

Trafford Graduated Response for School Attendance – Toolkit

Level 1 - Low Level Late / Irregular / Non-Attendance

Attendance between 90% and <100% over four weeks

Child / family needs being met by universal services

Support Interventions

- School to contact parent to determine reason for pupil’s absence on first day of absence and expected date of return**
 Identify the person responsible for the task, any back up to cover staff absence, and ensure that adequate training is in place to carry out the role effectively. There should be regular (weekly) meetings between the designated senior attendance lead and the attendance officer and ongoing opportunities for training in the role. See the following which gives examples of attendance good practice [Working together to improve school attendance local authority effective practice examples - YouTube](#)
 It is sometimes necessary to challenge the reason given by a parent for the absence if school believes that it is not justifiable, for example, unexplained illness. **Remember** It is the **school that decides** if the absence is authorised or unauthorised, **not the parent**. Utilise the DfE strapline **“Listen, understand, empathise and support....but do not tolerate”**
 Make sure you have up to date contact details for each parent and up to 3 alternative relative /friend contact details. Update these at the beginning of each school year.
 Contact the parent on each day of absence and mark the register with the most appropriate code for the absence as soon as practicably possible. For a list of the updated absence codes see DfE Guidance - [Working Together To Improve School Attendance](#)
 If you use a text messaging service, make sure the parent receives **follow up contact by phone** if you are not satisfied for any of the reasons given for the absence. See [Texting parents: our key to success in tackling absence – Teaching \(blog.gov.uk\)](#)
 For primary schools, the DfE parent communication guide is helpful for advice on school/parent relations and getting off to a good start [Help for early years providers : Working in partnership with parents and carers \(education.gov.uk\)](#)
 Ensure pupils and parents are aware of when the register officially closes (this is at school’s discretion , no more than 30 minutes from the registration period is deemed good practice) Late arrival after this time should be coded U (unauthorised absence for the session) Arrivals after the register has been taken but within the time limit set for closure should be coded L (late arrival)
- Attendance and monitoring process to identify when absence or punctuality becomes a concern**
 Is this being done regularly and by who? [Access your school attendance data - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
 Is your MIS system set up to achieve this effectively?
[Benefits of a fit for purpose management information system \(MIS\)](#)
 When monitoring individual pupils’ attendance re you able to identify patterns such as last days of term absence, regular Friday /Monday absences, absence patterns that may develop where there are parental shared care arrangements See : [The difference ending term well makes to pupil attendance – Teaching \(blog.gov.uk\)](#)

Ensure regular discussions take place with **form teachers** as they are well placed to identify emerging patterns and specific lesson avoidance

Make contact with siblings' schools to compare attendance

Monitor whole group attendance, for example, those pupils who have free school meals. What can be done to enhance the importance of school attendance amongst parents? How can school reach out? Consider holding a Parents' Workshop. See <https://assets.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wpuploads/2024/07/Top-tips-for-holding-a-parent-and-carers-workshop.pdf>

Make sure you prepare in advance for your termly Targeting Support Meeting with school attendance team as this will help to identify both group and individual attendance problems early on.

- **Support from the school's own attendance officer through telephone calls, letters, emails, and home visits.**

See DfE [Toolkit for schools: communicating with families to support attendance](#)

Model attendance letters can be accessed through the Trafford school attendance hub www.traffordeducation.co.uk/attendance

Where you are following up reasons for absence use telephone contact with the parent rather than e-mail it will save time in the long run

- **Home visits**

Have a home visit policy in place regularly updated which includes a risk assessment, reasons, and procedure for making visits. See Trafford model home visit policy on our attendance hub www.traffordeducation.co.uk/attendance

Agree a home visit with the parent and pupil in advance if you are able and gather as much information as you can before you go. Always go prepared and ready to listen.

Afterwards ensure a full report of the visit is recorded, this will potentially be crucial evidence if legal proceedings are instigated at a later date for irregular attendance.

- **Praise and reward scheme for children entering level one from any higher level.**

Continue with and update the Individual Attendance Plan and monitor the attendance closely

Identify a member of staff with whom the pupil can check in with regularly, this should be the same person to ensure consistency. Regular check ins for at least half a term means a greater chance of the improved attendance continuing.

- **Parents to be offered access to other sources of support if necessary**

It is important to attempt to identify the issue as soon as practicably possible as the problem may be easily resolved before it becomes entrenched.

Keep up to date with current local authority commissioned services. The Trafford Directory provides an excellent guide to the local support offers available to families www.trafforddirectory.co.uk

	<p>If there are potential mental health/ anxiety issues, use the Trafford Emotionally Based School Non Attendance toolkit www.trafforddirectory.co.uk/epsna</p>
Legal Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In cases of parental non-engagement, absences should be unauthorised, pupil attendance should be closely monitored, and a warning letter sent reminding parent of legal responsibility. For model letters, see www.traffordeducation.co.uk/attendance

Level 2 - Medium Level Late / Irregular / Non-Attendance

Attendance between 80% and <90% over four weeks

Child / family may require or would benefit from additional input or support from an agency or agencies

Support Interventions

- **Identifying patterns of absence**

See this example of a [weekly data report](#) broken down into year group and attendance code

Use historic pupil attendance data to target support at key transition points such as years 6 to 7 and 9 to 10

Ensure there is effective communication between feeder primary schools and secondary schools regarding potential attendance issues well in advance of the new academic year.

- **School meeting with parents**

Meetings should include pupils if they are old enough to understand the issue.

See [Toolkit for schools: communicating with families to support attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) for tips on holding effective meetings with parents.

Face to face meetings are often more productive than calls and letters as there is more opportunity to demonstrate a flexible approach

- **Individual attendance plan**

An IAP should set out clear and realistic expectations of the pupil's attendance over a specific period of time. It should also include details of actions the school and the parent (and any support agencies that may be involved) will take to support improvement. A model IAP can be found on our School Attendance Hub pages at www.traffordeducation.co.uk/attendance

- **Request for advice from Trafford's Pupil Absence Team**

Our Pupil Absence Officers are on hand to advise on attendance issues. We have a dedicated e mail address for general advice

pupil.absence@trafford.gov.uk. Referrals for advice on individual cases should be made through the schools' portal:

www.trafford.gov.uk/educationportal

Further instructions and videos explainers detailing how to use the portal can be found at www.traffordeducation.co.uk/educationportal

- **Request for medical evidence**

Government guidance recommends that schools should authorise medical absences **unless they have reasons to doubt that they are genuine**, and that schools should not ask for unnecessary medical evidence.

[The role of the GP in maximising school attendance – BJGP Life](#) looks at the role of the GP in maximising school attendance and sets out 5 principles that GPs should take into account to support pupils continuing to attend school where possible

See: [Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) for general advice on how to support pupils with medical conditions including ensuring every child with a known medical condition

- **Involvement from school nursing team**

If you have parental consent, this can really help with how to manage or help identify a potential medical condition

- **Emotionally based school non-attendance (EBSNA) toolkit**

The main reason reported for illness absence is emotionally based school non attendance. The Trafford EBSNA guidance for schools assists schools with approaching how best to support young people with EBSNA and identifying root causes.

www.trafforddirectory.co.uk/epsna

- **Family help assessment / involvement of Trafford Team Together**

For any child, young person and family who are in need of help and living in Trafford www.trafforddirectory.co.uk/ttt

Early Help Panel. this multi-agency forum, chaired by Children's Social Care, provides a platform for discussion between multi-agency professionals about the provision of a planned package of support for families, taking into account safeguarding needs and a a whole family approach. To refer a family to the Panel see www.trafforddirectory.co.uk/familyhelp

- **In-school pastoral and mentoring support and counselling**

See [Our work with schools - Mind](#) for a whole school approach in promoting good mental health and wellbeing

- **Home visits**

It is really important as a basic safeguarding measure to persist with home visits even if previous attempts have proved unsuccessful. Reports should be recorded o the outcomes of all home visits even if you do not receive an answer. This will provide evidence of what school has done to try and offer support should the case need to be escalated for legal measures at a later date.

- **Individual healthcare plan (IHCP)**

It is important to create an IHCP for any pupil with an identified medical condition, capturing the nature of the condition, impact on attendance and learning, and the strategies in place to support the young person.. It should be a **working document** that is updated regularly to reflect progress or lack of it. An IHCP should be in place before making a referral to the Medical Education Service should it become necessary to do so.

See [Health Conditions in Schools Alliance \(medicalconditionsatschool.org.uk\)](http://medicalconditionsatschool.org.uk) for advice on keeping children with medical conditions safe in school.

- **Referral to external support services / alternative provision such as the Medical Education Service**

The Trafford Directory contains a wealth of resources for supporting families www.trafforddirectory.co.uk

Other recommended sources of support can be found through the following: [Mental health resources for children, students, parents, carers and school/college staff – The Education Hub \(blog.gov.uk\)](#)

[MYTIME | How We Support Schools \(mytimeyoungcarers.org\)](http://mytimeyoungcarers.org) provides advice to schools on how to support young carers.

Referrals to the Trafford Medical Education service should be accompanied by a pupil's IHCP, see

www.trafforddirectory.co.uk/medicaleducation for full referral details

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referral to Trafford Virtual School for children with a social worker www.traffordvirtualschool.com or www.trafforddirectory.co.uk/virtualschool • Referral for specialist assessment (e.g. SEND / CAMHS / EP) www.trafforddirectory.co.uk/senas Trafford CAMHS (formerly Healthy Young Minds Trafford) - Royal Manchester Children's Hospital (mft.nhs.uk)
Legal Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notice to improve school need to send out a formal Notice to Improve when see template on the School Attendance Hub pages www.traffordeducation.co.uk/attendance setting out the recommended improvement period which will be between 3 and 6 weeks depending on each individual case. Should there not be sufficient improvement and further unauthorised absences take place during this period, a Penalty Notice may be requested to be issued. • An attendance contract is a formal written agreement between a parent and either the school (with the exception of independent schools and non- maintained special schools) or local authority to address irregular attendance at school or alternative provision. See the section in DfE Working Together to Improve School Attendance for full details. A Trafford model attendance contract can be found on our School Attendance Hub pages www.traffordeducation.co.uk/attendance

Level 3 - High Level Late / Irregular / Non-Attendance	
Attendance below 80% over four weeks	Child / family are experiencing multiple or complex needs. They are struggling to effect change without the support and intervention of services.
Support Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As at Level 2
Legal Interventions	<p>When all attempts to engage with the family at levels 2 and 3 have failed, referral to pupil absence team for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • penalty notice to be issued by Trafford Council. • prosecution in the absence of the penalty being discharged within 28 days. • consideration of Education Supervision Order (ESO)

Unauthorised Absence after Request for Leave of Absence Refused

10 sessions or more	Any level of child / family vulnerability
Legal Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headteacher requests penalty notice to be issued by Trafford Council. • Prosecution in the absence of the penalty being discharged within 28 days.

Safeguarding

Any Level of Attendance	Child / young person is at risk of or suffering significant harm and is in need of help and protection. Has a high level of unmet and complex needs requiring statutory interventions.
Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate referral by school, School Attendance Team or other concerned agency to Children's Services. • Children's services to conduct an immediate assessment of need or a multi-agency assessment under Children's Act 1989, s17 as appropriate.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people is everybody's business. Poor attendance can be a vital warning sign of safeguarding issues concerning a child or young person. Safeguarding concerns should be referred immediately to Trafford First Response FirstResponse@trafford.gov.uk in line with local safeguarding procedures.