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Netiquette

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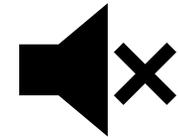
Raise your
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Session Aims

- To understand the function of the Fast Track process in supporting a return to regular attendance
- To be clear when Fast Track is the appropriate intervention for addressing poor school attendance
- To be able to complete the Fast Track paperwork to ensure that the level of evidence for prosecution is met
- To highlight changes that we have made to the process



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What is Fast Track?

Fast Track should be initiated when early intervention has not led to a return to regular attendance

Fast Track is a supportive intervention to improve school attendance

It allows school to discover, discuss and break down barriers to attendance

To ensure that the child's voice and lived experience is central to the plan to improve school attendance

To produce a robust plan by the attendees at the meetings, allocating appropriate actions for parents and professionals to improve school attendance for the child

When you should implement the Fast-Track process

Early intervention has not seen an improvement in attendance

The pupil has accrued at least 9 sessions of unauthorised absence in the past 6 school weeks

There is no statutory defence for the absence

Start the Fast Track Process

The child shall not be taken to have failed to attend regularly at the school by reason of his absence from the school if:

- 01 The absences were authorised by the Head teacher
- 02 The child could not attend because of sickness or 'unavoidable cause' in an emergency
- 03 The child was absent on a day exclusively set apart for religious observance
- 04 The school is outside of the statutory walking distance of the child's home and the Local Authority has a duty to make travel arrangements in relation to the child and has failed to discharge that duty
- 05 The child is not registered at the school and the parents are providing a suitable alternative education
- 06 The parents' trade or business requires them to travel from place to place

“The child could not attend because of sickness or ‘unavoidable cause’ in an emergency.”

Case law has held that stress arising from bullying, behavioural or mental health difficulties or a ‘chaotic lifestyle’ should not be considered an ‘unavoidable cause’

Environment:

Dedicated meeting room/space that means you will not be disturbed during the meeting.

Consider location within school: is it easily accessible? Visible? Appropriate?

Personnel:

Attendance Lead or other appropriate member of SLT to chair the meeting – they need to be able to make decisions on behalf of the school.

Minute taker present.

Any other appropriate school staff or professionals working with the family.

All 'parents' as identified under the Education Act.

'Key components of a successful Fast track meeting'

Equipment:

You must have access to a printer/photocopier.

Ensure you are using the correct template.

YTD attendance certificate for the pupil of concern.

Pen for all attendees to sign the agreed

Best Practice:

Ensure that wishes and feelings work has been completed with the pupil prior to the meeting so they can be shared within the meeting.

Contact teaching staff for an overview of the students current attainment level and any impact that absence has had.

Project written minutes for all attendees to see and contribute to easily.

Definition of a Parent

Under section 576 of the Education Act 1996 (EA 1996), a “parent” in relation to a child or young person is defined as:

Parental Responsibility – Children Act 1989 (Section 3 (1))

- Parents married to each other at the time of a child’s birth have shared PR
- Fathers who are unmarried at the time of a child's birth prior to 2003, even if their name is on the birth certificate, do not have PR unless-
 - (a) they have a parental responsibility order,
 - (b) have a residency order or
 - (c) become the legal guardian of the child.
- From 2003 fathers that are unmarried at the time of birth but are named on the birth certificate do have PR.

So the definition of parent under the EA 1996 is wider than PR.

All natural parents of a child, whether they are married or not including absent parents

Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child, for example, lives with and looks after the child

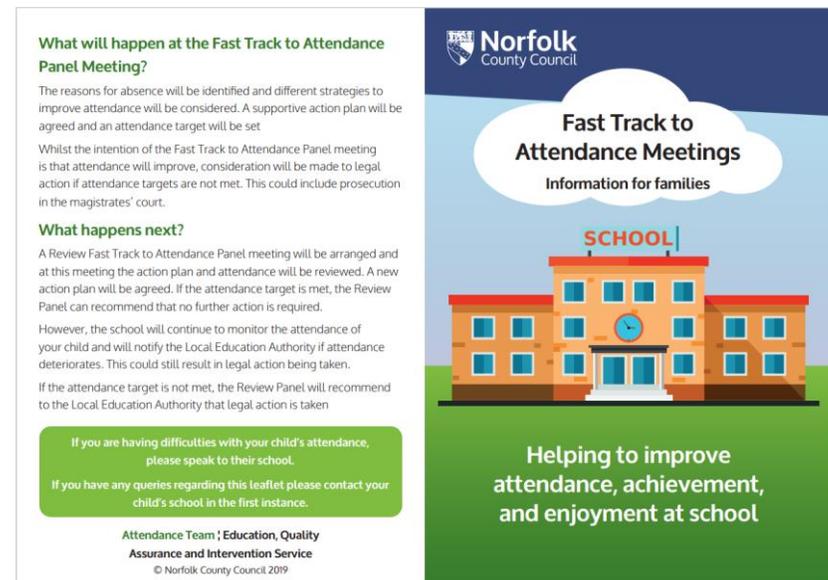
Anyone who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child

The local authority and school will need to decide who comes within the definition of parent in respect of a particular pupil when using legal measures, but generally parents include all those with day-to-day responsibility for a child.

Section 576 of the Education Act 1996

Documents and forms can be found at [NCC Schools and Learning Providers Website](#)

Pre legal intervention warning letter
Early intervention attendance plan
Attendance case management and application to prosecute form
Fast Track check list
Initial Fast Track invite letter
Fast Track information for parents pamphlet
Fast Track initial meeting record
Did not attend – initial Fast Track meeting
Review Fast Track – reminder invite
Fast Track review meeting record
Did not attend – Fast Track review referral to LA
Did not attend – Fast Track review improvement to close
Internal review – Improvement to close
Internal review – Referral to LA final notice
Guide Witness Statement
Master labels for witness statement
S566 Certificate of Attendance (head teachers certificate)



The leaflet is titled "Fast Track to Attendance Meetings Information for families" and is published by Norfolk County Council. It features a blue header with the council's logo and a central illustration of a school building. The text is organized into sections: "What will happen at the Fast Track to Attendance Panel Meeting?", "What happens next?", and a green call-to-action box. The footer identifies the Attendance Team and the year 2019.

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 and 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.

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.

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.

Attendance Team ; Education, Quality Assurance and Intervention Service
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Fast Track to Attendance Meetings
Information for families

SCHOOL

Helping to improve attendance, achievement, and enjoyment at school

Norfolk County Council

Preparation for Fast Track

- Start to complete the Attendance Case management form
- Review pupils history of attendance
- Complete background check on family composition
- Ensure your data is accurate
- Set a date and time
- Send invite letter(s)
- Complete wishes and feelings work with the pupil prior to the initial meeting
- Obtain all information relating to the child in school
- Consider accessibility requirements and location of room for attendees

Initial Fast Track – Parents have attended

- Prepare the paperwork
- Remember to introduce everyone
- Introduce the Fast Track process
- Talk through the YTD attendance herringbone
- Explore the barriers to school attendance
- Capture what the parent(s) and other attendees has said in the minutes
- Capture the voice of the child
- Set an attendance target and develop a targeted action plan
- Ensure the minutes are fully completed
- Ensure minutes are agreed and signed by all in attendance
- Ensure a copy of the minutes are given to parent(s)

Introducing the Fast-Track process to parents

 **Education, Quality Assurance, Intervention & Regulation Service - Attendance Team**
Initial Fast Track Meeting Record & Plan

Date of Meeting:		Location:	
Name of pupil(s):		Name of School:	
		Year Group:	

Invitees Name:	DOB: (parents)	Role & Organisation:	Attended? (Y/N)	Apologies given? (Y/N)

Family Information: Full details of all other parents and siblings should be requested where the information is not known

Parents
Name
Address:
DOB:
Sibling(s)
Name
DOB
School

As [INSERT NAME OF CHILD]'s parent(s) you have a responsibility in law to ensure his/her regular attendance at school, you should be aware that the only defences available in law are:

1. That the absences are with leave (i.e. that they have been agreed by the Headteacher);
2. That the absences are because of sickness or unavoidable cause;
3. That the absences fall on days of religious observance for the religion to which parents belong;
4. That the child is entitled to free transport to school and the LEA have failed to provide this;
5. That the child has no fixed abode, and the parent proves—
 - (a) that he is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require him to travel from place to place,
 - (b) that the child has attended at a school as a registered pupil as regularly as the nature of that trade or business permits, and
 - (c) if the child has attained the age of six, that he has made at least 200 attendances during the period of 12 months ending with the date on which the proceedings were instituted.

If absences do not fall into any of these categories or the school have not been informed of reasons for absence, absences will be marked as unauthorised.

Education Supervision Order (ESO)
We need to make you aware that, before instituting legal proceedings for an offence under s443/444 Education Act 1996, the LA has a duty to consider whether it would be appropriate to apply for an ESO; an application could be instead of or in addition to a prosecution.

WHY ARE WE HERE? SCHOOL INTERVENTIONS/SUPPORT PROVIDED TO DATE:
(In this section, you should discuss: the child's attendance to date providing a copy of the herringbone, the school support to date both academic and pastoral including any FSPs, support panel and log of phone calls/letters sent home to parent to be attached)

- look at the fast-track template and plan an introduction to a fast-track meeting. The introduction should ensure:
 - All parent, pupil and siblings' details are checked
 - Legal framework and defences are clearly explained

NEW CHANGE

If parent(s) fail to attend the meeting, you do not need to complete the fast track paperwork or send a copy to the parent(s). INSTEAD you will send them a letter giving them the opportunity to become actively involved.

Good Practice Example

WHY ARE WE HERE? SCHOOL INTERVENTIONS/SUPPORT PROVIDED TO DATE:

(In this section, you should discuss: the child's attendance to date providing a copy of the herringbone, the school support to date both academic and pastoral including any FSPs, support panel and log of phone calls/letters sent home to parent to be attached)

CHILD A's current year to date attendance is 54.28% and has attended 91 out of a possible 166 sessions. Of these absences, 35 have been authorised and 40 have been unauthorised. For the six week monitoring period (30/04/2021 to 16/08/2021) CHILD A's attendance is 20.97% and he has attended 13 out of a possible 62 sessions. Of these absences, 9 have been authorised and 40 have been unauthorised. CHILD B's current year to date attendance is 34.66% and she has attended 87 out of a possible 251 sessions. Of these absences, 104 have been authorised and 60 have been unauthorised. For the six week monitoring period (same as above) CHILD B's attendance is 22.58% and she has attended 14 out of a possible 62 sessions. Of these absences, 5 have been authorised and 43 have been unauthorised.

Interventions and support for both children:

First day texts have been sent out following failure to report absences

School PSA has been highly involved with mum, conducting weekly home visits and calling mum frequently

Children having daily zoom check ins with a member of the schools support staff

The school provided several sets of school uniform to mum when the home washing machine broke and reassured mum that children could attend in non school uniform.

The school arranged for a new washing machine to be delivered to the house for mum via a charitable donation and 2 members of staff plumbed it in.

The children have been collected from home and driven to school by a staff member when mum was unable to take them to school.

Medication for both mum and CHILD A have been collected by staff and given to mum.

Learning packs have been given to the children.

Home visits have been carried out along with regular wishes and feelings.

Food Parcels have been offered.

Rapid covid tests given and PCR test given to the family. A member of pastoral staff instructed and supervised the children to carry out the tests as on one home visit mum had not managed to carry out a test.

Mum has been given information about Point 1, JON, family lives, Young Minds, Carers Matter and Thomas Anguish.

Emails and phone calls have taken place to encourage both mum and dad to engage with the school, with the offer of phased returns to school offered: after hours tour of the schools: 1-1 pastoral support: small group work with the children: reduced timetable, delayed start and early finish.

Risk assessment shared and procedures with both parents.

Early Help Plan set-up, closed due to lack of engagement from mum/dad.

Fast Track Aim: Pupil to be in school everyday and on time

Actions to be taken to achieve the aim:

1. Parents to complete the joint medical protocol form giving consent for school to contact family GP
2. Child A to have help with school work and homework, Parents to ensure he completes homework and hands it in
3. School to make contact with GP for advice and will authorise absence accordingly based on evidence and advice from GP
4. Family to make contact with Parentline and look at Kooth. Also to complete a self-referral for Point One.
5. School will support with a referral to the school nurse.
6. Child A to reintegrate back to regular school attendance with the support of a reduced timetable for a period of no more than 6 weeks.
7. Child A will ensure that his school equipment and bag is packed the night before and with support from parents ensure he has clean uniform ready for the morning.
8. Parents will ensure that Child A attends 100% of the agreed timetable.
9. Parents and school to arrange suitable incentives for Child A for attending school each expected day.
10. Mrs X will be Child A's point of contact in school and will ensure to check in with him during each session he is expected in school.

- Your supportive action plan should include points on how you will achieve this aim.
- It should have action points for school, parents and pupil if appropriate.
- It should address the barriers that have been highlighted.

Preparation for review Fast Track

- Send all parent(s) individual reminder invite letters
- Remember to invite relevant professionals
- Complete wishes and feelings work with the pupil prior to the meeting
- Ensure that the required school staff are available to attend
- Obtain all information relating to the child in school

Review Fast Track

- Review the pupils attendance during the Fast Track period
- Discuss whether the action plan has been successful has the target been met?
- Capture the pupils voice
- Capture the parents voice
- Ensure the minutes are fully completed
- Build upon current action plan to ensure pupils is continually supported
- School to make decision on next steps and ensure parents fully understand
- Ensure minutes are signed by those in attendance and copies provided to parent(s)

NEW CHANGE

If parent(s) fail to attend the meeting, you do not need to complete the fast track paperwork or send a copy to the parent(s). INSTEAD you will send them a letter giving them the opportunity to become actively involved.

Option 1 – Improved attendance

- Attendance has improved and there has been no further absence. Remember to acknowledge good changes and efforts with parent(s) and pupil. Close the Fast Track.

Option 2 – Statutory defence provided

- There has been further authorised absence supported by a statutory defence. Ensure that a supportive action plan is in place to support pupil with regular attendance. Close the Fast Track.

Option 3 – Some improvement in attendance

- There has been some improvement in attendance, but there has been further unauthorised absence and the target has not been met. School can choose to hold a further review following a short period in order to see if the improvement can be sustained and built upon. If after the review period attendance has continue to improve school to close the Fast Track. If attendance has not improved with further unauthorised absence, school to close the Fast Track and to refer the case to the Attendance Team for prosecution.

Option 4 – No improvement in attendance

- There has been further unauthorised absence (15% or more unauthorised absence during the prosecution period) school to close the Fast Track and refer the case to the Attendance Team for prosecution.

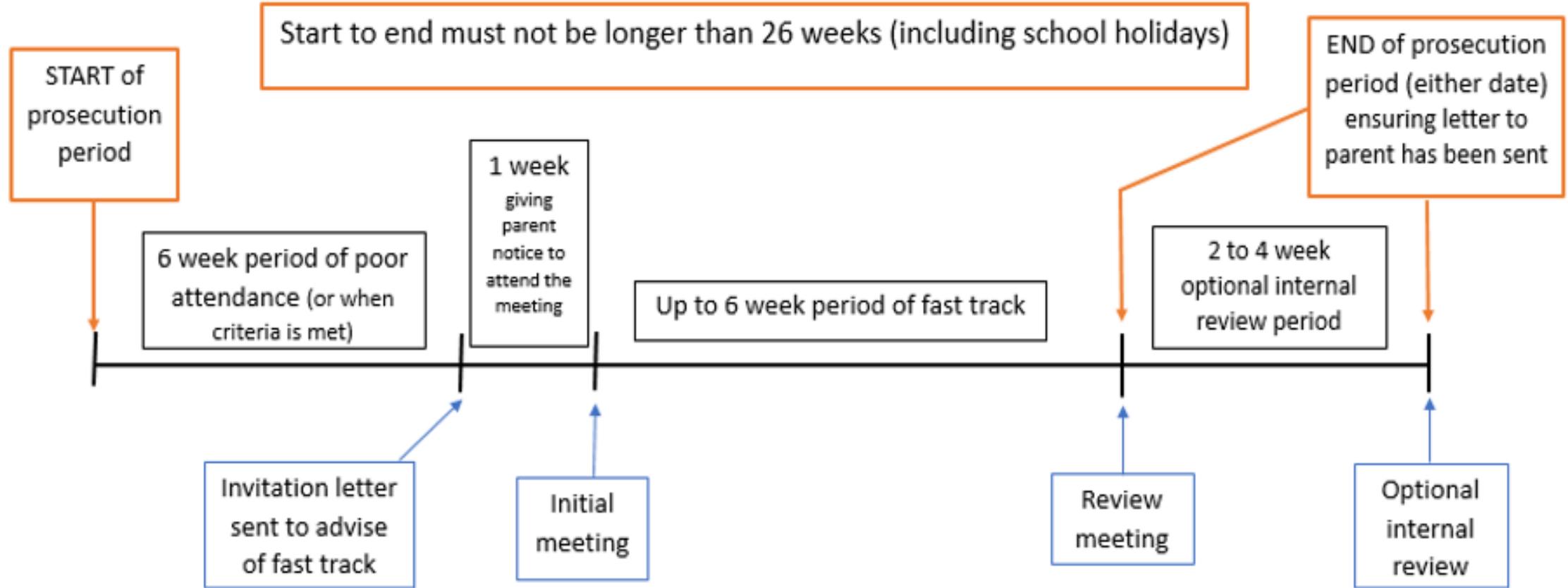
NEW CHANGE

Following the decision to proceed with prosecution you must now complete the Application to Prosecute and speak with the Attendance Team. Prior to completing the prosecution pack, you must speak to the Attendance Team, they will talk through your intervention to date and ensure is it appropriate to proceed.

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman finding:

“a delay in making a decision can be seen as an abuse of power and can cause unnecessary distress to children and their families”

PROSECUTION PERIOD TIMELINE





Further support and guidance can be found at:

- [School attendance - Schools \(norfolk.gov.uk\)](https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/school-attendance)

If you have any further questions that have not been answered today, then please contact the Attendance Team on 01603

233681 or at

csattendance@norfolk.gov.uk