**Attendance Surgeries – Practice Guidance**

Context

Learning from local and national case reviews, as well as audit, highlights how vital having access to a school place is to a child’s life, and the need to place school life at the heart of multi-agency planning and provision.

*“School life provides a crucial platform where the critical components of healthy development can be nurtured. It is not just a place of academic learning; it is somewhere to belong, to achieve, to have meaning and purpose and is an arena for social and emotional development in preparation for adulthood. This SCR requires a culture shift both in terms of how multi-agency services value the multi-facetted benefits of school and a redesign of service intervention so that schools are placed at the very heart of multiagency provision.” ​(NSCP Serious Case Review)*

In Norfolk we know that too many children are persistently absent from school. The critical importance of school attendance is something that we want all practitioners and teams to prioritise in their work with families. Staff should work with schools to understand and address the complex underlying needs that children may have that are preventing them from accessing education – neither a professional nor school can tackle these issues in isolation, and we appreciate that sometimes additional advice and support may be required from outside the team around the family. In order to support practitioners with this area of work, the Attendance Team runs weekly attendance surgeries, and this guidance seeks to explain how these work.

Attendance Surgeries

The [**Attendance Team**](https://www.schools.norfolk.gov.uk/pupil-safety-and-behaviour/school-attendance)works with schools to promote good attendance and reduce absence of children who are of statutory school-age. Their aim is to ensure that every child has access to a full-time education and to ensure that parents perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age are registered and attending school regularly. They can help with:

* Exploring and identifying the barriers behind poor school attendance
* Provide guidance on appropriate response and intervention
* Provide training and networking opportunities for school staff

Any professional can contact this team if they are worried about a child’s attendance at school.

The Attendance Surgeries will provide an opportunity for practitioners to meet with members of the Attendance Team to discuss cases of concern. Case discussions can be about any child of statutory school age where attendance is of concern or where it appears that the child does not have access to the suitable full-time education to which they are entitled. The aim will be to identify strategies for addressing these barriers and agree an effective plan to move forward.

The surgeries will run every Tuesday afternoon during term time between 2:30pm to 3:30pm:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Attendance Surgery Schedule** | | |
| **Area:** | **Time:** | **Meeting link:** |
| All | 2:30-3:30pm | [Click here to access the Attendance Surgery](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/ap/t-59584e83/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fteams.microsoft.com%2Fl%2Fmeetup-join%2F19%253ameeting_NmExZmMyOTktYTQzMi00NGJiLTg5ZTEtYzVlNmUxYzYyZWJh%2540thread.v2%2F0%3Fcontext%3D%257b%2522Tid%2522%253a%25221419177e-57e0-4f0f-aff0-fd61b549d10e%2522%252c%2522Oid%2522%253a%2522a48574f4-0e42-43d0-9436-8eb81f67c7c9%2522%257d&data=05%7C01%7Ckatie.griffiths%40norfolk.gov.uk%7C4a485f5c8320475f5d5108dad219b5b3%7C1419177e57e04f0faff0fd61b549d10e%7C0%7C0%7C638053305098291053%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=NIBTLhaMGY7hlECLV4GQrJPk9s4WZvcCT4AKhi5gMng%3D&reserved=0)  Meeting ID: 320 041 025 258  Passcode: itHfwE |

Practitioners can simply join the surgery to discuss any cases they might have. If there is an urgent concern about a child’s attendance, the Attendance Team should be contacted outside of this meeting schedule via [csattendance@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:csattendance@norfolk.gov.uk) or on 01603 223681.

Recording

It will be the responsibility of the practitioner to record a summary of the discussions including any actions agreed on the child’s case records. The Attendance & Entitlement Officer will record a summary of the discussion on the child’s PSS record in Synergy.

Supporting guidance

We have developed the following Quick Guide with a range of relevant contacts and useful information for Children’s Services staff - [**The importance of children having access to a full-time, suitable education quick guide (February 2022)**](https://intranet.norfolk.gov.uk/-/media/intranet/files/childrens-services/our-procedures-ml/01-social-care/02-policies-values-and-professional-practice/06-vital-signs-quick-guides/01-best-practice-quick-guides/csp000653-importance-of-children-having-fulltime-suitable-education-qg-v2.pdf)

[***Working together to improve school attendance:***](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance)***Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities -*** is the Department for Education guidance that outlines the responsibilities of all schools and local authorities

Helpful Contacts

Any queries regarding school attendance and the use of reduced timetables should be directed to the Attendance Service at: [csattendance@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:csattendance@norfolk.gov.uk) or 01603 223681.

If a school requires advice and support about the inclusion of children and young people at risk of suspension or permanent exclusion, please use the Inclusion Helpline. The Helpline phone number is 01603 307736 and is open from 8.30am until 4.30pm each weekday during term time.