

INTRODUCTION

Lancashire is a large and diverse county, educating over 170,000 children across more than 700 schools and maintained nurseries. As the local authority, our central aim is to support children, their families, and our schools to ensure every pupil has access to the high-quality education they are entitled to.

Each district in Lancashire has its own distinct character, challenges, and priorities. However, one consistent theme runs throughout our county: the importance of regular school attendance. We believe that by working together, we can make our schools welcoming and inclusive environments where every child feels a sense of belonging.

Attending school regularly is vital—not only for academic achievement, which opens doors to future opportunities, but also for personal growth. School provides children with a sense of community, the chance to build friendships, learn essential life skills, and develop resilience. For many, it offers stability, wellbeing support, and a nurturing environment.

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to a full-time, efficient education suited to their age, ability, and any special educational needs. It is the legal responsibility

of parents to ensure their child receives this education, and for the vast majority, this is best delivered through attendance at a Lancashire school. Our schools and the local authority follow the statutory guidance set out in Working Together to Improve School Attendance to uphold this right.

We recognise that some families face significant barriers to regular attendance. These may include mental health challenges, special educational needs, financial pressures, or changing attitudes towards school following the pandemic. We are committed to addressing these issues through a collaborative and compassionate approach.

This handbook outlines our graduated pathway to improving attendance. It is designed to provide the right support, at the right time, to the right people. Our approach prioritises early intervention and partnership working—with schools, families, and wider services—to ensure every child can access the education they deserve.

Together, we can foster a culture where every child feels welcome, valued, and motivated to attend school regularly—laying the foundation for lifelong success.



HOW FAMILIES CAN SUPPORT GOOD ATTENDANCE

We want every family in Lancashire to be part of our shared commitment to excellent school attendance. A child's right to education is protected by law in England, and it is every parent's legal duty to ensure their child receives full-time education suitable to their age, ability, and any special educational needs, in accordance with Section 7 of the Education Act 1996. Once a child is enrolled at a school, parents have a legal responsibility to ensure regular attendance.

Our schools are committed to supporting families who may face challenges with attendance, because children are best educated, supported, and safeguarded when they are present in school. We encourage parents and carers to work in partnership with schools, especially if invited to discuss attendance concerns. Open communication ensures every child receives the education to which they are entitled.

Following school attendance procedures is essential. This helps staff understand a child's whereabouts and reasons for any absence.

Parents and carers should avoid taking children on holiday during term time, as leave is only granted in truly exceptional circumstances. If a child is unwell, parents should provide medical evidence where possible and keep in regular contact with the school. This enables staff to provide appropriate support and monitor the child's wellbeing. In some cases, home visits may be carried out as part of safeguarding—these should always be welcomed and supported by parents.

In more complex situations, where additional barriers to attendance exist, schools may involve other services such as Children and Family Wellbeing through Early Help. This support is voluntary but highly effective, and we strongly encourage families to engage with it.

If your child is struggling to attend school, your school should be the first point of contact. Should further support be required, the local authority offers additional services. Signposting to these will be available through our parent toolkit. To better understand the process schools follow, please refer to the graduated pathway outlined later in this handbook.



If you are looking for additional resources to support your child's attendance, please see our recommended tools and links below.

How to support your child's attendance - advice from the DFE

Mental Health Resources for parents, children and school staff

Anxiety and school avoidance - support for families

Lancashire Emotional Health in Schools and Colleges

https://homestartcentrallancs.org.uk/trauma-informed-parenting/

https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/

HOW SCHOOLS CAN SUPPORT GOOD ATTENDANCE

We expect that all our Lancashire schools will have up-to-date, attendance policies written to be accessible to all and published clearly on their websites and in other key materials provided by the school. Our schools will ensure that their policies and procedures are made clear to all staff, parents and pupils attending their school at any transition point and annually. The local authority provides policy templates for all local schools to use if they wish to ensure they comply with DfE guidance.

Our schools across Lancashire are expected to be proactive in their approach to managing and improving attendance, as this is essential for children's safeguarding, welfare and academic progress. There is the expectation that attendance is 'everyone's business' within the school and will be led by an attendance champion selected from the school's senior leadership team.

Schools will rigorously analyse their attendance data (with support from the local authority where needed) to enable them to employ attendance interventions swiftly and appropriately. The vast majority of our schools now share live attendance data with the local

authority, enabling the relevant teams to monitor the statutory sickness and absence returns as set out in 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance'.

Early intervention is one of the most successful approaches to securing better attendance, and Lancashire schools will be expected to be able to evidence that approach through their policies and procedures. The DfE have produced absence bandings for each school on View Your Education Data where they are able to track emerging and early persistently absent pupils. A starting point for all schools should be to have their own graduated response, and a clear strategy for identifying and supporting those pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent.

We are also encouraging school staff to discuss absence with pupils and parents in terms of days of absence rather than percentages. This method makes it easier to identify an emerging PA (persistently absent) pupil at any point in the academic year. Schools are also encouraged to identify their vulnerable cohorts and begin support and intervention as early as when the 5 days' absence trigger is hit.



A key focus for our schools and attendance colleagues for 2025-2028 will be early intervention through effective transition planning and arrangements. This means, we will expect our early years settings (where possible) to provide insights and data around attendance concerns to primary schools. This will enable them to start working with any families who may face barriers to attendance as swiftly and effectively as possible. There is the same expectation between key stages 2 and 3. The DFE have now made available attendance data to all secondaries of their new Year 7 cohorts for September 2025 onwards.

This is to enable those secondary colleagues to address any attendance barriers during the transition process and beyond. Schools should also use their own data to analyse any internal transition points where a drop off in attendance is noticed across a cohort. Schools can then plan effectively to prevent this occurrence. The School Attendance Support team have curated research and created a range of materials support with this and they are available in the accompanying toolkit for schools.

Research has shown that schools who build strong working relationships with parents and pupils that last over time see better attendance outcomes overall. This is often done through identifying the best placed staff member to work consistently with that family to educate parents on what good attendance looks like and why it is so important, identify the barriers to attendance and seek ways to

overcome them. We want our schools to listen, understand and support children and families where attendance is an issue, but also be able to challenge where attendance is a concern.

We expect our schools to adopt a 'support first' model before assistance from other partners is sought and to use the School Attendance Support Checklist as their key document to ensure that they have done all they can to assess the barriers to attendance, identify unmet needs and make reasonable adjustments to facilitate attendance. Finally, under the national code of conduct, schools should consider whether more formal, legal interventions are required when they are in the best interests of securing a child's attendance in school, as poor attendance, without good reason, cannot be tolerated.

In Lancashire, we want all our schools to create a welcoming and inclusive environment where attendance is a top priority. Good attendance should be part of everything schools do-from keeping children safe and supporting behaviour, to helping pupils with special educational needs and disabilities. planning lessons, and promoting wellbeing. Schools should praise good attendance and offer the right help when attendance is low, so every child can thrive. We know this can be challenging, so it's important that staff and governors stay focused on it. Schools are encouraged to work closely with the local authority and other partners to keep finding ways to improve attendance.





Sometimes, a school may decide to use a parttime timetable to help a pupil who is finding it hard to attend school. This is only done in rare cases and is usually used to help the pupil gradually return to full-time learning. Any parttime timetable must:

- Be short-term and have a clear reason for being used.
- Include a review date from the start.
- Focus on increasing the pupil's time in school.

Extra support should be provided alongside the reduced timetable to help the pupil succeed. These timetables should only be used for

vulnerable pupils where attendance is linked to safeguarding. The local authority's Alternative Provision and Attendance teams will check how schools use part-time timetables and can step in if they are not used correctly or the school needs support. More details are available in the part-time timetable guidance.

When a child is off school for medical reasons (recorded with an 'I' code), schools must give them the right support, following the government's guidance on supporting pupils with medical conditions - <u>DFE Supporting Children in School with Medical Conditions.</u>

This means schools must:

- Make sure children with physical or mental health needs are properly supported so they can take part in school life, stay healthy, and do well in their learning.
- Work closely with parents and listen to their views, as well as advice from doctors and health professionals.
- Help pupils keep up with their learning and stay connected with school, so they don't fall behind or feel left out.

If a child is off school for a long time or has frequent absences for medical appointments, schools should put support in place to reduce the impact on their learning and wellbeing. When the child is ready to return, schools should help them settle back in smoothly. Schools must also keep records of the support they provide, especially if a child is off for more than 15 days. In Lancashire, we have extra guidance to help schools manage medical absences and check that children missing 30 sessions or more are getting the right education. This helps with decisions about extra support, including Section 19 provision.

Another important part of the School Attendance Support Checklist is to look out for signs that a child may be avoiding school for emotional reasons, even if there's no clear medical cause. This is known as Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA). Schools should start to explore EBSA if a child often misses school after weekends or holidays, or

has frequent minor illnesses like headaches or stomach aches. These can be early signs that the child is feeling anxious or worried about school.

Lancashire is a trauma-informed council and offers a range of helpful resources for schools, families, and services. More information and tools can be found in the Lancashire Schools' Toolkit and at traumainformedlancashire.co.uk.

There are occasions when schools have done everything they can to support a child's attendance, it hasn't worked, so legal interventions need to be considered. In these situations, schools will have already worked through the applicable sections of the School Attendance Support Checklist, making robust attempts to engage parents and carers to provide support.

For leave during term time, schools can request a penalty notice in line with the National Framework for Penalty Notices. Our penalty notice protocol is co-produced with our neighbours in Blackburn and Blackpool. Lancashire also has an excessive leave protocol to try to reduce the number of children missing school through extended holiday or travel leave.

In cases where a child's absence from school becomes a serious safeguarding concern, Lancashire has an educational neglect protocol for schools to follow.



THE LANCASHIRE GRADUATED ATTENDANCE SUPPORT PATHWAY

In response to attendance, schools will be expected to follow the graduated response below and involve other council services when required to support.

The Lancashire Graduated Attendance Support Pathway

* Percentage attendance and support pathway depends on the context for absence

Universal Pathway

School first approach/

* Pupil attendance above 92%

- · Schools' own attendance initiatives
- Targeting support meetings with LA attendance staff
- · School attendance mailbox/helpline
- Attendance Teams Channel
- School attendance local networks
- School attendance support checklist
- · Attendance Toolkit
- Virtual school (for LAC, PLAC children with Social worker)
- · Equality and Diversity teams
- Universal offer/provision and graduated response for pupils with SEND needs
- Adaptive teaching and screening for unidentified needs.
- Use of Ordinarily Available Provision Toolkit.

Improvement Pathway

School and the LA School Attendance Support Team/wider services

Pupil attendance between 71-92%

As column 1 plus:

- · Local authority letters to parents
- Attendance panels
- Joint home visits
- Attendance contracts with parents/ attendance action plans
- · Late Gates or other project work
- · Early Help (school led)
- SEN Support and Intervention
- EHCNA (if appropriate)
- School Nurse
- Mental Health Support Services
- Schools own internal AP
- · EBSA and trauma informed approaches

Targeted Pathway

School/SAST/SALT/ CFW and other external services

*Pupil attendance 51-70%

As columns 1 and 2 plus:

- CFW community senior and family intensive support
- · Children and Youth Justice
- CAMHS
- Alternative Provision Parttime timetables
- 3rd Sector support work

Intensive Support Pathway

School/SAST/SALT/ CFW and further external services

*Pupil attendance below 50%

As before plus:

- Children's Social
- · Care/MASH referrals
- Educational Neglect pathway
- Prosecution with Parenting order
- Education
- · Supervision Order





The Universal pathway between 92%-96% attendance (Absent 0-14 days approximately at any point in the school year)

96% attendance is considered good attendance but could still be improved.

Children who fall between 92% - 96% are likely to require some form of intervention and support to ensure their attendance does not decrease. Children below 92% would be considered a concern and therefore fall into the next pathway.

The vast majority of Lancashire children will follow the Universal pathway and responsibility for their attendance will be school led. In keeping with our early intervention ethos, this pathway is for our pupils who have 92% attendance or above. We encourage all schools to use the Lancashire School Attendance Support Checklist as a working document, as soon as any attendance concerns arise, to

facilitate sourcing, documenting and actioning the right support at the right time for these pupils.

We are encouraging schools to act early on days of school missed, rather than absence percentages. It is expected that schools start to provide some form of intervention or support for children in their vulnerable categories such as children with SEN, disadvantaged children, children with a historical pattern of poor attendance or children with a social worker as early as possible - within around 5 days of absence. For other children, schools should be implementing some form of formal intervention within around 10-14 days of absence. If attendance issues are arising, schools should be considering screening for any unmet needs and through Universally Available provision. The Universal pathway would include all expectations as set out in the Schools section above.

The Improvement Pathway attendance between 71 – 92% (55 to 15 days absent at any point in the school year)

The Lancashire Improvement pathway is the suggested response to pupils who start to accrue between 15 and 55 days of absence. We encourage schools to access wider services who can add support for more complex and stubborn barriers to attendance.

These pupils can be discussed, and the relevant services signposted through Targeting Support Meetings, the Local Authority School Attendance Teams channel, via local cluster groups with wider services in attendance and linked TASS projects.

The School Attendance Support Team can also support further by sending our targeted local authority correspondence, attending attendance panels and meetings held by school where capacity within the team allows. For children on this pathway, an Early Help referral will be beneficial in helping to access further avenues of support for the family and to capture the child's voice. Schools should document all support and intervention provided in the School Attendance Support Checklist which has been opened for that child when emerging attendance issues arise (other than absence through extended leave/term time holidays.)

Targeted (absence between 56- 94 days across the school year approximately) and Intensive Support Pathways (95 – 190 days' absence across the school year)

These pathways are for children who have significant persistent absence (at or over 56 days across an academic year.) Depending on the context of the child, further agencies may need to be consulted. For these pupils, the barriers to attendance can be multi-faceted and shifting, requiring a multi-agency support for the family alongside the efforts of school. Cases such as these will be managed by the attendance team and CFW senior colleagues, with input from Inclusion and Alternative Provision where appropriate to ensure that the appropriate professionals work collaboratively on actions and interventions to support the child's attendance.

If families do not engage with services at any point in this journey, this could lead to prosecution for educational neglect, penalty notices, parenting supervision orders or intervention through social care. If families are fully co-operating with services, there shouldn't be a need for such an approach.



HOW LANCASHIRE COUNCIL CAN SUPPORT SCHOOLS

There are several teams within the council that can support the school at a Universal level but that can also help if the needs of the family are more complex. Their roles are listed and outlined below.

- School Attendance Support Team
- SEND statutory services
- · Specialist Teaching service
- The Alternative Provision Team
- Elective Home Education
- Team around the School and Setting Locality groups
- · Pupil Access/Admissions
- School Advisers
- Governor services

- · Children Family and Wellbeing
- Health
- Attendance legal team
- · Children Missing Education
- · Equality and Diversity
- Virtual school
- Social care
- Multi Agency Support Hub (MASH)
- · Child Youth Justice Service
- Young Carers

THE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE SUPPORT TEAM

Lancashire has a dedicated team of 16 wellqualified and experienced staff who work across the entire county with colleagues in our schools and other services. The team comprises an Attendance Lead, three Attendance Consultants and 12 School Attendance Support Workers. The role of the team is to work closely with schools to support them with their attendance and ensure that schools are doing everything within their remit to improve attendance wherever possible. Through the local authority core offer, the team arrange targeting support meetings for all schools in Lancashire. These visits span all of our schools: primary, secondary, independent schools, special schools and pupil referral units. The team are also available, where required, to support maintained nurseries by giving advice on emerging attendance matters and guidance on working with families when discussing the importance of good attendance for younger children.

The team will prioritise the needs of schools based on a number of factors including attendance data, school context, needs identified by the attendance team or school advisers, and requests from schools themselves. Schools identified as being in greater need of support will receive intensive, bespoke input from the attendance team where possible to explore that school's unique context and barriers faced, working collaboratively and creatively to find solutions.

The focus of these meetings are two-fold: firstly to discuss attendance at whole-school level; emerging absence patterns; potential strategies, the school's strengths and areas for development. These discussions will be driven by live data which will underpin a professional conversation around emerging issues, including analysis of the coding of absences and what this coding might indicate when compared to regional and national averages; identification of specific cohorts for intervention and comparison of the school's data with 20 similar schools as identified by the DFE where those reports are available.

The attendance team also manages a dedicated attendance helpline and mailbox for all attendance queries. Supplementing these avenues of support are also face to face district clusters and a new virtual, pan-Lancashire Teams channel where schools can share good practice, access training opportunities and network with other similar schools. Through the Teams channel, schools and local authority colleagues will also be able to access attendance support materials such as letters. updates, templates and latest research. The team provide training for all staff involved with attendance including attendance staff in schools (both operational and strategic) and partners in other local authority services to ensure a coherent and consistent approach to attendance across the local authority.



Training topics include: understanding legal interventions, the role of the school attendance champion, early interventions and whole school approaches, plus an induction session for any school colleagues new to attendance. Training in attendance matters is available for colleagues in Children and Family Wellbeing, Children's Social Care and Youth Work, plus any other colleagues working with young people and their families as it is recognised that all stakeholders involved in attendance must have a clear and accurate understanding of attendance guidance and legislation.

The local authority will also monitor attendance across the county via our live data service. Through this we will gather schools' absence

and returns, contacting schools to discuss ways of supporting these children whilst absent, if appropriate, and when preparing to return to school. Schools' absence returns for sickness will be monitored by the local authority to ensure that schools are meeting their duty in respect of supporting pupils absent due to illness in line with the DFE statutory guidance on supporting children in school with medical conditions DFE Supporting Children in School with Medical Conditions. These returns will also enable the local authority to work with schools when considering the appropriate Section 19 provision for children who cannot attend school due to illness.

SEND STATUTORY SERVICES

This statutory SEND service is responsible for the administration of Education Health and Care plans (EHCP) for children and young people aged 0-25 who are Lancashire residents.

Regular school attendance is an important safeguard, and unexplained non-attendance can be an early indicator of unidentified or unmet need, risk, and vulnerability.

What will we do to support attendance

- Track the attendance of children with an EHCP on a regular basis and notify SEND officers of any cases that require further support/discussion with the school
- · Provide information, advice and guidance support on attendance
- Support colleagues within the local authority to understand the SEND needs of pupils with EHCP where attendance is a barrier.
- Raise the profile of education and the importance of attendance for children with SEND.
- Review the requirements within the EHCP through the annual review and consider ways to improve attendance alongside the school and other services supporting the child or young person.
- Liaise with schools in relation to children with an EHCP on part time timetables to

- ensure that the provision within their EHCP is continuing to be met in line with section 42 of the Children and Families Act.
- Review EOTAS (Education other than at school) packages at least termly, by contacting commissioned providers and collecting information regarding progress towards outcomes and attendance. Ensuring that any increases in packages as per section F provision is commissioned and implemented in a timely way.

- Tracking of attendance will form part of the monthly data analysis by team managers through the internal meetings and considered by the locality team in conjunction with the schools or settings.
- Annual reviews will consider attendance and allow opportunity for those working with the child/young person or family to consider the required provision to support the attendance of children with an EHCP.
- The attendance team will notify the SEND statutory service of any children that are raised through their termly attendance visits that have an EHCP.
- EOTAS panel will consider requests weekly, it will track the attendance data of children and young people monthly.





ALTERNATIVE PROVISION

Alternative provision refers to settings where children attend to receive education that are not maintained schools. These can be pupil referral units, short stay schools, therapeutic provision, tutoring, vocational provision etc. These settings can be commissioned by school to support children or they can be arranged by the council if they are required due to medical need or permanent exclusion.

The Alternative Provision team will:

- Track attendance of children at SEN support will form part of the monthly data analysis by the AP team.
- Work closely with the attendance team/pupil access team to support re-engagement in education within the child's named school when children with SEND or health needs are severely absent or where section 19 temporary provision is required.
- Encourage schools to update the health care plan and include a reintegration plan within it for any child that is receiving section.
- Liaise with the PRU and attendance team to support the attendance of children permanently excluded from school.
- Ensure schools have access to quality assured provisions and a directory of provision available

- The Access to Education panel will consider requests for children who are too unwell to attend school fortnightly and track their attendance to ensure provision remains suitable - Appendix D (Access to Education Process), Appendix E – Access to Education Protocol), Appendix F and G – Terms of reference for the two panels
- The permanent exclusion panel will ensure children are receiving suitable education from Day Six
- The AP team and the Alternative Provision
 Officers will liaise with schools to support
 them in arranging alternative provision where
 this is appropriate and to support with the
 reintegration of children and young people
 into their named school.
- Meet schools to school to discuss the trend of children becoming EHE and look at helpful solutions.
- · Liaise with the SEND team for children with an EHCP at risk of EHE to undertake an emergency review.
- AP work closely with the attendance team to support re-engagement in education in line with the Local Authority Section 19 duty.





or education is deemed unsuitable, the child will be closed to EHE, referred to CME to reintegrate into provision.

See appendices for Elective Home Education guidance and the Elective Home education protocol



TEAM AROUND THE SCHOOL AND SETTINGS EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP OFFICERS

What will we do to support attendance? Team Around the School and Settings is a collaborative way of working across services, schools, colleges, and early years settings with children and young people at the centre of all we do. This multi-agency approach brings together key partners who have the skills and expertise to help address the priorities identified in each locality. Lancashire has a dedicated team of Education Partnership Officers (EPOs) who work across the county to deliver the TASS way of working. Therefore each school is assigned an education partnership officer. This EPO is a key contact for the school who can help to navigate

local community safety partnerships, district councils, health colleagues, voluntary partners and other local partnerships to address these issues.

How will we do it?

Each EPO chairs a Locality Group where partners bring themes and trends to the table that require a TASS response, i.e. a multiagency approach to improve outcomes. If attendance of particular groups is identified as a need in the area, TASS can arrange and facilitate task and finish groups to pull together the right teams to support this.

PUPIL ACCESS

What we do to support attendance
The Pupil Access Team have statutory
responsibilities ensuring children can access
education. There are 3 area-based teams
that oversee the following areas of work that
support school attendance by ensuring pupils
can access or maintain a school place. These
statutory duties include the oversight of:

- · Reception & Year 7 admissions.
- In-Year Admissions.
- Fair Access Protocol / Managed Moves & Off-Site Directions.
- Home to School Transport. Statutory / Discretionary.
- Free School Meals.
- Discretionary clothing grants.
- · Exclusion advice and guidance.

How will we do it?

Reception / Year 7 Admissions:

Pupil Access ensure that offers made to all on time and late primary and secondary school applicants. Appeals and waiting lists operated to increase the number of pupils securing a place at a preferred school. Robust processes in place to identify and track Reception & Year 7 pupils who have been offered a place but who are not admitted each September.

In-Year Admissions:

Parents can seek admission to any school at any time and make an application. Pupil Access provide support and guidance around the school application and appeal process. Where a change of school is in a child's best interest and may help address attendance concerns, Pupil Access will be able to provide advice on school place availability and the next steps parents need to take.

Fair Access Protocol / Managed Moves / Off-Site Directions:

There are district-based Pupil Placement Panels that are overseen by Pupil Access and take place at least every half term. The Panels determine the destination of pupils put forward for reintegration from the PRUs and more widely monitors the progress and attendance of pupils placed under Fair Access, Managed Moves and Off-Site Directions. The panels include representation from the pastoral leads or head teachers in each district and are used to disseminate good practice and discuss behavioural support, attendance and access to Alternative Provision.

Home to School Transport / Discretionary Transport:

The Pupil Access Team assesses all Year 6 pupils to determine entitlement to receive home to school transport assistance to their secondary schools. By undertaking an assessment of Year 6, Pupil Access ensures the parents of all eligible pupils are notified and chased to submit a bus pass application. Consideration is given to whether pupils are in receipt of the qualifying benefits to be awarded a bus pass when attending one of their three nearest schools, where a place could have been secured, and where the school is between 2 and 6 miles from the home address. The Home to School Transport Policy includes the provision of discretionary transport assistance where there has been an unanticipated change of address, due to domestic violence or exceptional circumstances. Transport assistance is also provided for low income families where the pupil has a medical needs or in exceptional circumstances, due to parental incapacity.



Discretionary Clothing Grants:

The Pupil Access Team provide a small number of discretionary clothing grants each year. Although there is limited eligibility criteria, Pupil Access can provide support to families who need to replace or purchase new uniform after a house fire or a change of school when an EHCP is issued. Pupil Access also provide assistance with school clothing where a child's additional needs mean that a parent needs to buy additional uniform throughout the school year.

Exclusions Advice and Guidance:

The Pupil Access Team receive notifications of all suspension and exclusions awarded by Lancashire schools. Pupil Access provide advice to parents, head teachers and colleagues around exclusion procedures and prevention. Pupil Access will challenge schools around any unofficial suspensions and ensure that attendance registers are properly maintained when a pupil is permanently excluded, including their removal from roll.





SCHOOLADVISORYTEAM

School attendance and role of the Advisory Service

The school advisory service supports the local authority's statutory functions to monitor school performance, provide and broker school improvement support and, where a school is underperforming, support the local authority in using its powers to intervene.

The advisory service also offers a range of school improvement services for schools. The focus in to enhance educational outcomes and support and challenge school leadership.

What will we do to support attendance?

- Attendance is a key topic for discussion on any school visit agenda.
- We work closely with attendance and EHE teams to follow up with schools on any queries or concerns.
- We connect school leaders and school staff to relevant services across the authority to support them with attendance, as well as other schools with good practice.
- School leaders are signposted to LA resources for example the EBSA toolkit.
- Attendance is looked at as part of SEND audits.
- Attendance is a key theme discussed within several training courses delivered to schools.
- The advisers keep schools abreast of the latest DfE guidance and LA priorities through

relevant CPD, updates and newsletters.

- Attendance may form part of self-evaluation and development of the headteacher.
- We talk to Ofsted about attendance during a school inspection and seek assurances from schools when responding to complaints raised via Ofsted, which may be around attendance.
- School advisers support the Team Around the School and Settings (TASS) Locality Group Meetings. The TASS model sees a collaborative approach between schools and other agencies to address locality challenges in relation to improving attendance and punctuality (as well as other key issues).

- Through school visits and focus pieces of work with schools.
- By collaborating closely with relevant teams and services, including TASS work and liaison with the school attendance support team.
- By the high-quality training delivered.
- Through relevant signposting, documentation, updates and newsletters.
- · By accurately recording school visits.
- Schools can seek advice from their assigned adviser or the senior school adviser at any time.

GOVERNOR SERVICES

Governor Services provides schools with a clerking service to the governing board. This includes taking minutes of governor meetings, drafting agendas, and keeping records of membership, training, and attendance. The Governing Body Adviser (GBA or clerk) will advise the board on legal and procedural issues, ensuring compliance with governance rules and regulations, and to support the efficient functioning of the board. The GBA will maintain a register of governing body members and report any vacancies. Governor Services also delivers a comprehensive suite of training to governors.

What will we do to support attendance?

- GBAs provide advice and guidance around keeping policies up to date, including those relating to attendance.
- Governor Services provides support to governors about how to hold leaders to account around attendance through training and the Core Agenda materials.

- GBAs effectively captures minutes of board and committee meetings so that discussions and challenge around attendance is captured.
- Governor Services delivers specific training for governors on attendance and the role of the governors.
- GBAs signposts schools to other services where appropriate, for example the Attendance Team.
- Governor Services provides regular local and national updates i.e. of new guidance, developments in education.

- Through attendance of meetings.
- Meeting documents, organisation and information will be shared via GovernorHub.
- Training is available to access via GovernorHub.
- Schools can seek advice from their assigned GBA or the Area Team Manager at any time.





CHILDREN FAMILY WELLBEING SERVICE

What will we do to support attendance?

The Children and Family Wellbeing Service provides wrap around support to children, young people and their families across Lancashire. 10 district-based teams comprised of Neighbourhood Group Workers, Family Support Workers and Youth Workers work directly with children, young people and their families in relation to a wide range of needs. Many of these needs directly impact on a child or young person's attendance and engagement with education settings.

The Children and Family Wellbeing Service has a dedicated team of 29 Community Senior Family Support Workers who work at place with colleagues in our schools and with agencies across Lancashire's Early Help Partnership. The role of this team is to work closely with schools to support them where a family's needs are struggling to be met at Level 2: Early Help on Lancashire's Continuum of Need. This invariably includes children and young people where attendance is a primary issue.

How will we do it?

Through our core offer;

Community Family Support Workers offer schools advice and practical support regarding the use of Early Help Assessments, Plans and the Team Around the Family model with families where there are identified needs. The team work with schools to increase accessibility to wider family support via the Family Hubs Networks. Where there are gaps in support for families and school hold the Lead Professional

role Community SFSWs can provide specific time limited direct work which addresses the impact of parental needs, engagement with support and EBSA. This is in addition to consultation regarding thresholds for more intensive or statutory support.

The Family Hubs and Family Hub Networks of which many schools are part of provides access to the partnership of support services for children, young people and their families including; emotional health and wellbeing, SEND, group activities for children, parenting programs, domestic abuse and targeted youth support. Our Neighbourhood Group Work Offer and Targeted Youth Support Offer delivers evidence-based group work programs within schools in support of their response to the identified needs of children and young people.

Intensive Family Support Workers work with children, young people and their families who are assessed via their Early Help Assessment as requiring Intensive Support. A family's Early Help Plan details how partner agencies within the Team Around the Family will work with the family to address the identified needs and achieve a positive change impacting on the children. In relation to education support needs children who are persistently absent, experience EBSA or are missing education are high priority for Family Intensive Support. We also provide a dedicated helpline; Talkzone which provides children, young people and their families with access to information and support 365 days a year from 2pm to 10pm.





HEALTH

The School Nursing Team work with schoolaged children and young people and their families to improve health and wellbeing outcomes and reduce inequalities and vulnerabilities.

We provide a vital and unique link between school, home and the community. We are there from the start of primary school all the way through to secondary school and on to young adulthood. Throughout these years we guide and support children and help promote good physical and mental health. School nurses not only play a key role in understanding and improving school attendance we are also able to support children who are not accessing education.

We lead the delivery of the 5-19 element of the Healthy Child Programme. This comprehensive programme focuses on interventions, developmental reviews, and providing information and guidance to support and improve the health and wellbeing of children aged 5-19 years old, and up to the age of 25 for young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

What will we do to support attendance?

- We can offer a holistic review of health needs and support Children, Young People and families with health needs that may be impacting on attendance, including liaison and referrals to other health services.
- Children and young people with medical needs are supported so that they feel safe in school and their parents and carers are assured that they are well looked after.
 We can support school with care plans, and we offer training sessions to school staff to help them recognise and manage health conditions including Asthma and Anaphylaxis.

- We deliver a School Health Needs
 Assessments at key transition points
 (Reception, Year 6 & Year 9) utilising a health
 questionnaire. This allows health issues to be
 identified early and appropriate support to be
 put in place.
- We have a robust pathway that was developed in collaboration with the Children Missing Education & School Attendance Legal Lead at Lancashire County Council to identify Children and Young People who are missing in education.
- We follow the PAN Lancs pathway for Fabricated Induced illness.

- When professionals have concerns that a Child or Young Persons attendance at school is being impacted by a health need, they should complete a Request for Support Form (RFS) which can be downloaded from our website: https://lancsyoungpeoplefamilyservice.co.uk/services/professional-information/.
- The form should be completed identifying, what the health need/concern is, what support is required, and that consent has been obtained.
- Please return the completed RFS to vcl.019.singlepointofaccess2@nhs.net
- Once a RFS has been received, the School Nurse Team will review and assess and allocate to a member of the Team if appropriate.
- A member of the team will contact the parent and refer to discuss the referral and plan next steps of support.
- Professionals can contact our dedicated School Nurse Duty Number to request advice however we are unable to accept a request for support via telephone.
- Additionally, parents are also able to contact our dedicated School Nurse Duty Number to request advice support - 0300 247 004

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE LEGAL

What will we do to support attendance:

The School Attendance Legal Team are responsible for delivering the statutory functions for the authority in enforcing registration with school and regular school attendance across all of Lancashire County Council. Legal enforcement of regular school attendance is included in the statutory guidance Working together to improve school attendance and is used where voluntary support has not been effective in improving attendance at school. The team are committed to this 'support first' ethos and have ensured by working collaboratively with School Attendance Support that this ethos is embedded in the local code of conduct and legal intervention application processes.

The School Attendance Legal team will issue notices to improve and penalty notices. They will use the Single Justice Procedure (prosecution without court attendance) and conduct proceedings in the magistrates' courts to prosecute parents under s444 of the Education Act and will request ancillary Parenting Orders as required. Where an Education Supervision Order is required, they will request these via the Family Court and will provide the funding for the application.

How will we do it?

 We will respond to school applications for legal intervention and will either take these applications forward for legal action or will provide useful feedback to schools around the alternative/additional actions they could take to address the attendance issue and/ or improve the application. This will include signposting to their School Attendance Support team officer if required.

- We will adhere to the relevant legislation, statutory guidance and the local code of conduct when making decisions about legal applications and pathways.
- will identify the appropriate legal route on a case-by-case basis, including factors such as previous offending history, extent of the absence, context and reasons offered, attitude of the parent and required legislative processes.
- Schools will be kept informed throughout the process as to where their cases are up to and the final outcomes as soon as they are available.
- We will ensure that School Attendance Legal training and guidance aligns with School Attendance Support team approaches, to maintain consistent messages around attendance improvement and the 'support first' ethos. This includes participating in and contributing to the School Attendance Support Network.
- We will continue to work collaboratively with the School Attendance Support team to ensure schools requiring additional pupil attendance improvement guidance are supported effectively.
- We will work collaboratively with our neighbouring authorities (Blackpool and Blackburn) to maintain a consistent code of conduct for penalty notices which will be reviewed annually and consulted on with schools and partners.
- All schools have an allocated Court Officer who can provide advice on legal cases.





CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION

What we do to support attendance:

The Children Missing Education team are responsible for ensuring that the Local Authority fulfils its statutory duty under Education Act 1996/ Education & Inspections Act 2006 to make arrangements to enable them to identify children and young people in their area who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. The team track children who leave the area or go missing without a school confirmed at their onward destination. They maintain the CME database of all children living in Lancashire who are compulsory school aged and not on roll or in alternative provision (such as Elective Home Education or at college).

The team will ensure that we identify children who are at risk of becoming poor attenders and highlight these children to School Attendance Support when CME involvement closes. We will ensure schools understand their duties in relation to pupils that become CME and how that aligns with their school attendance and safeguarding responsibilities.

How we do it?

 We will respond to school notifications of CME and will either investigate or feedback to schools around the alternative/additional

- actions they could take to address the attendance issue and/or improve the notification. This will include signposting to their School Attendance Support team officer if required.
- We will ensure that CME training and guidance aligns with School Attendance Support team approaches, to maintain consistent messages around attendance improvement. This includes participating in and contributing to the School Attendance Support Network.
- We will work collaboratively with the School Attendance Support team to ensure information and guidance regarding admission and removal from roll is provided to schools and partners.
- We monitor the attendance of any child who has been to CME panel and who had a difficult transition back in to education and/ or was long term CME and has now closed.
 We will notify the School Attendance Support team of any children who appear to be poor attenders so that they can follow up with school as appropriate.
- The CME team has a duty email address which schools can use for any CME related queries: cme@lancashire.gov.uk.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

What we do

The Education Improvement -Equality and Diversity Team work to empower Lancashire pupils from diverse backgrounds to realize their full potential and flourish in education through inclusive partnerships with schools, families, and various agencies, fostering a culture of equality, cohesion, improvement, and diversity. To fulfil this, we promote good attendance in education as we know the impact this has on children and young people's lives.

How we do it

- Liaising between schools and families where attendance is a concern and culture and/or language may be a barrier to parents/carers understanding school's messages about the importance of good attendance. This includes families from different backgrounds including Gypsy Roma Traveller.
- This support can include interpreting (where we have capacity).
- Reinforcing good attendance messages during meetings, workshops, parenting sessions and outreach.
- Parents' leaflets promoting the importance of good attendance available for schools to use on our website in 14 languages (EAL Resources for Schools - Lancashire Professional Development Service). Further translations can be provided if schools request these.
- Support with development of school information packs in various languages to ensure parents gain the correct information from admission.

- Advice to schools regarding comprehensive and effective induction (including cultural awareness), provision and home-school liaison, all of which enable pupils to settle in and feel comfortable in school.
- Some 1:1 support and mentoring for vulnerable children from diverse backgrounds including GRT where attendance may be a concern.

Examples of Practice:

- A) We have worked with groups of schools and mosques In Burnley to share the impact of "extended leave" through both schools and mosques as partners and through local radio stations.
- B) We work closely with lots of families from the Gypsy Roma Traveller Communities, supporting liaison between school and family to promote an increase in attendance.
- C) We support many new to country families in accessing education and take opportunities to share information with them about importance of good attendance before children and young people start school. This takes in our facilities for New to Lancashire families in Preston and Burnley and Nelson (East Lancashire Learning Information Exchange and Central Lancashire Learning and Information Exchange), but we have also met with families/communities to speak about attendance both in schools or in temporary asylum or refugee accommodation.





The Virtual School has robust procedures in place to monitor the attendance of children the local authority looks after (CLA).

The Virtual School report regularly on the school attendance of looked-after children through the authority's corporate parenting structures.

The Virtual School work to ensure that all Lancashire CLA have an up-to-date Personal Education Plan (PEP) and that school attendance information is recorded within them and action planned as appropriate.

The Virtual School works to ensure that there are appropriate arrangements in place to meet the training needs of those responsible for promoting the educational achievement of CLA and previously looked-after children including regarding attendance.

Virtual Schools have an important role to play in understanding and improving the attendance of children with a social worker and children in kinship care.

What will we do to support attendance?

- Deliver training to educational professionals to support attendance
- Track CLA attendance on a regular basis
- Provide information, advice and guidance support on attendance

- Manage and allocate funding based on need to support attendance
- Support colleagues within the local authority
- Raise the profile of education and the importance of attendance for vulnerable children.

How will we do it? Training

- We deliver regular training to education settings on supporting children with emotionally-based school avoidance (EBSA).
- All schools and settings in Lancashire benefit from the offer of whole school/setting attachment and trauma training funded by the Virtual School.
- All schools and settings have access to Virtual reality attachment and trauma training to further enhance their knowledge and skills on how to support vulnerable young people and be more inclusive.
- The Virtual School offers a range of further training to educational settings, Children's Social care (CSC) Staff and parents/ carers which will indirectly support the attendance of vulnerable children and young people through supporting them with their engagement and education.



Children looked-after (CLA)

- The Virtual School commission IRIS (looked after call) who collect daily attendance data from the education settings of children of compulsory school age.
- Termly contact with education settings who have Lancashire CLA on roll. Attendance is one of the specific criteria measured and discussed. Attendance is RAG rated, barriers are identified and support, information, advice and guidance is provided as required. This includes supporting education settings with following the EBSA pathway correctly.
- Education settings are encouraged to contact the Virtual School promptly if they have any attendance concerns.
- Liaise with other local authority agencies including Children's Social care and the attendance team as appropriate to support CLA.

- Consider and recommend alternative provision to support young people with improving their attendance.
- The Virtual School administers the Pupil Premium Plus grant (PPG+), the majority of this is devolved to schools to be used to directly support and enhance the learning of the young person. The Virtual School retain an element of it to provide further support in the most complex cases. This is applied for using a form available from our website.
- We aim to ensure all Lancashire CLA have a termly PEP completed and that attendance is RAG rated and the current % is included. We would then expect to see appropriate actions if attendance was a concern. We aim to ensure that all Lancashire CLA have a PEP quality assured each year which provides a further level of monitoring.

Previously looked-after children (PLAC)

- All education settings, parents/carers and other professionals have access to a mailbox (kinshipcareandPLAC@lancashire.gov.uk) which they can contact for information, advice, guidance and signposting for any educational matters including attendance.
- Promote the effective use of PPG+ to support PLAC and provide advice to schools about this on request.
- Maintain strong relationships with CSC and Adoption Lancashire and Blackpool (ALB).
- We have developed and promote the use of an action-planning document to ensure the needs to these young people are considered and there are plans to meet these.

Children with a social worker and children in Kinship Care

- Raise the profile, promote the importance of education and good attendance and have a culture of high aspirations for these young people with educational settings, CSC staff and other professionals.
- Produce guidance to support CSC with improving the attendance of young people including advice on educational meetings.
- Access to regular support and advice for CSC staff on specific concerns, providing advice on how to promote and secure good attendance.
- Work with CSC to understand the needs of the cohort in their local authority and how best to improve their educational outcomes.
- Promote the use of the action-planning document
- Kinship parents/carers and other professionals working with these young people have access to a mailbox (kinshipcareandPLAC@lancashire.gov.uk) which they can contact for information, advice, guidance and signposting.







MASH/SAFEGUARDING

Poor school attendance is not in itself a child protection matter however regular school attendance is an important safeguard and unexplained non-attendance can be an early indicator of problems, risk, and vulnerability. Schools have a safeguarding duty to promote the welfare of their pupils. They should investigate any unexplained absences and maintain an accurate register of student admissions.

When cases should automatically come to the front door: if there is reason to believe a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, a RFS (see Requesting support from Children's Services procedures) should be made to children's social care at CON4 (and the Police if appropriate). If Educational Neglect is suspected and all of the pathway has been exhausted then schools can consider a referral to MASH under this heading. See Appendix K for this.

What will we do to support attendance?

- Team of social workers, early help workers and education officers can provide advice and guidance on thresholds for intervention around severe attendance concerns.
- MASH will expect that all school attendance avenues have already been explored and exhausted, and that no other options are available.

- MASH will accept and screen RFS where threshold is met, consent for an Early Help assessment has been gained.
- Where consent for an Early Help Assessment cannot be obtained, consideration will be given whether this can be overridden.
- MASH can provide social work input or assessment where cases are deemed to meet statutory threshold for assessment.

How will we do it?

- Provide call-back advice from a qualified social worker or other MASH professional (0300 123 6720) or you can go onto the website – <u>Click here</u> - and complete the call back request form yourself
- Once a RFS has been received the social worker will consider the information provided, the referrer may be asked to provide further information so that the social worker can ascertain the impacts to the child.
- The social worker will consider whether to progress to MASH assessment and gather information from MASH partners.
- Determine whether the case meets / doesn't meet threshold for Children's Social Care involvement or assessment.
- Provide a response within 24hrs to the referrer.

CYJS

Lancashire Child and Youth Justice Service (CYJS)

What will we do to support attendance:

Lancashire CYJS has a Development Manager for Education Training and Employment (ETE) who covers the whole county and also has responsibility for Restorative Development and overseeing the work of the Restorative Justice Coordinator and workers. There are also two Young People's Training Officers (YPTO's) who offer further support and a small number of CYJS workers who have the appropriate training to provide IAG sessions (Information Advice and Guidance).

Lancashire CYJS have three guiding principles of 'Child First; Trauma Informed; Restorative'. CYJS are committed to supporting the children who come through the Youth Justice Service by reviewing their school attendance, identify goals, aspirations and any challenges which impact on attendance and/or barriers to accessing provision. Engagement in Education Training or Employment is a key factor which supports children to desist from offending and is therefore a key focus for all children open to the CYJS.

How will we do it?

1. When a child becomes open to CYJS of statutory school age, we will contact the school that they are registered with for

- information on their attendance, welfare, and any identified additional needs. From this information we will identify the children who require support due to missing education, persistently not attending, or have SEN.
- 2. The Case Managers and CYJS workers allocated to the child will discuss any education concerns with the child and parents and will consider any support needs as part of the child's plan. They can attend school meetings to advocate for the child and family if/when required. They will highlight any issues/ barriers with ETE development manager who can liaise with wider LCC Education Teams to support.
- 3. The ETE manager reviews the ETE data monthly for the full cohort to identify concerns, support needs, appropriate provision and to also review information sharing requirements with other LCC Education services. This will include the identification of children with attendance issues. This information is also shared and reviewed with support from Inclusion, the CME team, the EHE team and the Attendance team to ensure appropriate support is in place for the child as part of partnership working. The two YPTO's can offer skills-based sessions to children in 1:1 session based at our external projects across county. There is also the opportunity for children to.



- 4. complete skills-based work (eg. Woodwork, gardening) to achieve basic AQA qualifications to enhance their achievements and develop their confidence in accessing provision. They primarily work with children who are post 16 NEET as this is a limited resource and CYJS have high numbers of Post 16 NEET children open to our service who need support. They may work with school aged children who are open to CYJS on intensive orders, who are not in receipt of/ accessing full-time education, although this would not replace the need for the child's formal education provision, and we would work with wider LCC education teams to ensure this is in place and support
- the child to access this.
- 5. Children can complete IAG sessions to consider their goals and aspirations.
- 6. The ETE Development Manager will continue to develop partnership working across all the education teams and information share/review in the best interests of the children. Identifying barriers for children accessing provision will also be an ongoing area of development.
- 7. The ETE Manager will attend all relevant meetings and working groups, to ensure current information/research/policy development can be utilised within CYJS interventions with children and families.

LANCASHIRE YOUNG CARERS SERVICE LANCASHIRE YOUNG CARERS | BARNARDO'S

The Lancashire Young Carers Service is a commissioned service, delivered on Lancashire County Council's behalf by Barnardos. The service works across all 12 districts of Lancashire but does not cover Blackpool or Blackburn with Darwen.

The service delivers our statutory duties to identify, assess and support young people aged 5-18 who may have caring responsibilities.

Being a young carer is defined in law as those who provide regular and ongoing care and emotional support to a family member who is physically ill, disabled or misuses substances. The Lancashire Young Carers Service uses a whole family approach to assess need. The Service works within an Outcomes Framework

to understand how the caring role affects individual children and young people in all aspects of their lives including their attendance in school. The assessment is regularly reviewed to monitor progress and to review the impact of the support offered.

- 2,435 young carers in Lancashire recorded on the 2021 Census
- Over a quarter, 26% indicated their caring responsibilities were over 20 hours per week.
 245 children indicated over 50 hours of care per week.

The Service supports young carers in all aspects of their lives, and a significant part of this support is to ensure that young carers are able to access education, attend school regularly and feel supported in school.



What we will do to support attendance

- Work in partnership with the education sector to upskill school professionals through awareness raising activities to understand the needs of young carers including how best to support them

 especially if they are struggling with balancing attendance in school and their caring responsibilities
- Deliver assemblies developed by young carers so that pupils within schools are able to recognise and understand that they might be a young carer

How will we do it?

- Work with schools to identify Young Carer Champions as the school expert
- Deliver bespoke training to school

- professionals to better understand need and to identify what schools can put in place to support their pupils
- Continue to provide a simple referral pathway into the service to enable a swift assessment
- Focus on support plans with young carers to ensure they feel confident to speak to their school about their caring needs and the impact this has on school life and their attendance
- Coordinate needs- led support, identifying additional services to support young carers and their services where required
- Attend a range of education briefings to highlight the service



APPENDICES

Working Together to Improve School Attendance

Educational Neglect Policy

Section 19 processes

Lancashire guidance on managing pupil absence due to illness

Lancashire Attendance Toolkit for schools

FAP policy

Flexi schooling

P/T timetables

New CME guidance DFE 2025



LANCASHIRE ATTENDANCE HANDBOOK