**Educational Engagement in Sheffield – how children not accessing full-time education should be supported**

**Introduction**

This document provides a quick guide to how children and young people not accessing full-time education should be supported in Sheffield. It covers policy, guidance and practice regarding:

* Reduced time tables
* Alternative provision
* GP protocol
* Child Missing Education (CME)
* Local Authority Attendance (Educational Engagement)
* Fair access
* Managed moves
* Elective home education (EHE)
* School attendance orders (SAO)
* Vulnerable Learner Reviews (VLRs)

Please contact Sheffield City Council’s Inclusion and Attendance team with any enquiries about school attendance: SheffieldInclusion&attendance@sheffield.gov.uk

**Reduced Time Tables**

* A reduced time table should be a temporary arrangement agreed between the school and parent/carer when a child is unable to attend their educational setting full time due to medical needs or a transitional period.

(Reduced time tables can be used in rare situations when it is deemed appropriate to try and increase / re-establish positive behaviours in school).

* All Reduced Time Tables should be recorded on the paperwork included in the Reduced Time Table guidance document (see below) and reported to the Local Authority via AnyComms, this should also be shared with all other agencies involved with the child/family.
* All reduced Time Tables must have parental consent, be risk assessed, time limited with at least fortnightly reviews, to a maximum term of 8 weeks.
* During the period of the Reduced Time Table it would be beneficial to provide parents/carers with work to complete with their child at home following taught sessions in school.
* A ‘C’ code should be added into the register for any agreed sessions that are part of the Reduced Time Table, once the welfare of the child is assured.
* Before commencing a Reduced Time Table for a child with an EHC Plan there must be a discussion with the Parent/carer, Child and SENDSARS and included within the review paperwork.
* Any child who is Looked After should have a PEP review, including the Virtual School prior to any agreement of a Reduced Time Table.
* Any child who is open to social care under Child in Need or Child Protection and may require a reduced time table has to be discussed with the parent/carer and the social worker who all must agree that a Reduced Time Table is necessary.

Further information: Reduced Timetables - Statutory Guidance and Local Protocols for Sheffield Schools, September 2018



**Alternative Provision**

* If a school is considering Alternative Provision for a child, the provider should be checked against the Local Authority framework. You can check this with the Progressions Team <http://lifelonglearningandskills.org/alternative-provision>
* If the provider is not on the Local Authority Framework then the checks and quality assurance are the responsibility of the school. If the Alternative Provision is on the Local Authority Framework, then those checks will have been completed by the Progressions Team.
* It is recommended that the Progressions Team are used when accessing Alternative Provision.
* If a child is attending an Alternative Provision and the attendance of the child at the provision has been confirmed and their welfare assured, a ‘B’ code should be added to the register. (A ‘B’ code cannot be applied when school work is completed at home, unless this is part of virtual learning, lessons planned and monitored live by school staff, or if 1:1 tuition is being provided).
* Alternative provision should be used as a short term intervention to provide children with the skills to be reintegrated back into mainstream. Regular reviews should take place to allow timely reintegration.

**GP Protocol**

* When the frequency / duration / pattern of a child’s absence is attributed to illness and is a cause for concern, the Local Authority believes it is reasonable to request evidence from the GP that the amount of absence is proportionate to the presenting medical issue.
* School attendance staff should always speak with an Attendance Officer within the Local Authority about any concerning patterns of attendance. (If you are unaware who your linked attendance officer is then please contact [SheffieldInclusion&attendance@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:SheffieldInclusion&attendance@sheffield.gov.uk)).
* If support has been offered and / or accessed and the child’s attendance does not improve the attendance officer within the Local Authority will contact the GP via the GP Protocol (Parental consent will be gained to do so).

Further information: School attendance, protocol for schools, General Practitioners and the Local Authority



**Children Missing Education (CME):**

* All children without a school roll, who are not ‘Educated other than at School’ (EHE) will/ should be known to CME and a school place will be allocated.
* CME can be contacted through: ed-missingchildren@sheffield.gov.uk
* When a school place is allocated, support offered, and a parent/carer fails to take their child to the named school a School Attendance Order can be applied for from the Local Authority Attendance Team which will allow for the allocation of a school place via court order.
* If a child remains out of education for longer than 50 days, they will be known to the ‘Every Child in Education Every Day’ Panel, which is a multi-agency panel that will provide holistic, wrap around assessment and support to ensure a child is able to access their full time education.
* CME will work with complex families who are new to city to ensure they are able to access full time education and those children will be covered under the Fair Access Protocol.
* Schools that refuse the admission of children under Fair Access will be discussed as part of the Fair Access Escalation for Direction and Senior Leaders within the LA will make the decision whether to take this to the ESFA requesting direction to a school to admit a child.
* Any School ‘off-rolling’ a child must submit a de-registration form to the Local Authority CME department and must wait for this to be accepted and a leave date given before any child is removed from roll.

Further information:

* Children Missing Education: www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education
* Fair access: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/fair-access-protocols-in-school-admissions](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fair-access-protocols-in-school-admissions)
* Form - Request To Remove Child From School Roll (see supporting documents): www.sheffield.gov.uk/home/schools-childcare/attendance-guidance-schools
* Admissions Directions Flow Chart – Complex Cases



**Local Authority Attendance (Educational Engagement)**

* The Inclusion and Attendance team analyse information provided by the Performance and Analysis Service linked to children who are Persistently Absent (90% and below) from school and children who are B, C and D coded on their attendance certificates for significant and prolonged periods of time.
* The team will work with schools where those identified children attend to understand why a child isn’t in school full time to support and challenge the schools around educational access and to work with the school, parents / carers and children to ensure barriers are removed and a full time education can be accessed.
* When additional support needs are identified the team will work with the school, professionals, parent carers and children to ensure an assessment of need is completed and the right / relevant services and help /support is in place to re-engage in education.
* The team will follow the GP protocol to gather information linked to absence attributed to illness/medical that is a cause for concern.
* The team provide consultation to staff both within the Local Authority and across wider partners around the legalities of attendance, coding application, policy, processes and what schools can / can’t do and what to expect.
* The attendance team process all Penalty Notices for irregular attendance, including aggravated and all fines for Term Time Leave.
* The team can be contacted at: [SheffieldInclusion&attendance@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:SheffieldInclusion&attendance@sheffield.gov.uk)

Further information: School attendance - Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance)

**Fair Access**

* The purpose of the Fair Access Protocol is to ensure that - outside the normal admissions round - unplaced children, especially the most vulnerable, are found and offered a place quickly, so that the amount of time any child is out of school is kept to the minimum. It is aimed at both admission authorities and schools.
* Fair Access Panels in Sheffield are held in schools and cover the allocation of children covered under the Fair Access Protocol and also those who would benefit from a Managed Move.
* When children are placed under the Fair Access Protocol and if any school disagrees or challenges an allocation and an agreement cannot be reached between the school and the Local Authority about the placement of a child, this will follow the Fair Access escalation of direction request through the ESFA and Secretary of State (Academy) or through the Local Authorities direction to school process.

Further information:

* Fair access protocol: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/fair-access-protocols-in-school-admissions](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fair-access-protocols-in-school-admissions)
* Admissions Directions Flow Chart – Complex Cases



**Managed Moves**

* A managed move is the transfer of a pupil to another school on a trial basis, when the pupil is at risk of permanent exclusion and their behaviour is causing serious concerns. It enables a pupil to have a fresh start in a new school, with the support of their family and both their home and new school.
* Managed moves are discussed through Fair Access Panels and all children who are placed on a managed move are recorded by the Local Authority and their progress is tracked.
* Children who are managed moved should be D coded in their original school and should receive their accurate attendance code where their education is being provided.

**Elective Home Education (EHE)**

* When a parent makes a decision to educate their child otherwise than at school this has to be entirely parental choice, no professional or member of the school staffing team should be discussing Education Otherwise as an option and this should never be a recommendation.
* If a parent makes the decision to educate their child otherwise than at school they should inform the school their child has been previously registered at about their intention to educate otherwise in writing and request the school remove from their roll.
* The school should inform the Local Authority of a parents intention to educate otherwise than at school through the submission of a De-Registration form along with written and signed evidence from the parent which outlines their intention to educate their child otherwise than at school.
* Once the Local Authority receives this information within the CME team they will pass the referral through to MAST who will ensure the family is visited and their decision is discussed to reiterate what this means and ascertain why this decision was made.
* If the parent and child are happy with their decision and reasons for choosing to educate otherwise than at school seem appropriate, information for their child will be passed to EHE Advisory Teacher who will offer support to the family around the education they can / could provide.
* In line with the Local Agreement, should the family not wish to continue to educate otherwise and it is within 12 weeks of the de-registration the child should re-enter education in their last named school, even if the family do not wish for their chid to be educated within that provision, they should instead submit an in-year transfer.
* It is recommended that parents submit evidence of how they plan to provide a full time, suitable education appropriate to age, aptitude, ability and any additional needs of their child to the local authority. If the local authority believes no suitable education is being provided, then the Advisory Teacher will seek a School Attendance Order through the Local Authority Attendance Team.
* If a child has been known to Elective Home Education Service and the education has been deemed unsuitable or not full time, a School Attendance Order will be applied for via the Local Authority Attendance Team to allocate a school through a court order.

Further information:

* Welfare of Children without Entitled Educational Provision



**School Attendance Order:**

* School attendance orders (SAO) are used as a tool to attempt to engage children and families with education when either a school place has been allocated and parents have not registered their child, or when the Local Authority believe that children educated otherwise are not receiving a full time, suitable education appropriate to age, aptitude, ability and any additional needs they may have.
* School attendance order procedure follows a legal process outlined in the Education Act, it allows every opportunity prior to the issue of the SAO for parents to engage with the Local Authority to prevent this action and ultimately ensuring children are engaging in education.

**Vulnerable Learner Reviews (VLRs):**

* This process is designed to bring school based support to children and families as well as identifying whole school need areas of training and development and whole school approaches in need of support. This will lead into discussion around children, looking at early identification and assessment linked to:
* SEND, graduated approach
* Persistent absenteeism
* At risk of exclusion
* The Local Authority can provide data to start the discussion in the process and schools will be asked to contribute their own information, this will lead to informed discussion about needs and support.
* As the meetings expand we will see the streamlining of all panels and identification meetings to bring the VLRs to the fore of access into services when schools, children and family’s’ needs are greater than the universal offer.
* The VLR process is being led by the Inclusion and Attendance team in the Local Authority: [SheffieldInclusion&attendance@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:SheffieldInclusion&attendance@sheffield.gov.uk). It links into the work being undertaken with head teachers and Learn Sheffield

Further information: A new VLR process

