

PROMOTING SCHOOL ATTENDANCE IN TORBAY STRATEGY 2009-2011



every
school day
matters ✓

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MISSION STATEMENT

“To eliminate poor school attendance across the Bay 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.”

1. INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF INTENT

Torbay Council 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 20% 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 one-to-one support to individual pupils who experience difficulties in attending school regularly
- c) 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
- d) the development of effective multi-agency working practices in order to facilitate early intervention and the delivery of a seamless service

- e) the development of a range of relevant performance indicators and the subsequent setting of realistic yet challenging targets.

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 Torbay.

The local authority will nominate an officer with responsibility for leading on the development of school attendance policy and practice.

2. 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); Secondary schools are strongly advised by the local authority to maintain a separate PA register and to monitor PA 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 DCSF
- e) submit termly absence returns and publish information relating to levels of attendance and absence in the school's prospectus and annual report
- f) set annual targets to reduce absence and submit these targets in accordance with the relevant regulations. Secondary schools should also set targets to reduce levels of persistent absenteeism.

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 DCSF 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 and the setting of targets)
- c) involve and identify a role for governors
- d) identify a key senior member of staff with overall responsibility for attendance
- 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 family holidays during term-time (schools are encouraged to grant leave for term-time holidays 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 Children Young People & Family Centres, the Intensive Family Support Service, Inclusion and Mental Health Service and Integrated Youth Service
- r) access Torbay Universal Curriculum to support the needs of pupils
- s) provide for regular structured meetings between school staff and the Children Young People & Family Centre personnel to discuss issues relating to school attendance
- t) ensure that reasonable steps are taken by the school before a referral is made to the Children Young People and Family Centres
- u) ensure that good practice is identified and disseminated.

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).

Since January 2009, the local authority has directly commissioned an Attendance Service from four of its secondary schools. This service is managed via a contract, which specifies the roles and responsibilities ascribed to the school and the support offered by the local authority. The remainder of the schools receive a centralised Attendance Improvement service.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS/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.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY

The key areas of activity regarding local authority support and challenge for schools, pupils and parents are:-

- a) the work of the Children Young People and Family Centres,
- b) the work undertaken by the Intensive Family Support Service, Inclusion and Mental Health Service and Integrated Youth Service that have been developed as a result of the transformation programme
- c) the development of multi-agency networks and partnerships,;
- d) work with key partners to develop a quality alternative curriculum for Key Stage 4 pupils who are unable to engage in the current national curriculum and are at risk of exclusion.

5. LOCAL AUTHORITY SUPPORT – THE ROLE OF LOCALITY BASED TEAMS

One of the overarching aims of the Children Young People and Family Centres is to maximise attendance rates for individual pupils, individual schools and for the authority of Torbay as a whole; and to discharge the local authority's legal duty to ensure that all pupils of compulsory school age are in receipt of suitable education. Team members will also assist in removing barriers which may prevent a child receiving education.

Staff from Children Young People and Family Centres will employ three main interconnected and interdependent strategies to ensure that registered pupils of compulsory school age attend school regularly and punctually:

- a) as authorised representatives of the local authority, monitoring attendance through the regular inspection of registers and liaison with school staff
- b) undertaking individual casework with non-attending pupils and their parents
- c) offer strategic advice, support and challenge to enable schools to develop improved systems and practices for managing attendance.

Casework

When a pupil with attendance difficulties is referred to a Children Young People and Family Centre the case will be allocated to an appropriate member of staff who will engage with the pupil and their parents/carers in order to bring about a pupil's return to regular attendance. The team member will recognise and take account of individual circumstances and will respond accordingly. The speedy return of the pupil to regular attendance will, however, always be the prime concern. The team member will employ a range of practices and strategies in his or her casework and will, when necessary, combine assistance with insistence.

All casework will involve the setting of targets for improvement and will be time-limited and subject to regular review. In some instances intervention may be limited to a single home visit in order to remind parents of their legal responsibilities or to help resolve a particular and identified difficulty. In other instances there may be complex and deep-seated reasons why the pupil is not attending. In such situations the worker may negotiate a plan of support. This might involve referral on to, or the involvement of, other agencies, convening a multi-agency meeting and so on.

All casework will involve close and continuous liaison with the pupil's school. Allocated workers will ensure that schools receive regular, written feedback on pupils with whom work is being undertaken. In cases where the main causes of non-attendance may be school-related (e.g. alleged bullying or racism, peer pressure, difficulties with a particular lesson or teacher) the worker will discuss these with the school in order to develop strategies to overcome these difficulties. Schools have identified that feedback in the form of an email would be a preferred mechanism.

Referrals

Referrals relating to school attendance issues are usually made by schools. There are, however, occasions when other agencies/services or parents may make a referral.

Before accepting a referral from a school the team manager will expect the school to have first undertaken a

number of steps to address the pupil's non-attendance. These would include:

- a) action by the class teacher/form teacher
- b) action by the Head of Year (secondary) or Head or Deputy Head (primary)
- c) contact with parents; Torbay encourages schools to work to a 'three-letter system', the use of which involves the school sending a sequence of letters of concern to the parents before formally involving the locality team.

Referrals will usually only be accepted in relation to absence which has not been authorised by the school.

Referrals may be made when:

- a) a pattern of irregular attendance has developed
- 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 pattern of post-registration truancy is persisting despite the school's efforts to prevent it
- f) a parent withdraws a pupil from school having expressed an intention to educate him or her otherwise than at school (Elective Home Education) and is failing to provide an adequate alternative education for their child
- g) 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
- i) there are specific and identifiable issues which are preventing a pupil from accessing education.

Referrals for casework involving attendance issues will be made using the individual and contact section of a CAF form together with a note of interventions undertaken at school level and a copy of the child's attendance. All referrals to Children Young People and Family Centres are entered on the CAF database, and referrals and case notes will be entered on the PARIS database. These databases are used in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act. Wherever possible, attendance issues should be considered within the family context and a 'Team around the Family' established to consider the wider needs of the young person, their siblings and family. This also encourages an appropriate level of communication and information sharing about the family, with their knowledge and consent.

Closer working links will be established between Attendance Improvement Officers and staff within the Early Years Foundation Stage. It is acknowledged that future patterns of poor primary school attendance can frequently be identified within pre-school settings. Torbay's Attendance Strategy will focus on improving the identification of such early patterns of behaviour and ensure appropriate support is in place across the transition into primary schools.

Attendance Improvement Officers will respond immediately to all referrals concerning Children Missing Education. All reasonable and practicable steps will be undertaken to track missing children and establish their whereabouts, welfare and access to education (see Children Missing Education Policy).

Visits to Schools

A member of the Children Young People and Family Centre will make regular 'Support and Challenge' visits to each school within their area. The frequency of these visits will be in accordance with an individual school's identified level of need. The purpose of these visits will include the following:

- Discharge the local authorities responsibility to monitor compliance with registration regulations
- Set and monitor targets to reduce overall absence, unauthorised absence, authorised absence and persistent absence
- Discuss and agree individual action plans for pupils who are persistently absent, including the invocation of statutory powers
- Agree the package of support that is most appropriate for each individual school eg immediate response, attendance rewards,
- Identify and explain trend data and agree the most appropriate response

A school which may have occasion to be dissatisfied with the level or quality of service provided by the Children Young People and Family Centre should contact, in the first instance, the relevant manager.

6. LOCAL AUTHORITY SUPPORT – OTHER LOCAL AUTHORITY SERVICES

As part of the Transformation Programme, Torbay Council and partners will be developing a number of new services to meet the needs of the Children and Young People in Torbay.

These are as follows:

Intensive Family Support

The Intensive Family Service (IFS) will be a targeted family service, aimed at 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, the IFS 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.

IFS is expected to contribute to:

- improving the parenting and care of children within targeted families
- reducing the number of missing person (MISPER) episodes
- reducing the length of Child Protection Plans
- reducing the number of children within the care system/length of care episodes
- better placement stability for any child entering the care system
- increasing the numbers of “kinship care” arrangements
- improving school attendance of children within targeted families
- reducing actual and perceived levels of anti-social behaviour and youth crime.

Inclusion and Mental Health Service

This service will ensure children with disabilities including those with emotional health issues, learning and behavioural difficulties are, along with their families, provided with the support and help they need.

To ensure children with disabilities or those with behavioural difficulties, who may be at risk of losing a school place, receive their educational entitlement.

Support, advise and provide training to practitioners working in a targeted and universal way so that they are able to identify children early on and maximise the inclusion of children with additional needs.

Provide an appropriate and evidence based assessment at a targeted and specialist level.

Anticipated outcomes are:

- timely, appropriate, co-ordinated assessments which are followed by right health intervention to minimise further risks to the health and well being of the child, young person and impact on the family.
- clear pathway for child and family to follow which will minimise delay, reduce bureaucracy and improve safety.
- through a joint multi-agency/disciplinary approach; improvements in inclusion and attainment of children with additional needs and more complex needs.
- greater participation of vulnerable groups, notably those children with Learning Disabilities or Difficulties (LDD) / Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Children Looked After (CLA).
- increased take up of direct payments for parents of children with disabilities, improving the number claiming carer benefits and increasing the numbers of young people with additional needs accessing education, employment or training.

Integrated Youth Support Services

The establishment of an integrated service for young people that will provide a core offer to all young people. This core offer will comprise: careers advice and guidance and access to opportunities for personal development and enjoyment during leisure time. At the same time, it was recognised that some young people need additional help and support and that by bringing together a range of quite disparate services

into venues and at times that suit the requirements of young people, access to more targeted support can be accelerated and enhanced. This includes services and supports for young people leaving care.

The careers advice and guidance element of the Core Offer will be provided by the Connexions service. Connexions Personal Advisors will work closely with school staff, locality teams and specialist learning support in order to help young people aged 13 – 19 engage in learning and work. Connexions and Torbay Council share a target to reduce the proportion of young people aged 16 – 18 who are not engaged in education, employment or training (NEET) to 4.5% by 2010. Regular school attendance has a direct impact on a young person's propensity to remain in learning beyond age 16, therefore joint working between Connexions and Attendance Improvement Officers is crucial to ensure that both NEET and attendance targets are met. These joint working arrangements will be detailed in a Partnership Agreement between the 2 services.

The aim of Integrated Youth Support Services is to provide a wide range of services that young people can access directly at locations across the Bay. By making the 'front door' as wide as possible, those young people who require an enhanced level of service will be caught up within the right system to promote accessibility. By so doing, a number of ECM outcomes will be promoted, including:

- fewer teenage conceptions and improved sexual health
- fewer young people involved in substance misuse
- young people, including those leaving care and young offenders, in receipt of education, training or employment
- maximising progressions into post 16 work and learning
- contributing to individual and area economic prosperity

As well as ensuring that children and young people remain within statutory learning.

Consultation

The strategy recognises that there is no 'one size fits all' approach, and that whilst clear escalation processes and timescales need to be in place, we must also listen to the voice of the young person and ensure best fit between needs and services. We will act on the messages within the 'Tell Us' surveys and on the feedback from young people within services. We recognise that age, gender and many other characteristics impact on the effectiveness of attendance strategies. We will ensure that evidence-informed practice shapes the work that we do and that staff are provided with the skills and training to maximise effective working with young people and parents.

Local Authority Policy on Prosecution

If a pupil who is registered at a school fails to attend that school regularly and attempts by the locality team and the school fail to ensure that the pupil returns to regular attendance the local authority will, unless there are mitigating circumstances, consider taking legal action by issuing a summons against the parents to appear before the magistrates court under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act. In deciding whether or not to take legal action, the local authority must be satisfied that:

- a) there is sufficient evidence to provide a realistic prospect of conviction; it must consider what the defence case may be and how this is likely to affect the prosecution case
- b) it is in the public interest to prosecute; in cases of any seriousness, a prosecution will usually take place unless there are public interest factors pointing against prosecution, which clearly outweigh those in favour

- c) any action which it takes complies with the terms of the Human Rights Act.

In cases where parents wilfully and knowingly withhold a pupil from school the local authority will proceed against the parents using sub-section 1a of Section 444 (the “aggravated” offence which is an imprisonable offence).

The local authority will, when appropriate, use a Fast-Track to Prosecution process. One element of this will include the use of a voluntary parenting contract in order to attempt to effect change.

When pursuing legal action the local authority will specify what actions have already been taken in order to voluntarily engage the parent. The local authority will request that consideration be given by the court to the issuing of a Parenting Order as the outcome of a conviction under Section 444 or Section 444(1a)

If after legal action has been taken the pupil still fails to attend school regularly, or the parent fails to comply with any other order that may have been made (eg a parenting order) the local authority will, if deemed appropriate, take further legal action.

The local authority will develop a policy to support schools to address instances of post-registration truancy. This policy will operate in conjunction with the main prosecution policy.

Local Authority Policy on the Use of Education Supervision Orders

Before initiating a prosecution under section 444 of the 1996 Education Act the local authority will consider whether it is appropriate to apply for an Education Supervision Order (ESO) under section 36 of the 1989 Children Act. The purpose of an ESO is to place a child who is not being properly educated under the supervision of the local authority. An ESO aims to ensure that the child receives full time education and that he or she and the parents receive intensive support, advice and guidance from a Supervising Officer who is required “to advise, assist and befriend”.

An application for an ESO will only be made when one or more of the following apply:

- a) all other attempts to improve the pupil’s attendance have failed and prosecution of the parents is deemed inappropriate
- b) the parents appear likely to co-operate with a structured programme of work prepared by the supervising officer
- c) there is support from Specialist Social Care for the ESO
- d) a magistrates court hearing has directed the local authority to apply for an ESO
- e) the local authority is of the opinion that the Order will have a significant impact upon the pupil’s non-attendance.

Local Authority Policy on the Use of School Attendance Orders

The local authority will serve a School Attendance Order (SAO) (under Sections 437-439 of the 1996 Education Act) on the parents of a child of compulsory school age if the parents have failed to demonstrate that the child is in receipt of suitable education and if the local authority believes that the child should attend school.

The SAO will specify the school (or Pupil Referral Unit) which the child should attend. Should the parents fail to comply with the SAO the EWO will initiate legal proceedings under Section 443 of the 1996 Education Act (unless the parents can prove that the child is in receipt of suitable education).

All legal action taken by the local authority will be monitored and reviewed.

Parenting Orders

When the courts, in relation to a non-attendance case, impose or recommend a Parenting Order. The Children Young People and Family Centre manager will identify a member of staff as the responsible officer for such an order.

Penalty Notices

Under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 designated staff have the power to issue a Penalty Notice to the parents of a child who fails to attend school regularly. They may also issue a Penalty Notice to the parents of an excluded child who is found in a public place during the first five days of an exclusion. Penalty Charge Notices may only be issued in accordance with the terms of a local Code of Conduct. Offering the parent the opportunity to discharge their liability relating to non/poor attendance may be considered a useful option at an early stage and before attendance problems become entrenched.

Other Services

As well as undertaking casework with individual pupils the local authority will offer strategic support and challenge to schools by working with school management teams on policies and procedures and will promote improvements in schools' management of attendance through the strategies listed below.

The local authority will have regard to statutory guidance issued on target setting by the DCSF.

Attendance Audits

Attendance 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 locality team support.

The written report produced by the Audit will be made available to the School Improvement Partner as well as to the school's governing body.

Truancy Sweeps

Under Section 16 of the Crime and Disorder Act (1998), police officers can be authorised to remove truants from a public place and take them to a designated area or back to school. Until 2007, there was a requirement by the DCSF on all local authorities to undertake regular truancy sweeps: a joint undertaking between the police and the Education Welfare Service. Since 2007, there is no longer a requirement for Truancy Sweeps to be carried out, although it is still recommended by DCSF as an effective tool. Locally, there has been no evidence that links Truancy Sweeps to a subsequent improvement in school attendance. For that reason, this activity is not a current priority within Torbay's Attendance Strategy, although may be revisited in the future.

Communication Strategy

The Communications Team will be deployed to assist in writing and implementing an effective Communications Strategy that spans schools, children and young people, parents, partners and the general public. This will include marketing campaigns, clarity about roles and responsibilities, the importance of good attendance habits, rewards and sanctions.

The local authority will support schools with attendance celebrations.

As part of the Communications Strategy, the local authority will provide schools with a variety of documentation aimed at enabling the more effective management of school attendance. Documents include:

- "Attendance Matters: A Guide to Schools and Colleges" (rev. 2008)
- "Family Holidays During Term-Time. Policy Guidance for Schools" (rev. 2006)
- "School Attendance Policies. Guidance for Schools and Colleges" (rev. 2008)
- "School Attendance. Information for Parents" (rev.2006) (Community language translations are available on request)
- "Bullying at School. Information and Advice for Parents/Carers" (rev. 2008).
- "Child Employment: Information for Employers and Parents/Carers" (rev. 2007)
- "Family Holidays During Term-Time and Extended Visits Overseas: Information for Parents/Carers" (rev. 2006)
- "Anxiety About Attending School: Information for Parents/Carers, Teachers and Professionals" (2002)

Copies of these documents will be available through Children Young People and Family Centres.

Parenting Contracts

Children Young People and Family Centre team members will consider the use of Parenting Contracts in appropriate cases, recognising that working with parents within a voluntary arrangement can frequently be productive and promote behavioural change.

Term-time holidays

The local authority recognises the effect that absence from school has on pupils' attainment and strongly discourages the taking of holidays during term time.

Training

The local authority will offer training to all schools via a programme of workshops 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.

Utilisation of Additional Funding

The local authority will support schools to use effectively external funding aimed at improving attendance and promoting social inclusion. This includes Extended Services funding, which has been used to embed the Full Core Offer so that attendance is improved, along with a number of other outcomes and opportunities for children and young people.

Links with Neighbouring Local Authorities

Responsibility for monitoring the attendance of pupils who attend school in Torbay rests with Torbay regardless of where the pupil lives. Each Children Young People and Family Centre will, therefore, work closely with the Attendance Improvement staff from neighbouring authorities in order to ensure a co-ordinated and coherent approach to school attendance issues. This will be undertaken via a Cross-Border Protocol.

Children Missing Education

Children Young People and Family Centres have a clear role to play in helping to trace children who go missing from schools in Torbay or who go missing from schools in other authorities and who may have moved into Torbay. Schools are strongly urged to follow corresponding procedures contained within the Children Missing Education Policy in relation to those pupils who are removed from school by their parents without a named-school destination being provided and confirmed.

Role of Parenting Support Facilitators

Parenting Support Facilitators, funded via Extended Services are available to Torbay schools. PSFs are responsible for working with parents in order to support better home-school liaison and thereby promote improved levels of attendance and improved behaviour. They deliver parenting drop-ins on school sites and are available to complete CAFs, undertake home visits and be part of Transition arrangements so that parents of new starters are offered access to support services.

Reintegration of Long-term Non-Attenders

Provision to support re-integration will be made on a time-limited basis with a clear understanding by the pupil and his or her parent that a return to school is the objective. Such provision may be considered in the following circumstances:

- a) there is evidence that other strategies and options have been pursued but have not succeeded
- b) there is a willingness on the part of the pupil and parent to accept that the support is provided with a view to bringing about a return to school.

Policy and arrangements for children with statements of SEN who become Non-Attenders

Should a child with a statement experience difficulties attending school a referral should be made. The allocated worker will inform the SEN team and pursue a range of strategies to secure regular attendance including use of legal measures when appropriate. If the non-attendance persists and proves impossible to resolve using these strategies the allocated worker will work alongside the SEN team so that the difficulty can be considered as part of the review of the statement. Part of that review may consider whether the placement of the pupil in the original educational establishment is still appropriate.

Role of Learning and Standards Service

School Improvement Partners (SIPs), deployed and managed by the Learning and Standards Service, will offer challenge and support to schools in matters of attendance. SIPs will:

- a) consider a school's attendance data and compare this with comparative benchmark data in order to assess performance
- b) assess progress achieved towards the meeting of attendance (and PA) targets
- c) consider the attendance performance of identified pupil cohorts
- d) analyse any links between attendance and attainment
- e) offer support and challenge to the school to ensure that the curriculum offered supports good attendance
- f) following consultation with the Local Authority SIP manager liaise with relevant support services accordingly
- g) Work with the school to set appropriately challenging attendance targets.

They will work with schools and other agencies to create appropriate and supportive environments within schools for individual pupils by ensuring that:

- optimum learning conditions are in place
- achievable and realistic targets are set and met
- positive relations with parents are maintained (or restored).

Role of the Governor Support Service

The Governor Support Service will:

- a) organise training for Governors which ensures that they are made aware of the responsibilities of schools for securing regular attendance; the Attendance and behaviour Manager will take the lead in this training
- b) publish information on Governors' responsibilities for securing regular attendance at school (in publications such as the Governors' newsletter and handbooks).

Attendance Strategy Group

An Attendance Strategy Group, chaired by the Lead for Attendance and comprising managers from schools, relevant services and teams will be developed to consider a range of management information and data related to school attendance and behaviour in order to:

- i) verify and quality control check this information and data
- ii) ensure that officers from a range of appropriate professional disciplines are able to contribute to the interrogation and analysis of the information and data
- iii) monitor performance against established performance indicators
- iv) identify and plan responses to issues which are identified through the interrogation and analysis of the data
- v) open discussions with schools
- vi) refer particular issues to the appropriate officers/services
- vii) help ensure that any necessary responses are properly coordinated and monitored
- viii) monitor and advise on the application of practice standards with regard to the management of attendance and behaviour across Torbay and to report on the application of these practice standards
- ix) ensure the development of consistent, Torbay wide policies in relation to behaviour and attendance
- x) ensure that plans, in particular the Children and Young People's Plan are properly informed by behaviour and attendance issues.
- xi) Inform the Corporate Area Assessment
- xii) Share best practice locally and nationally.

Ensure that schools are provided with individual attendance/behaviour profiles which can enable them to make comparisons with similar schools within their immediate area and within the region and with schools nationally.

Role of Race Equality and Diversity Advisor

To work with schools and other mainstream services to enable them to meet the needs of minority ethnic and bilingual and traveller pupils and their families. Locality based teams and the adviser will work closely together in order to ensure that council policies are applied fairly and equitably so that all ethnic minority groups are able fully to access their educational entitlement.

The local authority recognises that school attendance issues for minority ethnic pupils may differ. Traveller pupils and their families may need additional support to ensure their admission to school and their regular attendance. Other community groups, including the may need to consider appropriate times during the school year for extended visits to their country of origin. The Advisor and Lead for Attendance will work closely with schools in order to ensure that an appropriate, constructive and integrated response is made to these issues.

Advice will be provided on issues such as:

- admission of traveller pupils
- extended absences to country of origin
- parental involvement and home-school links
- appropriate appeals procedures
- primary-secondary school transfer concerns of traveller pupils and their families
- linking with locality based teams to pursue issues of non-attendance

- interrupted schooling
- help with the identification and support of children from ethnic minorities who may be young carers
- racism that may lead to non-attendance
- culturally related concerns regarding aspects of the school curriculum.

Role of the Safeguarding Officer

The Safeguarding Officer will support the attendance of children at school by providing appropriate training and advice to schools on child safety and other safeguarding issues and on supporting vulnerable pupils, such as children from homes where there is domestic violence.

Role of the Data Team

The Data Team supports local authority services to provide schools with detailed data relating to attendance/absence issues and will assist in the analysis and interrogation of this data; particularly through the roll-out of Base 2 Base. This system enables access to real-time attendance data, thereby leading to a more responsive service that can monitor outcomes and plan interventions without delays.

The Data Team also provides data reports and analysis which can inform the deliberations and planning of the local authority's Attendance Strategy Group.

7. MULTI-AGENCY NETWORKS AND PARTNERSHIPS

The local authority recognises that the reasons for non-school attendance are complex and that no single service or agency can expect to successfully to address the issue on its own. The local authority strives, therefore, through the development of locality working to develop a multi-agency, cross-service, interdisciplinary approach which is characterised by the delivery of a child-centred, seamless, co-ordinated and effective response.

Specialist Social Care

Specialist Children's Social Care staff undertake assessments of children in need in collaboration with other relevant professionals. The assessment looks at all aspects of the child's developmental needs, including his or her educational needs. Locality teams will bring to the attention of social care staff children who have been referred to them due to attendance difficulties who may require additional support in accordance with the local authority's thresholds for children in need.

Health Service

Children who are absent from school for extended periods of time due to illness receive home tuition. (The nature of the illness must be confirmed by a GP). Should the child's school and the allocated worker from the locality team consider that perhaps the problem of non-attendance may be linked to a mental health issue then consideration will be given to making a referral to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS). Where a mental illness is diagnosed the allocated worker will take advice from the CAMHS on the implications this has for working with the child and his or her parents to secure a return to regular attendance.

Police

The local authority and Police have agreed on a protocol in relation to Section 16 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. (This section of the Act provides a power for the police to take truants back to school or to another place designated by the local authority).

Magistrates

The Lead for Attendance in conjunction with the local authority's Legal Department will promote the local authority's prosecutions policy with magistrates and will offer training and awareness-raising sessions to magistrates in order to help ensure that:

- a) magistrates have a shared understanding of attendance issues and the criteria used when pursuing a prosecution
- b) there is a reduced likelihood of ineffective outcomes as a result of legal action having been taken against the parent of a non-attending child.

8. SUPPORTING THE ATTENDANCE OF VULNERABLE PUPILS OR PUPILS WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS

Policy and Arrangements for Supporting Looked After Children

The local authority has a statutory role as Corporate Parent of Children Looked After. It recognises that looked after children have underachieved as a group and is determined to address this situation.

Officers within Children's Services will work closely together to ensure that the targets for improving the educational attainment of looked after children as outlined in 'Quality Protects' are fully met.

An allocated worker will liaise with a looked-after child's social worker and Fostering Support Worker.

All schools should nominate a designated teacher for looked after children. This teacher will have a key co-ordinating and monitoring role with regard to the attendance of looked after children at his or her school.

The Lead for Attendance will collect and monitor the attendance data of all looked after children in Torbay and will use this data to inform the planning of future attendance support for looked after children. Specific actions and strategies relating to Looked After Children will be implemented and refined.

Policy and Arrangements for Supporting Young Carers

The local authority recognises that a number of children may be late or absent from school as a consequence of their responsibilities in relation to caring for a sick or disabled parent or sibling.

Schools should respond sympathetically to the needs of young carers but should combine this with a recognition that these children are nevertheless fully entitled to participate in all educational activities.

Referral of young carers to outside agencies should be done sensitively, recognising any feelings of guilt which the individual child may be experiencing.

Schools may consider designating a teacher to have responsibility for young carers. This teacher may be able to access local schemes of support.

Children Young People and Family Centre managers and the safeguarding officer may also be able to offer advice to the school on how to support young carers.

Policy and Arrangements for Supporting the Attendance of Traveller Children and Children from Ethnic Minorities

Torbay's Equality and Diversity Officer will work closely with the lead for attendance to develop an appropriate and consistent school attendance strategy for ethnic minority pupils.

Appendix 6 sets out arrangements schools and the local authority can pursue to promote the attendance of Traveller children.

Depending upon the needs of the school, the Equalities and Diversity Officer may be involved with school staff and other support services in the following strategies to support regular attendance of children from ethnic minorities:

- advice and support to mainstream staff on extended holidays to country of origin
- liaison between traveller parents and schools to encourage admittance and attendance of primary and secondary age pupils
- links with the Governor Support Service and those involved in Appeal Panel members' training so that issues relating to the needs of minority ethnic pupils are raised in their induction
- support for children and parents in situations where racism is presenting a barrier to educational inclusion.

Policy and Arrangements for Supporting the Attendance of Pupils who have or may have Special Educational Needs

The local authority recognises that special educational needs, including unidentified or unmet SEN, can prevent some children from attending school. Children Young People and Family Centre team members, Educational Psychologists and other local authority support staff will work with SENCOs, other school staff and with the pupil when there are concerns that a pupil's poor attendance may be related to unidentified or unmet SEN. The Parent Partnership Service, a confidential arms' length statutory service, offers information and support to parents of children and young people with SEN. The Parent Partnership Service can advise parents on attendance issues where SEN is considered to be a contributory factor.

Policy and Arrangements for Supporting the Attendance of Pupils who may have been bullied

The local authority recognises that bullying is an issue which prevents some children from attending school or from achieving their full potential when they do attend. The local authority has published a policy and guidance document on bullying for all Torbay schools.

Children Young People and Family Centre team members will offer support to pupils whose attendance is being affected by actual or perceived bullying.

Other local authority staff (Educational Psychologists, Safeguarding Officers and SIPs) will provide additional support, advice and assistance when necessary. Local authority staff will also be available to provide Inset and training on bullying and on developing a whole-school policy as well as advising on individual cases.

Policy and Arrangements for Supporting the Attendance of other Vulnerable Groups

The local authority will endeavour to respond energetically to support the school attendance of any group of children who may be vulnerable. Such groups might include:

- a) children from families under stress
- b) pregnant school girls and teenage mothers;
- c) children transferring school;
- d) children entering school outside the normal year of entry.
- e) Young offenders

Appendix 1

KEY DOCUMENTS AND REFERENCES

Advice and Guidance to Schools and Local Authorities on Managing Pupil Attendance - DfES Circular 2005

Missing Out: LEA Management of School Attendance and Exclusion - Audit Commission 1999

Improving School Attendance in England – National Audit Office 2005

The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006

Absence and Attendance Codes DfES 2006

Keeping Pupil Registers DCSF 2007

Improving Attendance and Behaviour in Secondary Schools - Ofsted 2001

Ensuring Regular School Attendance. Guidance on the Legal Measures Available to Secure Regular School Attendance – DCSF 2007

Guidance on Education-Related Parenting Contracts, Parenting Orders and Penalty Notices – DfES 2004

Children Missing Education Policy – Torbay Council 2005

Appendix 2

%Attendance		Autumn 05 Forvus	Spring 06 Forvus	Annual 05/06 Forvus	Autumn06	Spring 07	Summer 07	Annual 06/07	Autumn 07	Spring 08	Summer 08	Annual 07/08
Babbacombe	3615	94.70	92.00	93.60	95.15	93.65	95.35	94.59	94.94	93.99	94.07	94.44
Barton	2474	93.80	91.90	93.10	93.13	90.42	93.41	92.13	94.21	93.95	93.68	94.02
Brixham	3103	93.50	93.30	93.90	95.49	93.08	94.84	94.45	95.52	94.46	94.98	95.05
Chestnut	2466	94.10	90.40	92.80	93.33	94.79	94.45	94.07	94.26	93.38	93.51	93.82
Cockington	2453	94.20	92.30	93.60	93.80	92.92	93.50	93.41	93.42	93.20	94.24	93.52
Collaton St Mary	3619	95.70	92.90	94.60	96.05	94.27	96.31	95.40	96.71	95.92	94.68	96.00
Curledge Street	2434	93.00	90.20	92.20	93.98	92.24	94.42	93.38	93.64	92.71	93.43	93.28
Eden Park	3751	94.00	93.30	93.80	94.44	92.94	94.51	93.86	94.76	93.51	94.71	94.34
Ellacombe	2454	94.20	93.30	93.90	94.63	93.80	95.58	94.43	93.15	93.12	94.09	93.35
Foxhole Infants	2435	91.70	86.40	89.60	92.64	89.66	91.25	91.27	90.80	90.72	-	N/K
Foxhole Juniors	2437	93.10	89.60	91.80	93.23	91.88	93.76	92.81	92.33	92.93	-	N/K
Furzeham	2407	94.00	93.20	93.70	94.07	94.17	94.51	94.18	94.37	93.52	92.99	93.79
Galmpton	3600	96.30	93.20	94.90	96.07	95.43	96.00	95.81	96.29	95.26	93.82	95.43
Hayes	5200	95.00	94.20	94.50	95.39	92.95	92.69	93.98	93.85	94.15	94.45	94.08
Homelands	2455	95.40	92.80	94.40	95.39	93.62	94.80	95.16	93.87	93.03	95.02	93.84
Ilsham	3119	96.00	93.00	94.70	94.12	92.87	94.41	93.87	95.30	95.32	96.30	95.52
Kings Ash	3752											
Oldway	2438	95.10	92.50	94.00	95.44	93.61	95.50	94.74	95.10	93.43	95.50	94.99
Preston	2464	94.50	91.10	93.20	95.32	93.84	95.59	94.80	94.80	93.79	94.66	94.44
Priory	3617	95.60	93.20	94.60	95.42	93.31	95.04	94.54	95.50	93.98	95.41	94.97
Queensway	3614	93.70	92.50	93.50	93.42	93.02	94.58	93.45	94.20	93.43	93.78	93.85
Roselands	2473	94.20	92.60	93.80	95.23	94.89	93.90	94.86	94.24	94.79	95.17	94.62
Sacred Heart	3613	94.70	92.30	94.00	94.20	93.46	93.77	93.85	94.46	93.78	93.71	94.07
Sherwell Valley	2469	96.00	93.80	95.30	95.93	94.51	95.67	95.33	94.83	94.97	94.63	94.84
Shiphay	2468	95.80	93.90	95.10	95.86	94.06	96.18	95.20	95.93	95.40	95.22	95.60
St Margaret Clith	3601	94.20	92.60	93.70	95.53	93.69	95.44	94.79	95.11	95.61	95.80	95.43
St Margarets	2456	95.10	91.90	93.40	95.16	93.17	95.46	94.43	95.40	95.48	94.40	95.21
St Marychurch	3616	95.30	92.20	93.90	95.30	91.96	92.25	93.52	93.64	92.58	94.71	93.52
Torre Primary	3618	94.80	93.00	94.20	95.30	92.17	93.53	93.79	95.05	94.44	96.20	95.11
Upton St James	3120	94.00	92.00	93.40	94.44	92.60	92.67	93.41	93.13	94.49	94.25	93.80
Warberry	3121	94.90	92.20	93.90	94.63	91.74	95.48	93.65	94.97	93.99	95.08	94.67
Watcombe	2460	93.20	92.10	92.80	92.61	92.66	92.10	92.56	93.40	93.15	92.05	93.03
White Rock	2439	95.80	94.80	95.50	96.01	94.53	95.76	95.37	95.72	95.29	96.30	95.70
%Attendance		94.64	92.49	93.85	94.78	93.17	94.60	94.14	94.55	94.05	94.60	94.48
%Absence		5.36	7.51	6.15	5.22	6.83	5.40	5.86	5.45	5.95	5.40	5.52

%Attendance Census	Autumn 05	Spring 06	Summer 06	Annual 05/06	Forvus 05/06	Autumn 06	Spring 07	Summer 07	Annual 06/07	Autumn 07	Spring 08	Summer 08	Annual 07/08
Brixham College	91.96	89.84	92.27	91.23	91.20	89.72	89.93	88.89	89.67	91.49	91.74	91.13	91.50
Churston Grammar	95.61	93.26	91.26	93.14	94.74	95.98	93.87	95.85	95.13	95.71	94.93	96.48	95.61
Paignton College	90.21	86.16	88.52	88.56	88.49	87.82	85.70	86.61	86.83	89.04	89.94	90.83	89.73
St Cuthbert Mayne	93.96	90.31	90.25	92.04	92.65	94.17	91.18	90.73	92.48	93.42	92.45	91.71	92.74
Torquay Boys Grammar	96.55	93.38	92.37	93.40	95.32	96.60	94.88	92.84	95.36	96.70	96.51	92.93	95.80
Torquay Comm College	87.74	85.13	84.43	86.51	86.04	84.52	82.38	80.41	83.06	86.52	87.43	85.53	86.62
Torquay Girls Grammar	95.45	92.27	91.48	92.72	94.34	95.50	92.64	92.30	93.89	95.30	95.54	95.90	95.50
Westlands	90.24	88.29	90.72	89.87	89.89	90.90	90.36	87.81	90.21	91.12	91.65	91.59	91.38
Total %	92.05	89.10	89.83	90.42	90.89	91.05	89.30	88.61	89.98	91.80	91.94	91.55	91.80
%Absence	7.95	10.90	10.17	9.58	9.11	8.95	10.70	11.39	10.02	8.20	8.06	8.45	8.20

Appendix 3

Torbay Attendance Targets

Torbay Council Target for School Attendance 2008/09

	Overall Attendance	Authorised Absence	Unauthorised Absence	Persistent Absence
Primary				2.4%
Secondary				6.7%
Special Schools				6.7%

Torbay Council Target for School Attendance 2009/10

	Overall Attendance	Authorised Absence	Unauthorised Absence	Persistent Absence
Primary				2.4%
Secondary				6%
Special Schools				6%

Torbay Council Target for School Attendance 2010/11

	Overall Attendance	Authorised Absence	Unauthorised Absence	Persistent Absence
Primary				2.4%
Secondary				5%
Special Schools				5%

Appendix 4

Torbay Secondary PA Targets

Statutory Indicator N187

06/07 base-line (from Autumn term 06/Spring term 07)

07/08

08/09

09/10

10/11

DCSF expect all local authorities to have reduced PA levels to between 4.5% and 5.5% by 2010-11.

Appendix 5

Torbay Schools' Attendance Targets

Under the Education (School Attendance Targets) Regulations all schools are required to set an annual target for reducing overall absence. Schools were required to agree targets for 2008-09 with the LA by 31st December 2007. Schools which did not agree targets by this date were set targets by the local authority.

Appendix 6

Strategies for Improving the Attendance of Traveller Children

Schools

- show high expectations of attendance with regard to pupils who are not travelling
- respond promptly to absences through immediate telephone or other enquiries
- refer any continuing or repeated absence to the locality team
- check whether absences are authorised
- monitor absences
- set up pastoral systems to deal effectively with vulnerable children, bullying and racism
- avoid exclusions
- establish peer support/ befriending/ mentoring schemes
- create an inclusive culture which promotes equality and recognises cultural diversity and difference
- develop strategies to support pupils with literacy or learning difficulties
- provide an appropriate curriculum and personal learning plans
- support educational continuity while children are travelling
- provide whole staff inset on the particular needs of traveller pupils
- give additional support if needed on entry to school
- ensure adequate support at transfer between Key Stages, particularly primary to secondary, and Key Stage 3 to 4
- where appropriate, seek advice from the Advisory Service for Traveller Education currently a commissioned service from Devon County Council.

Improving parental involvement

- increase contact with families, including home visits, to develop trust and confidence and share information
- take account of parents' literacy levels and possible lack of school experience
- provide opportunities for mothers, fathers and other relatives to visit the school
- encourage the uptake by parents of pre-school and family education opportunities
- ensure that parents understand their legal duty to ensure that children receive efficient full-time education.

Local Authority Support

- the local authority will, if appropriate, prosecute traveller parents who neglect their legal duty
- the local authority will work to ensure that admissions and transport policies provide equal access for traveller pupils.

Appendix 7

Policy for Supporting the Attendance of Looked After Children

Introduction

1. Torbay is committed to securing the best possible educational outcomes for looked after children. It believes that regular, punctual, uninterrupted attendance at school is vital to help ensure that looked after children are able to make the most of the educational opportunities which are available to them.
2. This policy is intended to identify particular roles and responsibilities for schools, carers and the specialist social care teams.
3. The policy is intended to supplement other Local Authority policy and guidance in relation to school attendance.

Responsibilities of Schools

4. All Torbay schools are asked to appoint a designated teacher for looked after children. This designated teacher will be responsible for ensuring that practice within his/her school enables any looked after child registered at that school to attend regularly and achieve high educational standards.
5. If a looked after child fails to attend school and no notification or explanation is received from the child's carer within the first hour of the day of his/her non-attendance the school should attempt to contact the carer immediately.
6. Schools should not authorise any absence of a looked after child unless they receive a satisfactory explanation from the child's carer.
7. Schools should be alert to any emerging pattern of non-attendance by a looked after child and should refer this to the child's carer and the social worker without delay.
8. If a looked after child is dual registered and is receiving part or the whole of his/her education off-site the school should ensure that it regularly monitors this attendance and records and reports it accurately. The school should liaise with the other institution / provider where the looked after child is accessing his/her education on a weekly basis.

Responsibilities of Carers

9. Carers should ensure that all children in their care attend school regularly and punctually and that children only miss school for unavoidable reasons such as illness.
10. Carers should endeavour to arrange appointments for looked after children out-of-school hours.
11. Carers should be alert to any sign that a looked after child is reluctant to attend school and to any events and occurrences which may subsequently impact upon a child's regular school attendance.
12. Should a looked after child fail to attend school his/her carer should immediately notify the school on the first morning of any absence and offer an explanation for the child's absence (together with an anticipated return date).
13. Carers should not arrange holidays which involve taking the children for whom they care out of school during term-time.

Responsibilities of Social Workers

14. Social Workers should ensure that, wherever possible, care related meetings are arranged outside school hours.
15. Social Workers should ensure that carers are meeting their responsibilities as outlined above.

Appendix 8

Legislative framework

The legal framework governing school attendance and the responsibilities of parents, schools and the local authority is set out in a succession of acts, regulations and other guidance.

Education Act 1996

Under Section 7 of the Act:

- the parent is responsible for making sure that their child of compulsory school age receives efficient full time education that is suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs that the child may have:
 - this can be by regular attendance at school,
 - or otherwise (the parent can choose to educate their child themselves).

If it appears to the local authority that a child of compulsory school age is not receiving a suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise;

- they must begin procedures for issuing a School Attendance Order under Section 437 of the Education Act 1996.

If a child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend the school regularly

- the parent is guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

In addition, if it can be proved that a parent knew of the child's non-attendance and failed to act, then they may be found guilty under Section 444(1A) as amended by the Education and Inspections Act 2006. This offence (known as the higher or aggravated offence) can lead to a warrant being issued compelling a parent to attend court and conviction may result in a higher level of fine or a custodial sentence.

Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003

The Act added two new sections (444A and 444B) to the Education Act.

It introduced penalty notices as an alternative to prosecution under Section 444; the issuing of penalty notices is governed by:

- the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2004
- the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2004, and
- the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2005.

It introduced parenting contracts as another tool to be considered by LAs and schools for improving attendance.

Guidance on these regulations was published by the DfES in 2004 and revised in 2005:

- guidance on Education-Related Parenting Contracts, Parenting Orders and Penalty Notices.

Children Act 1989

Under Section 36 of the Act the local authority must consider whether to apply for an Education Supervision Order (ESO) before prosecuting a parent:

- an ESO will make “the local authority responsible for advising, supporting and giving ‘directions’ to the supervised child and his/her parents in such a way as to ensure that the child is properly educated.

If a parent persistently fails to comply with directions given by the supervisor they may be guilty of an offence.

If a child persistently fails to comply the supervisor is obliged to refer the matter to social services who have a duty to investigate under the Children Act and could commence care proceedings.

Crime and Disorder Act 1998

Section 16 of the Act gave police officers in England the power to take registered pupils back to school or to another designated place.

It was amended by the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to allow a police officer to remove an excluded pupil to designated premises.

Education and Inspections Act 2006

This Act amends the Education Act 1996.

It makes it a duty for the local authority:

- to promote high standards;
- ensure fair access to educational opportunity; and,
- to promote the fulfilment of every child’s educational potential.

It makes it a duty to make arrangements to identify children not receiving suitable education.

Section 103(2) of the Act

It makes it a duty for the parent of an excluded pupil to ensure that the pupil is not present in a public place during school hours on any of the first 5 days of the exclusion.

If the excluded pupil is present in a public place during school hours on the specified days:

- the parent commits an offence under Section 103(3) and the parent may be given a penalty notice or prosecuted in respect of this offence.

Statutory Instrument 2006 No. 1751 The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

This governs the registration of pupils in conjunction with guidance issued by the DfES:

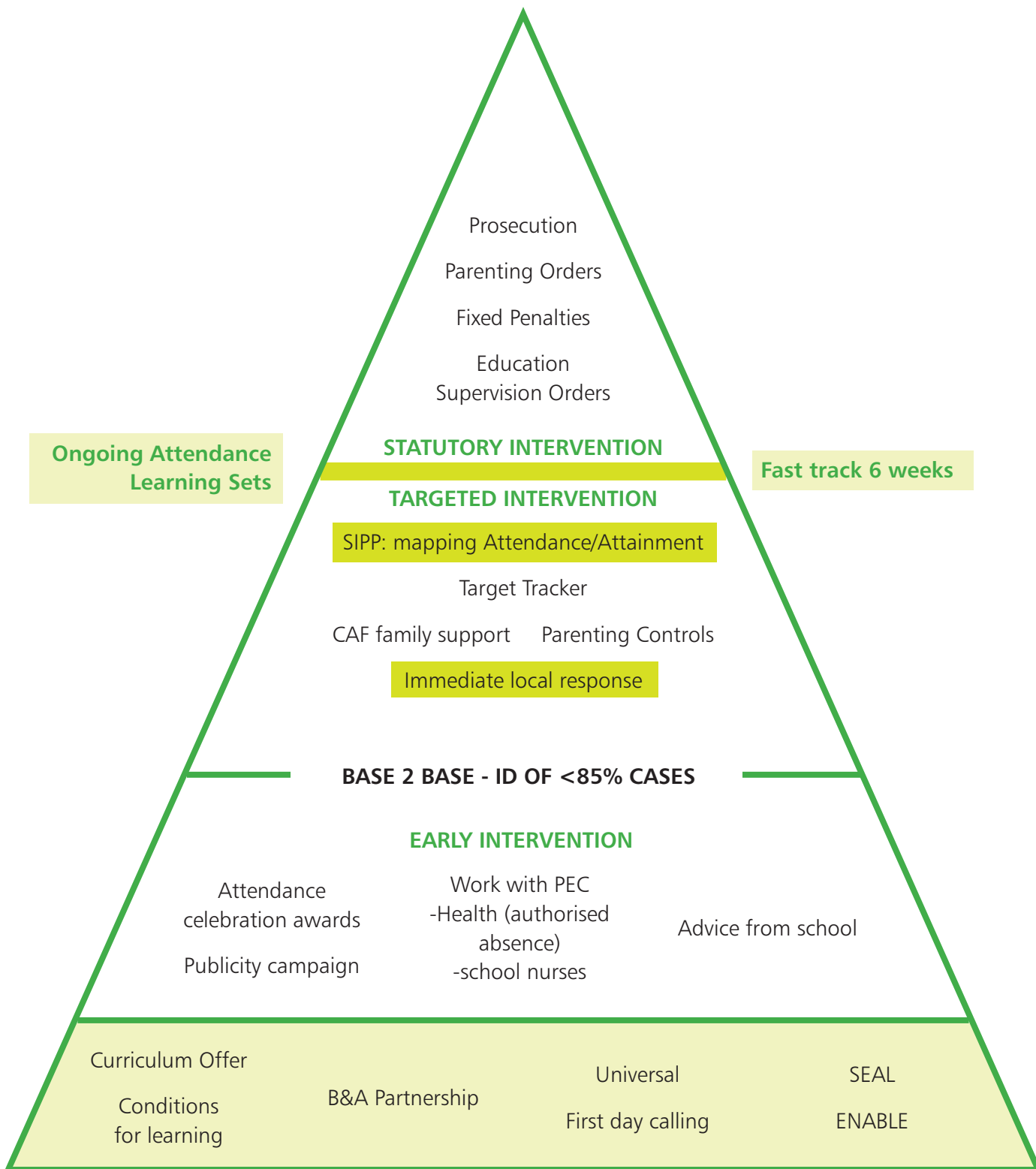
- Keeping Pupil Registers, DfES 2006;
- Absence and Attendance Codes, DfES 2006.

It makes it a duty for schools to report irregular attendance to the local authority:

- The local authority will investigate absence.

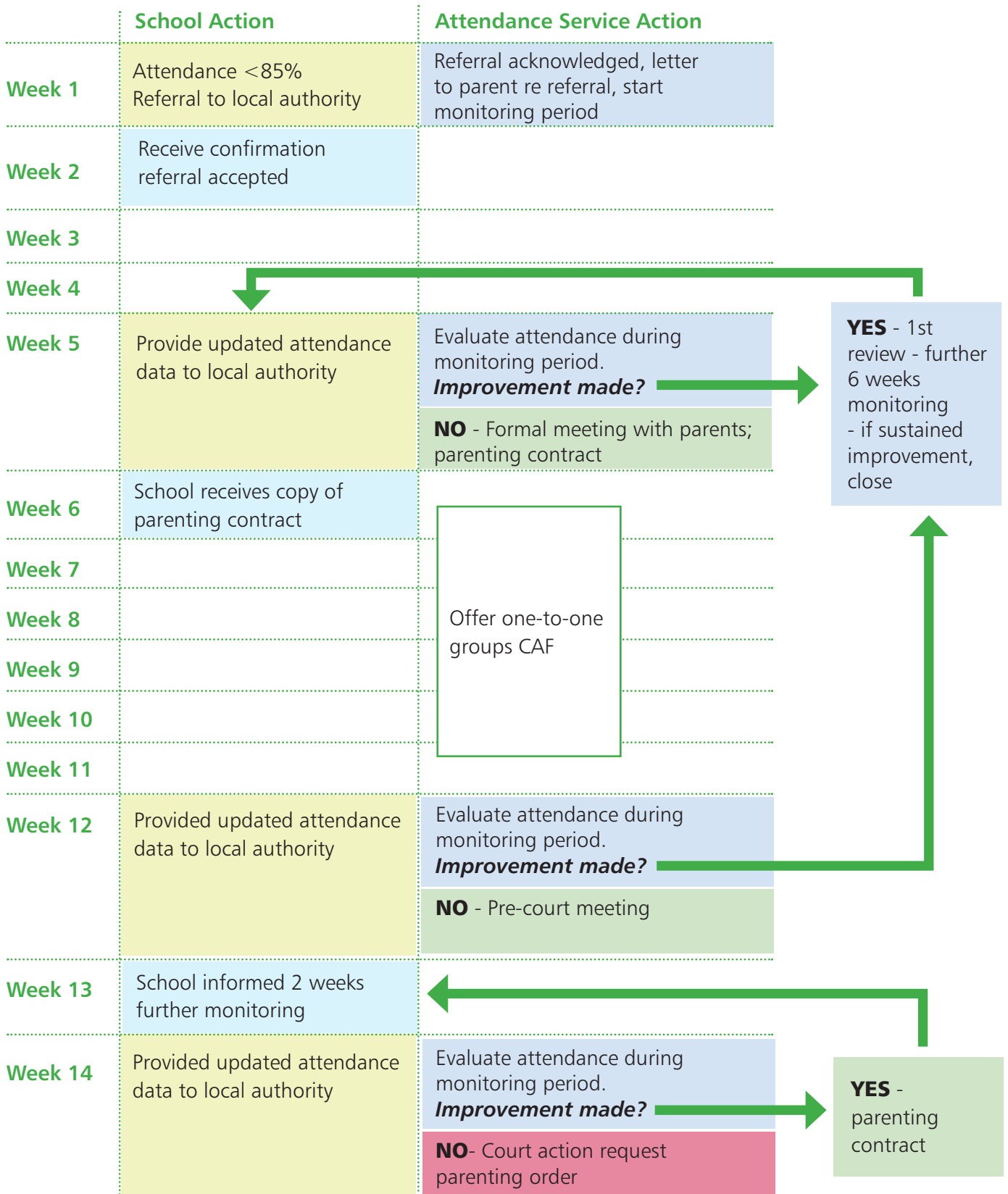
Appendix 9

Triangle Diagram: Support and strategies to promote attendance at each level of need



Appendix 10

Primary Attendance Fast Track Pilot



Appendix 11

The Core Offer (2009/10) to all schools across Torbay

Attendance Improvement Service Mission Statement

To eliminate poor school attendance across the Bay 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.

In order to achieve this with our schools we will ensure that registered pupils of compulsory school age attend school regularly and punctually. As authorised representatives of the local authority, the Attendance Improvement Officers will:

- monitor and analyse school attendance data through the regular inspection of registers and liaison with appropriate school staff;
- Undertake individual casework with children, young people and their families when there is poor attendance
- Provide strategic advice, support and challenge to enable schools to develop improved systems and practices for managing and improving attendance.

1. Monitor and analyse school attendance data through the regular inspection of registers and liaison with appropriate school staff

We will:

- provide a named Attendance Improvement Officer for advice, information and support
- visit your school at least once a term and meet with your school attendance leads
- Analyse your data to identify the specific attendance issues within your school, including individual pupil level data.
- Identify with you at risk and vulnerable groups in particular children looked after, children on the child protection register, black minority and ethnic children, travelling families and those with special educational needs to ensure additional support is available where necessary.
- Provide appropriate administrative training in data analysis for staff as necessary.
- Implement in partnership with you an attendance improvement action plan based upon performance data analysis and outcomes achieved. This will include targets to reduce overall absence, unauthorised absence, authorised absence and persistent absence. These targets will be set by the school in consultation with the School Improvement Partners and the Attendance Improvement Service.

2. Undertake individual casework with children, young people and their families when there is poor and/or non-attendance

This will be achieved by:

- Assessment of children and family needs in relation to improving attendance
- Identify and plan an appropriate package of intervention designed to improve attendance and address underlying issues. This will include:
 - Individual case work and planning
 - Parenting and family support – strategies to assist parents/carers
 - Evidence based parenting programmes that can be delivered on an individual or group setting – programmes that have been researched, tested and are shown to make a difference and improve outcomes for children and young people
 - Referral to other services and interventions as needed
- Attendance Improvement Officers will provide termly Parent/Carer drop-in surgeries to discuss attendance issues and best service interventions
- We will introduce as necessary the appropriate statutory intervention when a pupil continues to fail to attend school regularly and all attempts to voluntarily engage with parents and improve attendance have been unsuccessful. This will include :
 - Parenting contracts
 - Educational Supervision Orders – we must always consider this option before we consider prosecution
 - Penalty notices
 - School attendance Orders
 - Prosecutions – fines and parenting orders

3. Provide strategic advice, support and challenge to enable schools to develop improved systems and practices for managing and improving attendance.

This will be achieved by

- Providing a good practice handbook which will include advice on authorisation of holidays, absence recording, referrals, term time holidays, children missing education.
- Advising schools on attendance best practice and research
- To assist and advise on the development of your whole school attendance policy
- Good practice workshops will be held for school attendance personnel on a termly basis.
- Implementing effective Torbay attendance marketing and communication strategies to improve attendance ie every school day matters.
- Supporting schools in issuing parenting contracts where required

- Providing appropriate administrative training in data analysis for staff as necessary
- Attendance Improvement Officers attending school assemblies and other school events to raise the importance of attendance
- Producing articles on attendance for school newsletters
- Recognition and celebration of improved attendance at a pupil and school level by appropriate awards such as school certificates

In addition to the Attendance Improvement Service the Local Authority Behaviour and Attendance consultant will provide advice and support to you and your school around pupil behaviour at both an individual and whole school level. This will include whole school strategies, such as SEAL, and targeted approaches such as 'Thrive'.

The B and A consultant will facilitate termly workshops to disseminate best practice and explore evidence-based approaches from other authorities.

School Improvement Partners will work with you to set an appropriately challenging attendance target. They will work with you to identify and address barriers to achieving this target and will support you to ensure that the right focus is given to attendance within your SEF.

Core Offer Plus for all Torbay Primary Priority PA schools

Those primary schools who have been identified as priority schools for attendance will receive an enhanced core offer. This will include all of the above, plus the following:

- Visit at least twice termly or as needed and meet with respective school Attendance Leads
- Draw up in consultation with School Attendance Leads a PA improvement Attendance Action plan that will be regularly monitored and reviewed
- Offer a weekly parenting support facilitator drop-in service.
- Pilot unplanned house visits for non-attendance once a term
- Ensure the Local Authority performance data team assist schools in addressing any learning/training needs for school staff responsible for school registers
- Assistance with data monitoring.
- Promote and monitor the completion of CAF by school employed attendance staff and referral to services that will promote and assist in improving attendance
- Implement a fast-track to prosecution programme
- Ensure relevant marketing and communication data re improving attendance is provided to all school staff and offer school teacher practice workshops on attendance and improving outcomes for Children and Young People
- Termly meetings with the school Head Teacher and the Local Authority strategic lead(s) for Attendance

Once a primary school is no longer within a priority category, the offer will revert to the standard core offer.

Core Offer for all Torbay Secondary Priority PA contracted out provider schools – Paignton Community and Sports College, Torquay Community College and Westlands

In addition to the identified responsibilities within the Attendance Commissioning Contract, Attendance Improvement Officers will:

- Visit at least twice termly or as needed and meet with respective school Attendance Leads and attendance employed staff to analyse attendance data
- Ensure the Local Authority performance data team assist schools in addressing any learning/training needs for school staff responsible for school registers .
- Implement and maintain a fast-track to prosecution programme
- Ensure relevant marketing and communication data re improving attendance is provided to all school staff and offer school teacher practice workshops on attendance and improving outcomes for Children and Young People
- Promote and monitor the completion of CAF by school employed attendance staff and referral to services that will promote and assist in improving attendance
- School employed attendance officers will attend and participate in all appropriate learning and training events to ensure best and consistent practice
- Schools will be expected to contribute to the PA Attendance Improvement Action plans and work in partnership with the Local Authority Attendance Improvement Officer in terms of assessing, monitoring and evidencing progress made
- Termly meetings with the school Head Teacher and the Local Authority strategic lead(s) for Attendance

Core Offer Plus for Torbay Priority PA secondary Schools – non-contracted out provider – St Cuthbert Mayne

In addition to the core offer Attendance Improvement Officers will

- Visit at least twice termly or as needed and meet with respective school Attendance Leads
- Draw up in consultation with School Attendance Leads a PA improvement Attendance Action plan that will be regularly monitored and reviewed
- Offer of a weekly parenting support facilitator drop-in service.
- Pilot unplanned house visits for non-attendance once a term
- Ensure the Local Authority performance data team assist schools in addressing any learning/training needs for school staff responsible for school registers
- Assistance with data monitoring.
- Implement a fast-track to prosecution programme
- Ensure relevant marketing and communication data re improving attendance is provided to all school staff and offer school teacher practice workshops on attendance and improving outcomes for Children and Young People

- Promote and monitor the completion of CAF by school personnel staff and referral to services that will promote and assist in improving attendance
- Termly meetings with the school Head Teacher and the Local Authority strategic lead(s) for Attendance

We will review the Core Offer with you during the summer term 2010 and adjust in line with agreement or as a result of available capacity.

