



An Exemplar of Local Authority – Part 2: Procedures and Part 3: Appendices

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Part 2: Procedures

1. Recording of attendance, absence and lateness
2. Managing attendance and absence
3. Monitoring absence and providing support to improve attendance
4. Other Considerations

Recording of attendance, absence and lateness

- All schools are required to keep an attendance register of every pupil (Schools General (Scotland) Regulations 1975).
- Schools should use SEEMiS to record attendance, lateness and absence. Accurate records are vital in ensuring that learners are safe and protected.
- Every absence is categorised as either authorised or unauthorised (see link to Table of authorised and unauthorised codes and descriptors).
- Monitoring absence records ensures emerging patterns can be identified and supported as soon as possible and avoid non-attendance becoming chronic.
- Vulnerable learners should be known to named persons; pupil support leads; and office staff. In some circumstances, or settings, class teachers may also need to know that a learner is vulnerable so that they know to respond quickly in the event of lateness or absence.
- Registering attendance is the responsibility of the teacher or other designated staff.
- Attendance is recorded at the beginning of each session in ELC settings (see link to ELC absence procedures).
- Attendance is recorded twice per day in primary school, at the start of the day and after lunch, and period by period in secondary school. In primary school registration should be completed within 15 minutes of the session start time, and in Secondary School at the beginning of each class.
- Where learning is provided out with school by other providers (for example, work experience, college, other alternative programmes) the provider must

contact the school when the pupil is absent or late. Schools must establish an agreement with the provider that:

- absence should be reported to the school within xx minutes of the agreed start time
- if a learner goes missing at any other time, even if they reappear, the school must be informed.

Managing attendance and absence

- Some absences, such as ill health, are unavoidable. Reasons for absence can also be complex and any communication about absence with learners or parents or carers should always be treated sensitively. Parents and carers are key partners in supporting attendance and reducing absence.
- Parents and carers should notify the school in advance of a planned absence.
- Parents and carers should be aware via the school policy, handbook, and website, that all unexplained absences will be followed up and a reason for the absence sought (see link to simple flow chart of procedures – see Inverclyde Decision Making Tree Exemplar)
- Parents or carers can communicate with the school via written note, email, text or telephone call.
- Schools should follow up with parents or carers if they have any concerns about the authenticity of any communication.
- If no advance notification for an absence is sent to the school, it will be assumed that parents or carers are unaware of the absence and that the learner is missing. Attempts to contact the parent or carer will then be made. Again, if a reply is received and there are doubts regarding its authenticity, further communication should be attempted to clarify or confirm the reason for the absence.
- Over 16-year-old learners can self-certify however, if they are considered vulnerable the school should carefully consider risks and their capacity to self-certify. If appropriate discuss with a parent or carer or seek advice from legal services. Schools should record all communications and actions.

- Protocols should be established for signing learners in and out of school to ensure school staff know who is present in the building at any one time.
- If no reasonable explanation is provided on the first day of absence and if the learner is vulnerable or there are wellbeing concerns about them, further attempts should be made to contact the parent or carer via a phone call or home visit. Child Protection procedures should be followed for any known safeguarding and child protection concerns (see link to relevant procedural guidance).

Monitoring absence and providing support to improve attendance

- Accurate recording and monitoring is vital to maximising attendance and reducing absence.
- Regular monitoring reports should be generated on SEEMiS. (fortnightly unless there are specific concerns which require more frequent monitoring).
- Monitoring reports should be checked for changes or emerging patterns in attendance for both individuals or groups of learners (year/class/characteristics).
- Learners for whom concerns have been identified should be subject to more regular attendance monitoring.
- Number of days missed, the frequency of absences, concerning absence patterns, and/or the level of concern an absence causes due to vulnerability or risk factors could all trigger a supportive response or intervention.
- Vulnerabilities and risks should always be considered first when deciding when and how to respond to absence. Responding to absence should be staged (see link to Staged intervention model and communications/responses).
- Communications with parents or carers are an essential part of absence management (see link to standardised communications (letters/texts/emails) to parents/carers) however they are not interventions in themselves. Appropriate interventions can only be put in place when there is a clear understanding of

the factors contributing to absence. These may be complex. Communications with parents or carers should always be managed sensitively and respectfully.

- Intervening as early as possible may prevent absence becoming chronic or entrenched therefore attendance thresholds should be considered a minimum criteria for triggering a supportive response.
- If attendance concerns persist after working through the intervention stages, it may be necessary to consider compulsory measures (IEI Section 7 and see link to local authority referral procedures to Attendance Group or SCRA and standardised letters to parents/carers/partners).
- Staff with responsibility for monitoring and supporting attendance should undertake the appropriate professional learning (see link to local authority training guide).
- To support a whole school approach towards maximising attendance and reducing absence all staff should undertake appropriate professional learning (see link to local authority training guide). Ideally professional learning should be completed collectively as a whole staff group or as Induction training respectively.

Other considerations

Early Learning Provision - There is no legal requirement for children to attend nursery school, however all learners enrolled in Early Learning and Childcare provision, for the purposes of safeguarding, will be subject to the attendance monitoring procedures similar to those in Primary School (see link to ELC absence procedures). Parents or carers however will not be subject to school attendance procedures for non-attendance.

Ongoing Authorised Absence (see IEI1: 5.3) – If authorised absences look like they may become extended periods of absence schools should consider how they can best support the learner and their family during the absence. In recognition of the fact that school can be a protective factor for learners, schools should work with the learner and their family to minimise the absence. This may require support from other agencies. As corporate parents, schools have additional responsibilities with regard to looked after children.

Diverse School Communities (see IEI1: 5.4) - School staff, who know learners and their families, are best placed to judge the most appropriate response to requests for these absences to be authorised or not. For learners from Gypsy Traveller families who are mobile refer to local authority guidance and procedures (add link to Local Authority guidance and procedures).

Long-Term Illness (see IEI: 4.2 & 4.3) - Where appropriate provision is in place, schools may record this as attendance, but where it is not in place, this is still categorised as authorised absence. Further guidance is available in Guidance on Education of Children Absent From School Through Ill Health – ([Guidance on education for children and young people unable to attend school due to ill health \(www.gov.scot\)](#)). If a school has concerns about the learner in this situation or is unable to provide education for them contact [insert LA lead] directly or refer them to [Name]. group/committee.

Home Educated Children (see IEI: 4.4) – Every child has a right to an education, and it is the duty of the parent (carer) of every school age child to provide that education, either by sending the child to school, or by other means. A parent (carer) has the right to choose not to enrol their child in a school, or to withdraw their child from school, and home educate them. Home education refers to education provided by parents and not to education provided by the local authority out with the school (see [Home education guidance 2021](#)). If a parent or carer asks to withdraw their child from school a Senior School Leader should initiate a sensitive and supportive discussion with them. They should seek to understand the reasons for the request and sensitively advise the parent about the process and implications of choosing to home educate their child. Senior leaders should familiarise themselves with local authority Home Education Guidance and Procedure in advance of the conversation (see [Local Authority guidance and procedures](#)).

Part-time timetables (see IEI2¹: p40)

Local authorities have a statutory obligation to provide full-time education for all school aged learners². It is however recognised that adaptations to how and where the curriculum is delivered may be required in order to meet the learning and wellbeing needs of a small number of learners whose needs extend beyond a school's normal provision and stage 1 or 2 interventions. All partners including the learner and the parent/carers should be involved in the development of this temporary, short-term arrangement. The child's plan should reflect the steps taken by the school to provide the learner with as close to their statutory entitlement of hours, ensuring that their learning needs are met. The [name] team must be informed of any learner placed on a part time timetable including targets, timetable, and timescales for return to full time provision. The local authority will monitor all part time timetables.

¹ [Included, Engaged and Involved Part 2: A positive approach to preventing and managing school exclusions 2017](#)

² The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 (as amended); and the Children and Young People's Act (2014)

Part 3: Appendices (or electronic links to resources)

[Most of these resources ideally should be in a format that can be printed as a poster or leaflet to use as a quick reference guide for school staff, or in the case of the letters downloaded as required]

- Table of authorised and unauthorised absence – codes/descriptors
- Early learning and childcare (ELC) absence procedures
- Flow chart of unexplained absence procedures
- Flow chart of child protection procedures & link to guidance)
- Letter templates
- Guidelines and referral procedures to Local Authority Attendance Group and to Children's Reporter (SCRA)
- Guidance for Gypsy Traveller Learners living in mobile communities
- Guidance and Procedures for use of Part-time Timetables