

Attendance Connections Summary

11 September 2025

Lead Officer: Fliss Falconer

Key Points Covered

1. Post-Holiday Attendance & Penalty Notices

- Schools should submit penalty notice requests promptly for absences during the last weeks of summer term.
- Ensure accurate absence dates are entered into Capita – these must match attendance certificates.
- Year 2 and Year 6 pupils who have transitioned cannot be issued penalty notices post-transition.

2. Importance of Accurate Data

- Incorrect dates or documentation can invalidate legal proceedings.
- Proofreading is essential to avoid delays or dismissals in court.

3. Legal Timeframes

- Legal proceedings must begin within 26 calendar weeks from the first date of absence.
- Summer holidays reduce this timeframe, making prompt action critical.
- Schools should check Capita regularly to track case progress and respond to requests for additional information.

4. Unpaid Penalty Notices

- After 28 days of non-payment, schools are asked to prepare witness statements and exhibits.
- Parents are contacted automatically and offered a chance to make late payments.
- Schools may also contact parents directly to encourage payment.

5. Witness Statements for Repeat Offences

- For third offences within a rolling 3-year period, schools must bypass penalty notices and proceed directly to court with full documentation.
- Templates and guidance are available on Schoolsnet.

6. Attendance Policy Compliance

- Schools must ensure their attendance policies align with the legal paperwork checklist by October half-term.
- Inclusion Officers will update our records accordingly.

7. Communication with Parents

- Legal team now requires a cover letter (can be emailed) for unauthorised absence forms, detailing:
 - o Date sent
 - o Parent's name and address

- Specific dates of unauthorised absence
- Potential for penalty notice

8. Notices to Improve

- If no improvement is seen within the improvement period, schools may request a penalty notice early.
- Parents must be informed transparently.
- A bespoke letter is required; support is available to help draft this.

Resources

- All slides, templates, and guidance are available on the Schoolsnet Attendance Connections page.

For further support, contact:

 attendance@gloucestershire.gov.uk