

# **Rotherham Early Help & Family Engagement Service School attendance matters**

## **Guide for parents and guardians**

Rotherham Local Authority takes attendance very seriously because we know that children who attend school regularly are more likely to achieve positive results throughout their childhood than later in life. The law stipulates that all schoolchildren must receive full-fledged full-time education and it is important that parents/guardians are aware of their responsibility to ensure that their child goes to school.

Schools are legally required to report insufficient school attendance to the local authority and the local authority can take legal action against parents/guardians if the child does not attend school regularly. This could result in a fine of up to £2,500 or a prison sentence of up to three months.

The Early Help & Family Engagement Service in Rotherham works with children, families and schools to help families and promote good schooling. If concerns arise about a child's school attendance, the school will contact the family to find out where the child is; and examine issues that can contribute to their reduced attendance. The school can alert Early Help to ensure that attendance problems are dealt with quickly by parents/guardians and that they are offered assistance if necessary.

If additional needs are identified, the school or other partner will be asked to complete an Early Help assessment to understand the issues affecting the family. Evaluation of Early Help is a way to understand what contributes to poor school attendance and this assessment can be developed by different institutions (including school) to ensure that a plan is drawn up to address the problems that arise and ultimately to ensure that the child attends school.

If a family refuses to participate in the Early Help assessment process, coercive measures will have to be taken because the local authority takes school attendance very seriously.

If the child does not attend school for a long time due to illness, the school asks parents/guardians to provide a medical certificate.

If your child's attendance does not improve after you have been contacted on this matter, you will be asked to attend a meeting where the issue will be discussed. A decision will be taken at this meeting, which may have one of the following results:

- Apply for an Education Supervision Order (ESO) for children registered at the school
- Impose a fine
- Offer intervention and assistance
- Apply for a School Attendance Order for children who are not registered at school
- Refer the case to the Magistrates' Court for prosecution

If you need more information or would like to get help with regard to school attendance, please contact the school; or Early School Attendance Guide : Lisa Marriott [lisa.marriott@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:lisa.marriott@rotherham.gov.uk) or Kathryn Wiltshire [kathryn.wiltshire@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:kathryn.wiltshire@rotherham.gov.uk)  
Alternatively you can contact the Early Help Triage Team on 01709 334905