

Fast-Track to Attendance Information for Parents/Carers

This fact sheet can be made available in other languages or formats on request by contacting 0161 770 6620. For further information please see our detailed fact sheet **Information for all**.

What is Fast-Track to Attendance?

The Fast-Track to Attendance framework is a time-focused approach to improve attendance.

The aim of Fast-Track to attendance is to promote early intervention by the school and, when necessary, by the LA. The approach aims to ensure that rapid and appropriate action is taken to tackle absence problems as soon as they become apparent.

Under current legislation, parent/carers commit an offence if a child fails to attend school regularly and the absences are categorised as unauthorised, such as truancy when the school views the reasons as unacceptable or no explanation has been received.

What does it involve?

The Fast-Track framework is used to try and engage the young person, parent/carer with school and School Attendance Improvement Service (SAIS), and to improve the young person's attendance by addressing any issues that might be hampering their school attendance.

- Early identification, analysis and follow-up of absence patterns.
- Identification of any underlying causes of absence or mitigating circumstances and taking action to address these by engaging the parent and child, and specifying what improvements need to be made over a set time frame (usually 8-12 weeks).
- Ensuring that, where appropriate, parents are prompted to focus on their responsibilities to ensure their child's regular attendance at school .
- Application of sanctions and compulsory measures where the parent fails to take their responsibilities seriously and the required improvements are not made within the specified time frame.
- Appropriate reintegration arrangements when the pupil returns to school .
- Regular monitoring of absence by the school and LA after the Fast-Track to attendance process has finished.

Who is a parent under the Education Act, 1996?

All natural parents, whether they are married or not; and or any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility (as defined by the Children Act 1989); and/any person, who although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person e.g. a child living with their maternal Grandmother.

What happens if attendance does not improve?

Parents can be prosecuted in the Magistrates Court under Section 444(1) or (1A) of the Education Act 1996, for failure to ensure the regular attendance of their child in education.

If a registered pupil is absent without authorisation from school or alternative provision then the parent is guilty under section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

If the parent knows that their child is failing to attend regularly at school and fails to cause them to do so, then they are guilty of an offence under section 444 (1A) of the Education Act 1996.

What are the consequences if the matter goes to court?

Conviction of an offence under section 444 (1) may result in a fine of up to £1,000.

Conviction of an offence under section 444 (1A) may result in a fine of up to £2,500 or a prison sentence.

Contact

You can access fact sheets in a number of ways:

Download: <http://www.oldham.gov.uk/learning/school-attendance.htm>

Tel: 0161 770 6620

Fax: 0161 770 3844

Email: sais@oldham.gov.uk

Write to: Education Attendance Service, Oldham Council, Civic Centre, West Street, Oldham, OL1 1UT
