





## School Attendance Service

# An Introduction

Dorset's School Attendance Service has produced this information for all schools as a guide to the work of the Service. It contains information that schools may find useful and details of who to contact if you have any questions or concerns about attendance. It also includes a sample form for schools to complete when requesting involvement from the Service. More detailed information on school attendance and a good practice guide can be found in Dorset's School Attendance Policy and Guidance on Schoolsnet.

It is important that professionals involved in education should promote regular and punctual school attendance.

Regular attendance and good punctuality are not only important in obtaining maximum benefit from education but are key skills for adult life.

The legal responsibility for ensuring that children attend school is with parents and carers. A whole school approach promoting a positive ethos will improve the attendance of pupils and make a difference to attendance rates.

This information is intended to assist schools in managing attendance and to promote effective partnership with the Local Authority, so that together we can improve educational outcomes for all children.

Attendance Manager  
Learning and Inclusion



School Attendance Service

## Useful Contacts

Colin Briden – Attendance Manager

Email: [c.r.briden@dorsetcc.gov.uk](mailto:c.r.briden@dorsetcc.gov.uk)

Tel: 01305 225728

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Kay James – Attendance Support Officer, Blandford, Gillingham, Shaftesbury, Sherborne & Sturminster Newton

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Cheryl Noble – Attendance Support Officer, Purbeck, Lytchett Minster & Wimborne

Email: [c.noble@dorsetcc.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:c.noble@dorsetcc.gcsx.gov.uk)

Tel: 01305 225976

Laura Whittaker – Attendance Support Officer, Christchurch, Ferndown & Highcliffe

Email: [l.m.whittaker@dorsetcc.gov.uk](mailto:l.m.whittaker@dorsetcc.gov.uk)

Tel: 01305 221418

Kristian Rose – Children Missing Education (CME)

Email: [k.l.rose@dorsetcc.gov.uk](mailto:k.l.rose@dorsetcc.gov.uk)

Tel: 01305 225741

Julia Howorth – Attendance Team Administrator

Email: [j.howorth@dorsetcc.gov.uk](mailto:j.howorth@dorsetcc.gov.uk)

Tel: 01305 228392

If you have any general questions or queries, please email [schoolattendance@dorsetcc.gov.uk](mailto:schoolattendance@dorsetcc.gov.uk)



## School Attendance Service

# Key Principles

Dorset's School Attendance Team aims to ensure that all schools and the local authority work together to promote the highest levels of regular attendance thereby helping Dorset's children and young people to achieve their full potential.

### Principles

- Dorset County Council will work with all partners to promote and support good school attendance.
- All children and young people have a fundamental right to education in order to achieve their maximum potential.
- Good attendance is secured when there is a strong culture of partnership between the Local Authority, School Governors, Headteachers, parents and other partners each with clearly expressed and understood roles and responsibilities. Parents/carers should be fully involved as key partners in securing regular school attendance.
- Early identification, communication and action on attendance problems are critical in achieving successful outcomes.

### The School Attendance Service will aim to

- Establish consistent county-wide legal advice and action on school attendance.
- Offer advice, support and guidance to schools on whole school approaches to attendance.
- Provide advice and support to school staff on school specific issues and individual cases.
- Seek and share good attendance practice.

### Good Practice

- Setting good habits early:

All schools need to help pupils establish regular, punctual attendance from the start, involving parents in the process.

- Early Intervention:

Prompt intervention is needed where there is absence causing concern so it is clear that this will not be tolerated.

- Rewarding achievements:

Positive recognition of individual pupil, class or year group achievements in attendance, through mentions in assembly, awarding certificates or prizes, is helpful.

- Working with Parents, Students & Pupils:

All schools should encourage parents to support good attendance through home-school agreements, parents' meetings and newsletters. Schools should always know who has parental responsibility for all their pupils.

*'One of the most effective ways that schools can improve achievement is by improving attendance. Even the very best teachers struggle to raise the standards of children who are not in school regularly. Schools that relentlessly pursue good attendance also get better overall attainment and behaviour.'*

**Improving Attendance at School DfE 2012**



CHILDS NAME:	DATE OF BIRTH:
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ETHNICITY:	LANGUAGES SPOKEN:
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SCHOOL NAME:	HOME TEL NO:
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NAME(S) OF PARENT/CARER	<input type="checkbox"/> Parental Responsibility
	<input type="checkbox"/> Parental Responsibility

CHILDS HOME ADDRESS:	PLEASE TICK:
	CHILD PROTECTION/CIN <input type="checkbox"/> SEN <input type="checkbox"/>
	TRAVELLER <input type="checkbox"/> LAC <input type="checkbox"/>

PLEASE LIST ANY SIBLING(S) CURRENTLY ATTENDING THE SCHOOL:

REASON FOR REFERRAL (Please attach attendance record):

SAMPLE



ACTION TAKEN BY SCHOOL (Please provide full details):

CONTACT WITH PARENTS/CARERS:

SAMPLE

Meeting with Parents (tick)  Letter to Parents (tick)

OTHER AGENCIES INVOLVED/ANY OTHER CONCERNS INCLUDING CSE (include full names of workers if known)

Social Worker.....Name: \_\_\_\_\_

GP.....Name: \_\_\_\_\_

CAMHS.....Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Other.....Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_

REFERRAL MADE BY:

POSITION:

DATE:



## School Attendance Service

# Removal of a pupil's name from the school roll

Deletion from the admission register of the name of a pupil (of compulsory school age) is permitted when:

- a) A school attendance order naming the school has been altered or revoked
- b) The pupil has been registered at another school
- c) The pupil has ceased to attend and the parents have satisfied the LA that he or she is receiving full-time education suitable to his or her age, ability and aptitude otherwise than at a school
- d) Transfer of the pupil's ordinary residence makes attendance at the school unreasonable (i.e. he or she has moved to another area)
- e) The pupil has failed to return to school within 10 days of the expiry of extended leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday unless the absence is because of sickness or some other unavoidable cause and both the proprietor and the local authority have failed, after reasonable enquiry, to ascertain where the pupil is.
- f) The School Medical Officer has certified that the pupil's health is such that he or she is unlikely to benefit enough to attend before becoming legally exempted from attendance
- g) The pupil has been continuously absent for at least four weeks and, after reasonable enquiry, neither the school nor the LA has been able to locate the pupil (Note: this means that the School Attendance Team and the school must agree. One cannot act alone)
- h) The pupil is known to have died
- i) The pupil will cease to be of compulsory school age before the school next meets and he or she intends to leave
- j) In an independent school he or she has ceased to be a pupil
- k) In a maintained school, he or she has been permanently excluded but only when the school appeal process has been concluded or the parent decides not to appeal
- l) Having been admitted to the school for nursery education, he or she has not transferred to the reception class

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016 means that all schools now have a duty to inform the local authority in all circumstances when a pupil is deleted from the register. The only exception is when a pupil has completed their final year of education.



# Employment of children and young persons

## The Law Says

The following rules apply until school leaving age. A child work permit application should be completed by the employer.

*A child reaches the end of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June in the school year during which he/she becomes 16. A work permit is not required after this date.*

A child may undertake 'light work'. This refers to work that is not likely to be harmful to the health, safety or development of a child or to their attendance at school.

There are certain jobs that cannot be undertaken by a child under the age of 16. Examples of prohibited employment types include:

- to sell alcohol, except in a sealed container
- in a commercial kitchen (this includes washing up, unless the washing up area is separate to the kitchen)
- to collect or sort rubbish
- employment where harmful chemical, biological or physical agents are used
- in the personal care of residents of any residential care home or nursing home unless under the supervision of a responsible adult

## Hours a child can work during term time

During school term time	Children aged 13 and 14 years	Children aged 15 and 16 years
<b>Daily maximum (Monday to Friday)</b>	2 hours (of which no more than 1 hour may be prior to the start of school hours)	2 hours (of which no more than 1 hour may be prior to the start of school hours)
<b>Daily maximum (Saturday)</b>	5 hours	8 hours
<b>Daily maximum (Sunday)</b>	2 hours	2 hours
<b>Weekly maximum</b>	12 hours	12 hours
<b>Earliest start time</b>	7am	7am
<b>Latest finish time</b>	7pm	7pm
<b>Is employment during school hours permitted?</b>	No	No

## Hours a child can work during school holidays

During school holidays	Children aged 13 and 14 years	Children aged 15 and 16 years
<b>Daily maximum (Monday to Saturday)</b>	5 hours	8 hours
<b>Daily maximum (Sunday)</b>	2 hours	2 hours
<b>Weekly maximum</b>	25 hours	35 hours
<b>Earliest start time</b>	7am	7am
<b>Latest finish time</b>	7pm	7pm

Further information along with relevant legislation and the online application form can be found at: <https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/licensing/child-employment>



School Attendance Service

## Holidays in Term Time

### Guidance for Schools and Governors

#### Request for approved leave of absence

##### **Amendments to the Pupil Registration (England) 2006 Regulations state that:**

“Head teachers may not grant any approved leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Head teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted”. Before any request for leave of absence is approved, a headteacher must be satisfied that there are “exceptional circumstances” justifying the request for leave of absence.

##### **Defining exceptional circumstances**

Many head teachers and school pyramids wish to define for their parents/carers what would constitute an exceptional circumstance, so that schools can be consistent in their response to any leave of absence requests received.

However, the Department for Education has not defined exceptional circumstances, except to explain that: “Schools should consider each request individually taking into account the circumstances, such as: the nature of the event for which leave is sought; the frequency of the request; whether the parent/carer gave advance notice; and the pupil’s attainment, attendance and ability to catch up on missed schooling”. Guidance from the NAHT defines exceptional as rare, significant and unavoidable.

In relation to the practice of developing cluster or local school partnership letters (a blanket policy), schools need to ensure they remain lawful – in that head teachers have a discretionary power, and should consider each individual leave of absence request based on the circumstances of that family and the impact that absence will have on the child. Schools should not issue blanket policies where they state that they will only approve requests for leave of absence up to a certain duration, or where a pupil has a certain percentage attendance. Similarly, a refusal to authorise any leave of absence requests, or to automatically refuse certain categories of request, could be unlawful.

##### **Dorset County Council advises that:**

- Where schools do operate a cluster or partnership response to requests for absence it remains acceptable and lawful to communicate with parents/carers examples of what you all would consider to be exceptional circumstances, as long as it is very clear that these are examples and every request will be considered individually.
- The nature of the words *exceptional circumstances* are such that they indicate unusual events or an abnormal occurrence. It is therefore not possible to define in advance when a request will or will not be exceptional.

##### **How do I decide if it is exceptional, whether to authorise and how many days?**

Although the decision is the headteacher’s, to support your decision-making we would ask you to consider the following:-

Could this request for leave take place during normal school holidays? If the answer is yes then it is not an exceptional circumstance. The Department for Education is clear that there is no parental/carer right for a family holiday and that cost, experiences for the child or overlapping with school holidays are not factors on which the decision should be made.

**Dorset County Council's Current advice is as follows:**

If it is an exceptional circumstance you still have to decide whether to approve the absence or not. This decision should be made by considering primarily the pupil's attainment, attendance and ability to catch up on missed schooling; followed by the frequency of the requests; the nature of the event for which leave is sought and whether the parent/carer gave advance notice. You do not have to approve leave of absence even if the reason given is exceptional.

Schools and head teachers should ensure that they are not discriminatory in their decision to approve leave in exceptional circumstances for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children who may request this in addition to the extended leave covered by the *T* code. (If schools are using the *T* code correctly this would only be used for the time when a child is absent from school as the family are travelling for employment.) The decision to approve the leave should be made without consideration for leave taken for employment, but schools should take into account the child's overall attendance rate, which may include other absences.

If you do approve leave of absence you need to make it clear the days you are authorising and from what time that approval takes place. For example, you may approve the absence for the immediate family wedding that takes place on the Wednesday, but may feel that due to the location of the wedding the child does not need to be absent for the entire week or for the two whole days of travel either side of the event.

**Authorised approved leave of absence**

Dorset County Council anticipates that it will be extremely rare for leave of absence for a holiday in term time to be authorised. Where it is approved the school should use the appropriate authorised absence code. If leave is not approved the absence should be coded as a G. If a parent/carer takes a child on holiday during term time without obtaining the head teacher's consent beforehand, the pupil's absence must be recorded as unauthorised G.

The parent/carer is then committing an offence and may be issued with a penalty notice or prosecuted under the Education Act 1996, Section 444(1).

Authorised officers have the discretion to issue a penalty notice without warning where the parent/carer has chosen to take the child on leave during term time without authorisation.

**Relevant legislation and guidance**

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, which came into force on 1 September 2013.



## School Attendance Service

# Children Missing Education

This refers to children who stop attending school and who are believed to have left the area without parents notifying the school, and school has been unable to contact.

- The school should try to make telephone contact
- Write to the home address
- Make informal enquiries to relations or friends of the child and refer to the School Attendance Service.

On receipt of such a referral the School Attendance Service will complete checks to locate the child.

If you have any Child Protection concerns about the child you should follow the Child Protection Procedures and contact the **Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub** on **01202 228866** immediately.

The government has placed a duty on local authorities (Education and Inspections Act 2006) to make arrangements to establish (as far as it is possible to do so) the identities of children in their area who are of compulsory school age and not receiving a suitable education.

Children Missing Education (CME) refers to all children of compulsory school age who are neither on a school roll nor being educated other than at school or who have been out of any educational provision for a substantial period of time.

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have.

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. School and college staff should follow the school's or college's procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.

A procedure for CME can be found in the Pan Dorset Pan-Dorset Multi-Agency Safeguarding Policies and Procedures Manual.

[http://pandorsetscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p\\_ch\\_missing\\_care\\_hme\\_edu.html](http://pandorsetscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_ch_missing_care_hme_edu.html)

Schools should put in place appropriate safeguarding policies, procedures and responses for children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions.

It is essential that all staff are alert to signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns such as travelling to conflict zones, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage.

The law requires all schools to have an admission register and, with the exception of schools where all pupils are boarders, an attendance register. All pupils must be placed on both registers.

All schools must inform their local authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register where they:

- have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education; Kate Williams 01305 224762 email: [ehc@dorsetcc.gov.uk](mailto:ehc@dorsetcc.gov.uk)
- have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered; Jean Walker 01305 228444 email: [j.k.walker@dorsetcc.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:j.k.walker@dorsetcc.gcsx.gov.uk)
- have been certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he/she nor his/her parent has indicated the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age. Email: [k.l.Williams@dorsetcc.gov.uk](mailto:k.l.Williams@dorsetcc.gov.uk)
- are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period; or, have been permanently excluded.  
Kate Williams 01305 224762 email: [exclusions@dorsetcc.gov.uk](mailto:exclusions@dorsetcc.gov.uk)

As stated previously the local authority must be notified when a school is to delete a pupil from its register under the above circumstances. This should be done as soon as the grounds for deletion are met, and before deleting the pupil's name from the register. It is essential that schools comply with this duty, so that local authorities can, as part of their duty to identify children of compulsory school age who are missing education, follow up on any child who might be in danger of not receiving an education and who might be at risk of abuse or neglect.

All schools must inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more, at such intervals as are agreed between the school and the local authority (or in default of such agreement, at intervals determined by the Secretary of State).

**Relevant Guidance and Information**

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/550416/Children\\_Missing\\_Education\\_-\\_statutory\\_guidance.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550416/Children_Missing_Education_-_statutory_guidance.pdf)

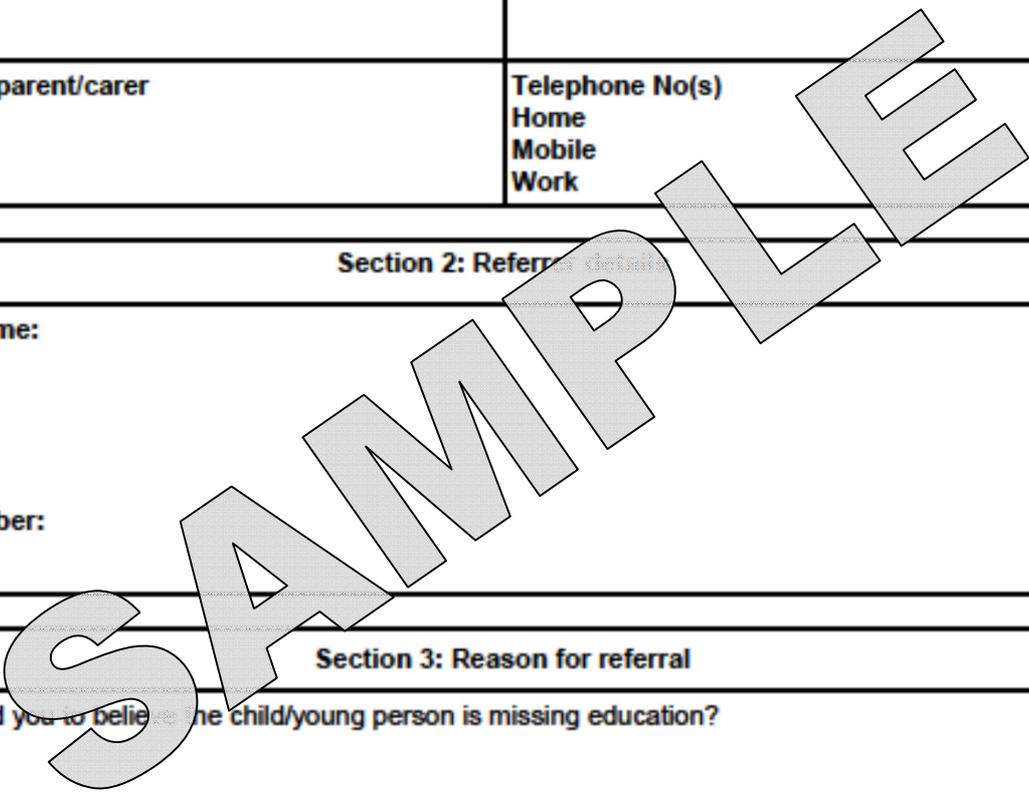
*You may need to copy and paste the above link into your browser.*

**CHILDREN'S SERVICES**  
**Referral Form for Child Missing Education**  
 Please complete all sections of this form

<b>Section 1: Core information - please complete all sections</b>	
<b>Name</b> (include any alternatives / nicknames/AKA)	<b>Date of Birth</b>
	<b>UPN</b> (unique pupil number)
<b>School Last Attended</b>	<b>Last known address</b>
<b>Date Last Attended</b>	
<b>Name(s) of parent/carer</b>	<b>Telephone No(s)</b> Home Mobile Work

<b>Section 2: Referrer</b>
<b>Referrer name:</b>
<b>Role:</b>
<b>School:</b>
<b>Phone number:</b>
<b>e-mail:</b>

<b>Section 3: Reason for referral</b>
What has led you to believe the child/young person is missing education?



Section 4: Please answer yes or no to these questions then go to section 5	
Are you aware of any other school aged children in the family home?	Yes / No
Do you have any other addresses for this child/young person?	Yes / No
Have you had any contact with any adults in the family or connected to the family regarding this child?	Yes / No
Are there any other agencies involved with the family e.g. Family Support, Social Care?	Yes / No
Have you or any other professional involved with the child/young person considered completing the child sexual exploitation risk assessment tool? If yes, please advise Louise Dodds, Safeguarding Standards Advisor, 01305 221319.	Yes / No

Section 5: Additional Information
<p>If you have answered Yes to any questions in section 4, give details here. Also, please add ANYTHING else, no matter how small, that might help us to find a school place for this child.</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 48px; opacity: 0.5; transform: rotate(-15deg);">SAMPLE</p>

Signed ..... Designation ..... Date .....

**PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO :**

Jean Walker  
 Admin Assistant - Central Support Team  
 Children's Services  
 West Court  
 County Hall, Colliton Park  
 Dorchester  
 Dorset DT1 1XJ

Tel: 01305 228444 e-mail: [j.k.walker@dorsetcc.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:j.k.walker@dorsetcc.gcsx.gov.uk)



School Attendance Service

## Useful Links

<https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence>

Government guidance to parents.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/school-behaviour-and-attendance>

A range of articles and resources from the Government on behaviour and attendance.

[https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/media/112043/Penalty-Notices/pdf/Dorset\\_Childrens\\_Services\\_Penalty\\_Notice\\_Protocol\\_0809141.pdf](https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/media/112043/Penalty-Notices/pdf/Dorset_Childrens_Services_Penalty_Notice_Protocol_0809141.pdf)

Dorset County Council Children's Services Penalty Notice Protocol – (PDF download).

<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/term-time-holidays>

Dorset For You advice to Parents regarding Holidays in Term Time.

<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/penalty-notices>

Dorset For You advice to Parents regarding Penalty Notices.

<https://www.gov.uk/child-employment/minimum-ages-children-can-work>

Government guidance on child employment.

<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/article/406356/School-Attendance-Policy-and-Guidance>

Schoolsnet – School Attendance Policy and Guidance. Requires the user to be logged into Schoolsnet in order to view/download the document.