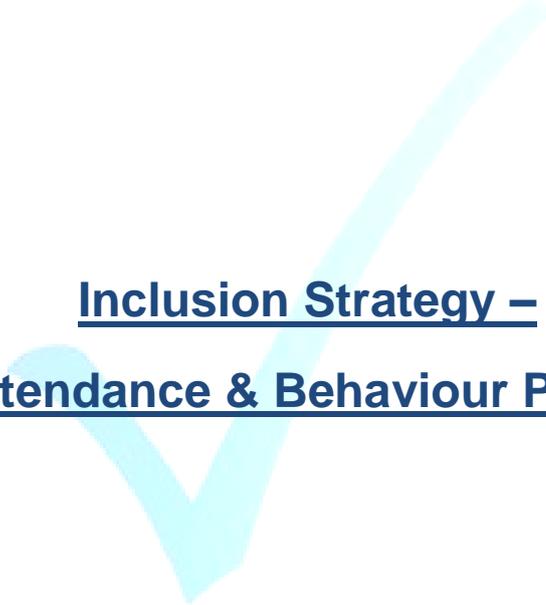


The irtual School

Inclusion Strategy – Attendance & Behaviour Policy



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Context

This Inclusion Strategy outlines the work that Gloucestershire County Council's Virtual School undertake, to meet the duties in relation their Children in Care (CiC) education.

It also identifies the roles and responsibilities of schools, academies and other alternative providers.

The Virtual School is committed to improving and sustaining attendance for its CiC in all educational settings, as we recognises the links between attendance, attainment, safeguarding and future life opportunities.

The key to outstanding attendance is undoubtedly high quality teaching and learning experiences for our children and young people. This is best achieved through educational settings adopting earlier intervention strategies as part of a whole-school approach to behaviour and attendance, supported by consistent statutory action from GCC.

The primary responsibility for ensuring that CiC attend school rests with the local authority, and the parents / carers. Tackling non-attendance is the responsibility of schools, but in partnership with agencies, foster cares and indeed the CiC.

It is the role of schools to ensure that, with the support of the Local Authority, they personalise learning and create an environment in which CiC want to engage and are given the best possible opportunities to achieve their full potential.

The Virtual School support CiC to improve their attendance, and take the responsibility of securing and sustaining a suitable educational setting.

Strategies for improving attendance include a variety of initiatives:

- ✓ Rewards for children, who achieve over 95% attendance at the end of each term.
- ✓ Postcards to children who are making significant progress with improving attendance
- ✓ Multi agency meetings, for those CiC with poor attendance.
- ✓ Sharing of the attendance data from "Getting to Good" meetings.
- ✓ Letters to carers / parents/ Fostering and social care colleagues when attendance is an ongoing serious concern.

- ✓ Discussions with attendance leads and Designated Teachers in school from EPI and / or Virtual School.
- ✓ Home visits in partnership to carers and parents where concerns about attendance are escalating.

Exclusions

‘Statutory guidance’ means that schools, governing bodies and Local Authorities should follow this guidance, unless there is good reason not to in a particular case.

Exclusion from Maintained Schools, Academies and APS in England is statutory guidance relating to:

- ✓ The Education Act 2002, as amended by the Education Act 2011;
- ✓ The School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulations 2012;
- ✓ The Education and Inspections Act 2006; and
- ✓ The Education (Provision of Full-Time Education for Excluded Pupils) (England) Regulations 2007.

‘Head teacher’ in this document and in DfE guidance applies equally to an acting head teacher, the teacher in charge at an Alternative Provision School and principals of academies.

Permanent Exclusion for Children in Care

Any exclusion is detrimental to the education of all children, and in the case of Children in Care, even more so, therefore we have worked with schools and other agencies to develop a supportive way to deal with a CIC that is permanently excluded from school.

It is important to note that circumstances may occur where the school has no choice but to exclude a child for a serious breach of the school behaviour policy, however, this approach is to avoid a permanent exclusion recorded on the child’s record.

Children in Care Transfer Protocol

For Children in Care in Gloucestershire, the CIC Transfer Protocol provides an alternative to permanent exclusion. It allows the head teacher to withdraw the permanent exclusion and decisions about the next steps for the child to be made quickly.

How does the protocol work?

The head teacher will convene a meeting within 5 days of the permanent exclusion, to discuss the pupil needs and the support available.

At this meeting, there should be the Head Teacher, and social worker, (foster carer / parent) and a governor, who can make a decision on behalf of the school governing

body. The meeting will be chaired by the Education Inclusion Lead of the Virtual School.

The Head will present the case for the permanent exclusion, providing evidence that the decision was reasonable, fair, proportionate and lawful.

The professionals present will then have an opportunity to comment on the permanent exclusion and decide if the CiC Protocol should be invoked or if the matter should go to a full governor's disciplinary hearing.

The social worker must agree to use the CiC transfer.

Next Steps

The head teacher will write to the parent/ carer and the **Social Worker**, to advise that the permanent exclusion has been rescinded. They will also notify the local authority of this decision, by emailing a written record to exclusions@gloucestershire.gov.uk

The Local Authority will take responsibility to ensure that a suitable education provision is provided for the pupil, the school will provide work while this is arranged.

Once a new educational setting is found the pupil will be removed from the school roll.

In the case of Y11 CiC transfers, this matter will be considered on an individual basis.

If the decision is NOT to evoke the CiC protocol

The governors will hold a disciplinary hearing within the first 15 school days following the permanent exclusion.

Governors have a duty to review exclusions, using government guidance.

They will invite the head teacher to give the reasons for the exclusion.

They may ask the head teacher to explain the support that the school have offered in order to avoid exclusion.

They will also give an opportunity for the parent / carer and the social worker to give their view about the exclusion, and to ask questions.

Governors can make one of two decisions

1. To uphold the head teacher's decision, or
2. To overturn the head teacher's decision.

If the head teacher's decision is upheld by the governors, Parents will have a right to ask for an independent review panel to consider the decision again. You will be

given details about this in the governors' letter informing you of their decision following the meeting.

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| Fixed Term Exclusion | A child can be excluded from school for up to 45 days in a school year. DfE Guidance indicated that the School Governors Disciplinary Committees must be notified when a child has 15 or more FTE's |
| 1 Day | To monitor the reason for this FTE and to mitigate against a repeat. To consider a restorative approach with the school |
| 5 Day | Early intervention in the school setting, use of additional support with Pupil Premium. Involvement of the Virtual School for advice and guidance at informal pastoral planning meetings. Activate a new Personal Education Plan meeting with new targets for intervention . |
| 5 – 15 Days | High Risk planning meeting, Governors should be advised. Use of External outreach behaviour support, 16 week Pastoral Support Plan with targets and interventions, supported by the Virtual School. Social Worker to consider approaching resource panel for additional funding support. Further Update the Personal Education Plan |
| 15 Days Plus | Multi agency planning meeting, further outreach and consider use of the Alternative Provision schools. |

Attendance

Statutory Duties of Schools and Academies

Schools' responsibilities relating to attendance are detailed in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010.

These responsibilities include:

- ✓ advising GCC of any pupil who fails to attend regularly or has had 10 or more days of continuous unauthorised absence;
- ✓ taking a register twice each day (at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon);
- ✓ marking pupils for each session indicating with the appropriate code whether each was present, absent, engaged in an approved educational

activity off-site or unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances (unavoidable school closure, lack of school/LA transport and not within walking distance or widespread travel disruption due to local/national emergency); and

- ✓ complying with statutory registration & deletion procedures.

Where there are concerns about pupil absence, schools should seek to intervene early and maintain a chronology of all contact regarding pupil absence with the pupil, parent and other agencies. This is of great importance, as schools will be required to produce this as evidence if legal intervention is subsequently used.

For the purposes of school attendance, the term 'parent' means all natural parents, whether they are married or not and includes any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility (as defined in the Children Act 1989) and any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person.

Registration is a key aspect of excellent practice. Registers are legal documents and school leaders should ensure systems for recording attendance and absence is accurate at all times. Schools should maintain an up to date knowledge of pupil registration regulations by accessing information from the Department for Education (DfE) web site. The DfE provides guidance on the use of National Attendance Codes which are used when completing the school census.

Developing and maintaining a whole school approach to attendance is identified as a key principle of excellent practice. Outstanding schools:

- ✓ demonstrate a strong attendance ethos
- ✓ have a clear policy on absence
- ✓ use effective, non-bureaucratic systems
- ✓ use data to improve school and pupil performance
- ✓ promote the importance of legal requirements to all staff, pupils parents/carers
- ✓ intervene early when individual pupil absence gives cause for concern
- ✓ have support systems in place for vulnerable pupils
- ✓ reward and celebrate good and improved attendance
- ✓ ensure the best use of additional support for those with greatest need.

| % Absence | Intervention | | |
|--|------------------------------|--|--|
| | Who? | Authorised Absence | Unauthorised Absence |
| more than 0, up to and including 4% | SCHOOL / Educational Setting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor absence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expect the school Investigate and challenge the reasons for any unauthorised absence –normally a phone call to the carer |
| | Virtual School | Watching brief | |
| more than 4%, up to and including 6% | SCHOOL / Educational Setting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor absence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate and challenge the reasons for any unauthorised absence – Inform the LM and Social Worker in writing that a specific number of sessions have been missed and that future absences could result in an attendance meeting in school. |
| | Virtual School | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitors Absence and ensures the authorised code is a valid reason | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contacts social worker, to highlight the concern for the absences and discuss the expectation of improving attendance. |
| | Social Worker | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> .Discuss with Foster Carer absence concerns | |
| | Inclusion Lead | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintains overview of absence rates - at this stage | |
| more than 6%, up to and including 10% STUDENT AT RISK OF BECOMING | SCHOOL / Educational Setting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor absence Communication all partners. Identify any recurring patterns of absence and discuss concerns with LM / social worker | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate and challenge the reasons for any unauthorised absence Invite Foster carer / Social Worker and LM into school by letter to discuss reasons for absence and strategies to improve attendance |

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| or PERSISTENT ABSENTEE This CiC will now be recorded on the Getting to Good data and shared with senior Social Care Managers | Virtual School & Social Worker | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss with Social Worker is absence due to illness continue, medical evidence may be required in order to continue to authorise. Remind Social Worker and Foster Carer that it is only a head teacher that can authorise an absence. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offers a home visit to gather information and plan strategies to improve attendance Coordinates a meeting in school with social worker and Foster carer to discuss absence and plan strategies to improve attendance |
| | Inclusion Lead | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs to be part of a meetings with Social Worker and Foster Carer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To lead a meeting in school with Social Worker Foster Carer CiC and other agencies as involved. |
| more than 15%, up to and including 20% | SHOOL / Educational Setting | Monitor daily with communication on every day of absence to Social Worker/Foster Carer | TAC meeting to consider the needs of both the child missing education, but what other interventions and strategies can be used. |
| | Virtual School Inclusion Lead | If this is authorised, there needs to be a discussion about the level of absence and any additional needs to avoid the CiC falling behind and missing out on education | <p>This should now be escalated with a clear focus on challenge to both Foster Carer and Social Worker</p> <p>Include the CiC</p> |
| more than 20%, | Virtual School Inclusion Lead | If this is authorised, there needs to be a discussion about the level of absence and any additional needs to avoid the CiC falling behind and missing out on education | <p>This should now be escalated with a clear focus on challenge to both Foster Carer and Social Worker</p> <p>Include the CiC</p> |