

Attendance and inclusion is everyone's business



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New DfE guidance documents

From September 2022

Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2022)

Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil, movement (2022)

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New duty to share attendance data

‘Local authorities may seek, **and schools are expected to provide**, more frequent or comprehensive sharing of data than the statutory minimum where it is essential to fulfilling their obligations under the Education Acts...

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New duty to share attendance data

... whilst the law provides access to registers of maintained schools for local authority officers who need access to fulfil their obligations under the Education Acts, **all schools, regardless of whether or not they are covered by that legislation**, are still expected to provide the local authority with access to support joint working between schools, trusts and local authorities.’ (DfE, 2022, p19, para’ 47 and 48)

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New duty to share attendance data

To avoid any unnecessary burdens for schools **this should always be automatic from school registers and not require additional manual data collection/returns** (e.g. through a data aggregator directly from management information systems DfE 2022, para' 47)

To make this as easy as possible for schools, Southwark Council has commissioned *Studybugs*...

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Studybugs

Studybugs is a well established data platform already in use by multiple LAs and schools to share attendance data

It takes approximately 10 minutes to link to your MIS and requires no further time, effort or resource. The LA covers the full cost of the service

Please go back to your schools and encourage senior leaders to sign up

<https://studybugs.com/la/southwark/register>

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Why is this important?

The latest figures from the Department for Education show that more than 125,000 children were out of school more than in school for the first term of this academic year. That is double the number before the pandemic

Of the 39 schools sharing live data there are 2,713 children persistently absent (<90%) There are 95 severely absent pupils (<50%)

Of the total PNA, the attendance of 1,331 children is worsening rather than improving

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Why is this important?

Identify area wide themes to inform strategic planning

Enable social workers and other LA lead professionals to respond in real time to attendance issues and have accurate and up to date information in assessments, plans and reviews

Enhance our termly conversation (TAS or TSM) with every school to identify, discuss and signpost or provide access to services for pupils who are persistently or severely absent or at risk of becoming so

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Inclusion – new guidance

When headteachers suspend or permanently exclude a pupil, they must also notify the local authority and allocated social worker, without delay, regardless of the length of a suspension.

Social workers must be invited to Governors' review panel post and, as far as possible, attend the governing board meeting to share information



Why bother?

Our data shows that we are not being informed of the majority of suspensions in real time

We know from case audits and reviews some permanently excluded children have previous suspensions that the LA were not informed of

These could represent missed opportunities to offer help and support to prevent escalation

We would like to know about every suspension so that we can...



Our role

... **screen every suspension** to ensure that where there unmet risks and needs, help and support is offered to the young person and family

We want to ensure that our records reflect **the true journey of the child and family**

Where there is an allocated social worker or lead professional in the LA, ensure that they are aware of the suspension and **respond quickly** to emerging concerns



How?

Schools could continue to use the existing inclusion passport template available in our online education inclusion handbook to notify the LA of a PEX

For suspensions a email notification with the dates and reasons for the suspension is acceptable

From September online forms will be added to the Education Inclusion Handbook online to enable direct notification avoiding unnecessary bureaucracy



Looking forward

We face a massive challenge in addressing attendance and inclusion in a climate of increasing poverty, deprivation and mental distress - there will be no easy solutions

We know that these measures are not sufficient in themselves to solve these problems, but they are necessary first steps in ensuring that no child falls through the net

Improving school attendance is safeguarding children



Questions?

Education inclusion handbook for schools
and lead professionals

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

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