Early Years Attendance Toolkit

**Ensuring good attendance – whose job is it?**

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| **Parent/Carer** | **Practitioners** | **Manager** |
| Parent/carers aware of the importance of good attendance and its benefits and are proactive in supporting their children to attend. | Inform and report to manager/s absences of children. | Monitor attendance of children at the setting.  Follow up with parent/carers absences and record information.  Use the framework and suggestions below to explore actions and select the right level of support. |

**Who is here to help me?**

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**Leading and Managing Attendance: a community response**

**If children’s absence in settings is to be addressed effectively, it is essential not only that all members of staff are clear about the role they have to play but also that there is a consistent, staged approach so that action is always taken at the right time and by the right person.**

**This graduated framework demonstrates a staged approach in action.**

**It starts with Level 1 which demonstrates how promoting good attendance is everyone’s responsibility.**

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| **Level 1: UNIVERSAL – Making Attendance Everyone’s Priority** | | |
| **Impact on learning & development**  **What are we seeing?** | **Response**  **What should we be doing?** | **Resources** |
| **Strong leadership which places attendance as everyone’s responsibility within the setting.** | Strategic analysis of attendance data  Regular celebration of attendance  Maintaining/improving attendance is a strategic priority in the setting development plan.  How does our data compare within the collaborative, across the borough and nationally? | This [attendance guidance](https://www.knowsleyinfo.co.uk/sites/default/files/early_years_attendance_guidance_accessible.pdf) can be used by settings to share with whole teams  This [audit](https://www.knowsleyinfo.co.uk/sites/default/files/1a._attendance_audit.docx) may also be useful |
| **A community that values attendance at school** | Children welcomed each day.  Monitoring and celebrating staff attendance.  Regular updates on attendance for all staff.  Communication strategy – *e.g.* text message service, use of social media.  Attendance displays are high profile.  Policy on children with medical conditions and administering medicines.  Parents are expected to communicate absences.  Strong relationship with health professionals and education providers | This [parent leaflet](https://www.knowsleyinfo.co.uk/sites/default/files/early_years_giving_your_child_the_best_start_leaflet_accessible.pdf) will support parent/carers understanding of good attendance as will the [poster](https://www.knowsleyinfo.co.uk/sites/default/files/early_years_traffic_light_poster_accessible.pdf)  Please refer to your own Sickness and Medication policy |
| **High levels of parental engagement - clarity about setting processes and systems** | Attendance policy on setting website with examples of the importance of good attendance – emphasise the positive.  Attendance is a feature in newsletters/communications.  Use good relationships with families to promote the vaccination programmes. | This model [attendance policy](https://www.knowsleyinfo.co.uk/sites/default/files/3._attendance_policy_example_for_early_years.docx) can form the basis of your own practice. |
| **Good behaviour and positive relationships** | An effective behaviour management policy that is applied consistently and understood by all staff is in place.  All phone enquiries from parents, carers and others are responded to promptly. | You will want to make sure that your setting’s behaviour policy is based on your own ethos and approach |
| **Culture of high expectations** | Messages about the importance of high attendance are continually reinforced.  Robust induction processes | You may find this [induction example](https://www.knowsleyinfo.co.uk/sites/default/files/5._staff_induction.docx) extract useful for staff  You may find this [induction example](https://www.knowsleyinfo.co.uk/sites/default/files/5a._parent_induction.docx) extract useful for parent/carers |
| Evidence of successful Level 1 practice | | |
| Letters on attendance  Parent information leaflet  Setting Attendance Guidance  Parental meetings minutes  Behaviour policy  Attendance policy  Medicine Policy  Sick child Policy  Monitoring and analysis of reasons for absence  Setting website  Setting notice/display boards  Responses to parent and child questionnaires | | |

**Level 1 should help you to make sure that you have effective strategies in place to promote good attendance with the majority of children.**

**If this is not working with an child/ren, the staged approach moves on to Level 2.**

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| **Level 2: Early Intervention: A family response to early challenges with children’s attendance** | | |
| **Impact on learning and development**  **What are we seeing?** | **Response**  **What should we be doing?** | **Resources** |
| **Attendance has not improved or has deteriorated over a 6-week period, despite early support interventions.** | Consider the need for any additional referrals to support agencies to improve the wider issues which can support attendance. | [Link to EYs service request form](https://www.knowsleyinfo.co.uk/sites/default/files/early_years_service_request_form.docx)  [Link to MARF](https://marf.knowsley.gov.uk/Home) |
| **Parents don’t appear to have high aspirations for their child to have good attendance.** | Parent partnership targeted interventions | [Link to parent leaflet](https://www.knowsleyinfo.co.uk/sites/default/files/early_years_giving_your_child_the_best_start_leaflet_accessible.pdf) |
| **Increase in occasional absence impacting on learning and/or friendships/relationships/self-regard** | Data analysis: understanding the scale of the problem (patterns).  First day response escalated to home visit.  Early help assessment initiated  Regularly track the pupil in pupil progress meetings – at least half termly.  Set family attendance targets  Consider the child’s additional needs/SEND – ensure the SENDco is involved at all stages.  Involve the SEND/Inclusion team, contact any children with EHCP’s, SEND key worker for further advice and support.  Seek advice from the Educational Psychologist | This [attendance letter](https://www.knowsleyinfo.co.uk/sites/default/files/7._attendance_letter_missed_sessions.docx) for poor attendance and for [progress made](https://www.knowsleyinfo.co.uk/sites/default/files/7a._attendance_letter_congratulations.docx) may be useful |
| **Parental/family dysfunction leads to change in norm, *e.g.***  **reduced engagement of child/parent,**  **change in appearance,**  **change in mood** | Signposting to parenting courses.  Consider support from other agencies  Complete an Early Help Assessment (is appropriate)  Carry out a safeguarding assessment to identify any common themes. | Links to [Early Help](https://www.knowsleyinfo.co.uk/categories/knowsley-early-help), [Safeguarding website](https://www.knowsleyscp.org.uk/) |
| Evidence of effective level 2 practice | | |
| Meeting minutes recommending parenting courses  Early help assessment form  Safeguarding assessment/worry logs/incident reports  Minutes of TAF meeting with actions reviewed and implemented. | | |

**Level 2 should help you to make sure that you have effective strategies in place to promote good attendance with those whose attendance causes concern. If this is not working, the staged approach moves on to Level 3**

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| **Level 3: Targeted Intervention: Brokering support from multi-agencies to meet the challenge of poor attendance** | | |
| **Impact**  **What are we seeing?** | **Response**  **What should we be doing?** | **Resources** |
| **TAF meeting actions have failed to improve attendance** | Family First officer is assigned to family to encourage attendance by developing a more robust action plan and assisting with family issues. |  |
| Evidence of Graduated Response | | |
| Additional referrals to other services – CAMHS, Shield, Butterflies for Bereavement, Diamond for Domestic Abuse.  Family First case notes | | |

**Some top tips for improving attendance**

**Developing a skilled and attendance-knowledgeable workforce**

* Appreciate that a ‘one model fits all’ approach is not effective and that dealing with attendance on an individual needs basis is paramount.
* Robust induction processes in place for staff and families with a focus on attendance

**Effective communication systems**

* Create short, considered letters and other communications, regularly reminding all parents about attendance
* Send letters to parents of children who are absent
* Adopt a personalised response to attendance bearing in mind parents’ and children’s needs
* Contact parents at different times of the day -
* Vary who makes first response calls to maintain impact
* Discussions with families should be centred initially on hopes/aspirations for their children rather than focused on poor attendance. The impact of tackling attendance in research worked best when families were contacted about something else first
* Post COVID-19, regularly and in a variety of ways communicate how setting looks now, how children are enjoying the setting, share pictures on social media, extend positive messaging. Ensure the setting makes it very clear when pupils are too sick to attend and when they should attend

**Rewards and incentives**

* Consider rewarding improved attendance, not just 100%