

ATTENDANCE IS EVERYONES BUSINESS

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The phrase "**School attendance is everybody's business**" emphasises that ensuring students attend school regularly is a shared responsibility. It's not just up to the students or their parents.

Everyone includes **teachers, school staff, communities, and even policymakers.**

We all play a role in supporting consistent attendance.

Here are a few key ideas behind this message:

Why Attendance Matters

Academic success: Regular attendance is directly linked to better academic performance.

Social development: Being in school helps children build relationships and social skills.

Long-term impact: Chronic absenteeism can lead to lower graduation rates and fewer opportunities later in life.



WTTISA SCHOOLS DUTIES

Recognise that absence is a symptom and that improving pupil's attendance is part of improving the pupil's overall welfare. This can be achieved by prioritising attendance in strategies on attainment, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, supporting pupils with medical conditions or disabilities, safeguarding, wellbeing, and support for disadvantaged students including use of pupil premium and support for young carers and children with a social worker.



**Attendance
Matters**

Every student. Every day.

SUPPORT FIRST

The 'Support First' approach prioritises early help and intervention before enforcement.

Key principles include:

- Understanding the reasons behind absence.
Listening and Understanding (WTTISA)
- Providing tailored support to pupils and families.
Facilitating Support (WTTISA)
- Collaborating with multi-agency teams.
(FEH/CSC/CAMHS/SCHOOL NURSES)
- Ensuring support is accessible, inclusive, and sustained. (WTTISA)
- Southwark's Three Stage Approach (EIT)



EDUCATIONAL NEGLECT

We want children and young people to be confident, resilient and to thrive in their learning.

There is no statutory definition of educational neglect.

Instead, it is described as a pattern of parental failure to ensure a child receives an education, which may include:

- Not enrolling a child in school.
- Failing to address persistent absenteeism.
- Ignoring special educational needs



SAFEGUARDING & ATTENDANCE

Recognise children missing education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, sexual abuse and child sexual and criminal exploitation.

A minimum standard of safety should be afforded to children not attending school. This includes four groups of children:

- Children who are registered with schools and who are or go missing from school, and give rise to concern about their welfare (these children may be classified as missing, whereabouts unknown);
- Children who are poor attendees at school or who have interrupted school attendance; (EIT)
- Children of school age who are not registered with a school;(CME)
- Children of school age who are educated at home but where there are concerns about their welfare. (EHE/EIT)

RED FLAGS

Additional concerns may be caused if:

- There has been local authority children's or adult's social care or criminal justice system involvement in the past;
- There is a history of mobility;
- There are immigration issues;
- The parents been subject to proceedings in relation to attendance;
- There is a history of poor attendance;
- There is information which suggests the child may be subject to:
 - A forced marriage (see [Forced marriage of a child Procedure](#))
 - Honour based violence (see ['Honour' Based Abuse Procedure](#))
 - Female genital mutilation (see [Female Genital Mutilation \(FGM\) Procedure](#))
 - Sexual exploitation (see [Sexual Exploitation Procedure](#)) and / or trafficking (see [Trafficked and Exploited Children Procedure](#)).

SAFEGUARDING & ATTENDANCE

Recognising that absence is a symptom and that improving pupil's attendance is part of improving the pupil's overall welfare. This can be achieved by prioritising attendance in strategies, such as raising attainment, behaviour and combatting bullying, special educational needs and disabilities, wellbeing, and safeguarding.

Ensuring that attendance improvement is prioritised and strategies and action plans are put in place for pupils with persistent and severe absence is crucial to safeguarding and improving pupils' overall welfare in both the short and long term.

One of the most successful approaches to improving attendance is the sharing of effective practice between schools. Multi-academy trusts and federation governing bodies are, therefore, expected to provide regular opportunities to bring together staff from different schools to learn from each other's attendance expertise and share effective interventions.

SAFEGUARDING & ATTENDANCE

If contact is made with the parent and the child is not missing from home, the member of staff will follow their school procedures for children who are absent. (Attendance Policy)

However, if they are concerned about the welfare of the child (and this is likely to be the case if there is any reason to doubt the reason given by the parent for the child's absence from school), the staff member should discuss the case with the school's designated safeguarding children professional. (Stage 1)

Schools must have systems for monitoring attendance, and where children are attending irregularly the local authority Education Inclusion Team should be notified to ensure the child is safe. (Stage 2 Attendance & Inclusion Consultation)

The local authority has a range of legal powers to enforce school attendance, including the prosecution of parents who fail to ensure that their children attend school regularly. (Stage 3)

WTTISA FRAMEWORK

- EXPECTATION
- MONITOR
- LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND
- FACILITATE SUPPORT
- FORMALISE SUPPORT (Intensify support through statutory children's social care involvement where there are safeguarding concerns, especially where absence becomes severe (below 50% attendance)).
- ENFORCE
- 15. All schools have a continuing responsibility to proactively manage and improve attendance across their school community. As set out in chapter 1, attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all pupils including their safeguarding and welfare and should therefore be seen as everyone's responsibility in school. That starts with the senior attendance champion on the ground, but also includes the school staff.

EDUCATION INCLUSION TEAM

The local authority, statutory safeguarding partners and other local partners therefore have a crucial role in supporting pupils to overcome those barriers and ensuring all children can access the full-time education to which they are entitled. Local authorities are facilitators of wider support needed by individual families and schools to overcome barriers in the short term. They are also strategic leaders that work across a geographical area to remove barriers in the longer term.

EIT can be contacted on **0207 525 2714**

Email Earlyhelp@southwark.gov.uk

Education Inclusion Handbook

<https://services.southwark.gov.uk/childcare-and-parenting/children-s-social-care/family-early-help-feh/education-inclusion-handbook>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>