

# Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership Attendance Strategy

## Introduction

This document sets out the overarching principles of the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership - Attendance Sub-group in contributing to regular school attendance. It is underpinned by the County Council's vision of an educational community as set out in the Inclusion Statement:

*"Inclusive educational communities are those which take account of the needs of individuals and where individuals are valued, feel secure and have a sense of belonging. These learning communities work actively to promote this process and reduce exclusive practices. They also reduce barriers to learning and participation to ensure that all learners experience learning environments in which they can strive for and attain their highest levels of achievement."*

and the Statement of Intent:

*"All Pupils will make the greatest possible progress".*

In order to achieve this the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership - Attendance sub-group endorses the view that *"The County Council considers that the national education expectations at the end of every Key Stage are an **entitlement** for every child and young person"* and believes that this can only be achieved through regular school attendance.

The Children Act 2004 recognises that it is crucial to *"reduce the numbers of children who experience educational failure, engage in offending or anti-social behaviour, suffer ill-health or become teenage parents"*. The sub-group will actively seek to improve outcomes for children and young people, determined by the Act as

- Being healthy
- Staying safe
- Enjoying and achieving
- Making a positive contribution
- Economic well being.

These aims are priorities in the partnership plans to which the County Council contributes. There are clear links between the County Council's strategic plans and partner agencies in achieving the authority's strategy for improving pupil attendance.

## Links to Strategic Plans

### Strategic Plans

- The Community Safety Strategy identifies good school attendance as an essential objective in reducing crime and the fear of crime and offending by young people.
- The County Council Plan and Single Education Plan prioritises regular school attendance to ensure participation and achievement in learning, particularly of under represented groups and those vulnerable to social exclusion.
- The authority's Strategy for Educational Inclusion informs Service Development Plans in setting annual targets and objectives to support schools in achieving improved pupil attendance through inclusive policy and practice.
- Local Implementation Groups implement the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership key priority of improving attendance.
- The authority shares the Youth Justice Board target in relation to young offenders engaged in education, employment and training.
- Cross cutting targets are shared with Connexions Derbyshire for participation in learning and outcomes for school leavers.
- The authority has specific shared targets with Social Services on improving educational outcomes for Children in Public Care.
- The Department of Health Public Service Agreement Objective II seeks to improve health and social care outcomes for children with mental health problems and care leavers.
- The Department of Health National Service Framework for Children, young people and maternity services.

### Public Service Agreement

The County Council has agreed a stretch target, to be achieved by 2007 in respect of improving pupil attendance in Derbyshire schools. The target is a shared target aimed at improving achievement and reducing crime and disorder.

Performance	NMES	2005	2006	2007	
without PSA Stretch	Secondary	7%	6.9%	6.8%	Total absence
	Primary	5%	4.9%	4.8%	Total absence
Performance with PSA Stretch	Secondary	A further 0.2% reduction in total absence to 6.6% by 2007			
	Primary	A further 0.2% reduction in total absence to 4.6% by 2007			

### **Aims**

- To improve the educational outcomes of all children and young people in Derbyshire by supporting the authority in improving school attendance.
- To work with schools and other agencies to protect identified vulnerable children and young people from the negative impact of poor school attendance
- To ensure equality of access to services and assist in addressing disadvantages that may limit a families ability to develop to their full potential
- To co-operate with all agencies in addressing barriers to access which may affect children and young persons' attendance e.g. crime, drugs, alcohol, gambling

### **Objectives**

The Attendance sub-group will:

- Work in partnership with all statutory, non-statutory agencies and communities in promoting regular pupil attendance
- Contribute to the Community Safety Strategy, County Council Plan, Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership and other relevant strategies as appropriate.

### **Procedures/ protocols**

Derbyshire Education Welfare Service accepts referrals from schools, parents/carers and other agencies working with families where poor pupil attendance at school affects their ability to access education or achieve to their potential. Criteria for referral are outlined in the Education Welfare Service Good Practice Guide for school/pupil attendance.

Education Welfare Officers are seconded to the Youth Offending Service as part of an agreed protocol. They aim to support the Youth Justice Board target of 90% of all young offenders engaging in education, employment or training and the protocol for those young offenders placed on the Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme.

Connexions Derbyshire have agreed a protocol with the Service for working with young people aged 13 to 16 years where attendance is an identified problem.

Respective Strategic Health Authorities and Primary Care Trusts have agreed the Policy and procedures on 'Access to Education for Children and Young People with Medical Needs'.

Healthy school communities are effective schools and provide environments that are conducive to learning and encourage children to achieve. Working with teachers, parents and carers, the children and young people themselves and the wider community; health professionals can support schools to deliver a positive health agenda. Healthy eating, self esteem, sexual health and relationships, peer support, for example, are particular issues that have a wider influence on children and young people and affect their involvement at school. Health Services have has a valued contribution to make to reducing inequality, promoting inclusion and improving standards through school attendance and improvement.

The Early Years and Childcare Service have some Children's Fund projects which have improving attainment and attendance as an objective. These include peer mentoring in some primary schools and community mentoring in some secondary schools. The Service promotes regular school attendance by support for breakfast clubs, funding for all 3 and 4 year olds to have a nursery place and district SENCOs who work with early years providers to support transition from early years settings to mainstream school.

Where school aged girls become pregnant, both Early Years and Health contribute to the provision of appropriate services including healthcare in school and childcare to enable the young mother to return to educational provision as quickly as possible.

In all cases, protocols and procedures are reviewed annually.

### **Prioritisation of Referrals**

The sub-group will ensure priority services in certain categories or circumstances:

- Where a child or young person is identified as 'at risk of harm' as defined in "Working Together" (Department of Health).
- Where a child or young person is identified as ' a child in need' as defined in "Framework for Assessment of Children in Need and their Families" (Department of Health).
- Where a child or young person is identified as 'vulnerable' as defined in "Every Child Matters"

### **The role of Local Implementation Groups**

The relationship between the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership, Local Implementation Groups and the sub-group is detailed in Appendix 1 which outlines communication routes to ensure effective actions and outcomes.

The sub-group has commissioned the Education Welfare Service to be the lead agency in 'Championing' the importance of regular school attendance at the Local Implementation Groups. The Education Welfare Service has undertaken to ensure a Manager attends each Local Implementation Group. Their role will be:

- To ensure attendance is a standing agenda item
- To report on attendance rates for each area to the group
- To report agreed actions to promote regular school attendance back to the sub-group

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The sub-group will utilise attendance data in assessing their own performance against national, regional and local comparisons via the Local Implementation Groups and report to the Young People's Strategic Partnership, every 6 months.

Sub-group members will monitor their own service performance in contributing to improving school attendance by seeking the views of service users, including pupils and their families. It will carry out an annual consultation with all partners and report back to the sub-group.

The sub-group will report to the Young People's Strategic Partnership annually.

## Appendix 1

