



Rotherham Early Help & Family Engagement Service

School Attendance Matters

A Guide for Parents and Carers

The Local Authority in Rotherham takes attendance very seriously, because we know that children who attend school regularly are much more likely to achieve positive outcomes throughout their childhood and later on in life. The law states that all children of compulsory school age must receive a suitable full-time education and it is important that parents/carers are aware that they are responsible for making sure that their child attends school.

Schools are responsible, by law, for reporting poor attendance to the Local Authority and the Local Authority can take legal action against parents/carers when a child doesn't attend school regularly. This legal action could result in a fine of up to £2,500 or imprisonment for up to 3 months.

In Rotherham, the Early Help & Family Engagement Service works with children, families and schools to support families and promote good attendance. When concerns arise about a child's attendance, the school will make contact with the family to find out where the child is; and explore issues that may be contributing to their reduced attendance. School may raise a concern with the Early Help Service, to ensure that issues with attendance are addressed swiftly by the parents/carers and that support is offered where required.

Where there is additional need identified, the school or another partner will be asked to complete an Early Help, which seeks to understand issues that are affecting the family. The Early Help Assessment is a way of understanding what is contributing to the poor attendance and this assessment can be completed by a range of different agencies (including school) to ensure that a plan is developed to address problems that are being experienced and ultimately, to ensure that the child attends school.

When a family refuses to engage in the Early Help Assessment process, enforcement action will need to be taken as the Local Authority takes non-attendance very seriously.

When a child is off school for long periods due to illness, the school will request that parents/carers provide medical evidence of this.

After being contacted about your child's attendance, if it doesn't improve you will be requested to attend a panel meeting to discuss the concerns. At this meeting a decision will be made and one of the following outcomes will be agreed:

- Apply for an Education Supervision Order (ESO) for children on roll
- Issue a Fixed Penalty Notice (fine)
- Offer intervention and support
- Seek a School Attendance Order (for children not on roll)
- Refer to the Magistrates Court for Prosecution

If you require further information or would like to access some support regarding attendance, please contact school; or the Early Help Attendance Leads: Lisa Marriott lisa.marriott@rotherham.gov.uk or Kathryn Wiltshire kathryn.wiltshire@rotherham.gov.uk Alternatively you can contact the Early Help Triage Team on 01709 334905