

# Coventry Local Authority

## Attendance Strategy

2012-2014

"Promoting positive school attendance  
is everyone's responsibility"



Coventry City Council

# Implementation of Coventry's attendance strategy

## Executive Summary

**Aim of strategy-** In line with the recent report *"Improving attendance at school"* by Charlie Taylor, Government Adviser, Coventry's priorities are:

- ✚ Improving attendance and reducing absence, particularly, persistent absence.
- ✚ Focus on Early Intervention and Prevention
- ✚ Raising standards and narrowing the attainment gap.
- ✚ Safeguard all children

These priorities are especially pertinent for the vulnerable groups identified through the Overcoming Barriers to Learning Programme. The profile of tackling non-school attendance will be raised across all agencies and become a shared responsibility across Services in order to prevent neglect of Children and Young People.

### Overview of key features of the Strategy

- Focus on Early Intervention and Prevention through enhanced support for Primary and other schools where attendance is raised as a concern.  
***Recommendations are for 'a greater focus on improving attendance of vulnerable pupils in Primary schools.'***
- Partnership working with Early Years Foundation Stage; Children's Centres and PVI's to promote 'being ready' for school and offer support for targeted families.  
***Report recognises that 'many schools do not take measures to improve attendance until their pupils reach statutory age but for some children this is already too late.'***
- Focussed work on Primary Schools with well below National Average (94.86% for 10/11), therefore, attendance below 93%. ***'Non- attendance in the early years is approved by parents. This will soon become a pattern and establishes poor attitudes towards school. Youngest children don't play truant from school, they are off because their parents allow it.' 'Evidence shows that children who miss significant amounts of their education in Primary school are more likely to truant later on.'***
- Reinforce parental; school and Local Authority responsibilities in promoting positive school attendance.
- Develop effective multi-agency working practices in order to facilitate early intervention and the delivery of a seamless service. ***'Poor attendance is often a sign that there are more serious issues going on in the child's home...'***
- Identification of families where poor attendance is systemic, for example, via engagement with the 'Troubled Families' programme to offer intensive support and intervention.
- Family approach working holistically to overcome barriers through more effective use of the CAF and flexible early intervention services with appropriate levels of intervention, including Parenting Programmes.

- Improve future economic wellbeing of Children and Young People through good attendance and academic achievement and reduce NEETS. ***'Clear link between poor attendance at school and lower academic achievement. Of pupils who miss more than 50% of school, only 3% manage to achieve five or more GCSE grades A\*-C...73% who have 95% attendance achieve five or more A\*-C grades.'***
- Use wider range of support and sanctions from CAF to criminal prosecution or Child Protection legislation. ***'The best schools work with their parents to improve attendance and they offer a wide range of support to help them get their children to school..'***
- Make the legal process more robust, streamlined and effective by:
  - Developing Magistrates' understanding of the supportive partnership work carried out by schools and Local Authority with families to improve school attendance prior to moving to prosecution.
  - Working with Magistrates to develop consistent sentencing policy and guidelines including the range of community sentence options.
  - Actively pursue prosecution for those parents who fail to carry out their legal responsibility of ensuring their children attend school regularly.
  - Actively pursue non payment for Fixed Term Penalties on behalf of the schools using Civil Debt Recovery.
  - Strengthening of Fixed Penalty Notice Warning for unauthorised holidays and extended holidays in term time incorporated into common school attendance policy or Parent/school agreement. ***'Changes are made to the pupil registration regulations to strengthen the rules on term time holidays. While head teachers should continue to have discretion, holidays in term time should be the exception rather than the rule.'***
- Greater use of publicity to demonstrate outcomes from legal proceedings to deter other families and promote positive school attendance.
- Greater impact of sanction on improving attendance not only for individual child but whole school. Improved communication and common system will allow sanction to have impact on all family members.

**Debbie Carter**

Head of Service

**Sarah Newton**

Service Manager (NW)  
Strategic Lead for Schools

**Sue Diamond**

Advisor 5-18 Behaviour &  
Attendance

# Section 1

## Overall Purpose of Strategy

# Overall Purpose of the Strategy

Coventry is a vibrant and economically successful city. In order to benefit from the opportunities the city offers, it is important that children and young people are successful at school, leaving with the skills and qualifications that enable them to secure employment, continue with their education or access appropriate training courses. Ensuring that children go to school every day will help achieve this ambition by maximising their educational and social achievements and by developing self-discipline and organisation and preparedness for the work environment / culture.

Children's Services work in an integrated way with schools, other agency settings and partners to secure positive outcomes for children and young people in what were the five Every Child Matters outcome areas: Staying Safe, Being Healthy, Enjoying and Achieving, Making a Positive Contribution and Achieving Economic Wellbeing.

There is a strong correlation between good school attendance and achieving positive outcomes for children. It is recognised that attending school regularly can be a protective factor for children and young people. Poor school attendance is a recurrent theme in Serious Case Reviews. It is therefore important to ensure that schools and other settings offer a safe environment, positive relationships, high-quality teaching and learning, and opportunities to develop social and emotional skills. This will include Children's Centres and Nurseries, where education is non compulsory.

The Attendance Strategy has been developed to help the Local Authority, schools, settings and other services work in a more coherent way, making the best use of resources available, in order to ensure that:

- All children and young people can make the most of the opportunities provided by attending school. Standards continue to rise and improvements in attainment are sustained
- Overall attendance improves and levels of persistent absence reduce
- Children are safeguarded because they attend school regularly
- Parents understand the contribution they can make to their child's wellbeing, achievement and good attendance.

This Strategy document:

- Describes the Coventry context
- Identifies the role of the Local Authority, schools, settings and partners in improving attendance
- Describes the key strands of the Strategy.

Related Strategies that have a direct impact on school attendance include:

- Overcoming barriers to learning
- The Social and Emotional Wellbeing Strategy
- The Parenting & Family Support Strategy
- The Community Cohesion Strategy
- The Crime and Disorder Strategy.

**Improving attendance and reducing absence, especially persistent absence, is a priority for Coventry and critical to the city's ambitions to raise standards, narrow the attainment gap and safeguard all children, especially for the vulnerable groups identified through the Overcoming Barriers to Learning Programme and to create a future citizens with a positive attitude to work.**

The key strands of the Strategy are described and developed in Section 3. They can be summarised as

Strand 1: parents and carers;

Strand 2: attendance and school improvement;

Strand 3: the integration of attendance within Children's Services – a family intervention approach;

Strand 4: data and the use of data;

Strand 5: developing the skills of the workforce;

Strand 6: legal sanctions.

Emotional health and wellbeing is a theme that underpins all strands within the Strategy.

## Strand One: Parents and carers (not including Children Looked After by Local Authority)

For the purpose of this document, the term parent includes carers and all those with parental responsibility.

Parents have the responsibility and therefore a vital role to play in ensuring that their child attends school regularly, is on time and is ready to learn. Engaging positively with parents at all stages of their child's education is a key driver for the success of the Attendance Strategy.

Positive relationships between the school and parents will help to ensure good attendance.

Schools need to be accessible and develop a wide range of effective strategies to ensure that relationships are built with all parents. This can include the use of Family SEAL (Social Emotional Aspects of Learning), a family or parent support worker, training for school staff and regular consultation with parents.

Through a continued focus on developing positive and responsible parenting outlined in Coventry's Parenting Strategy parents will be provided with high-quality information through The Family Intervention Service, children's centres, libraries, health centres, early years settings and schools. This will include information about the importance of their child attending school. The Local Authority is working in partnership with schools to give clear messages to parents and is developing a range of guidance relating to school attendance.

Poor school attendance is a safeguarding matter and where parents are not able to ensure that their child attends school regularly, additional and targeted short-term support will be required; this might take the form of a parenting intervention such as involvement in a parenting programme. This level of support should be offered at the earliest opportunity when concerns first emerge. The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) should be used to assess and identify appropriate multi-agency support for the child and family. This will help to identify the underlying causes of poor school attendance and ensure that appropriate solutions are identified and parents and pupils are supported to effectively participate in this process. This may lead to a package of family support which can be tailored to the individual needs of the family.

**The Education Act 1996 places a legal responsibility on parents to ensure their children receive a suitable education and attend school regularly if their child is a registered pupil.** Where appropriate, schools and the Local Authority will move to more assertive intervention. Schools will

be supported and training will be provided for schools deciding to use parenting contracts and penalty notices, and in preparing cases for prosecution.

## Strand Two: Attendance and School Improvement

### Schools

Schools are the key universal children's service that children and young people experience and that can positively influence their lives and emotional wellbeing. A positive ethos, the quality of the curriculum, the organisation and engaging delivery of teaching and learning all contribute to school being a safe and secure environment and a place, children want to be. Building strong relationships with parents and engaging them in their child's education will also help secure good attendance. Regular attendance at school makes a critical contribution to safeguarding children and securing good outcomes. We want our schools to promote a culture of good attendance and to work in partnership with children and young people, their families, Children's Services and other agencies to improve attendance.

Providing children with the opportunities to develop positive social and emotional skills and resilience is crucial in addressing individual needs. Research increasingly demonstrates that positive emotional health and wellbeing are key factors in affecting social development, school attendance and educational attainment. Embedding programmes such as SEAL (Social Emotional Aspects of Learning and Healthy Schools) will support school improvement.

Schools have a key role to play in the early identification of patterns of poor attendance and for taking action at an individual pupil, cohort, departmental and whole-school level. Systems and procedures for encouraging regular attendance should be clearly set out in each school's Attendance Policy and make clear links with the CAF windscreen, Curriculum, Behaviour, Health, Anti-bullying and Emotional Wellbeing Policies. The Attendance Policy should identify how individual cases are managed, how the school works proactively with parents and pupils to ensure that they understand why attendance is important, as well as include an escalation of interventions that will be used.

The Local Authority strongly recommends that all schools adopt a 'Distributed Leadership' model of managing attendance, with all staff having a clear role and responsibility for improving attendance and reducing persistent absence. Staff should be supported to implement this model through professional development opportunities, such as reflective practice, coaching and the shadowing of others. This approach also includes:

- Identifying a senior member of staff as the Attendance Leader
- Identifying specific groups of PA (persistently absent) pupils



- Identifying specific actions for each half-term
- Implementing a scale of escalating interventions that are understood by pupils, their families and staff
- Monitoring the impact of actions taken.
- Issue Fixed Penalty Notices where appropriate.

## **The Local Authority**

Through the process of self-evaluation the school will identify priorities, supported by the Adviser for Behaviour and Attendance and the Education Improvement Advisers. These will include targets for reducing overall absence and persistent absence where attendance has been identified as a priority from attendance data. There is an expectation that in schools where attendance is identified as a priority, Local Authority support will be tailored accordingly.

**The focus for the Local Authority will be on Early Intervention and Prevention, working in a more targeted way with Primary schools and families (where non attendance impacts on a number of siblings). Primary schools will be supported to identify children where there are early signs of poor attendance. The named Children and Families worker – Schools, will identify whether there are other siblings within the same family also with poor attendance and will work with the family through the CAF process to address the issues.**

The Local Authority has a clear role, through the Education Improvement Advisers, to challenge and support Head teachers and senior leaders to ensure that the measures taken to improve attendance and reduce persistent absence are effective.

The Local Authority ensures that the Children and Family First Service and the Adviser for Behaviour & Attendance efficiently and effectively discharges the Local Authority statutory functions relating to attendance.

These include:

- Analysing data from schools, providing reports for the Director of Children's Services and others, reporting on the number of penalty notices issued, etc.
- Providing early intervention via family support interventions
- Prosecuting cases for non-attendance in line with legal and statutory requirements
- Executing post-prosecution interventions, parenting orders and monitoring conditional discharges
- Conducting register and attendance audits annually
- Providing training on legal and statutory requirements
- Monitor children missing from education
- Implementing Child Employment and Entertainment functions

- Developing and co-ordinating city-wide campaigns and initiatives
- Co-ordinating truancy sweeps and liaising with relevant agencies.

**The Local Authority will support schools in taking a rigorous line in reducing absence. While the predominant focus is always to build strong positive relationships between parents, pupils and education providers, the Local Authority will prosecute parents/ carers where it is deemed appropriate. Parents and carers will be encouraged to participate in the CAF process, however, where there is non engagement and/or no improvement in attendance, the Local Authority will prepare a strong case for prosecution and pursue the case with vigour.**

Support for schools for learning, behaviour and attendance is available through SLA; Partnership and Bespoke approaches. **Schools will be offered support based on priority and need.**

Examples of support may include:

- Consultancy and assessments
- Developing preventative early intervention strategies
- Support and advice on establishing and maintaining effective systems and interventions to improve school attendance and reduce persistent absence
- Support to develop processes involved in issuing penalty notices
- Guidance on standard procedures to ensure case management processes are robust, for example, how to record actions taken in individual cases to build up a pre-court file.

Schools can either prepare cases for court themselves or commission support from the family support service

## Strand Three: Integration of Attendance Work Within Children's Services and Partner Agencies

Services and key partners that have the potential to impact on attendance outcomes include the following:

### **LACES (Looked After Children Education Service)**

The Looked After Children Education Service works with schools, social workers, carers and other professionals to support the educational achievement of looked after children. The service also provides a range of material resources, both to young people and to schools. Liaison with schools and other professionals, together with monitoring systems, enables the service to respond to attendance issues at an early stage and provide advice, guidance and support to those working with young people to encourage attendance. In addition, close working relationships with services such as the LAC Mentoring Service and Work Related Learning, provide an effective means of promoting good attendance.

### **Children Centres and Nurseries**

Engagement with young children and their families through a local Children centre or Nursery is a key opportunity to work with parents to ensure that they understand the importance of their role in ensuring good attendance at school. Staff working in these provisions are well placed to provide targeted support to parents and to emphasise the crucial role parents play in their child's learning and development. When children start school, children's centre staff can support the transition, working with the school staff to ensure a positive start, which includes good attendance.

### **MGSS**

The Minority Group Support Services provide a range of services to schools and community groups to enhance the educational provision for Black & Minority Ethnic pupils and their families. The MGSS settlement team works closely with newly arrived families from overseas to ensure children and young people's smooth admission, induction and integration into allocated schools and to help inform parents & carers about educational systems & procedures. Multilingual educational assistants & outreach workers provide home language support to children & families and liaise between schools & families to improve communication and minimise potential cultural or linguistic barriers to learning for BME pupils.

### **Primary Care Trust Coventry**

Health Services and Children's Services work closely together in the context of developing integrated approaches within districts. All health professionals, especially School Nursing Service, have an important role to play in supporting good attendance and challenging reasons for poor or non-attendance. Consideration should always be given to making routine medical appointments for children out of school hours. The Healthy Schools Team supports schools in achieving the National Healthy School Standard and curriculum development.

### **Integrated Youth Service**

The Integrated Youth Support and Targeted Youth Support programmes support the development of enriching experiences, which will enable young people to develop better outcomes, including positive behaviours in relation to attendance.

Persistent non-attendance heightens the possibility of young people being involved in criminal activity. Closer liaison between YOS, Education Services and schools can ensure that each young person known to YOS is afforded the best opportunity to attend school or a suitable alternative provision.

## **Connexions**

The Connexions/ CSWP Service support vulnerable young people to successfully engage in education, employment and training. The ' NEET indicator' can be used for early identification of young people who are most at risk of not achieving their potential.

## **The voluntary and community sector (including Work Related Learning Providers)**

The voluntary and community sector works with many children and young people, including those who are not fully engaged with the education process. This resource is often not fully recognised and the Local Authority should seek opportunities to co-ordinate resources and interventions on a more targeted basis to meet identified district and locality needs.

## **Early intervention and prevention services**

A range of preventative services are available to provide a holistic family intervention approach to assist schools in working with families to improve non This includes intensive intervention for 'Troubled Families' and includes Multi Systemic Therapy for 11- 17 year olds where there are complex needs.-school attendance and persistent absence.

## **Troubled Families Programme formerly Family Intervention Programme**

Troubled Families Programme will work with families identified through the CAF process and is aimed at improved school attendance, preventing children becoming looked after / supporting the rehabilitation of children looked after to their families, reducing the risk of significant harm to children, reducing youth crime and curtailing anti-social behaviour. When fully developed, troubled families programmes will be a discrete service to families who present the greatest risks to children and/or their communities. Its mission will be to provide intensive, high quality, multi-disciplinary interventions offering effective individual/family support and/or therapeutic interventions where:

- children and young people within the household have, or are at risk of, suffering significant harm; and/or
- children and young people within the household are on the margins of entering public care, and/or
- children or young people are returning to the household from public care, and/or
- Significant levels of anti-social behaviour or youth crime are evident.

Troubled families programme is expected to contribute to:

- Improving the parenting and care of children within targeted families
- Improving school attendance of children within targeted families
- Reducing actual and perceived levels of anti-social behaviour and youth crime.

## **Social Care**

Social Care are involved in child protection concerns and where non-school attendance is deemed to be a significant contributing risk factor social care will always take a lead role.

## **West Midlands Police**

West Midlands Police is committed to making Coventry safer: respecting, reassuring and responding to local communities. The police work with partners to identify those young people failing to attend school and who are in danger of becoming involved in crime. The Safer Schools Partnership places officers in schools and has helped to build the relationships with young people and address some attendance issues.

# **Strand Four: Data and the Use of Data**

The Local Authority will work with all schools to ensure that data returns are both timely and accurate.

Data is available to schools and the Local Authority at school, cohort and individual child level through the Watch tables and EMS system. Through improved analysis and better understanding of data by individual schools and by the Local Authority, patterns and trends will be identified and interventions planned. The data will be shared with all partners.

The main focus within this strategy is to ensure that schools understand and own their data, analyse it accurately, identify trends and compare it with the national picture, have a clear picture of the reasons for absence, understand their attendance profile, and have in place actions for improvement. The Local Authority will also analyse school data and work with schools and partners to address issues raised by the analysis.

The four year data trend for schools, will be used to determine the level and frequency of support from the Children and Families Worker (Schools) and strategic support from the Adviser for Behaviour & Attendance.

To improve the accuracy and quality of the data set, the Capita 'ONE' system has been implemented across the whole of Education Services as a major tool for capturing the support provided by the Local Authority for schools and for individual children .

# **Strand Five: Developing the Skills of the Workforce**

We need to ensure that staff in schools, all educational settings and Children and Family First Teams have the knowledge, understanding and skills to meet the needs of our young people. They also need to have opportunities to problem solve, reflect on practice, coach and shadow others.

Training on communication with parents will be developed and made available for school staff, particularly in relation to behaviour and attendance issues. Other training to be developed and made available for staff will include learning from Serious Case Reviews linked to poor school attendance.

In schools, staff with lead responsibility for attendance may wish to obtain the qualification provided by the National Programme of Specialist Leaders – Behaviour and Attendance (NPSLBA). The Local Authority is committed to supporting the continued roll-out of this training programme.

Through Behaviour and Attendance networks, the Local Authority, working in partnership with schools, will provide information for School Attendance Leaders that will enable them to continue to develop their skills and understanding, as well as share effective practice between schools within and outside the Local Authority. Schools will be provided with further training to support them with the effective use and analysis of their data. A range of training courses for Learning, Behaviour and Attendance is also available for schools through Partnership and Bespoke approaches.

Training for Governors will be provided by the Learning and achievement service through governor support and individual governing bodies will be able to request bespoke training in relation to attendance.

## Strand 6: Legal Sanctions

The strategy will articulate the full range of legal sanctions available to the school and Local Authority to be employed consistently to provide a deterrent and encourage parents to exercise their responsibilities in relation to ensuring their children attends school, including:

- Parenting Contracts
- Parenting Orders
- Education Supervision Orders
- School Attendance Orders
- Harbours notices
- Safeguarding escalation
- Penalty Notices
- Prosecution

## Section 2

# Coventry's Attendance Policy

# Coventry Local Authority Attendance Policy

“ To eliminate poor school attendance across Coventry and help children and young people achieve the very best outcomes they can during their time at school. We do this by identifying, supporting and, where necessary, intervening in those families where children have a poor attendance record. As a council we work with schools to celebrate and promote excellent attendance.”

Coventry Local Authority recognises that punctual and regular school attendance is essential to effective learning and, for a significant number of children; poor school attendance is a direct cause of social exclusion and underachievement. It also recognises that children who are registered at a school and fail to attend regularly are placing themselves at greater risk of either offending or becoming the victims of offending by others. (The local authority acknowledges that some parents or carers may choose to home educate their children rather than send them to school) the local authority is committed to improving levels of school attendance and punctuality.

It aims to do this by:

- a) Promoting the value and importance of regular school attendance
- b) Reducing all forms of unjustified absenteeism, especially levels of persistent absenteeism. (a child is classified as being a persistent absentee if he/she has an absence rate of 15% or more).the local authority sets a range of attendance and absence targets, including statutory and non-statutory, and incorporates these into its key plans (including its Children and Young People's Plan) and supports schools to set their own individual targets. The local authority believes that success in obtaining these targets will be best achieved if principles of active and meaningful partnership (with schools, parents, pupils and other agencies and services) inform all local authority activities.

In order to improve levels of school attendance and punctuality the local authority will employ the following strategies:

- a) The provision of support and challenge to all schools, focusing resources on those schools with the most clearly identifiable needs
- b) The provision of consistent and equitable support to parents, ensuring, through an appropriate balance of assistance and insistence that all parents are able to meet their legal responsibilities in relation to school attendance
- c) The development of effective multi-agency working practices in order to facilitate early identification and intervention and the delivery of a seamless service**



- d) The development of a range of relevant performance indicators and the subsequent setting of realistic yet challenging targets.
- e) Actively pursue prosecution for those parents who fail to carry out their legal responsibility of ensuring their children attend school regularly.
- f) Actively pursue non payment for Fixed Term Penalties on behalf of the schools.

In developing its policy and practice for promoting school attendance, the local authority has endeavoured to ensure that the need to recognise the national context and central government priorities is balanced by the need to respond to the local context and particular priorities within Coventry.

## Responsibilities of schools

Schools are responsible for supporting the attendance of their pupils and for responding to difficulties and issues which might lead to non-attendance.

Schools play a major role in improving levels of attendance and punctuality and in reducing absenteeism through adopting a positive and proactive approach towards attendance matters and encouraging parents/carers to take an active role in the schooling of their children.

It is a legal requirement that schools will:

- a) Be open to all pupils for 380 sessions each school year
- b) Maintain attendance registers (either manual or computerised) in accordance with the relevant regulations (see appendix 1); Schools are strongly advised by the local authority to maintain a separate Persistent Absence (PA) register and to monitor PA at 15%, as a discrete category of absenteeism
- c) Accurately record and monitor all absenteeism and lateness
- d) Clearly distinguish between absence which is authorised and absence which is unauthorised according to criteria laid down by the DFE
- e) Set annual targets to reduce overall absence and to reduce levels of persistent absenteeism.

Ensure governors are fully engaged in monitoring and evaluating attendance and PA.

Schools should have a whole school policy on attendance (developed in discussion with staff, governors, parents and pupils) that reflects relevant guidance issued by the DFE and good practice identified locally and nationally.

### **This policy will be regularly monitored and reviewed in order to:**

- a) Give a high priority and value to attendance and punctuality
- b) Ensure compliance with all relevant statutory requirements (particularly with regard to the maintenance of attendance registers)
- c) Involve and identify a role for governors
- d) Identify a key senior member of staff with overall responsibility for attendance and governor.

- e) Help create an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance, addressing school-based causes of poor attendance such as bullying, racism, an inappropriate curriculum, etc.
- f) Ensure that clear attendance information is regularly communicated to parents through the school prospectus, newsletters and parents' evenings. Parents should be specifically reminded of their legal responsibilities for ensuring their children's regular and punctual attendance
- g) Collect and make effective use of attendance data to monitor progress/trends and set targets for improvement
- h) Provide clear guidance to staff on the practice of registration and the appropriate categorisation of absence
- i) Identify clear procedures to identify and follow up all absence and lateness (allocating individual staff roles and responsibilities)
- j) Identify pupils who are vulnerable to becoming persistent absentees and have individual action plans in place for each pupil
- k) Make provision for first-day of absence contact, particularly in relation to pupils who are known to be poor attenders or who might otherwise be considered to be at risk
- l) Monitor post-registration truancy through the taking of class registers and spot checks and ensure that the parents of any post-registration truants are promptly informed and where necessary actively involved
- m) Be alert to critical times (e.g. Key Stage transfers, exam and assessment periods)
- n) Stress to parents the importance of continuity of learning; particularly in relation to requests for leave during term-time (schools are encouraged to grant absence for exceptional leave during term-time sparingly, if at all)**
- o) Establish procedures for reintegrating long-term absentees and pupils who may, for specific reasons, have been on a reduced timetable
- p) Develop attendance incentive schemes which recognise pupils' attendance achievements
- q) Participate in effective networks with other involved agencies and services such as the Family Intervention Service.
- r) Schools should be particularly alert to Children Missing education (CMe) ie those children who appear to have left the school without confirmation. In these circumstances the school should use the CMe procedures and immediately inform the local authority who will undertake stringent checks to establish the missing child's whereabouts and welfare. (See separate Children Missing education Policy).
- s) Issue Fixed Penalty Notices following a period of unauthorised absence, e.g. Holiday during term time/ extended holiday or Persistent lateness. This will follow the blanket warning notice issued in the schools attendance policy, previously signed by parents.**

# Responsibilities of Parents and Carers

Parents/carers are responsible in law for ensuring that their children attend the school at which they are registered; regularly, on time, properly dressed and in a fit condition to learn.

Parents/carers can support the regular and punctual attendance of their children:-

- a) Ensure that their child arrives at school on time each day;
- b) Ensure that their child only misses school for reasons which are unavoidable or justified, such as illness or days of religious observance;
- c) Always notify the school as soon as possible - preferably on the first morning - of any absence;
- d) Confirm this in writing when the child returns to school;
- e) Avoid booking family holidays during term-time;
- f) Take an active interest in their child's school life and work;
- g) Attend parents' evenings and other school events
- h) Ensure that their child completes his/her homework and goes to bed at an appropriate time;
- i) be aware of letters from school which their child brings home;
- j) Talk to the school if they are concerned that their child may be reluctant to attend

## Attendance Audits

Attendance and register audits are available to all schools. Key features of these audits are:

- examining existing procedures
- inspecting attendance-related documentation
- assessing communication with parents
- interviewing staff and pupils
- analysing attendance data
- considering strategies used to promote attendance
- evaluating the effectiveness of EWO/MDT support

## Training

The local authority will offer training to all schools via a programme of workshops or through the National Programme of Specialist Leaders in Behaviour and Attendance (NPSLBA) covering such issues as:

- good practice on the keeping of registers
- IT solutions to registration
- strategies for promoting regular attendance
- strategies for addressing persistent absenteeism
- communication with parents
- good practice in monitoring punctuality
- addressing post-registration truancy
- reintegrating long-term absentees

- developing a whole-school attendance policy
- rewards and incentives
- first-day of absence contact
- primary-secondary transfer.

## **Referrals to Children & Family First Service**

Before accepting a referral from a school, the Children & Families First Service will expect the school to have first undertaken a number of escalating steps to address the pupil's non-attendance.

These would include:

- a) Action by the class teacher/form teacher/attendance lead/CAF coordinator
- b) Action by the Head of year (secondary) or Head or Deputy Head (primary)
- c) Contact with parents via phone call; letter; meeting.
- d) Attempted to identify needs and put in early intervention strategies.

Referrals may be made when:

- a) A pattern of irregular attendance has developed, including a decline in attendance from a child or young person with normally good attendance.
- b) A period of entrenched non-attendance has begun
- c) Communication by the school to the parents has met with little or no response
- d) There is evidence of a lack of parental co-operation in ensuring a child's regular attendance
- e) A pupil is withdrawn from school by the parents who are moving to another area and the school does not have a confirmed destination school/provider where the child will resume his or her education (such pupils will be treated as 'children missing education')
- h) A pattern of persistent lateness has developed

**(See Referral Protocols on following pages)**

## Multi-agency contribution to improving attendance

Activity	Purpose	Detail	Who
Identification of attendance issues	To ensure attendance issues are identified as early as possible with the relevant amount of intervention to improve attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of local Performance Data to identify highest need schools and allocation of CCC Resource (EWS etc)</li> <li>• Identify attendance issues and persistent absence</li> <li>• Speak with parents to review attendance – remind them of attendance legal responsibilities and possible actions</li> <li>• Regular face to face meetings with attendance lead of school, CAF Coordinator and Designated CFF Worker to identify and review actions/interventions where attendance is a concern – where initial school action has not improved attendance</li> </ul>	<p>SD – Advisor (5-18) Behaviour &amp; Attendance Schools Schools</p> <p>School Attendance Lead CAF Coordinator Designated CFF Worker</p>
Formal Assessment of need	To identify whole family underlying issues and causes of attendance problems and inform appropriate intervention needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where Early Concerns are identified, school will phone home, write to parents/carers (include “Access to Universal Triple P” leaflet), invite parents/carers in to the school to discuss concerns.</li> <li>• If attendance continues to deteriorate schools will seek to undertake a home visit and reinforce legalisation regarding school attendance and where appropriate initiate a CAF. Support could be sought from CAF Coordinator – or if complex the designated CFF Worker</li> <li>• Following initial School intervention and CAF initiation, a TAF will be called by the school and where CFF Key Worker becomes involved, they will update the CAF and update the plan – to include interventions to be offered and use of sanctions where appropriate</li> </ul>	<p>Schools</p> <p>Schools – drawing on CAF Coordinator support – and Designated CFF Worker if complex</p> <p>Schools CAF Coordinators Designated CFF Worker</p>
Clear Plan of intervention	To ensure all need is being responded to and all agencies involved are clear about their contributions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early concerns dealt solely by schools to have school attendance plan</li> <li>• CAF initiated, clear Family Support Plan to be created</li> <li>• Updated Plan with enforcement options following CFF Key</li> </ul>	<p>Schools</p> <p>Schools (with support from CAF Coordinator where appropriate) CFF Key Worker</p>

		<p>Worker involvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complex cases plan = parenting contract</li> </ul>	
Attendance Interventions at each level of need	To ensure all agencies are clear about their responsibilities and required contributions at each level, the outcomes that services are trying to achieve and the support available to improve attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Level 2 Attendance from 100 to 90%</b> Initial Concerns identified by schools – telephone calls, school meetings and home visits offered – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ referral to school nurse,</li> <li>○ work with child – reward system,</li> <li>○ initiate CAF,</li> <li>○ appropriate wider referrals – e.g. Triple P, VIBES, MDT</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Complex Level 2/3 Specify Attendance 95-85% +</b> sibling groups, cross phase and cross school families to ensure whole family approach. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Practical support with routines/boundaries</li> <li>○ Parenting (programmes or 1 to 1)</li> <li>○ Direct work with children</li> <li>○ Advice on housing and benefits</li> <li>○ (See wider EIP Slide on windscreen services)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Level 3 Attendance below 85%</b> Clear plan including sanctions, where appropriate with a range of interventions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Parenting Contracts including intervention and sanctions – at this stage confirmation with asb interventions to ensure single aligned contract</li> <li>○ Task Centred and motivational interviewing</li> <li>○ Intensive practical support</li> <li>○ 1 to 1 parenting support</li> <li>○ Direct work with children including three houses approach</li> <li>○ Lower level substance misuse and dv work</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Unsuccessful Level 3 cases following above interventions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>CHECK Whether PO can be sought for non-schl attendance in isolation</b></li> <li>○ Education Supervision Orders (process to be confirmed)</li> <li>○ Penalty Notice</li> <li>○ Prosecution</li> <li>○ CHECK NOTTS FIP Guidance</li> <li>○ Eviction from tenancy</li> <li>○ Referral to social care for possible care proceedings</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Schools Family assistants/volunteers (MDT's)</p> <p>CFF Workers (MDT's) Schools Other appropriate agencies (e.g. health, housing, adult services)</p> <p>CFF Worker (Schools) Schools CFF Worker (MDT's) where asb exists Other appropriate agencies e.g. health, housing, adult services</p> <p>CFF Worker (Schools) Schools CCC Legal Services Social Care</p>

## Coventry Children and Families Worker (schools) contribution to attendance

Intervention	Purpose	Detail	Who
Identification of attendance issues	To ensure attendance issues are identified as early as possible with the relevant amount of intervention to improve attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyse, understand and utilise strategic attendance data for their named schools</li> <li>• Attend half termly (minimum) face to face meetings with attendance lead of school and relevant CAF Coordinator to identify and review actions/interventions where attendance is a concern – where initial school action has not improved attendance or to clarify interventions                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Seek to predict and identify children with additional needs – specifically attendance</li> <li>○ Determine level of need and appropriateness of intervention. The result may be current intervention is sufficient, a CAF is required which the school will undertake with support from the CAF Coordinator or a case needs escalating.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Where a CFF Worker (Schools) is allocated to a priority schools these meetings may take place more regularly to ensure appropriate support, communication and focus between the school and local authority on children where attendance is raising concern.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ This will involve CFF Worker re-enforcing the Attendance policy and reviewing appropriateness of interventions and progress.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	CFF Worker Schools
Formal Assessment of need	To identify whole family underlying issues and causes of attendance problems and inform appropriate intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where CFF Worker support is requested through a school, the worker should check that the following has been undertaken by the school in the majority of cases:-                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Phoning home to discuss concerns with parents,</li> <li>○ Formally writing to parents/carers including relevant information reminding parents of responsibilities and local support (such as “Access to Universal Triple P” leaflet)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	CFF Worker Schools to confirm

	needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Invite parents/carers in to the school to discuss and share concerns.</li> <li>● In complex cases where schools are seeking to complete a CAF, CAF Coordinators will support schools to complete this – or where this has already been completed help to update the CAF with the school.</li> <li>● CFF Workers to attend Team Around the Family (TAF) meetings to support completion of Family Support plan and interventions necessary to support attendance. Confirm Key Worker responsibilities where sibling groups, cross phase and cross school families to ensure whole family approach.</li> </ul>	
Clear Plan of intervention	To ensure all need is being responded to and all agencies involved are clear about their contributions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Where a CAF is initiated, the CFF worker (schools) should support the school in creating a Clear Family Support Plan with clear targets/outcomes, including specific targets around improved attendance, expectations of all parties with relevant interventions &amp; date for review including next steps where attendance doesn't improve. This will be done through attendance at the TAF meeting.</li> <li>● Where CFF Worker becomes the Key worker, they should update the Family Support Plan with clear targets/outcomes, including specific targets around improved attendance, expectations of all parties with relevant interventions &amp; date for review including next steps where attendance doesn't improve</li> <li>● Reviews should take place in line with the family, but at a minimum frequency of 6 weekly. At the first review meeting, if attendance has not improved then consideration should be given to the use of a Parenting Contract which will replace the existing plan.</li> <li>● Where case is progressing to Parenting Contract, CFF Worker to lead coordination of contract and for the contract to become the specified support plan. At this stage CFF Worker to liaise with other agencies who may use parenting contracts to avoid duplication and where other contracts are being considered to ensure one single contract is created. Where this is the case, guidance should be sought from line manager as to which worker should hold the contract</li> </ul>	CFF Worker



Attendance Interventions for schools	To ensure all agencies are clear about their responsibilities and required contributions at each level, the outcomes that services are trying to achieve and the support available to improve attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Level 2 School Attendance from 100 to 90%</b> Initial Concerns identified by schools – telephone calls, school meetings and home visits offered by schools who coordinate interventions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ CFF Worker to support schools, where necessary in identifying relevant services to provide support. This may include referral to <b>MDT's</b> for practical family support, access to lead professional budget, volunteers, CAB etc</li> <li>○ Where intervention does not appear to be successful, CFF Worker to offer support and guidance on next steps including progression to level 3</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Complex Level 2/3 95% to 85% attendance +</b> sibling groups, cross phase and cross school families to ensure whole family approach. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ CFF Workers to attend TAF Meetings where appropriate</li> <li>○ Offer advice and guidance on escalation, where appropriate</li> <li>○ Review cases as part of half termly meetings</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Level 3 (Attendance below 85%)</b>  <b>Consideration should be given to safeguarding concerns and escalation to Social care for formal safeguarding processes</b>  Clear plan including sanctions, where appropriate with a range of interventions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Parenting Contracts including intervention and sanctions – at this stage confirmation with asb interventions to ensure single aligned contract</li> <li>○ Task Centred and motivational interviewing</li> <li>○ Intensive practical support</li> <li>○ 1 to 1 parenting support</li> <li>○ Direct work with children including three houses approach</li> <li>○ Lower level substance misuse and dv work</li> <li>○ Set up and chair reviews</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Unsuccessful Level 3 cases following above interventions</b></li> </ul>	<p>CFF Worker</p> <p>CFF Worker Schools</p>

		<p><b>Consideration should be given to safeguarding concerns and escalation to Social care for formal safeguarding processes</b></p> <p><b>A range of enforcement options should be considered:-</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Safeguarding</b></li> <li><b>2. Parenting Order</b></li> <li><b>3. School Attendance Order</b></li> <li><b>4. Education Supervision Order</b></li> <li><b>5. Penalty Notice</b></li> <li><b>6. Prosecution</b></li> </ol> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Contribute to any prosecution or legal process (such as parenting order or Education Supervision Order) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Consultation with service manager, schools and legal services re-options for enforcement</li> <li>● Review evidence and agree enforcement option</li> <li>● If prosecution, arrange PACE interview and invite parents/carer and child where appropriate</li> <li>● Complete required PACE interview documentation – with sign off from Sr CFF Worker (Schools)</li> <li>● Where case progresses to court, CFF Worker to complete statement and evidence pack.</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Offering on-going support to family during process</li> </ul> <p><b>Where a Parenting Order is granted:-</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● CFF Worker (schools) to be named lead and hold the order</li> <li>● Provide direct intervention to the family</li> <li>● Monitor improvements and take any appropriate action where breach occurs</li> <li>● Consult with Service Manager and Legal Services where breach occurs</li> <li>● Where appropriate book breach court date and prepare relevant statement and evidence pack</li> </ul>	
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# Coventry schools contribution to improving attendance

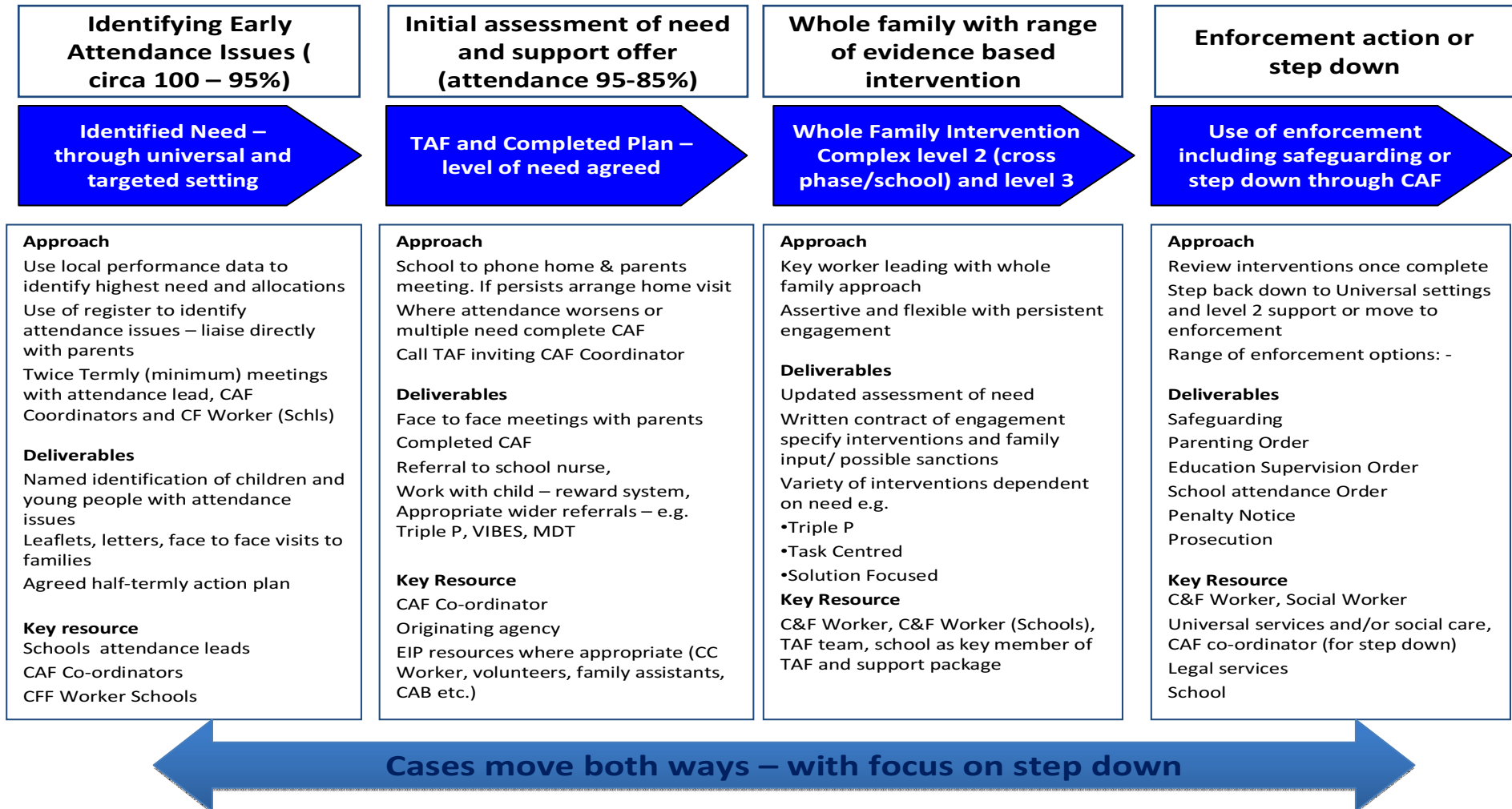
Intervention	Purpose	Detail	Who
Identification of attendance issues	To ensure attendance issues are identified as early as possible with the relevant amount of intervention to improve attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyse, understand and utilise strategic attendance data               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Clear Attendance Policy in place                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Including clarity over exceptional leave of absence</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Attendance Assemblies</li> <li>○ Regular newsletters (including focus on attendance)</li> <li>○ Rewards for positive attendance and punctuality</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Identify attendance and persistent absence               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Classroom Teacher to monitor class attendance and raise initial concerns with wider School personnel</li> <li>○ Ensure accuracy of registers</li> <li>○ Monitor sims data daily and weekly to pick out children/young people where attendance is a concern – using attendance codes to identify specific issues. <b>Where this relates to unauthorised leave of absence, issue penalty notice at this point</b></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Speak with parents to review attendance – remind them of attendance legal responsibilities and possible actions               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Where concerns arise – invite parents in immediately</li> <li>○ Ensure formal focus on attendance at Parents evenings and termly progress review</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Half termly (minimum) face to face meetings with attendance lead of school, CAF Coordinator and Designated CFF Worker (Schools) to identify and review actions/interventions where attendance is a concern – where initial school action has not improved attendance or to clarify interventions</li> <li>• In priority schools these meetings may take place more regularly to ensure appropriate support, communication and focus between the school and local authority on children where attendance is raising concern</li> </ul>	<p>Attendance Lead (utilise support of EIA and Advisor 5-18 Behaviour and Attendance)</p> <p>Classroom/form teacher All relevant Teachers</p> <p>Attendance Lead Learning Mentor/School Attendance Lead</p> <p>Relevant School Personnel Class Teacher/Form Tutor</p> <p>School Attendance Leads (CAF Coordinator &amp; Designated CFF Worker)</p>

<p>Formal Assessment of need</p>	<p>To identify whole family underlying issues and causes of attendance problems and inform appropriate intervention needed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where Early Concerns are identified, school to take immediate action including: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Phoning home to discuss concerns with parents,</li> <li>○ Formally writing to parents/carers including relevant information reminding parents of responsibilities and local support (such as "Access to Universal Triple P" leaflet)</li> <li>○ Invite parents/carers in to the school to discuss and share concerns.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• If attendance continues to deteriorate or there is non-engagement/improvement, schools will seek to undertake a home visit and reinforce legalisation regarding school attendance. Set clear target with family for improved attendance and monitor weekly. At this point consideration should be given to any other children in the home with information shared with local CAF Coordinator. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Check Protocol e-CAF System to identify whether any CAF exists with any family member</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Where level of need is 2 or above with additional needs apparent in the family with non-school attendance a symptom of wider issues, initiate a CAF. <b>N.B. Support could be sought from CAF Coordinator – or if complex the designated CFF Worker</b></li> <li>• Call a Team Around the Family (TAF) meeting to confirm support plan and interventions necessary to support attendance</li> </ul>	<p>Relevant school personnel</p> <p>Relevant school personnel such as Learning Mentor, Pastoral Support staff etc</p> <p>Relevant school personnel such as Learning Mentor, Inclusion Coordinators, Pastoral Support staff etc (drawing on CAF Coordinator support and Designated CFF Worker if complex)</p> <p>School personnel leading the CAF with support from CAF Coordinators</p>
<p>Clear Plan of intervention</p>	<p>To ensure all need is being responded to and all agencies involved are</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where schools identify initial attendance concerns an attendance plan to be completed with targets, expectations of all parties and date for review including next steps where attendance doesn't improve</li> <li>• Where a CAF is initiated, Create a Clear Family Support Plan with clear</li> </ul>	<p>Attendance Lead/Learning Mentor from school</p> <p>Relevant School Personnel (with support from CAF Coordinator &amp;</p>

	clear about their contributions	targets/outcomes, expectations of all parties with relevant interventions & date for review including next steps where attendance doesn't improve	where appropriate CFF Key Worker)
Attendance Interventions for schools	To ensure all agencies are clear about their responsibilities and required contributions at each level, the outcomes that services are trying to achieve and the support available to improve attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Level 2 School Attendance from 100 to 90%</b> Initial Concerns identified by schools – telephone calls, school meetings and home visits offered – Some suggested interventions to be offered by schools to improve attendance: -               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Home visits to share concerns and bring children to school on a temporary short term basis</li> <li>○ referral to school nurse to explore persistent or erratic illness</li> <li>○ direct work with children/young people including incentives/reward systems,</li> <li>○ Assemblies for improved attendance – inviting parents in to celebrate success</li> <li>○ Offer parenting support (group programmes)</li> <li>○ Signpost to other services either internally or externally</li> <li>○ Appropriate wider referrals – e.g. Triple P, VIBES, Cruise, Relate (time for you), LABS</li> <li>○ initiate CAF,</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Complex Level 2/3 School Attendance 95% to 85% +</b> sibling groups, cross phase and cross school families to ensure whole family approach. Led by CFF Worker (MDT's) with following school input (examples are non-exhaustive):-               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Attend on-going Team Around the Family meetings</li> <li>○ Contribute to Family Support Plan</li> <li>○ Continue to engage and support family</li> <li>○ Feedback to Key Worker</li> <li>○ Be fully involved in any reviews</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Level 3 School attendance below 85%</b> Clear plan including sanctions, where appropriate with a range of interventions led by CFF Worker (Schools) with following input from schools (examples are non-exhaustive): -               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Be signed up member of parenting contract providing support alongside Key Worker</li> <li>○ Attend on-going Team Around the Family meetings</li> <li>○ Contribute to Family Support Plan</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Schools</p> <p>Schools</p> <p>Schools</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Continue to engage and support family</li><li>○ Feedback to Key Worker</li><li>○ Be fully involved in any reviews</li><li>○</li><li>● <b>Unsuccessful Level 3 cases following above interventions</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Contribute to any prosecution or legal process (such as parenting order or Education Supervision Order)</li><li>○ Offering on-going support to family during process</li><li>○ Attend on-going Team Around the Family meetings</li><li>○ Contribute to Family Support Plan</li><li>○ Continue to engage and support family</li><li>○ Feedback to Key Worker</li><li>○ Be fully involved in any reviews</li></ul></li></ul>	
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# Children & Families First Partnership Model and School Attendance



# Components of Children and Families First Toolbox



<b>Assessment</b>
CAF
Enhanced Assessment Skills
<b>Assertiveness</b>
Empowerment
Enforcement
Anti-oppressive practices
Assertive interventions
FIP Intensive Intervention
<b>Partners/Contracting</b>
Referring on to other services
Brokering (P2,3,5)
Contracting with other services
Effective multi-agency approach
Managing (C4)
<b>Whole Family</b>
DV perpetrators
Recognising Issues
Whole Family Approach (C4)
Solution Empowerment
Solution focuses approach – consultation (P3)
<b>Life-story</b>
Life-story work – 3 hours – direct work with children

<b>Crisis Intervention (C4)</b>
<b>Parenting</b>
Triple P (P1,P3,P4,P5)
<b>Practical Modelling</b>
Modelling parental communicational (C4,P5)
Practical support – “can do” (C3,P5)
Motivational Interviews
Counselling Skills (C4)
Family links
<b>Safety</b>
Safe planning stay + safe (C4)
Safe at home
Protective behaviours – safety
Family learning
Knowing when to use what methodology
<b>Task Centred</b>
<b>Knowing when to use what method</b>
<i>Portage</i>

**Other**  
 Remember level 2, Impact Management, Clinical Tools, Infant Massage, Friends – anxiety and depression methodology, preparing for parenting (HV/UoW), Ante-natal (find out more) (P4), Books on prescription, Circle, Seal, MST, FNP, Youth Service Methodologies, OB2L (P5), Emotionally Healthy, Assessment/ Screening, Clinical Tools (Compass etc) , Strengthening families and communities (P1)



## Workforce Development to deliver Children and Families First Model



### **EIP Tool Box and practitioner approach**

Solution focused  
Crisis Intervention

Triple P

Direct work with children

Task Centred

Practical Support

**Range of direct**

Assertive, whole family, persistent,  
flexible, clear plan – reviewed  
regularly, multi-agency approach

**Skilled Families First  
Practitioners with above  
characteristics**

Children Centres and Schools identifying need and  
initiating CAF's – supported by Families First Teams  
and CAF Co-ordinators. Significance of Health.  
Enhanced assessment skills.

**CAF As the Bedrock**



