

# **Fast Track to Attendance Panels**

**Information for families**

**Helping to improve attendance,  
achievement, and enjoyment at school**

**If you are having difficulties with your child's attendance, please  
speak to their school.**

**If you have any queries regarding this leaflet please  
contact your child's school in the  
first instance**



We are committed to ensuring that all children and young people receive a good education and we know that full school attendance is vital to ensure that they are able to achieve their full potential.

This is underpinned by our vision for all children and young people of Norfolk:

**‘We believe that all children and young people have the right to be healthy, happy, and safe; to be loved, valued and respected; and have high aspirations for their future’.**

### **What does the law say?**

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 places a duty on all parents to ensure that their children receive an efficient, full-time education. Parents who are seen to fail in their duty can be brought before the Magistrates Court.

In Education law, a parent is defined as an individual:

- (a) who is not a parent of his/hers but who has parental responsibility for him/her or
- (b) who has care of him/her

This can include parents therefore with whom the child is not normally resident and/or carers or wider family members who share day to day care of the child.

### **Types of Absence**

Absence can be **authorised** or **unauthorised**. Absence can be **authorised** by the school if one of the following four circumstances apply:

1. Sickness or unavoidable cause (an unavoidable cause relating to the child, not the parent)
2. Leave of absence (granted by the Headteacher)
3. Days of religious observance (for the religion followed by the parents)
4. The child is entitled to Local Education Authority provided transport to school and this is not being provided

For long or frequent periods of sickness absence, it is likely that your child’s school will require you to provide medical evidence to authorise the absence.

A school may also agree to authorise an absence in exceptional circumstances. This will be the decision of the Head Teacher or Principal.

An **unauthorised** absence is any absence for which the school has not given permission or where the parent/carer has been unable to provide a reason for the absence which is acceptable to the school. This includes un-agreed holidays during term time.

### **What is the purpose of the Fast Track to Attendance Panel Meeting?**

The purpose of the Fast Track to Attendance Panel meeting is for you and your child to meet with teachers, school governors and Attendance Improvement Officers to identify the reasons for absence and to work together to improve attendance.

### **What will happen at the Fast Track to Attendance Panel Meeting?**

- The reasons for absence will be identified and different strategies to improve attendance will be considered
- A supportive action plan will be agreed
- An attendance target will be set

Whilst the intention of the Fast Track to Attendance Panel meeting is that attendance will improve, consideration will be made to legal action if attendance targets are not met. This could include prosecution in the magistrates’ court, education supervision orders or parenting orders.

### **What happens next?**

A Review Fast Track to Attendance Panel meeting will be arranged and at this meeting the action plan and attendance will be reviewed. A new action plan will be agreed.

If the attendance target is met, the Review Panel can recommend that no further action is required. However, the school will continue to monitor the attendance of your child and will notify the Local Education Authority if attendance deteriorates. This could still result in legal action being taken.

If the attendance target is not met, the Review Panel will recommend to the Local Education Authority that legal action is taken as specified above: i.e. prosecution in the magistrate’s court, an Education Supervision Order or Parenting Order.