidance.**

Education Supervision Order

Where a voluntary Early Help (Family) plan, or formal attendance contract has not been successful, an Education Supervision Order (ESO) can be a useful alternative to provide formal legal intervention without criminal prosecution. In deciding whether to progress to an ESO, the school and local authority should have exhausted voluntary support and 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.

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 pupil

and parent(s) to ensure the pupil 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. **More details of ESOs can be found in Chapter 6 of the Working together guidance.**

Attendance Prosecution

If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at a school at which they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided for them, their parents may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the local authority.

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. **More details of Attendance Prosecution can be found in Chapter 6 of the Working together guidance.**

Parenting Order

Parenting orders are an ancillary order that can be imposed by the Court following conviction for non-attendance alongside a fine and/or community order, parents' agreement is not required before an order is made, they may be appropriate where the parent has not engaged in support to improve their child's attendance and where compulsion to do so would help change parental behaviour.

The order requires a parent to comply with the arrangements specified in the order by the Court which can include a requirement for parents to attend counselling or guidance sessions (e.g. parenting education or parenting support classes) where they will receive help and support to enable them to improve their child's attendance for up to 3 months. All parenting orders must specify a 'responsible officer' which will be named on the order. This should be the most appropriate lead practitioner working with the family. **More details of Parenting Orders can be found in Chapter 6 of the Working together guidance.**

Fine/Penalty Notice

Penalty notices are issued to parents as an alternative to prosecution where they have failed to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered or in certain cases, at a place where alternative provision is provided. Penalty notices can be used by all schools (except for independent schools) where the pupil's absence has been recorded with one or more of the unauthorised codes and that absence(s) constitutes an offence. A penalty notice can be issued to each parent liable for the offence or offences. They should usually only be issued to the parent or parents who have allowed the absence (regardless of which parent has applied for a leave of absence).

Penalty notices are intended to prevent the need for court action and should only be used where it is deemed likely to change parental behaviour and support to secure regular attendance has been provided and has not worked or been engaged with or would not have been appropriate in the circumstances of the offence (e.g. an unauthorised holiday in term time).

Penalty notices must be issued in line with the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended and can only be issued by a headteacher or someone authorised by them (a deputy or assistant head), a local authority officer or the police. They must also be issued in line with Local Codes of Conduct which are drawn up and maintained by each local authority.

Since August 2024, there is a consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered if 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period has occurred.

The amount payable under the first Penalty Notice is £160 if paid within 28 days beginning on the date which the notice is received. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days, beginning on the date which the notice is received.

Any second penalty notice issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period will be charged at a higher rate of £160 with no option for this second offence to be discharged at the lower rate of £80.

No one parent will receive more than 2 penalty notices for the same child within a rolling 3-year period, so at the 3rd (or subsequent) offence(s) other options will be considered (such as **prosecution** or one of the other attendance **legal interventions**).

More details of Penalty Notices can be found in Chapter 6 of the Working together guidance.

All penalty notices are issued in line with the RCBC Penalty Notice Code of Conduct: [Legal action to enforce school attendance | Redcar and Cleveland](#)

For more information [School attendance and absence: Legal action to enforce school attendance - GOV.UK](#)

And [School attendance and welfare service | Redcar and Cleveland](#)

Where there are safeguarding concerns and an Education Supervision Order is not appropriate, or has not been successful, the case should be considered for a section 17 or section 47 statutory social care intervention [Working together to safeguard children - GOV.UK](#) and concerns raised to RCBC's Multi-agency Children's Hub (MACH) [Concerns about a child | Redcar and Cleveland](#)

8.0 Termly support meetings

RCBC offer termly support meetings to all schools. These provide an opportunity to:

- Identify, discuss and agree action plans and joint approaches for SA pupils (where they do not already have a plan in place).
- Discuss and agree approaches for PA pupils where they have barriers to attendance that require a multi-agency response to overcome.
- Agree which agency will act as the lead practitioner, which will be the school in most cases but can be RCBC or partner team where there are multiple needs if they are the most appropriate service.
- Conduct data analysis, including comparisons to other schools in the geographical area or identifying areas to focus attendance efforts on.
- Any other priority area the school wishes to discuss.

The structure of the meeting will be discussed with the school/MAT, so it is beneficial for everyone. A meeting invitation and associated paperwork for completion will be sent out at least 2 weeks before the meeting takes place, it is vital the paperwork is completed prior to the meeting to ensure effective outcomes from the discussion. As per the Working together guidance, areas for inclusion in the agenda will include:

- Current position and horizon scanning, including overall trends in the school's data and any emerging patterns or issues.
- Looking at the overall position for SA/PA pupils and the trends and reasons for absence within these groups.
- Reviewing progress and/or agreeing additional actions since the last meeting on existing plans.
- Agreeing new joint action plans for SA/PA pupils since the last meeting.
- Sharing best practice with RCBC/other partners.

9.0 Register codes

All schools, except those where all the pupils are boarders, must keep an attendance register in accordance with the [School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024, regulation 10](#). **Regulation 10** sets out the contents of the attendance register and information can also be found in **Chapter 8** of the [Working together guidance](#).

All schools must record attendance accurately in the register and share the required information with DfE and RCBC. Accurate recording will enable schools to regularly analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place (as above). Accurate recording of attendance and absence codes is also essential where RCBC issues penalty notices to parents, or where parents are being prosecuted in the Magistrates Court as a copy of the pupil's registration certificate must be submitted as evidence of an offence. **A case may be jeopardised if register codes have been used incorrectly or are not a true record of events that may have taken place with a pupil's absences.**

All 'N' codes (Reason for absence not yet established) should be converted to the correct code within 5 school days. The attendance and absent code must be applied to pupils not yet of compulsory school age as well as those who are compulsory age. Codes should be entered on to the pupil's main attendance register at the two points in the school day the register is taken, even if schools record attendance for each lesson in cases of secondary schools. A range of new codes were published on 19th August and detailed in the Working together guidance. In summer 2024, the DfE published a [webinar](#) with an explanation of all codes (including new ones).

10.0 Part-time timetables (PTTs)

In **very exceptional circumstances**, where it is in a pupil's best interests (and may assist in improving attendance) there may be a need for a school to provide a pupil of compulsory school age with less than full-time education through a **temporary** part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending school or another setting full-time and a part-time timetable is used to help the pupil access as much education as possible. PTTs may also be used in cases of pupils re-integrating into school after a period of absence due to physical health and/or psychological health reasons, or when transitioning into a new school. The DfE states very clearly in **paragraph 66** of its Working together guidance that PTTs should **not** be used to manage behaviour.

Key considerations and requirements for schools when considering moving a pupil on to a PTT include:

- **Parent and School Agreement/Consent** must be obtained as all pupils are entitled to a full-time education. If parents agree and wish their child to return to full time sooner than planned or with immediate effect this must be honoured even if the school believes it is not in the child's best interests. Equally, school may refuse a parent's request for their child to be placed on to a part-time timetable. School may choose to move the pupil back to full-time at short notice if it is not proving an effective intervention.
- The timetable should be a **temporary** measure and for the **shortest time** possible.
- There should be a **regular review** with input from parents (and pupil where appropriate) using a **pastoral support plan** or similar framework to record details such as actions agreed etc to support the pupil returning to a full-time programme.
- As school is a protective factor for pupils, a **risk assessment** should be conducted to mitigate against potential safeguarding risks when they are absent. This may also include arrangements which become apparent, e.g. adult supervision, travel arrangements at alternative times of day and free school meals (where applicable). The DfE's [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(September 2024\)](#) guidance is a key document which to refer to promote the wellbeing of pupils missing school.
- If the pupil has an **EHCP, or subject to a statutory children's social care plan and/or in the care of the LA** then the relevant RCBC department(s) should be contacted for their input to ensure the child is safeguarded and there

is compliance with any related statutory legislation. Schools may also wish to seek advice and guidance from professionals in RCBC's Specialist Teaching and Learning Service (STLS)/SEND Inclusion Advisers. The school can contact the RCBC Inclusion Team directly for advice.

- Any sessions where the pupil is not required to be in school must be recorded on the register as **authorised absence** (code C2). For non-compulsory aged pupils who are part of a whole year transition (e.g., new reception pupils in September) code X (classed statistically as not a possible attendance) may be applied.
- **Schools should inform RCBC** by completing a part-time timetable agreement which is signed by parents and sent to the LA and complete a return which is sent half-termly with any updates on children on PTTs. reducedtimetable@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk
- Where the **pupil has a social worker**, the school is expected to keep them informed and involved in the process

Schools are required to report how many pupils are on a part-time timetable for the census three times per year.

11.0 Suspensions and permanent exclusions

The most recent DfE guidance related to suspensions, permanent exclusions and pupil movement (September 2024) can be found [here](#). Schools, governing bodies/academy trustees and LAs **must** comply with specific requirements set out in the guidance including:

- The school **notifying parents and RCBC** of any suspension permanent exclusion issued **without delay**.
- School notifying specific teams/professionals where applicable (e.g. **Social Worker or the Virtual School**) of any suspension or permanent exclusion. *If a permanent exclusion is cancelled (known in the past as withdrawn or rescinded), any days served by the pupil before the cancellation **must** be formally recorded and count towards the maximum 45 days of suspension permitted in an academic year.*
- School arranging **provision from day 6** onwards of any suspension which last longer than 5 days (this includes any consecutive suspensions) which may be less than 5 days each but bring the total days above 5).
- School and governors complying with key legislation and guidance including the [Equality Act 2010](#), the [SEND Code of Practice](#) where relevant, and [Keeping children safe in education](#) when suspending or permanently excluding a pupil.

The Governing Board/Academy Trustees convening to consider reinstatement of:

- Any pupil **permanently excluded**. The meeting must be within *15 school days* of the headteacher's notification.
- Any pupil **suspended for more than 15 school days**. The meeting must be within *15 school days* of the headteacher's notification.

- Any pupil **suspended for more than five school days** (or more than ten lunchtimes) in a term where parents have made representation. The meeting must be within *50 school days* of the notification of suspension.
- Any pupil suspended or permanently excluded which would result in the pupil missing a **public examination** or national curriculum test. Governors (may be less than three) must make reasonable steps to meet before the exam.
- The school should inform the Virtual School and Social Services (where the pupil is known to Social Care or in the care of the LA or other LA) of any statutory meeting to consider an exclusion or to any independent review. A copy of any decisions made in those meetings must be shared with RCBC. In the best interests of the pupil, RCBC recommends that any LA representative is invited to contribute and not solely to attend as an observer (see paragraph 104 of the DfE suspensions and permanent exclusions [guidance](#)).
- The school should ensure there is a clear **behaviour policy** accessible to school, parents and pupils (there may be a separate specific exclusion policy).

Additional guidance for schools was published in February 2024 by the DfE; [Behaviour in Schools, Advice for headteachers and school staff](#).

Once all statutory processes have concluded for a permanent exclusion – PEX (including when the governors meeting has been held and within 15 days from date of PEX, unless the parent wishes to challenge the decision via the Independent Review Panel) and the pupil is not reinstated; the school should notify RCBC **of a deletion from admissions register** using the CME return cme@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

Every school has a named RCBC Inclusion Officer to provide advice around exclusion processes and the DfE guidance. Schools should contact the Exclusions Officer for administrative enquiries in relation to DfE guidance and exclusion processes, or their named Inclusion Officer or Inclusion Lead (contacts above) for more specific discussions around the reasons for PEX contact schoolexclusion@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

12.0 Managed moves and off-site directions

The DfE [Suspensions and permanent exclusions including pupil movement guidance](#) (August 2024) recommends headteachers consider a **managed move or off-site direction** for a pupil as a **preventative** measure to exclusion. Paragraph 33 states off-site direction may only be used to improve future behaviour and **not as a sanction or punishment** for past misconduct. It should be a **temporary** intervention which may result in a return to the school or managed move to another mainstream school. Pupils subject to a managed move should not take priority over any pupil who has priority status for admission to the school as detailed in the [School Admissions Code 2021](#).

Governing bodies of maintained schools have the power to direct a pupil off-site for education to improve behaviour under [Section 29A](#) of the Education Act 2002. Academies can arrange off-site provision for similar purposes under their general powers, set out in its *Articles of Association*. The managed move process was

changed by the DfE in September 2022, having previously been a dual registration agreement and temporary.

The differences between managed moves and off-site directions are summarised in the table below:

Move Type	Parental consent	Timeframe	Registration	Provision type
Managed move	Yes	Permanent	Single	School
Off-site direction	No	Temporary	Dual	School or Alternative Provision

The relevant RCBC department should be informed before any managed move or direction off-site is initiated if the pupil has an **EHCP, subject to a statutory children's social care services plan and/or in the care of the LA** so any protective and risks factors are identified and addressed. This will also ensure compliance with any statutory legislation which may influence the suitability of the arrangement.

Schools should ensure that parents and pupils fully understand how a managed move or off-site direction works from the outset and how any direction will be monitored and reviewed. Schools may wish to seek advice and guidance from their linked Inclusion Officer.

During the offsite direction to another school, pupils must be dual registered (D) and added to the school management information system (MIS). For example, if a Redcar and Cleveland schools are sending a pupil on offsite direction to another school, then the pupil should be dual registered. The original school (A) will record the pupil as dual registered, and the offsite direction school (B) should record as dual registered subsidiary. Actual day-to-day attendance or absence is attributed to the offsite direction school (B). Additionally, the offsite direction school (B) would carry any suspensions against their school. If the offsite direction breaks down before the allocated period, then the pupil would return to original school (A). If the incident at the offsite direction school (B) was significant enough to warrant a PEX, then the original school (A) would need to consider the evidence collated from the offsite direction school (B).

13.0 Children with medical needs

LAs have a statutory duty under [Section 19 of the Education Act 1996](#) to ensure suitable education, such as alternative provision, is arranged for children of compulsory school age who, because of health reasons, would not otherwise receive a suitable education. RCBC is undertaking development work around its Section 19 duties with other North-East LAs, the outcome of any developments is not complete at the point this handbook was published but will be updated in due course. The DfE has three guidance documents related to children with medical conditions and

schools attendance including [Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs](#) (Dec 2023), [Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions](#) (Dec 2015) and [Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance](#) (Feb 2023). The national campaign [Moments Matter, Attendance Counts](#) launched by the government in March 2023 continues to run and contains useful resources for schools, especially to promote attendance where absences are for minor health reasons.

RCBC has commissioned River Tees MAT Hospital School to provide education for children who are **too unwell** to attend their home school setting. Educational provision is provided either in their hospital school setting (hospital teaching) or if the child is too unwell to attend the hospital school, educational provision may be offered in the child's home (community teaching), the child will be on a PTT. To access this support, medical evidence must be provided from a suitable qualified medical professional such as a consultant or CAMHS, children will be dual registered and remain on their home school roll. The aim of this provision is to ensure disruption to learning is minimised, good progress is made, and children do not fall behind their peers especially in key subjects of English, maths and science.

A Supporting School Attendance Plan has been developed for schools to use to provide appropriate support and reasonable adjustments for children with medical conditions.



Supporting
Attendance Plan.doc

The NHS has produced guidance for parents and carers in relation to when to keep your child off school - [Is my child too ill for school? - NHS](#)

14.0 Children Missing Education

Children Missing Education (CME) are children of **compulsory school age** who are **not registered pupils** at a school and are **not receiving suitable education otherwise** than at a school (e.g., elective home education). LAs have a duty under [section 436A of the Education Act 1996](#) to make arrangements to establish the identities of children in the circumstances outlined above. A pupil would **not** be classified as CME if they were a persistent or severe absentee in general unless there is continuous absence and indication or confirmation they have not returned or will not return to the area.

For safeguarding purposes, schools and wider service provider partners are advised to notify RCBC of any non-compulsory aged child who may be CME so there is a record and RCBC can follow up when they reach compulsory age.

Updated CME guidance was published by the DfE in August 2024 and found [here](#). Schools have a legal duty to inform RCBC (see policy and associated forms below) of a child missing education and can do this through: cme@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk



Schools should complete a CME referral as soon as they become aware of one of the scenarios below and have completed their own **reasonable enquiries**: In cases where schools intend to delete a pupil's name under any of the three grounds shown below, they should notify RCBC on the CME return.

Note: If a school has a forwarding address for a pupil, then a CME referral is not required and the deletion from admission register form can be completed automatically.

Ground 1(g) within [Regulation 9 of The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#). The pupil no longer normally lives a reasonable distance* from the school and:

- The school does not have reasonable grounds to believe the pupil will attend the school again and the pupil is not a boarder at the school.

The DfE does not define reasonable distance because each case depends on the family situation and the geography of the area, for example, the parent's ability to get the child to the school, a safe walking route or the accessibility of local transportation.

Pupils should not be deleted under this ground in cases where they are generally not attending school, either for authorised or unauthorised reasons. Schools are advised to contact the CME Officer for advice as other measures may be suitable such as a penalty notice or statutory attendance intervention.

Ground 1(h) within [Regulation 9 of The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#). The pupil has been granted a leave of absence and:

- The pupil has not attended school within the ten school days immediately after the end of the period that the leave was granted for.
- The school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or an unavoidable cause and
- The school and the local authority have jointly made reasonable efforts to find out the pupil's location and circumstances, but:
 - They have not succeeded, or
 - They have succeeded but they agree that there are no reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will attend the school again, considering any reasonable steps that could be taken (either jointly or separately) to secure the pupil's attendance.

Ground 1(i) within [Regulation 9 of The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#). The pupil has been continuously absent from school for a period of 20 school days or more and:

- At no point during that period did any of the circumstances in regulation [10\(3\) Table 2 or 10\(4\) Table 3](#) other than the ones for codes G, N, or O apply.

- The school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or an unavoidable cause, and
- The school and the local authority have jointly made reasonable efforts to find out the pupil's location and circumstances, but:
 - They have not succeeded, or
 - They have succeeded but they agree that there are no reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will attend the school again, taking into account any reasonable steps they could take (either jointly or separately) to secure the pupil's attendance.

Reasonable enquiries entail contact with parents, reaching out to any emergency contacts, for example Police Community Support Officers, liaising with other schools where there are siblings (where applicable) and contacting any agencies to whom the family may be known. For safeguarding reasons, schools should conduct a **home visit** where there is no forwarding address and if there is uncertainty surrounding the family relocating. RCBC has a '**caution advised system**' that schools can access to check if there are any known risks to visiting a particular address and should discuss with their allocated AWO if access is required. Each case should be judged on its own merits and professional curiosity should always be applied. Schools should submit a CME referral as soon as enquiries have been completed and within 10 school days of the last time the child attended school. Schools do not have to wait until 10th day of absence if the necessary information is available or investigations are already complete (whether the whereabouts of the pupil is known or not).

Once a CME referral is submitted it will be directed to the CME Officer. RCBC will follow up any lines of enquiry to identify the whereabouts of the pupil and confirm to school via email when investigations are complete and advise for the pupil's name to be deleted* under [Regulation 9](#) of The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. The LA will do this when satisfied that grounds to remove are correct. The register must be recorded up to the day the pupil is deleted, which means the deletion cannot be backdated to when the pupil last attended school or when a CME referral was submitted. Schools must keep pupils on roll until LA investigations are complete but are not required to hold a pupil on roll until they have gone on to the admissions register of a new school in the area they have moved.

If a pupil is known to **Social Care and/or has an EHCP and/or in the care of the LA**, then for safeguarding purposes the school should contact the relevant professional **before** deleting the pupil's name from the admissions register.

A notification of a potential CME does **not** replace safeguarding procedures which a school would follow if a child went missing and there are reasons to believe the child is a risk of immediate harm, in which case standard procedures with the relevant statutory authorities must be pursued by school without delay.

When a pupil is deleted from roll and the **next school is unknown**, the original school should create a common transfer file (CTF) for the destination LA and for the destination school. More details can be found on page 15 of [School to school \(S2S\) guide for schools \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#) guidance.

Schools are **not** required to notify RCBC of pupils who leave school at standard transition points Years 6 or 11.

If a practitioner not based in a school (e.g. Early Help worker) becomes aware of a child who has moved into Redcar and Cleveland without a school place they should notify RCBC's CME Officer. cme@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

The DfE delivered a [webinar](#) for schools in June 2023 about the CME process and examples of good practice including joint work between schools and their LA. For further information [Children missing education: statutory guidance for local authorities and schools - GOV.UK](#)

15.0 Elective Home Education

Elective home education (EHE) falls under the bracket of education otherwise than at school (EOTAS) and describes a choice by parents to provide education for their children either at home, or in some other way, instead of sending them to school full-time. DfE guidance about EHE can be found [here](#)

RCBC's EHE/CME/Exclusions Officer can provide advice and support and visit families to check that arrangements are suitable and signpost to resources and further information. If the LA is not satisfied that a suitable education is in place they may initiate a School Attendance Order and the child will become CME. Parents may be prosecuted under [section 437 of the Education Act 1996](#) if they fail to make suitable arrangements for their child's education.

Schools have a statutory duty to notify the LA when a parent provides notification of their intention to electively home educate their child and can do this by notifying the EHE Officer – EHE@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk Schools should choose CME Guidance Ground F – the parent of a pupil has notified the school in writing that the pupil will be leaving the school to be educated otherwise than at a school. Schools do not need to complete a CME referral first and should ensure the pupil is not under a School Attendance Order. If unsure, email EHE@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

A pupil who is registered at a special school **cannot** be deleted from roll without agreement from the LA in accordance with paragraph 8.6 in this statutory [guidance](#). For any pupil who has an EHCP the school is advised to call an **early annual review** and invite parents and any relevant RCBC practitioners to discuss the matter to ensure the arrangements for the pupil's continued education are suitable.

In any other case the pupil's name **must** be deleted from the admissions register once notification is received from the parent and not held on roll due to any concerns the school may have or due to a belief the parent may have made a rash decision and could change their mind. Notification should ideally be in writing, but verbal notification can be accepted.

The only exception is if the notification from the parent(s) does not state an intention to electively home educate, for example, the parent solely requests for their child to be **'taken off roll.'**

For any queries from schools or parents, the Elective Home Education team can be contacted through EHE@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

16.0 Statutory returns

All schools are legally required to share information from their registers with RCBC, known as 'returns.' There are four types of returns including **new pupil** returns, **deletion** returns, **attendance** returns and **sickness**

New pupil returns

New pupil returns (i.e. notifying RCBC when a pupil's name is added to the admissions register) are managed by the **RCBC Inclusion Team** and should be added to the CME return and emailed to cme@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk



CME Officer return
Sep 2024.docx

Deletion returns

All schools have a statutory duty in accordance with **Regulation 9 of The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024** to notify RCBC of any pupil's name being deleted from its admission register, this is irrespective of whether the pupil is compulsory school age or not. There are 15 grounds for deletion for compulsory aged pupil and 5 grounds for pupils not of compulsory school age, located in **Chapter 7** of the Working together guidance (**paragraphs 222 to 281**). Schools can notify RCBC of any pupil being deleted from its admissions register by adding to the CME return (as above), which should be emailed to cme@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

If a pupil is deleted for a reason not set out in **Regulation 9**, this would be classified as **off rolling** and deemed unlawful. If RCBC becomes aware of a pupil deleted from roll for a reason not set out in legislation, or no notification has been received by RCBC, then an Inclusion Officer may contact the school to advise on process. This may result in a direction from the **Office of the Schools Adjudicator** to reinstate the pupil on to the school roll. Equally, schools must **not** hold pupils on roll if one of the grounds is met. The exception is for a **compulsory** aged pupil on the roll of a **special school** (for example where a parent wishes to electively home educate their child), in which case agreement **must** be sought from the relevant SEND team/department.

Attendance returns

All schools have a statutory duty in accordance with **Regulation 13 of The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024** to notify RCBC of the full names and addresses of all **compulsory aged** pupils who are **continuously** absent for **at least 10 school days**, where 1 or a combination of the 4 unauthorised absent codes are recorded (**G, N, O and/or U**) – see section 7(b). In Redcar and Cleveland attendance data is automatically pulled through from every school's MIS system to RCBC's secure education system (facilitated through a data sharing agreement).

In addition to this from Autumn Term 2025, we will require all schools to provide a return through Broadcast on a **termly** basis and within **10 school days** of the new term (for example, returns should be made within 10 school days of term 2 for all pupils who meet the criteria during term 1), we will support schools to fulfil this. RCBC will also collect additional details such as if the pupil is a **Child in our Care**, has an **EHCP** or subject to a **CP plan** with Children's Social Care to triage if any action is required by RCBC teams to address absences following contact with the school.

An attendance return does not automatically mean RCBC will take any action. Schools will still be expected to complete an attendance return even if they notify RCBC about a pupil's continuous absences for other reasons (for example, when intending to request a penalty notice). Equally, if for example a pupil meets the CME criteria, a CME referral must still be made even if the school has already made an attendance return.

Sickness returns

All schools have a statutory duty in accordance with Regulation 13 of The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 to notify RCBC of the full names and addresses of all **compulsory aged** pupils where there are reasonable grounds to believe the pupil:

1. Will be unable to attend because of sickness for at least **15 consecutive school days**
2. Will be, or will have been, unable to attend because of sickness for a total of at least **15 school days** during the school year, whether **consecutive or not**

In any case, the pupil meets criteria for a sickness return if the absences are recorded using **code I** (illness, not medical or dental appointment) on the register. In Redcar and Cleveland attendance data is automatically pulled through from every school's MIS system to RCBC's secure education system (facilitated through a data sharing agreement).

In addition to this from **Autumn Term 2025**, we will require all schools to provide a return through Broadcast and we will support schools to fulfil this. In cases in scenario 1 above, schools must complete a notification **without delay** if there is reason to believe or confirmation (which may or may not include medical evidence) the pupil will be unable to attend in the next 15 or more days due to illness. Where scenario 2 applies, returns must be made within **10 school days** of the new term (for example, returns should be made **within 10 school days** of term 2 for all pupils who meet the criteria during term 1) but schools may wish to do this more frequently.

Schools will **not** be expected to make a sickness return if it has already done so for that pupil in the same school year and relating to same continuous period of absence, nor in cases where there are concerns about the authenticity of the absences which result in them being recorded as **unauthorised**. RCBC will monitor sickness returns closely to identify if any pupils where we may have a statutory duty to make arrangements for their continued education in accordance with [section 19 of the Education Act 1996](#). [Education Act 1996](#)

Appendix

Further Reading

Department of Education – Working together to improve school attendance [Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#)

Department for Education – Summary of responsibilities for school attendance [Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#)

To support schools to identify the drivers of absence and adopt effective practice to improve attendance [Attendance toolkit for schools.pdf](#)

Sharing good practice [Improving attendance: good practice for schools and multi-academy trusts - Case study - GOV.UK](#)

Department for Education – Toolkit for schools: communicating with families to support attendance [Toolkit for schools: communicating with families to support attendance - GOV.UK](#)

Department for Education - [Attendance campaign communications toolkit for schools.pdf](#)

Guidance for schools in relation to mental health [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools - GOV.UK](#)

Support where mental health is affecting attendance [Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance](#)

Department for Education - [Relationship between mental ill health and absence in students aged 13 to 16 - GOV.UK](#)

[Persistent absence and support for disadvantaged pupils - Committees - UK Parliament](#)

Anna Freud [School attendance and mental wellbeing 2024.pdf](#)

A practical handbook on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) [PHW-WHO-ACEs-Handbook-Eng-18_09_23.pdf](#)

Keeping children safe in education [Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK](#)

Redcar and Cleveland [The Early Help Assessment or Our Family Plan | Redcar and Cleveland](#)

Redcar and Cleveland's [Supporting families toolkit | Redcar and Cleveland](#)

Making every contact count, a health and wellbeing signposting tool [MECC Gateway](#)

Legal Intervention [School attendance and absence: Legal action to enforce school attendance - GOV.UK](#)

Nationally The Children's Commissioner for England has published a large body of work to address this issue

<https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/?s=attendance+>

[Attendance is everyone's business | Children's Commissioner for England](#)

With some excellent resources <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/back-into-school/resources-for-schools/>

<https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/back-into-school/resources-for-families/aaa-guide-for-parents-on-school-attendance.pdf>

The Big Ambition compiles the voices, views and experiences of children about their lives and aspirations and education experiences.

<https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/the-big-ambition>

The Education Endowment Foundation's rapid evidence assessment examines the existing research on interventions that aim to improve pupils' school attendance and the characteristics of these interventions, based on a systematic search of existing literature. [Attendance interventions rapid evidence assessment | EEF](#)

A resource has also been designed by EEF to inform and support school leaders and attendance teams in their work to increase pupil attendance [Supporting attendance | EEF](#)



[EEF podcast: Breakfast club provision in schools](#)



[EEF Podcast: Supporting school attendance](#)

N8 Research Partnership Child of the North series - [CotN Attendance Report 10.pdf](#)

Since 2021, the Centre for Social Justice has been investigating the issue of school absence [Lost and Not Found - The Centre for Social Justice](#)

[The missing link: Restoring the bond between schools and families - The Centre for Social Justice](#)

[ImpactEd Evaluation Attendance Record Report Jan24.pdf](#)

Dedicated website hosted by Skyblue Research Limited for the Making Attendance Everyone's Business approach in Redcar & Cleveland

<https://www.skyblue.org.uk/attendance/index.html>